

# House of Mercy

c. 1892 – 1946

**Other Names:**

- House of Mercy Home for Wayward Girls
- Female Rescue Home
- Retreat House

## Details

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The House of Mercy, in Cheltenham, was opened in 1892. It was run by the Mission to the Streets and Lanes as a home for 'fallen and friendless women'. The women in charge of the House of Mercy were to become known as the Community of the Holy Name. The House of Mercy ceased providing accommodation to young women in 1946, after which it became known as Retreat House.

In 1889, the Mission to the Streets and Lanes purchased eight acres of land for £500 at Cheltenham. The Mission Council set to work planning to establish a new 'Country Home for Fallen and Friendless Women'.

The institution was officially opened in 1892 with the name 'House of Mercy in Connection with the Melbourne Diocesan Deaconesses Home and Mission to the Streets and Lanes'.

The women in charge of the facility were from what became known as the Community of the Holy Name, founded by Sister Esther (Emma Caroline Silcock, 1859 – 1931).

Extensions were added to the buildings in 1895 and 1907. In 1938, another major development included the construction of a laundry, the profits of which contributed to the running of the home.

The laundry operation closed in 1946, when the House of Mercy ceased its accommodation of young women. It became known as the Retreat House, 'a centre for youth conventions and group meetings for those seeking solitude, spiritual retreats or a religious environment for several days'. The Retreat House was still run by the Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name, on behalf of the Mission to the Streets and Lanes.

In early 1997, ownership of the Retreat House passed to Anglicare Victoria. The site underwent development and is today a residential area known as 'Cheltenham Green'.

In 1997 the Mission to the Streets and Lanes became part of Anglicare Victoria. At this time, records of the Mission were transferred to Anglicare Victoria. These included records of the various orphanages, homes and other residences run by the Mission. The custodian of these records is Anglicare Victoria.

## Gallery



## House of Mercy showing the original laundry c1930

**Description:** This image shows the House of Mercy original laundry.

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Mission to the Streets and Lanes \(1886 - 1997\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [Community of the Holy Name \(1888 - current\)](#)

In 1946, the House of Mercy became known as the Retreat House of the Community of the Holy Name.

### Resources

- Swain, Shurlee, [Mission to Streets and Lanes](#), eMelbourne: the city past and present, 2008
- Nunn, H.W., [Social Services \(Chapter VIII of A Short History of the Church of England in Victoria 1847-1947\)](#), Issued by the Editorial Committee of the Centenary Celebrations, Melbourne Diocese, 1947
- [House of Mercy](#), The Argus, 23 October 1935
- [House of Mercy, Cheltenham: Formally Opened by the Countess of Hopetoun](#), The Argus, 16 June 1892
- Archdeacon Hancock, [House of Mercy, Cheltenham](#), The Argus, 4 February 1938
- [Mission Finances](#), The Argus, 18 August 1938

## Records

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For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

### Records

- [Anglicare Victoria Records \(1886 - current\)](#)
  - ['Closed' Agency and General Correspondence Files \[Charities Board of Victoria\] \(1923 - 1983\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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