
Former Ballarat Orphanage and State School



Former Toddlers' Block
(2025)



Former school



Elms on east side of former
Toddlers' Block (2025)



Wall along Stawell Street



Wall along Stawell Street

Location

200, 200A, 200B, AND 200C VICTORIA STREET, BALLARAT EAST - PROPERTY NUMBER 2033039, BALLARAT CITY

Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO177

Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 22, 2025

What is significant?

The former Toddlers Block, former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256, front memorial garden (including the Magnolia tree and memorial Ludbrook seat), two 19th century Dutch Elm trees to the east, and the western brick boundary wall associated with the Dormitory Orphanage Era (1865-1957) and the foundation stones and plaques associated with the Cottage Orphanage Era (1957-1988) at 200 Victoria Street, Ballarat East have significance as tangible physical legacies of the former Ballarat Orphanage established in 1865 in the Victoria Street Heritage Precinct. The foundation stones and plaques associated with the Dormitory Orphanage and Cottage Orphanage eras provide a further understanding of the evolution and development of the place. They are foundation stone on the former Administrative Block (Classrooms C Building 2), dated 1968; foundation stone on the former William Farrell Cottage (Library C Building 2), dated 1965; Memorial obelisk in the front garden of the of the former William Farrell Cottage (Library C Building 2) with a plaque dated 1974; and the foundation stone on the former Service Block, Dining Room, Intermediate Cottage & Swimming Pool (Technology/Hall/Gymnasium C Building 8), dated 1959.

The original Ballarat Orphanage opened in 1866 to provide institutionalised welfare for neglected children. The Orphanage was the culmination of allied charity instigated by the Oddfellows, Foresters, Freemasons and Protestant Christian denominations. This fraternal charitable network emanated from the peculiar local situation brought about by the shifting fortunes on the goldfields and especially the misfortunes of many parents left destitute in the wake little success. Established on the worked out diggings of the Eureka lead, the initial 10 acre site was completely transformed and the orphanage soon boasted a substantial front garden, vegetable garden, farm and ancillary buildings. These changes appear to have been largely instigated by the long serving Orphanage Superintendent, Arthur Kenny, whose tenure commenced in 1884. The period between 1865 and 1957 had the most profound and far reaching effects on the provision of child welfare at the orphanage. Between 1925 and 1949, the orphanage was led by Herbert and Daisy Ludbrook as Superintendent and Matron. By 1945, over 4,000 children had passed through the orphanages doors. From 1957, the orphanage was again transformed with the staged development of the cottage system (in which a more domestic network of housing units was built to simulate a homely environment). As part of this new method of welfare, the old orphanage building was demolished between 1957 and 1965. Eric and Mrs Morton were Superintendent and Nurse from 1950 until 1963 during the initial transformation into the cottage system.

Today, the former Toddlers Block, built in 1929 and extended in 1939 to designs by Clegg, Morrow and Cameron, former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256, built 1919 and altered in 1963-68, the western brick boundary wall (built in the 1880s), the memorial garden (including the Magnolia tree and two Dutch Elm trees) on the Victoria Street frontage and surviving foundation stones, plaques and other items physically embody the historical associations and social and commemorative significance of the former Orphanage complex.

How is it significant?

The former Toddler's Block, former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256, front memorial garden (including the Magnolia tree and Ludbrook memorial seat), two mature Dutch Elm trees east of the former Toddler's Block, western brick boundary wall and foundation stones and plaques associated with the orphanage until 1988 contribute to the architectural/aesthetic, historic and social significance of the Victoria Street Heritage Precinct.

Why is it significant?

The former Toddlers Block, former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256, front memorial garden (including the Magnolia tree and two Dutch Elm trees) and western brick boundary wall have historical significance as enduring historical associations with the evolution and development of the former Ballarat Orphanage from 1865 until 1988, including the Dormitory Orphanage Era (1865-1957) which had the most profound and far-reaching effect on child welfare (AHC A.4, H.1). From 1957 until 1988, the Cottage Orphanage Era¹ is associated with a major transformation in the management of child welfare at the Orphanage. The former Ballarat Orphanage hosted thousands of neglected children (including Aboriginal children of the stolen generations from 1887). The surviving fabric has associations with the welfare traditions, regimes and values at the orphanage in the 19th and particularly early 20th centuries. This fabric has associations with members of the respective orphanage committees, benefactors, staff and former residents.

The former Toddlers Block was constructed in 1929 (and extended in 1939) to the design of local architects, Clegg, Morrow and Cameron as a modern system of infant accommodation. It was named the Kenny Memorial

Block in honour of the former long-serving and dedicated Superintendent and Matron, Arthur and Jean Kenny (1884-1925) (the east wing being named the James Kerslake wing in 1939 in honour of this important benefactor).

The former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256 was built in 1919 to a design by Edwin Evan Smith of the Architect is Branch of the Victorian Public Works Department. It was altered between 1963 and 1968. It is associated with the education of former residents and other local children. Education was a key priority at the orphanage and the surviving early fabric is a particular legacy of the primary education experiences of the former child residents. This education was the same as that for children outside the orphanage from the early 20th century. It was an important place of respite and learning from the other experiences and labors of orphanage life for the child residents. While this building and the former Toddlers Block have been altered, the historical significance of the place is embodied in the surviving fabric as a demonstration of 20th century child welfare ideals.

The former western brick boundary wall has historical significance for its associations with the Dormitory Orphanage Era (1865-1957), having been built in the 1880s. It symbolizes the sense of enclosure of the orphanage from the outside world in the 19th century.

The memorial garden, including the Magnolia tree and two Dutch Elm trees have historical significance in embodying the Dormitory Orphanage Era (1865-1957) as an important front landscape to the orphanage complex.

The former Toddlers Block and former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256 are socially significant as they have strong personal associations with former child residents and others that were part of the orphanage community (AHC G.1). They are valued for the role they have played as a community welfare facility and in the primary school education of former residents. This education was the same as that for children outside the orphanage. Importantly, education provided opportunities for growth and development in later years outside the orphanage.

The memorial garden and Magnolia tree at the front of the Toddlers Block (although altered from 1968) have social significance as symbols of celebration, commemoration and contemplation for many former residents, staff and their families. The Ludbrook memorial seat adjacent to the Magnolia tree "C although only introduced in 2007 also commemorates the service and association to the orphanage by the former Superintendent and Matron, Herbert and Daisy Ludbrook (1925-1949) and their family.

The former Toddlers Block has architectural significance as a moderately intact example of an interwar domestically scaled institutional building (AHC D.2). This is demonstrated through the original and early design qualities including the single storey and asymmetrical composition of elongated hipped roof forms, projecting jerkin head porches at the front, terra cotta tiled roof cladding, eaves overhangs, pressed redbrick wall construction, regularly arranged timber framed double hung windows, horizontal rendered wall band, brick buttresses on the eastern (James Kerslake) wing, and the E plan layout with the central courtyard. The former Toddlers Block also represents one of the more intact non residential designs of the architects, Clegg, Morrow and Cameron. The building continues to have a noticeable presence when viewed from Victoria Street.

The front memorial garden (including the Magnolia tree) and two Dutch Elm trees to the east of the former Toddlers Block have aesthetic significance (AHC E.1). They exhibit notable visual qualities and are significant contributors in establishing an important presence for the former Toddlers Block and orphanage site on the traditional Victoria Street frontage. The memorial garden, Magnolia tree and the two Dutch Elm trees are held in high esteem by past residents, staff and their families. The brick wall on the west boundary also provides a contribution to the appearance of the site from Stawell Street, signifying the restriction and protection of the former orphanage function within.

Notes

[1]. The Ballarat Courier "C 28th March 2012, Radio interview - 23 December 2011, Win News TV - 28 March 2012, numerous phone calls & informal discussions between former residents and Council officers.

2. The citation was refreshed by Dr David Rowe, Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd, under instruction from the City of Ballarat. In particular, the instructions were that the refreshed citation be based on the recommendations of the Panel Report for Amendment C164 to the Ballarat Planning Scheme and the findings and conclusions in the Amendment C164 Expert Witness Statement for the Former Ballarat Orphanage Site, 200, 200a and 200b Victoria Street, Ballarat East, by Annabel Neylon and Christine Johnston of Context Pty Ltd, 2014.

3. The term neglected has been taken from the Neglected Childrens Act 1864 outlined in *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out of home care as children*, The Senate Community Affairs References Committee, Commonwealth of Australia, August 2004, p.31. This Act set out the grounds on which a child may be deemed to be neglected to include: found begging, wandering, residing in a brothel and the parent representing that he is unable to control the child. This definition was expanded in the Acts of 1890 and 1928. The term has not been used in this report to make value judgements of the former residents of the Ballarat Orphanage.

4. J. Penglase, *Orphans of the Living: Growing up in care in twentieth-century Australia*, Curtin University Books/Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle, 2005, p.130.

5. *Ballarat Orphanage Jubilee Souvenir 1865-1915*, Child & Family Services, Ballarat.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Ballarat - Ballarat Heritage Precincts Study, Dr David Rowe and Wendy Jacobs, 2006;
Construction dates	1880, 1919, 1929,
Architect/Designer	Clegg & Morrow, Smith, Edwin Evan, Public Works Department, Clegg, Morrow & Cameron,
Other Names	Former Ballarat Orphanage State School, Magnolia, Elm trees,
Hermes Number	158056
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The former Ballarat Orphanage site is characterized by a complex of brick and predominantly single storey buildings. These buildings are largely reflective of the 'cottage orphanage era' of 1957-1988, with only four buildings being associated with the 'dormitory orphanage era' of 1865-1957. These surviving buildings of the 1865-1957 era are the former Toddlers' Block (Building 1), altered former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256 (Building 4) and the altered former Sloyd Room (Building 7) and the altered former Gymnasium, Picture Theatre and Latrines wing (part of Building 8 - Service Block).

The former Ballarat Orphanage site is especially characterized by a memorial garden outside the former Toddlers' Block (Building 1) to its north and north-west. It is defined by a grassed rectangular area with perimeter gardens, Norfolk pines and shrubs, concrete footpath towards the front and a front perimeter garden bed with dwarf masonry wall. The majority of the front garden appears to be reflective of the changes made in 1968. However, the mature Magnolia tree to the north-west appears to have been planted in the early 20th century and together with the nearby Ludbrook seat (installed in 2007), it has become a symbol of commemoration and contemplation to many associated with the former orphanage. The timber seat has four brass plaques affixed in memory of the Ludbrook family. A space for a fifth plaque has been made available for Herbert and Daisy's daughter, Joan. An entrance pergola, brick signage wall and row of trees along eastern portion of the front boundary represent more recent fabric. There is also an interpretive display on the front boundary that is part of a Ballarat Koorie Heritage Trail which outlines the associations of the 'stolen generations' with the former Ballarat Orphanage.

The brick wall on the west boundary also provides a contribution to the appearance of the site from Stawell Street. It is a surviving symbol of enclosure that once signified the restriction and protection of the orphanage function within. More specifically, the wall along Stawell Street was called the 'waiting wall' and the 'hope wall'. Residents of the orphanage waited on this wall for their parents to visit or take them home, which in many cases, never eventuated.

The rear of the site is dominated by a large open grassed area that was once the sports grounds.

At the rear of the building complex are remnants of an early road that traverses the site and exists onto Victoria Street immediately east of the former Assistant Superintendent's Residence (Building 11).

Overall there are nine buildings on the site, together with a brick boundary wall on the west side and two dwellings formerly associated with the orphanage are located to the east.

Former Toddlers' Block (Building 1)

Located behind the Memorial Garden on the Victoria Street frontage is the former Toddlers' Block. A single storey, asymmetrical, interwar face red brick building of a domestic scale, taking on an interwar Bungalow-like appearance, the former Toddlers' Block represents one of the few surviving buildings of the 'Dormitory Orphanage Era' 1865-1957. It is characterized by elongated hipped roof forms clad in terra cotta tiles with broad eaves. A minor projecting front porch at the western end of the front facade features a jerkin head roof form, as does the James Kerslake wing at the eastern end.

There are regularly-arranged original and early timber framed double hung windows and the walls are accentuated by a horizontal rendered band at window sill level. Behind the front wing is an open courtyard surrounded by the remaining wings.

Externally, the E plan layout and construction of the former Toddlers' Block is largely reflective of its original (1929) design and early (1939) additions. Changes have included the boxing-in of the eaves on the front facade of the original western portion in 1939 to match the design of the Kerslake wing, alterations to some window and door openings (particularly within the central courtyard) and in more recent times, the construction of a projecting glazed porch to the front of the main western entrance. According to the original drawings, this main entrance was initially designed with brick piers supported by paired concrete columns. It appears that the existing corbelled buttressed piers were introduced at the time of the Kerslake extensions in 1939 as similar buttresses define the eastern wing. An original door opening on the west facade (that once linked the building to the old orphanage) has been bricked up and a walkway shelter on the west side has replaced the original shelter. In considering both the original design and early additions, the former Toddlers' Block has moderate integrity. The building continues to have a noticeable presence when viewed from Victoria Street. There is a foundation stone that reads: "Kenny Memorial. This stone was laid by R.J. Love, Inspector of Charities, Victoria. 18th June 1929. W.J. Hoare. President. H.C. Ludbrook. Superintendent." There is also a plaque affixed to the wall that reads: "Damascus College, established by the amalgamation of Sacred Heart College, St. Paul's College, St. Martin's in the Pines College. Blessed and opened by 19 February, 1995 by Rev Brian Finnigan, Vicar General, Diocese of Ballarat. Sponsors: Sisters of Mercy, Ballarat East, Parishes of the Ballarat Region. "To Live by the Light of Christ"."

Former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256

Located towards the north-west corner of the site and associated with the 'Dormitory Orphanage Era' 1865-1957 is the former Ballarat Orphanage State School No. 1256. Built in 1919, the early 20th century building has an original T plan comprising a front (northern) wing that traverses the site, together with a perpendicular wing at the rear. There are minor projecting wings to the rear of the front traversing wing. The building is characterised by the introduced shallow-pitched gable roof forms clad in metal tray deck, with broad eaves and timber fascias, and mainly original face red brick wall construction. The minor wings projecting from the rear of the front (northern) gable also have been introduced, broadly-projecting flat roofs. On the east and west elevations are banks of early timber framed, 12 paned double hung windows with three paned upper hopper sashes. Other single timber framed windows also appear to be early. Towards the rear on the west elevation, an altered verandah has introduced lightweight infill wall cladding and a toilet addition. The building has a foundation stone that reads: "This stone was laid by The Hon. W. Hutchinson, M.L.A., Minister of Public Instruction. 26th July 1919."

Internally, the spatial layout of the former School building appears to be predominantly intact. Access to the building is from the entrance porch on the east side to a corridor which gives access to two front classrooms. The dividing wall between these rooms has been introduced. Access to two rear classrooms is by the enclosed verandah on the west side. Remnant early fabric includes the windows, corner fireplaces and mantels (the fireplaces are now blocked up and chimneys removed), doors and walls. The plaster ceilings have been introduced.

Foundation Stones & Plaques: Cottage Orphanage Era 1957-1988

Some of the buildings and structures of the 'cottage orphanage era' (1957-1988) include foundation stones and plaques. In particular, they are:

. Foundation stone, former Administrative Block (Classrooms) - Building 2. The foundation is within the porch and reads "This stone was unveiled on 17th March, 1968 by Dr. John Henry Lindell, Chairman of the Hospitals & Charities Commission of Victoria. R.H. Hollioake, A.M.I.E., President. R.J. Jenkins, B.A. Dip. Ed., Secretary & Superintendent."

. Memorial obelisk in front garden of the former William Farrell Cottage (Library) - The lower plaque reads: "this plaque, which commemorates one hundred years of education at the Ballarat Children's Home Primary School, was unveiled at the centenary celebrations on the 3rd day of March 1974, by Mr. W.F. Stephen, M.P."

. Foundation stone, former William Farrell Cottage (Library). The foundation stone is located next to the porch and reads "This stone was laid on 12th December 1965 by the Hon Vance Dickie M.L.C. Minister of Health and State Development and commemorates the centenary of Ballarat Orphanage 1865 - 1965 Dr C.E. Richardson M.B.B.S. President R.J. Jenkins B.A. Dip. Ed. Sec. & Supt. The original foundation stone was laid on 8th December 1865 by the Hon. J. McCulloch Chief Secretary of the Colony."

. Foundation stone, former Service Block, Dining Room, Intermediate Cottage & Swimming Pool (Technology/Hall/Gymnasium) - Building 8: on the wall adjacent to the western entrance doors is a foundation stone that reads: "This stone was laid by the Honorable Ewing P. Cameron, M.L.C. Minister of Health 22nd March 1959, Cr. K.C. Webb, J.P. President, E.R. Morton, J.P. Superintendent."

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/>