

(No 12.)



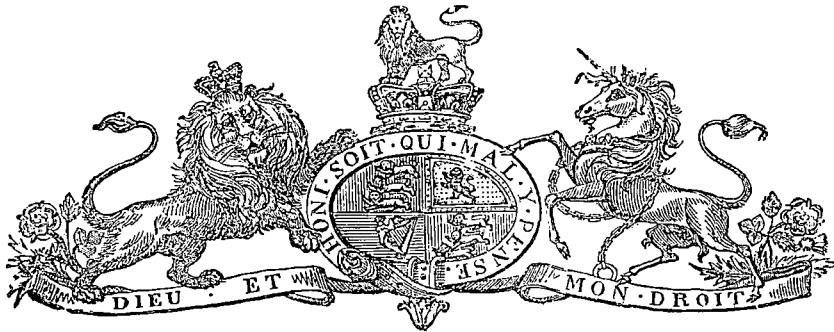
1860.

TASMANIA.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

RELATIVE TO THE SITE AND ACCOMMODATION OF THE
HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, NEW NORFOLK.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Henty, and ordered by the Council to
be printed, 31 July, 1860.



Hobart Town, 23rd July, 1860.

SIR,

ON the 31st January last, not being able to attend the meeting on the following day at New Norfolk, I addressed a letter, of which I enclose a copy, to the Commissioners of Lunacy.

The Commissioners, in acknowledging its receipt, stated that the proposition therein contained is one beyond the sphere of the Commissioners' functions, and properly belongs to the Government.

This must refer to my observations on the new building proposed by me.

I consider the subject of such great importance that I venture to submit it to the consideration of the Government; but, as one of the Commissioners, I do not feel at liberty to submit any observations further than those I made to the other Commissioners, and therefore refer you to the letter enclosed.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. S. P. BEDFORD,

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary.

(COPY.)

31st January, 1860.

SIR,

I REGRET that circumstances prevent me from attending the meeting at New Norfolk. I take this means of submitting to the Commissioners some remarks for their consideration before the Report is adopted.

Considering the alterations that are making, and are referred to as proposed, in the present buildings, I think it is most desirable that Plans should be sent in with the Report,—

- 1st. Showing the state of the buildings when the present Commissioners took charge.
- 2nd. Showing the alterations already effected in buildings and walls.
- 3rd. Showing the alterations it is proposed should be made; which Plans would more clearly explain to Parliament our proceedings than any explanation could without them.

It is impossible that the proper works can be carried out, or that they can, if determined upon, be done so speedily, unless it is settled whether the present Asylum is to be the Hospital for the Insane, or another one is to be built.

I think, as yet, there is one view in which this subject has not been considered.

Insanity is curable chiefly in cases of recent occurrence, and in proportion to their early treatment : it is most necessary that such cases should be at once placed under efficient treatment ; and it is quite as unnecessary that hopeless cases of old standing should be surrounded with expensive appliances, calculated to effect a curative change in their state.

The curative state is one which requires the expenditure of a larger amount of money in the arrangements necessary for treatment than the cases of confirmed lunatics.

I consider there are about 53 cases at present that are fit for treatment ; the others, unfit for a Hospital, only require retention, care, and kindness.

If a proper Hospital, fit to hold 100 Patients, could be erected separate and distinct from the New Norfolk Hospital, it would hold all those cases now under treatment, and be able to receive the recent cases as they may arise, and treat and dispose of the curative cases ; and those that continued without benefit for, say, three years, could be removed to the present Establishment, where not only could this class of insane persons be taken care of, but other invalids might be provided for.

If this view meets the concurrence of the Commissioners, a really complete Establishment might be erected ; the cost not so great as was contemplated ; all the requirements that could be procured obtained for the cases likely to be benefitted ; and the Colony not put to unnecessary charge in the care of the incurable.

The expenses of management would be much less, as New Norfolk would not then require a resident Medical Officer, he would be wanted at the *Hospital* for the Insane ; and the New Norfolk buildings might be made an establishment for the incurable invalids of all kinds.

The more this important question occupies the attention of the Commissioners, the more it must be daily impressed upon their minds the necessity that exists to determine whether the present Asylum is to be the Hospital for the cure of Insane persons.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed).

E. S. P. BEDFORD; *President.*

The Chairman of the Commissioners.



The Surrey County Asylum, Tooting, 15th March, 1860.

MY LORD,

I BEG to acknowledge the receipt, by the last Australian Mail, of your Lordship's letter on the subject of the Lunatic Asylum at New Norfolk, and of the Report of the Joint Committee on the accommodation and site of the Hospital for the Insane at New Norfolk, with printed copies of Letters addressed by your Lordship to the Colonial Secretary on the same subject.

Your Lordship asks for an expression of my opinion upon the different proposals under consideration:—

1. Additions and Alterations to the present Asylum, to meet present wants.
2. The Erection of a new Asylum at New Norfolk or elsewhere.

I enclose a copy of printed Instructions and Suggestions issued by the Commissioners in Lunacy on the subject of Sites and Construction of Lunatic Asylums. This document will naturally have more weight than any opinion I may venture to express. Its perusal will, I think, convince all acquainted with the site and buildings at New Norfolk that any attempt to provide a suitable Asylum for the Insane by alterations in, and additions to, those Buildings can only prove a failure. The Buildings were not, in the first instance, planned for a Lunatic Asylum, as Dr. Officer has already stated in his evidence.

When I took charge of the Asylum in 1845 the two back yards on the Male side, and a portion of the more recent building on the Female side, were alone occupied by the Insane, whose increasing numbers gradually led to the occupation of the whole Building as a Lunatic Asylum. A large portion of the Building was very old and dilapidated when I gave up charge, in February 1854; and, according to the accepted views of the present day, all the Buildings must necessarily be condemned as altogether unsuited for the reception of the Insane.

As regards the second question,—that of site,—it appears from the Report that by the purchase of 9 acres of land a total of 26 acres might be secured—barely sufficient for an Asylum capable of containing 120 patients, and encircled by a road, in itself very objectionable and a complete bar to future extension—for which it is always most desirable to provide in the quantity of land as well as in the plan of the Building.

If it is once decided to abandon the old site, and I do not see how any other decision can be arrived at, the neighbourhood of Hobart Town will doubtless be preferred as more central to the mass of the population.

A supply of Gas must always be a very great object in a large Building, and of some importance in the selection of a site in a Colony where it is not everywhere to be procured.

I have the honor to be,
My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient Servant.

JOHN MEYER, *M. D.*,

Member of the London College of Physicians, Resident Physician to the Surrey County Asylum, late Medical Superintendent of the Civil Hospital established at Smyrna during the Russian War.

The Right Reverend Bishop WILLSON.

P.S.—The capital outlay in the erection of Asylums in England is invariably spread over a series, generally 30 years. Some such arrangement might facilitate matters in Tasmania.

SUGGESTIONS and Instructions in reference to — 1. Sites : 2. Construction and Arrangement of Buildings : 3. Plans : — of Lunatic Asylums.

No. 1. SITES.

1. *General.*] The site of an asylum should be of a perfectly healthy character, and offer facilities for obtaining a complete system of drainage. A chalky, gravelly, or rocky subsoil is most desirable; but if a clayey subsoil only can be obtained, an elevated position is indispensable.

It should not be near to any nuisances, such as steam engines, shafts of mines, noisy trades, or offensive manufactures; neither should it be surrounded, or overlooked, or intersected, by public roads or footpaths.

2. *Proportion of land.*] The land belonging to the asylum should, when practicable, be in proportion of not less than one acre to four patients, so as to afford ample means for agricultural employment, exercise, and recreation; and should be so situate as to offer facilities for any extension which may become necessary at a future period.

3. *Form of ground.*] The site of the building should be elevated, as respects the surrounding country, and (if to be obtained) undulating in its surface, and cheerful in its position, and having a fall to the south.

4. *Position and aspect of the building.*] The building should be placed near the northern boundary of the land; and it is important that the site should afford a plateau of sufficient extent for the structure, and for ready access from the north; the whole of the southern portion of the land being available for the undisturbed use of the patients.

5. *Locality.*] The asylum should be as central as possible to the mass of population in the country or district for which it is to be erected, and should be convenient with respect to its easy access by public conveyance, in order to facilitate the visits of friends and the supply of stores.

6. *Supply and quality of water.*] It is of the utmost importance that there should be a constant and ample supply of good water, of which a careful analysis should be made, with a view of determining the proper materials for pipes and reservoirs, and also in order to ascertain its fitness for the purposes of drinking and washing. The quantity, exclusive of rain water, should, at the driest season, be not less than twenty-five gallons per patient per diem, and the amount should be accurately gauged.

No. 2. CONSTRUCTION AND ARRANGEMENT OF BUILDINGS.

1. *General form.*] The general form of an asylum should be such as to afford an uninterrupted view of the surrounding country, and the free access of the sun and air; and be so arranged as to give the principal day-rooms, on the lowest and middle stories, a southern or south-eastern aspect.

2. *Entrance and offices to the north.*] There should be no road of approach or public entrance on the south side of the asylum.

The general entrance, the porter's room, the reception and visitors' rooms, the committee room, the clerk and steward's office and store rooms, and the other offices, should be placed on the north side of the building.

3. *Character of building.*] As the building is intended for the accommodation of pauper patients, all superfluous external decoration should be avoided; at the same time it should be rendered as cheerful and attractive as due considerations of economy will permit.

4. *Separation of Sexes, and classification.*] The accommodation for the male and female patients should be kept distinct on either side of the centre; and the building should be so constructed as to admit of the separation of the male and female patients respectively into at least three classes. As a general rule, the numbers in each class should be such as to require the services of not less than two attendants.

5. *Stories.*] The building may consist of three stories, provided the uppermost story be devoted to sleeping accommodation.

6. *Building for working patients.*] Buildings of a cheap and simple character, consisting merely of associated day rooms and dormitories, without long corridors or other expensive arrangements, should be provided for the use of working patients. These buildings should be placed in connection with the wash-house and laundry on the female side, and be conveniently situate in reference to the workshops and farm buildings on the male side.

For idiotic and epileptic patients.] Provisions of an equally simple and inexpensive description should also be made for a portion of the idiotic and epileptic patients, and also for chronic cases.

7. *Size of chapel and offices.*] The chapel, and all offices and parts of the building common to the establishment, such as the kitchen and scullery, the wash-house and laundry, the workshops and store rooms, should be sufficiently spacious to meet the prospective wants of the asylum in case of an increase in the number of patients.

8. *Position of Chapel.*] The chapel should not be placed over the kitchen. It should be capable of comfortably accommodating at least three fourths of the patients. It should have the usual character and arrangement of a church, and contain no special or peculiar provision for the separation of the sexes.

9. *General dining hall.*] A general dining hall, conveniently situate with reference to the kitchen, and capable of being made available for the purpose of recreation, should be provided for the patients of both sexes.

10. *Officers' residences.*] A good residence should be provided for the medical superintendent, with kitchen and other necessary domestic offices.

Suitable apartments of moderate extent should also be provided for the assistant medical officer, the steward, and the matron; but for these officers a separate kitchen is not required.

Domestic servants.] There should also be sleeping accommodation for the domestic servants of the institution, with whom might conveniently be associated those patients who habitually work in the kitchen.

11. *Proportion of single rooms.*] The proportion of single rooms throughout the asylum need not exceed one third. The single rooms should be chiefly in the wards appropriated to the excited and the sick. A few should be available for special cases in the other wards.

12. *Arrangement of upper stories. Passages and corridors.*] In the upper stories, passages of communication of moderate width should be adopted in lieu of wide corridors, and the dormitories should be placed to the south. Generally, long, wide, and expensive corridors should not be constructed, but only so much passage or corridor provided as may be absolutely necessary to connect the several parts of the building.

13. *Stairs.*] The stairs should be built of stone, without winders or long straight flights. The well should be built up, and handrails should be provided.

14. *Staircases.*] The staircases should be so arranged that the medical officer, attendants, and others may pass through from one part to another without necessarily retracing their steps.

15. *Material for floors. Provision against fire.*] All the corridors, and day and sleeping rooms, should have boarded floors; and it is desirable that the boards should be tongued. It is indispensable that they should be of the best wood, and thoroughly well seasoned. The floors of the sculleries, lavatories, and water-closets need not be of wood. There should be a disconnexion of the floor and joists at all the internal doorways, by means of a stone sill; and in all cases where a fireproof construction is not adopted, similar separations, at no greater distances apart than fifty feet, should be made in the floors and joists of the galleries or corridors. Provision should also be made for a complete fireproof separation of the timbers of the roof at the same distances, and the parapet should be carried through the roof one foot above the slating.

Oak floors, capable of being cleaned by dry rubbing, are preferable for the corridors and dayrooms.

Plastering.] The walls of the galleries and rooms generally should be plastered.

16. *Number of beds in dormitories.*] No associated bedrooms should be designed to contain less than three beds.

17. *Height of each story and dimensions of rooms.*] The general height of each story should not be less than eleven feet.

The associated dormitories should not contain less than fifty feet superficial to each bed or patient.

Dormitories.] The separate sleeping rooms generally should be of not less than the following dimensions, viz., nine feet by seven superficial, and eleven feet high. Those appropriated to sick or bed-ridden patients should be of somewhat larger dimensions, and some of these should be provided with a fireplace.

18. *Size of day-rooms.*] The day-rooms, of which there should be at least one in each ward, should contain not less than twenty-feet superficial for each patient, and should be calculated for the whole of the patients in each ward, exclusive of corridors or galleries.

19. *Position of day-rooms.*] The day-rooms should be so arranged as to afford ready communication with the grounds, and those appropriated to the aged and infirm should be on the lowermost stories.

20. *Attendants' rooms.*] Rooms should be provided for two or more attendants to each ward, and single attendants' rooms should not be of less dimensions than 120 feet superficial; and, whenever practicable, these should be placed between two dormitories, with glazed doors of communication.

21. *Windows.*] The windows of the day-rooms and corridors should be large and of a cheerful character, and every one be made to open easily and so as to allow a free circulation of air, but not so far as to expose patients to danger.

The wall below should not be sloped or splayed, but recessed, to admit, if requisite, of a seat.

In the dormitories and single rooms the windows should, as a general rule, not be placed more than four feet from the floor.

Shutters.] Sliding shutters should be provided for a majority of the single sleeping-rooms.

22. *Doors.*] The doors of the single rooms should open outwards, and be so hung, that when open they will fold back close to the wall.

23. *Lavatories, baths, and waterclosets.*] In each ward there should be conveniences for washing the person, a slop-room containing a sink, a storeroom or closet, waterclosets, and a bath. (In many instances the bath-room may be so arranged as to be available for two or more wards.) It is very desirable that all waterclosets, lavatories, &c. should be placed in projections.

24. *Infirmaries.*] Suitable infirmaries, in the proportion of at least one-tenth of the whole, should be provided, in which the cubical contents of the sleeping-rooms should be greater than in other parts of the building; and every room, including the single rooms, should have an open fireplace.

A small dayroom in each infirmary is also desirable.

25. *Warming.*] All the dayrooms and galleries should be warmed by means of open fireplaces, or open firestoves; and in large rooms two fires should be provided. Fireplaces should also be built in all associated dormitories. In large rooms, such as the chapel or general dining hall, and in the corridor, further provision for warming may be necessary, by means of some simple system of hot-water pipes in connection with the open firestoves or fires.

26. *Ventilation.*] The ventilation generally should be provided for by means of flues, taken from the various rooms and corridors into horizontal channels communicating with a perpendicular shaft, in which a firebox should be placed for the purpose of extracting the foul air.

27. *Smoke flues.*] In all cases where descending or horizontal smoke flues are used, they should be entirely constructed of brickwork, rendered or pargetted, inside and out; and flues from any of the heating or other furnaces, which are carried up through any of the main walls, should be constructed with a hollow space round them to prevent the inconvenient transmission of heat into the building during the warmer periods of the year, and to allow of a moderation of the temperature of the building at other periods, when, owing to a change in the atmosphere, it may become inconveniently hot.

28. *Ventilating flues.*] Whenever ventilating flues are constructed of inflammable materials, such as quartering lathed and plastered, a distance of at least twenty feet from their point of connexion with any shaft, furnace, rarefying chamber, or smoke flue, must be constructed entirely of brick, stone, or other fireproof material.

The rarefying chamber for ventilation, together with the adjoining roof, must be entirely fireproof; and a communication should be made with it by means of a slate or iron door-frame.

29. *Drainage.*] The best and most approved system of pipe or tubular drainage should be adopted, with a sufficient fall, so as effectually to carry off to a sufficient distance from the asylum the soil and all other impurities; and the sewage should be collected in closed tanks, and so placed and constructed as to render the contents available for agricultural purposes.

Means of flushing should be provided.

30. *Airing Courts.*] The enclosed airing courts need not be more than two in number on each side, and should be of ample extent so as to afford proper means for healthful exercise. They should all be planted and cultivated, and any trees already existing within them should be preserved for shade. The walls should be sunk in a ha-ha.

31. *Rain water.*] The whole of the rain water from the building should be collected in tanks, suitably placed, for the purposes of the wash-house, and, if possible, at such levels as will dispense with the labour of pumping. Lead is an objectionable material for pipes and reservoirs, as adulterating the water.

32. *Lightning Conductors.*] Lightning conductors should be placed on the most elevated parts of the building; and they may be connected with the stacks of iron rain water pipes, which, in that case, should be fixed so as to answer the double purpose of rain water pipes and lightning conductors.

33. *Farm buildings.*] Farm buildings, with suitable stables, &c., for visitors' horses, should be provided.

NO. 3. PLANS REQUIRED.

1. One or more sheets of the Ordnance map, containing the county, borough, or district in respect to which the asylum is to be erected; or some other large map in which the situation of the proposed asylum, and all the public roads and footpaths in the vicinity thereof, are clearly and fully defined.

2. A general plan of the land (with the block of the buildings and offices), and of the exercise grounds, garden, and road of approach, with the levels of the surface of the ground at the quoins of the building, offices, and fence walls, figured thereon. Scale of 100 feet to an inch.

3. Plans of the basement, ground, and each other floor of the building and offices; also of the roofs and gutters, and of the principal elevation. Scale of 20 feet to an inch.

4. Elevation of portions of the principal front, and also of any other parts, in which any variation therefrom takes place. Scale of 10 feet to an inch.

5. Transverse and longitudinal sections, or sufficient portions thereof to show the construction of every portion of the building. Scale of 5 feet to an inch.

6. Plan and section of one separate sleeping-room, dormitory, and eating or day room respectively, or of part of the same, showing the method of warming and ventilating each; also of the baths and washing rooms, and waterclosets, and the construction of the apparatus for each. Scale of 1 foot to $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch.

7. An abstract of the draft contract and specification, giving a concise statement of the whole of the intended work; and also a detailed estimate of the building, and the prices at which the different materials and workmanship have been calculated in making the estimate.

8. The thickness of the walls, and the scantlings of the timbers of the floors and roofs, to be figured.

9. The general system of heating and ventilation, proposed to be adopted throughout the asylum, to be fully described in the drawings and specifications.

10. Each plan to show the several classes and numbers of patients to be accommodated, in the wards, dayrooms, dormitories, cells, galleries, and airing courts, respectively, to which such plan relates.

The Surrey County Asylum, Tooting, 15th March, 1860.

MY DEAR LORD,

I QUITE enter into your Lordship's views upon the subject of the New Norfolk Asylum. No good can come of patching the present Buildings, and, if there were no other objection, the site ought to be relinquished on account of its very limited extent. The place has done good service in its time, but ought now to be given up.

In the event of a new Asylum being built, I should most strongly recommend the obtaining of Plans from this Country,—it would be well worth the delay and the expense. As regards the latter, the economical working of the Asylum must depend much upon the Plan. There are in this Establishment an average of 960 Lunatics, and only 1 attendant to 17 patients, including the night attendants—6 in number. With you the reduction in the number of attendants would be even of more importance than it is here, and must depend entirely upon the Plan of the Building.

If I can be of use in any way I hope your Lordship will not hesitate to command my services.

Believe me,

My dear Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

JOHN MEYER.

The Right Reverend Bishop WILLSON.