

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: PRIVATE HOSPITAL (FORMER)

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: 99 McKebery Street COLERAINE

STUDY NUMBER: 0088

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Coleraine

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 9 **SECTION:** 36 **PARISH:** PARISH OF COLERAINE

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 430J, located on the south west corner of Gage and McKebery Street, five blocks south of the intersection of Whyte and Gage Streets, Coleraine.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Private Hospital (Former), 99 McKebery St, Coleraine, looking south from McKebery Street.

Image Date: 9/02/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the house and all of the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

99 McKebery Street Coleraine is a federation style timber residence situated on a large elevated corner allotment overlooking the town. The building is asymmetrically composed, with a hipped corrugated iron roof, projecting gables with bay windows, including a corner bay window. The attached timber verandah is balustraded, and has a return on the east side.

HISTORY:

The land on which the former Private Hospital stands was first purchased from the Crown by Isaac Gelston Gray on July 27, 1866. At the time of purchase, Gray bought the two corner allotments facing Gage Street (Allotments 9 and 10 of Section 36) (Department of Survey and Lands, 1955).

Isaac Gelston Gray was an important early local identity, he owned the Black Horse Inn in Whyte Street, and was considered to be an outspoken and 'colourful' identity. He was born in Belfast County Down, Ireland in 1834, and became a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary until he emigrated, together with his brothers Archibald and James in 1857 (Cox in Forth (ed.), 53). On arrival in Melbourne, Gray joined the Victorian Police, and was appointed as a mounted constable on 11 March, 1858. From 1858 - 1859, he served with the gold escort between Ballarat and Geelong until he was injured in an accident at Meredith in July 1859 when his horse fell on him. After recovering from this accident, Gray served for a short time as a mounted policeman at Portland, and was then transferred to Balmoral, where he took up duties in February 1860. Shortly after his arrival in Balmoral, Gray met and married Catherine Scott, the daughter of a local contractor and former overseer of Gringegalonga, William John Scott (ibid.).

Constable Gray and his new bride transferred to Coleraine in November 1860, where he was appointed as the first policeman to serve the town. The Coleraine Albion reported that the appointment of 'such a constable must be the greatest possible boon to our rising population; and under his active supervision, we will hope to see crime in this locality speedily diminish' (CA 6/11/1860). Gray continued in the Police force until 1865, when he resigned to purchase and run the Black Horse Inn.

Gray was perceived as controversial and outspoken, as he held strong socialist principles, which often brought him into conflict with local establishment. The Coleraine Albion reported a number of meetings which had ended in uproar 'with Gray the chief agitator'. Gray's supporters were the landless workers, the small selectors, and his constituents in the Balmoral riding. He fought the Wannon Shire Council for the rights of selectors who had pegged land on the Coleraine Common to purchase their selection at a reasonable price per acre.

Although considered controversial, Gray was well respected. He sat on a variety of different boards and committees, serving as the Manager and Secretary of the Coleraine Common, Manager of the Coleraine Presbyterian Church, a member of the Mechanics Institute Committee and the committee to establish a reservoir to supply the town with reliable water. He served as a member of the Wannon Shire Council, and a representative of the Balmoral riding for a total of nineteen years between 1872 -1891. He also stood, unsuccessfully for the Victorian Legislative Assembly.

Gray relinquished his publican's license in 1880, and became an auctioneer until the time of his death, at his home on March 23rd, 1906. He was survived by his wife Catherine and six of their eight children (Cox, in Forth (ed.), 53).

It is not known whether any structures were erected on this land while in Gray's ownership, as it seems that he and his family resided in the residence associated with the Black Horse Inn in Whyte Street. The purchase of the land in 1866 appears to be evidence of his success as a general merchant and publican, as the purchase of two corner allotments would have been a substantial cost, especially Allotment 9 which faced McKebery Street and would have had extensive views over the township. Gray may have planned to build a substantial residence on

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this land. At some time, perhaps in Gray's later career as an auctioneer, both allotments were sold to different parties. Allotment 9 was sold to Eugene Silvester (the local solicitor) and Allotment 10 to Emily Gregory of Hamilton.

There is no firm history of the site after this time until 1910, when Octavius Palmer, an auctioneer (originally from Warrnambool) purchased both allotments and constructed a timber residence on Allotment 9, facing McKebery Street. In 1914, a local nurse, Beatrice Watson established Coleraine's second Private Hospital at 99 McKebery Street (the first was opened in the late 19th century by a Miss Fitzgerald at the corner of Turnbull and Read Streets).

A local widow, Mrs. Pleydell took over the running of the hospital in April 1915, and it continued as a hospital until the accommodation was found to be inadequate, and the new Bush Nursing Centre was built in 1930 (Centenary Celebrations Committee, 15). After this time, 99 McKebery Street returned to residential use. It is now owned by a former doctor who served for many years at the Coleraine Bush Nursing Hospital.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.26 Providing Health Services

3.26.2 Providing hospital services

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life

8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

CONDITION:

The building is in very good condition.

INTEGRITY:

Externally, good degree of integrity, interiors not inspected.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The former Private Hospital, located at 99 McKebery Street Coleraine is a substantial timber building which was initially built as a private residence for Octavius Palmer, an auctioneer. The Federation style timber residence is situated on a large elevated allotment on the corner of Gage and McKebery Streets, overlooking the township of Coleraine. The building is asymmetrically composed, with a hipped corrugated iron roof, projecting gables with bay windows, including a corner bay window. The attached timber verandah is balustraded, and has a return on the east side. The land was initially owned by the important local man, Isaac Gelson Gray, the first Policeman in Coleraine, who went on to become a 'colourful' local identity, running the Black Horse Inn and serving on a variety of committees within the township. Although the house was initially built for Octavius Palmer, within five years it had been transformed into Coleraine's second Private Hospital by a local Nurse, Beatrice Watson in 1914. The building continued to serve as a Private Hospital until the current Coleraine Bush Nursing Centre was established in 1930 when 99 McKebery Street was considered to have insufficient facilities. Since this time, the house has been used as a private residence.

How is it significant?

The former Private Hospital at 99 McKebery Street, Coleraine is of historical significance to the township of Coleraine and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The former Private Hospital at 99 McKebery Street is of historical significance for the site's early associations

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with an important local figure, Isaac Gelston Gray. Gray was the towns first Constable, and in 1865, he retired to become the publican of the Black Horse Inn, a popular hotel in the nineteenth century. Gray was also an interesting community figure for his outspoken manner and presence on many of the major committees and boards of the Coleraine township. His political views appear to contrast strongly with those of other committee members at this time, being strongly socialist. The building is of further historical interest as for its use as a private hospital for fifteen years in the first half of the twentieth century, as it represents a way of service delivery that has been lost, and demonstrates how medical service provision has changed.

COMPARISON:

306 Glenthompson Private Hospital (former), Bell Street, Glenthompson
275 St. Martins Private Hospital, 89 Bell Street, Penshurst

ASSESSED BY: TFH & AEN

ASSESSMENT DATE:

10-Jul-03

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Centenary Celebrations Committee	Coleraine Centenary Celebrations, October 7 to 14 1939	1939	15
Department of Justice Victoria	Pioneer Index Victoria 1836 - 1888	2001	
Department of Lands and Survey	Township of Coleraine (Parishes of Coleraine and Konong Wootong County of Dundas)	1873	
Department of Lands and Survey	Township of Coleraine (Parishes of Coleraine and Konong Wootong County of Dundas)	1955	
Troeth, Malcolm	The Cultural Landscape of Coleraine	1988	