

Aradale Mental Hospital, Garden & Gate Lodge



B2122 Aradale Mental Hospital



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Location

McLellan Street,, ARARAT VIC 3377 - Property No B2122

Municipality

ARARAT RURAL CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 1, 2004

Aradale, erected as a lunatic asylum in 1864-67, its accommodation augmented in the late 1880s by the erection of detached cottages and hospitals, the institution further enlarged during the twentieth century, and used for its original purpose until its closure in 1994, is of State cultural significance:

- for its retention of early design elements typical of mid-nineteenth century asylum planning; these remnants of ha-ha or sunk walls, gate lodge, axially planned buildings, wards with airing courts and towers, main drives, and an extensive area for the farm and vegetable garden, plus farm buildings;
- for its retention of buildings from the period 1864-67 which demonstrate the earliest phase of development on the site; these include the gate lodge and fencing, administration and kitchen block, wards, verandahs and covered ways, and sunk wall;
- for its retention of buildings from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century which demonstrate the continuing development of this site and shifts in attitudes to the treatment of psychiatric illness; these include the convalescent cottages and detached male and female hospital wards, the sunshades and fever tent, and the links with the former Ararat gaol (used as a criminal ward);
- for its collection of mature trees and plants some dating from the mid-late nineteenth century and others from the 1916 work of Hugh Linaker and later curators; these include a large collection of conifers and other mature exotic trees;
- for its considerable aesthetic qualities principally derived from the mature planting, distant views of the site, views from the site to surrounding land, the impressive scale and detailing of the early buildings;
- for its representation of the after effects of the gold era, a period of paramount importance in development of the Colony;
- for its close links with the township of Ararat; this aspect is manifest in both historical and social importance (Ararat's economy relied on institutions such as the gaol, railway depot, asylum and hospital) and the visual prominence of the institution located on a hill to the east of the township;
- for its long continuity of use as a psychiatric institution.

Classified: 19/10/1967

Revised: 01/08/1994

File note 18/06/2012: B2123 & G13052 amalgamated & filed with B2122

The Gate Lodge is a comparatively rare example of the Italianate in the Victorian scene, recalling the work of Sir Joseph Paxton at Edensor, Derbyshire.

Gate Lodge Classified: 29/10/1969.

Other Names Aradale Lunatic Asylum, Aradale Psychiatric Hospital,

Hermes Number 67299

Property Number

Physical Description 1

Aradale is approached from the south along a long drive which passes a handsome and notable 'villa-rustica' Italianate gate lodge before entering a pine plantation. The drive trifurcates; a main drive leads through a pine plantation, a western drive skirts the plantation and leads to the rear of the walled complex, and an eastern drive leads to the farm complex and circuitously to the rear. The plantation on the main drive opens to reveal the imposing bulk of the main administrative block with flanking wards. The main early buildings are contained within a high brick (c1867) and iron (1890s) wall, in plan once a square with rounded corners. The main two and three-level male and female wards and administration wing, and the two-storey kitchen buildings reveal the influence of English asylums such as Colney Hatch and the continuation of this design theme in the colony by the Public Works Department under Wardell. The 1860s buildings embrace the Italian Renaissance stylistically, are of stuccoed masonry and built on a palatial scale, with Venetian window groupings to the main elevation, more austere window treatments to the side elevations and unique (once open) arcaded links between the wards resembling Roman aqueducts. Ground level links and verandahs are iron framed with lattice friezes and the rear kitchen wing contains a notable dining hall with panelled plaster wall treatment. The towers, used for ventilation as much as ornament, are a major elements in the design, with the tower over the kitchen wing serving as a bell tower to announce meals and entertainment events, among other things. It was the first to open of the three asylums built (Ararat, Beechworth, Kew) using these design principles. Airing courts are contained by the buildings and the high perimeter wall. This wall was in part designed as a ha-ha or sunk wall, permitting extensive views from the elevated site, eastward to Mount Langi Ghiran and westward to Ararat. The male airing yard retains one sun-shade from early this century (another collapsed) and the female yard has a notable rustic two-roof sun-shade with bush pole construction and a shingled roof, presumably from the 1870s. The fever tent from early this century is nearby and had a similar open-air design which is now rare in the State's large hospital complexes.

The walled enclosure, with its gate houses and workshops on the north, is now breached in several parts and some newer buildings have been erected in the original compound but the remaining sections are notable, particularly on the south-east of the main block where the wall profile and plan are both curved. On the west side of the wall is an opening (since closed in) which served the morgue (1879) which itself is also of note.

To the north-east, north-west, south-east and south-west are the cottage male and female hospital wards and convalescent cottages, used in part for the farm worker patients. These follow a typical suburban verandahed Italianate villa style externally but their layout still evokes their markedly different use and they represent the change in approach to lunatic accommodation, allowing particular types of patients to be located apart from the major body of lunatics. This type of accommodation has been demolished at Kew

There are extensive grounds outside of the wall, containing the ornamental dam, pine plantations, sports oval, recently established golf course, farm buildings and extensive farm area. Some newer buildings dot the grounds but the overall character is remarkably intact to the three major development eras (1860s, 1870s, 1880s).

Buildings which do not fit this character but are of individual note, are the nurses home of the 1930s and the nearby converted mental defectives hospital from the same period. The 1950s, although a major era of 'improvement' under the new Mental Health Authority, has left no architecturally notable structures but instead many alterations to the ward interiors. The administration wing interior still has some notable original elements.

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/>