Hopeleigh Maternity Home

c. 1910 – 1956

Other Names:
- Marrickville Maternity Home
- Bethesda Hospital
- Bethesda Maternity Hospital
- Hopeleigh Mothers' Hospital
- Bethesda
- Salvation Army Hospital for Mothers

Details

The Hopeleigh Maternity Home, run by the Salvation Army, opened in Marrickville in 1911. It was also called Marrickville Maternity Home and, from 1927, Bethesda Maternity Hospital. It was a rescue home, a babies' home, and a hospital and lying-in home for both married and unmarried pregnant women. In 1957 a new Bethesda Maternity Hospital building was opened on the same site and the name transferred to that building. This home was not related to Bethesda Home for Waiting Mothers at Camperdown.

The Hopeleigh Maternity Home, run by the Salvation Army, was located on the corner of Leicester Street and Victoria Road in Marrickville. Some sources state that it commenced operations in October 1910, but the property was not bought by the Salvation Army until July 1911. It was a maternity and rescue home that, at first, had 32 beds for inmates.

The Hopeleigh Maternity Home was established in an historic mansion that dated from 1850. The house was first known as 'Waterloo Villa'. In the 1890s it was renamed 'Frankfort Villa' and renovated to Italianate style in the early 1890s, by Samuel Cook, manager of *The Sydney Morning Herald*. When Cook died in 1910 his children subdivided the estate and created Leicester Street. The Salvation Army bought the villa and changed its name to 'Hopeleigh'.

The Salvation Army decided the house was rather small for its purpose so added a wing to the north of the house in 1912, which effectively turned the house to face Victoria Road. It was licensed as a hospital in November 1916.

In 1926 a wing was added to the main building to accommodate more mothers and infants. It was opened by Lady Stonehaven on 12 April 1926, with Miss Gillett of the Salvation Army, Colonel Suttor and Dr JR Campbell, Chief Medical Officer. At the time *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the Salvation Army Hospital for mothers was called 'Bethesda'. In 1925, 235 women were treated at the hospital and 211 babies. The *Herald* quoted a Mrs Whatmore as telling the crowd at the opening that many of the mothers were 'young unmarried girls, and the institution helped them recover their happiness and self-respect.'

The new wing included medical and obstetrics facilities. Various verandahs were enclosed at this time and covered walkways were added to the main building.

The building suffered extensive damage in late December 1938, when a hurricane tore away verandahs and balconies and flying debris, including a water tank, destroyed the isolation building. Bedding, equipment, furniture and nurses' belongings were all destroyed. At that time the building was known as Bethesda Maternity Hospital and had two sections, one for unmarried mothers and one for married mothers. Four hundred babies had been

born at Bethesda in 1937.

In 1955 a purpose-built maternity hospital, Bethesda, was built in the grounds, on the Victoria Road frontage, and Hopeleigh was no longer used for maternity nursing. It became nurses accommodation and a laundry.

When Bethesda closed in 1973, Hopeleigh was renamed 'Stead House' and converted to a convalescent hospital, and then a young women's hostel. The name was bestowed in honour of the founding matron of Bethesda Hospital, Lieutenant Colonel Doris Stead. In 2007 it was closed and the site was placed on the market by the Salvation Army.

In 2010 the property was sold to a developer, Boyce Group, and converted to apartments. The exterior of Stead House remains unchanged. In September 2012 the last apartment in the complex was auctioned.

Gallery

Stead House

Description: Stead House was the main building of the former Hopeleigh Maternity Home in Marrickville, which was run by the Salvation Army.

Hopeleigh 1915

Description: This image shows the building where Hopeleigh Maternity Home operated. The building was later converted to Stead House.

Bethesda Maternity Hospital 1927

Description: This image shows the building where Hopeleigh Maternity Home operated. The building was later converted to Stead House.

Frankfort House 1905

Description: This image shows the building, Frankfort House, which was converted into Hopeleigh Maternity Home.

More info

Chronology

- **Hopeleigh Maternity Home (c. 1910 – 1956)**
  - Bethesda Maternity Hospital (1957 - 1973)
    - Stead House (1973 - c. 2007)

Related Entries

Run by

- [The Salvation Army, Australian Territory (1880 - 1921)](#)
- [The Salvation Army Australia Eastern Territory (1921 - 2018)](#)

Records

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

Records

- [Salvation Army Australia, Records of Homes in the former Eastern Territory (c. 1891 - 1990s)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/hopeleigh-maternity-home/