



DUNKELD

Background

The third of the Burnside Presbyterian Orphan Homes was officially opened by the Right Rev. M. Kay, the State Moderator, in May 1913 and was originally used as a home for boys. The home, which cost approximately £2,500 to build, was financed from general donations. Like both of its predecessors, Dunkeld was designed by the architects, McCredie and Anderson. The home was originally known as "No. 3 Home" but was altered to "No 4 Home" when the original administration building was converted into a home. From about 1924 the name "Dunkeld", meaning "Stronghold of the Caledonians", was generally used.

In 1980 the architect Gregory Nolan described the building as follows:-

"Dunkeld is a double storey structure. The first floor is in brickwork and the ground floor is in rusticated sandstone block.

The roof, of terra cotta tiles, is in Federation style. Yet there is evidence that the original roof was clay shingles. The roof plan consists of two mansard roofs with A. C. facings.

The timbered verandah and exposed rafter ends also reflect the Federation style.

The quality of the brickwork is high. This is evident in the well executed semi-circular brick entrance arch."

Although built as a boys' home, Dunkeld was destined to house girls for the greater period of the Orphan Homes period. The northern side of Pennant Hills Road was to become the boys' domain when the first homes opened there in 1919, in addition to Airlie and Novar homes on the southern side of the road.

War Years

During the years 1941 to 1944 the children were evacuated to temporary homes in the Blue Mountains. The Australian Army occupied Burnside and Dunkeld was used for the Deputy Director, Supplies and Transport.

1945 - Present

The children returned to North Parramatta in January 1945 and Dunkeld once again became a girls' home. In 1951 the girls were moved temporarily into Eskdale home while Dunkeld was remodelled. This included modernising the kitchen, [including the installation of a gas stove to replace the former fuel one and a stainless steel sink] the bathroom and toilet facilities, placing the boiler outside and painting the premises.

A decade later more changes were made. Dormitories were subdivided so that a maximum of 5 girls were accommodated in each room. The dormitories were painted in bright colours pleasing to children. The shutters which had been a feature of all Burnside buildings were replaced by windows and an individual laundry was constructed to replace the communal one. Individual wardrobes were introduced to replace clothes' rooms. By 1962 the home which had been built to house forty boys housed fifteen girls.

In 1981 Dunkeld was used for two years by the Hills Public School for Intellectually Handicapped Children to conduct a living skills programme.

After renovations in 1985-1986 the home changed to become a residential unit for Burnside children once again, by now catering for only six children who were being prepared to return to their families.

In 1994 Dunkeld was the only home at North Parramatta still in use as a residential care unit specializing in adolescent care.

In August 1997 Dunkeld's focus altered to a family restoration program where young people aged 12 – 18 years resided during the week and received counselling and assistance with school work. They spent the weekend at home with their families.

Residential care ceased at Dunkeld in about 2000 and the property was leased to Redeemer Baptist who used it for the infant's section of their school.

In April 2006 Dunkeld was returned to the use of Burnside and is used as office space for the Foster Care and Extended Family Support programs.