

Victorian Heritage Database Report

ROYAL VICTORIAN EYE AND EAR HOSPITAL, AUBREY BOWEN WING



Location:

MORRISON PLACE EAST MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H1724

Listing Authority: VHR

Heritage Overlay Number: HO164

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital was established when Dr. Andrew Sexton Gray's charitable

institution for the eye and ear amalgamated with the Ophthalmic and Orthopaedic Institution (conducted by Drs Aubrey Bowen and Ewin Jones) in 1870. In 1878 the Government granted it a valuable site on what was known as the Tank Reserve on Eastern Hill and by 1883 a Victorian Classical style hospital had been constructed using a special grant of £1000 and money raised by subscription. The construction of the Aubrey Bowen Wing in 1896 was funded by a bequest from Dr Bowen. It was designed and constructed to the same Victorian Classical style of the original building. The building is two storey and constructed of rendered brick walls with ruled ashlar blockwork to the ground floor exterior. It has a parapet roof with pediments and a three storey tower at one end. Windows are arched and the bays are divided by Ionic order pilasters with a classical cornice at the termination of each floor. In 1978 the earliest part of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital was demolished.

How is it significant?

The Aubrey Bowen Wing of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital is of social, historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Aubrey Bowen Wing is of social and historical significance as the earliest section remaining of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, the original 1883 section having been demolished in 1978. The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital is important for its associations with its founders Dr Aubrey Bowen and Dr. Andrew Sexton Gray, both prominent figures in their medical fields. Andrew Sexton Gray is believed to be the founder of Ophthalmology in Australia. After World War II, The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital with its numerous specialists, training posts, special services and professional presence became a cornerstone in the expansion of Australian ophthalmology and otorhinolaryngology, and made possible the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists.

The Aubrey Bowen Wing of the Eye and Ear Hospital is of architectural importance as part of the unique East Melbourne Precinct surrounding St Patrick's Cathedral. It contributes to a rare composition of related building proportions and Victorian architectural vocabulary, with the vista down Morrison Place providing a grand view of the Cathedral. The Aubrey Bowen Wing is of interest for its classical detailing with arched windows, parapet and cornices and Ionic order pilasters.

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| Heritage Study / Consultant | |
| Construction Date Range | 1895 - |
| Architect / Designer | |
| Municipality | MELBOURNE CITY |
| Other names | |
| Hermes number | 386 |
| Property number | |

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online