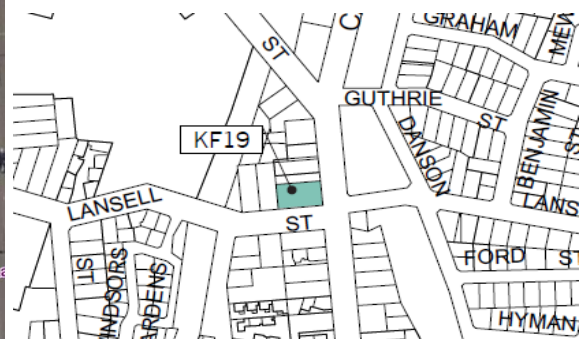|			
Name	Medical Centre (formerly known as *Belmont*)	**Reference in 1998 Marong Study**	KF19
Address	68 High Street, at corner with Lansell Street, Kangaroo Flat	**Map reference**	Vicroads 613 M2
Building type	Medical centre (former private residence)	**Survey date**	June 2010 (external inspection only)
Date of construction	Built from the early 1870s	**Recommendation**	Include in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay
Significance	The medical centre is of local historical and aesthetic/architectural significance.		

Left: East elevation, addressing High Street, c. Early 1990s (Source: *Photographic History of Kangaroo Flat*, 1994, v. 1). Right: East and north elevations, 2010.

Left: South wing. Right: Rear of the medical centre, with car park pictured right.

Left: Aerial view, 2010 (Source: City of Greater Bendigo). Right: Proposed Heritage Overlay map. The subject site is shown as KF19.

Intactness   ✓ Good   Fair   Poor

History

Thomas Luxton (1850-1911) commissioned the construction of Belmont, a red brick dwelling, in the early-1870s. The property was located next to the former Devonshire Arms Hotel, of which Thomas' father James Luxton had been licensee following the family's arrival in the Bendigo district in the 1850s. Thomas Luxton worked at Kangaroo Flat grocery store before finding success as a mining speculator and subsequently helping to form the Bendigo Stock Exchange.[1] He married Sarah Schooling of Kyneton in 1872. Their first son, Harold (later Sir Harold) was born at Belmont.[2] During the 1870s, Thomas Luxton was an eminent member of the Kangaroo Flat community. He was on the Marong Shire Council from 1874 to 1877 and also served as a guardian of St Mary's Church of England (demolished 2009, KF05).[3] In the 1880s the family moved to Melbourne, where Thomas continued to prosper as a broker and investor and became Mayor of Prahran in 1894. In his later years Luxton became a prominent philanthropist. By the time of Luxton's relocation to Melbourne, Belmont comprised nine rooms including a small ballroom.[4] In the mid-1950s, Belmont was acquired by Dr Peter Kirby, who established his medical practice there, which was maintained for the next 40 years.[5] Dr Kirby added a brick surgery to the rear of the original building and made modifications to the verandah.[6] Belmont remains a large medical centre. The property has been refurbished in recent years, with additions and alterations carried out at the rear.

Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes

Victoria's themes and sub-themes:
- 6.5: Living in country towns
- 8.3: Providing health and welfare services

Description & Integrity

The medical centre (formerly Belmont) is a large single-storey asymmetrical mid-Victorian villa in the Italianate style, with complex hipped and gabled roof forms, located on a prominent site at the corner of High and Lansell streets, Kangaroo Flat. The number of rooms in the earliest 1870s component of the building is not known, but the earliest elements include the High Street (east) elevation and the rendered faceted window bay to the north. As noted in the 'History' above, the original building expanded to include nine rooms and a small ballroom by the 1880s. The property was also extended in the 1950s, and more recently, as part of its adaptation to a medical centre. Additions and alterations have generally been concentrated to the rear (west) and south. The east elevation, comprising a recessed verandah and projecting gabled bay to the south, is distinguished by stuccoed quoins, and the gable end treatment of the south bay which features an oculus. The front door, accessed from the verandah, includes the lettering 'Belmont' to the frosted highlight. The windows to the verandah recess are double-hung timber-framed sashes; the window to the south bay has a cambered soffit and two narrow sidelights. A stuccoed chimney with terracotta pots is set back from the east elevation of the south wing. There is a narrower chimney, also stuccoed, above the north bay. It is possible that the east elevation – the L-shaped frontage to High Street – may be later than the north bay. The sashes in the latter faceted bay are of an earlier type than the three-light wing window facing High Street; there is also a marked difference in eave height; and the quoining to the wall edges in the east elevation do not appear in the rest of the building. There are two later additions to the south side, facing Lansell Street. The rear (west) elevation includes weatherboard and brick additions begun in Dr Kirby's time. These have thick-framed double-hung sashes characteristic of the 1940s and 1950s.

In recent years the property has been extensively refurbished. Works include generally unsympathetic treatment to the front verandah, with timber columns, quasi-Federation details around the post and lintel intersections, and a simple steel balustrade. A similar fabric has been added to form a second verandah at the junction of the north side and the faceted bay wing, where it shelters a mural added to the east elevation. In addition, the gable cross-bar and finial to the south wing addressing High Street is modern; the cross-bar inappropriately cuts across the gable oculus. The roof has been reclad in corrugated galvanised steel. The rendered north bay and its lug-bordered windows facing north, parallel with High Street has been painted a light colour, increasing its differential with the rest of the house. The bagged brick front fence is another complete refurbishment. The property has a generous curtilage to all sides, with a large asphalted car park to the west, and lawns to the south, east and north. There are no plantings of obvious age.

Comparative Analysis

The medical centre (formerly Belmont) presents generally as an Italianate property, with its original or early proportions and detailing related to Kangaroo Flat railway station (1863), completed about ten years earlier.[7] The steep roof pitch gives the property a faintly Gothic character. The house was planned and/or evolved asymmetrically and inflects diagonally onto its site in characteristic Italianate manner.[8] Belmont is also more insistently asymmetrical in composition than its Kangaroo Flat counterparts, including Dunedin House (KF18).

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

The medical centre (formerly Belmont) at the corner of High and Lansell streets, Kangaroo Flat, the original component of which dates to the early 1870s, is historically significant as a large and prominently-sited mid-Victorian villa. It was commissioned by Thomas Luxton, an eminent member of the Kangaroo Flat community, who was a local politician and philanthropist, a successful mining speculator who helped form the Bendigo Stock Exchange, and later (in the 1890s) the Mayor of Prahran. From the 1950s to the 1990s, the property was also the long-standing surgery of local general medicial practitioner, Dr Kirby. This later use of the property, as medical centre, continues.

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City the of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

The medical centre is a rare example of a substantial property dating to the 1870s which was built on the fringes of Bendigo. It is also one of the oldest properties of this type in Kangaroo Flat.

N/A

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

N/A

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

N/A

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics in the context of the municipality.

The medical centre (formerly Belmont) originally constructed in the early 1870s, is of aesthetic/architectural significance. It is a large asymmetrical mid-Victorian villa in the Italianate manner, with complex hipped and gabled roof forms and prominent chimneys, located on a prominent site at the corner of High and Lansell streets. Although an evolved building, with some substantial additions, the original and early components remain evident and clear, particularly on the diagonally-oriented east and north sides of the building. This is also notwithstanding that these two most prominent early bays (building components) appear to have been constructed at different times.

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

N/A

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of the place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

N/A

Criterion H: Special association with life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Greater Bendigo's history.

The medical centre (formerly Belmont) is significant for its association with its first owner, Thomas Luxton, an eminent member of the Kangaroo Flat community, who was a local politician and philanthropist, a successful mining speculator who helped form the Bendigo Stock Exchange, and later (in the 1890s) the Mayor of Prahran.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The medical centre (formerly Belmont) is located on a prominent site at the corner of High and Lansell streets, Kangaroo Flat. It is a large single-storey asymmetrical mid-Victorian villa in the Italianate style, with complex hipped and gabled roof forms. The original component of the building dates to the early 1870s, and includes the High Street (east) elevation and the rendered faceted window bay to the north. The dwelling had expanded by the 1880s to include nine rooms and a small ballroom. The east elevation, comprising a recessed verandah and projecting gabled bay to the south, is distinguished by stuccoed quoins, and the gable end treatment of the south bay which features an oculus. The front door, accessed from the verandah, includes the lettering 'Belmont' to the frosted highlight. There are two later additions to the south side, facing Lansell Street. The rear (west) elevation includes weatherboard and brick additions of the 1950s. There are also more recent works associated with the property's adaptation to a medical centre. Additions and alterations have generally been concentrated to the rear (west) and south.

How is it significant?

The medical centre (formerly Belmont) at the corner of High and Lansell streets, Kangaroo Flat, the original component of which dates to the early 1870s, is of local historical and aesthetic/architectural significance.

Why is it significant?

The medical centre (formerly Belmont) is of local historical significance (Criterion A) as a large and prominently-sited mid-Victorian villa. It is associated with the first owner Thomas Luxton, an eminent member of the Kangaroo Flat community, who was a local politician and philanthropist, a successful mining speculator who helped form the Bendigo Stock Exchange, and later (in the 1890s) the Mayor of Prahran (Criterion H). From the 1950s to the 1990s, the property was also the long-standing surgery of local general medicial practitioner, Dr Kirby. This later use of the property, as medical centre, continues. The medical centre (formerly Belmont) is also of aesthetic/architectural significance, as a large asymmetrical mid-Victorian villa in the Italianate manner, with complex hipped and gabled roof forms and prominent chimneys, located on a prominent site at the corner of High and Lansell streets. Although an evolved building, with some substantial additions, the original and early components remain evident and clear, particularly on the diagonally-oriented east and north sides of the building. This is also notwithstanding that these two most prominent early bays (building components) appear to have been constructed at different times. The medical centre is additionally one of the oldest properties of this type in Kangaroo Flat, and a rare example of a substantial property dating to the 1870s which was built on the fringes of Bendigo (Criterion B).

Recommendations

The property is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Greater Bendigo Heritage Overlay. The Overlay extent is indicated in the above map, although the focus of significance is on the original/early building components and their diagonal presentations to the adjoining streetscapes. The

later additions and works, including those which supported the adaptation of the dwelling to a medical facility, are not elements of significance. The brick walling should remain unpainted. In preference, replace the unsympathetic treatment to the front verandah.

External Paint Colours	No
Internal Alterations Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and fences exemptions	No
Victorian Heritage Register	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated plan	No
Aboriginal heritage place	No

Identified By

Andrew Ward, 1998.

References

Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust of Australia (Vic), 1987.

David Horsfall (ed), *Kangaroo Flat, A History, Gold, Goats and Peppercorns*, Back To Committee, 1993.

Andrew Ward *et al*, *City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Study (Marong) Study Area*, Stage 2, 1998.

Specific:

[1] J Ann Hone, 'Luxton, Thomas (1850-1911)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 5,Melbourne University Press, 1974, p. 113.

[2] Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust of Australia (Vic), 1987, p. 142.

[3] J Ann Hone, 'Luxton, Thomas (1850-1911)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 5,Melbourne University Press, 1974, p. 113.

[4] Andrew Ward *et al*, 'Belmont' citation, included in *City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Study (Marong) Study Area*, Stage 2, 1998. The original source is not cited.

[5] David Horsfall (ed), *Kangaroo Flat, A History, Gold, Goats and Peppercorns*, Back To Committee, 1993, p. 65.

[6] Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust of Australia (Vic), 1987, p. 142.

[7] See Wesley Hamill and Dorothy Wild, *Photographic History of Kangaroo Flat*, Photographic History series, Bendigo, 1994, volume 1, unpaginated.

[8] The diagonal inflection in later Victorian house designs is discussed by Miles Lewis in Richard Apperly and others, (eds., contrib.) *The History and Design of the Australian House*, Oxford, Melbourne, 1985, pp. 79-81. For Italianate more generally see James Stevens Curl, *Encyclopedia of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*, Oxford, 2006, for 'Italianate' and 'Italian Villa Style', p. 389. In Australia, Italianate is understood to refer to both the style of 15th and 16th century Italian urban palaces, and also to more picturesque and usually asymmetrical detached houses.