

FORMER BALLARAT ORPHANAGE



162918_Former_Ballarat_Orph



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_Workshop

Location

200 VICTORIA STREET BALLARAT EAST, BALLARAT CITY

Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7622-0455

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The Former Ballarat Orphanage was established in the mid-1860s, and operated from an imposing two-storey building designed by the Ballarat architect H.R. Caselli. Following the demolition of the original orphanage building in the 1960s, the site now only retains buildings from the twentieth century, which include the Orphanage School (1918) and the Toddler's Block (1929).

The social upheavals following the gold rush meant that the township of Ballarat was home to a large number of orphaned or destitute children. To address this problem a number of charitable institutions were established, including the Benevolent Asylum (1858) and the Ballarat Female Refuge (H1893, 1867). Whilst orphaned children were initially housed at the Benevolent Asylum, it was decided that the influences of such an institution were unsuitable. In mid-1865, a proposal to establish an Orphan Asylum was adopted by the North Star Lodge of Oddfellows, with Ballarat Freemasons and Foresters joining the fundraising efforts, and a committee of management was drawn from 'gentlemen representatives'. The architect H.R. Caselli's plan for a two-storey gabled building with central tower won the design competition, and the foundation stone for the Ballarat District Orphan Asylum was laid by Hon. J. McCulloch, Chief Secretary of Victoria, on 8 December 1865. The original orphanage, constructed in three stages (1865, 1867, 1871), comprised dormitory wards, staff quarters, school rooms, and hospital wards. It was the first institution of its kind to have a swimming pool, and the orphanage farm provided much needed revenue as well as training the children.

The orphanage school was moved from the main building with the construction of the new school in 1918. In 1929, the Toddlers' Block was constructed to house children under the age of six. Attitudes to child welfare began to change in the interwar years, with a move away from housing children in dormitory wards in large institutional buildings to cottage-style accommodation. The deteriorating 1860s building was completely demolished by 1963, replaced by domestic-sized accommodation for 200 children. The Ballarat Orphanage operated at the site until the mid-1980s, and the site was used by a school until 2011. Over 4100 children were housed at the orphanage in its 120 years of operation.

Following the demolition of the original orphanage building in the 1960s, the site now only retains buildings from the twentieth century. The Toddlers' Block, constructed in 1929, is a single-storey red brick building with a central courtyard. Internally, most of the original children's rooms were replaced by modern offices during the building's

use as a school administration wing. The Orphanage School of 1918 is a single-storey gabled building, with corrugated iron roof. The red brick school consists of classrooms of various sizes opening off a corridor. Other buildings on the site include a gymnasium, communal areas and classrooms dating from the 1960s and 1980s, and a brick workshop of unknown construction date. A brick wall runs the length of the Stawell Street boundary, and there are also asphalt sports courts and grassed play areas. A Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) and two elms (*Ulmus*) situated at the front of the site have had the ashes of former residents scattered around them.

The former Ballarat Orphanage is of local historical significance for its more than 120-year association with child welfare in Ballarat. It is of local historical significance as the site of a nineteenth century orphan asylum, which has since been demolished.

The former Ballarat Orphanage is of local historical significance for its demonstration of twentieth century child-welfare ideals in the Toddler's Block and Orphanage School, both of which have been altered.

The former Ballarat Orphanage is of local social significance to the former residents and carers associated with the institution.

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| Archaeological Significance | <p>The site is likely to contain deposits relating to the former orphanage. Demolition of previous buildings and the history of building phases leaves the potential for intact subsurface deposits as yet unknown.</p> <p>There is an understanding within the community that there are on site burials of children who lived at the orphanage. However, without further historical investigation and archaeological work, the existence of the graves cannot be certain.</p> |
| Other Names | BALLARAT ORPHAN ASYLUM, |
| Hermes Number | 162918 |
| Property Number | |

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>