

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated 09/07/20



FORMER WILLSMERE HOSPITAL



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SOHE 2008



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1 former willsmere hospital kew front
view june 1995



former willsmere hospital kew front
elevation jun1995



former willsmere hospital kew gatehouse
june 1988



former willsmere hospital kew hospital
wing jun1984



former willsmere hospital kew view of
tower jun1988



former willsmere hospital kew view of
grounds june 1995



H0861 Plan B



H0861 Plan A

Location

1-258 WILTSHIRE DRIVE and 21 VAUGHAN CRESCENT KEW, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0861

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO109

VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

Amendment to Registration

August 2, 1989

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 2, 1999

What is significant?

The former Willsmere Hospital, previously known as the Kew Lunatic Asylum, was commenced in 1856 and opened in 1872. The design of the complex was based on contemporary English models of asylum planning. The E-shaped complex of buildings was designed in the Italianate style by various architects employed by the Victorian Public Works Department. The central administration block comprises a three-storeyed building with attic Mansard roof and cupola, with two double-storeyed wings extending to each side which include a four-storey Mansard roofed tower, and courtyards lined with iron columned verandahs. The complex was set in a garden and surrounded by a walled fence. Fever Tents were erected in 1907 in response to a major typhoid epidemic.

How is it significant?

The former Willsmere Hospital is of historic and architectural significance to the State of Victoria

Why is it significant?

The former Willsmere Hospital is unique as the largest and most notable example of an institution erected by the Victorian Public Works Department in the nineteenth century. It is of historic importance because of its association with and ability to illustrate the evolution of mental health in Victoria over a century. It is also historically important

in demonstrating rarity as one of the most intact nineteenth century lunatic asylums in the world. The former hospital is architecturally important in exhibiting the principle characteristics of the Italianate style, and of the work of the Victorian Public Works Department in the nineteenth century. It is also important in illustrating the mid-nineteenth century move to a grander style of institutional design. The former Willsmere Hospital is also architecturally important in exhibiting aesthetic characteristics of good design in the towers and mansard roofs and the central administration block. The Fever Tents are important in demonstrating the Department of Health's response to epidemics, as well as the prevailing belief in isolation and fresh air as a curative measure.

Construction dates	1870,
Architect/Designer	Kawerau, Frederick,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	KEW ASYLUM, KEW LUNATIC ASYLUM,
Hermes Number	622
Property Number	

History

Associated People: George W Vivian;

Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 861- Former Willsmere Hospital, Princess Street, Kew.

(To the extent of the buildings and structures shown on the plan marked A, endorsed by the Director of the Historic Buildings Council, the land known as "Willsmere Historic Building" in the Kew Planning Scheme gazetted 14 June 1989 and depicted in Plan B, and the existing lodge adjacent to the oval.)

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G6 13 February 1991 p.289]

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 data owner.

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