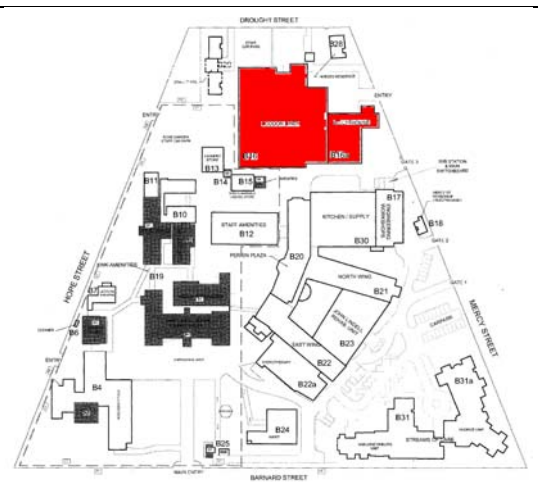


*The Boiler House and Laundry as built from the east. The large volume of building on the rhs houses briquette hoppers.*

**Location:** Western portion of site  
**Built:** 1949-56, 1961-63, 1967-68, 1976, 1994  
**Date range:**  
**Designer:** YFGS Architects  
**Builder:** Lewis Construction Co Pty Ltd



#### History:

It had been intended that the boiler house complex be commenced as early as possible as part of a larger master-plan prepared by Yuncken Freeman Griffiths and Simpson. Steam was to be provided to a new high rise hospital block (one of three proposed) to be developed to the north east and this building would be commenced and completed shortly after the boiler house became operational. As it turned out both sites stood partially commenced for a number of years.

The schematic design drawings were completed in February 1949, approved by the Hospitals and Charities Commission in May with work starting in September – October 1949 after a tender was accepted from Lewis Constructions for £89,461. The mechanical work was to be undertaken by Symthe & Sons, JL Howard were the electrical contractors and the boilers were to be supplied and installed by John Thompson Aust. P/L.

The proposal was that the boiler house would supply steam via a tunnel under Mercy Street to the nearby Bendigo Base Hospital. Almost straight away problems appeared in the design and cost of the tunnel and the need to supply clean water to the boilers. It was determined that a water supply filtration plant had to be built and this would add another £10,000 to the boiler house cost.

Fate was to intervene when in 1952 the Commonwealth Government, on review of all its loans and grants to the states determined that it was entering an era of financial shortages and in May 1952 all public works funded by the Commonwealth were halted. This had a major impact across works projects in Victoria.

Works were not to recommence until March 1955 and by the end of 1956 the works were nearing completion with the tunnel completed and boiler attendants having been employed.

The automatic boilers ran on briquettes and sustained a pressure of 250lbs/sq inch with a delivery of 20,000lbs of steam per hour. The total boiler house and 150ft chimney and the laundry cost £388,615 most of which was paid by the Government.

It was not long before extensions were made to the laundry in 1963 (an expanded sorting, mending and manufacturing area to the south end) and again in 1967-68 with an expanded area along the Drought Street elevation at a cost of \$210,121. The completed work for the 1967-1968 extensions were greeted with much acclaim and there is a detailed plaque commemorating the commissioning event in mid June 1968 which names all the major players in this development.

Although it didn't start auspiciously (there were issues with cost of equipment, then failure of the Hospital to use the laundry services and failure of the hospital to pay for the steam it used), the complex continued to supply steam to the site and the hospital. Issues with the laundry service were overcome by its ability to handle large volumes of linen and hospital items eventually causing it to become the second largest laundry facility in the state.

In 1976 a new flue liner was installed in the brick chimney.

As an adjunct to the boiler house, a co-generation plant was designed by ABB Power Plants (1993) and built over the following year by Fletcher Constructions with the service providing steam and power to the electricity grid with the plant being run on natural gas. The structure is in concrete tilt up slab.

Marie Tehan the Minister for Health in the Kennet government, opened the plant in 1994

**Description:**

A yellow brick complex in part of single storey with saw tooth roof sections facing east. One section of the building was designed as a five-storey element with briquette feed hoppers for the boilers. These were later used as water header storage for the laundry. The site is dominated by 45-metre brick circular chimney on the north end of the site, which is a landmark feature in this area of Bendigo. A new stainless steel flue liner was inserted in 1976. The original open area of the east side has been progressively filled with offices for the laundry services and the south and west sides added to with expanding work areas for the laundry.

**Cultural Heritage Significance**

**Primary Historic Theme:** Development of Bendigo Asylum

No significance

**Historic Sub -Theme:** Post War Development

Of primary historical significance in the development of the site in the post war years and marking a change in the way services such as steam were perceived as being of importance in servicing the site for a large number of purposes from general heating, through to cooking and warming in kitchens to sterilizing and linen cleaning services.