

Church Rescue Home

1885 – 1923

Other Names:

- Strathmore
- Rescue Home for Women

Details

The Church Rescue Home was established in 1885 and run by a committee associated with the Church of England Temperance Society. It opened as a Home for the “rescue” of “intemperate”, “inebriate”, and “fallen” women (‘Church Home for the Intemperate and the Fallen’, published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 September 1884), including teenage girls. While the Home was associated with the Church of England, it accepted women from any denomination.

The Home was officially opened in an eight-roomed rented house at 242 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst, on the 6th March 1885, with 14 women in residence, and capacity for up to 20. This house quickly proved to be too small for the number of women in residence – by the end of March that year there were 25 women living there. On 5th May 1886 the Home officially opened in a larger building on the corner of Crown and Albion streets, Surry Hills. In 1892 the Home had relocated again to the corner of Norfolk and Suffolk Street, Paddington, which had room for approximately 32 residents.

An article published in *The Daily Telegraph* in 1886 (‘At the Church Home’, 4 August 1886) provides a detailed (though sanitised and overly positive) description of the Home, and the life and work of the women there, with the intention of encouraging public donations. The article described four dormitories at the Home each for women in different stages of their stay:

“I ascend the broad stair-cases, on whose polished surface our footsteps sound sonorously, and am shown into the “refuge” as it is termed, the first sleeping-room... I look around the bare room, with its eight little beds, with their grey quilts covering them, and absolutely nothing else... Next to this is another bedroom, occupied by those who have successfully passed through the probationary period. In the second room, white quilts cover the little iron beds, and simple though the change is, the snowy quilts seem to typify the change that morally the inmate has undergone during her short stay... I follow my guide and find myself in No. 3 dormitory, another step in the gradation of improvement, for here the floor is covered with linoleum. A looking-glass... is on the mantel-shelf, flanked on either side by some illuminated and framed texts... No. 4 room on the same floor is still brighter and more cosy. The quilts, of Bolton sheeting, have two bands of Turkey twill stitched around the edges, and the little touch of color gives a warmth and brightness that must seem very pleasant to those who have passed through the four successive stages. On the mantelpiece are little adornments.”

Women were frequently admitted to the home directly from the police courts, and younger girls in particular were sometimes sentenced by a judge to serve a term at the home rather than in gaol. Staff for the Home also visited local parks, inns, gaols, and places of “ill-repute” to find women to be admitted (as reported in ‘Church Home’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 August 1892), and some younger women were admitted to their Home by their parents, or were admitted to the Home due to having “neither home, nor parents, nor friends to look after them”

(‘Rescuing The Fallen, Opening of a Girls’ Home’ in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 October 1904).

On admission to the Home women were made to sign a promise that they would stay for a set period of time – 3 months for first admissions, 6 months for second admissions, and a year for third admissions. If women on their second or third admission stayed for the agreed length of time they would be gifted with an outfit when they left (or half an outfit for shorter stays). At the 1897 annual meeting of the Home, the committee lamented that many women and girls refused to sign this promise, and chose to leave instead.

Women at the home were expected to perform laundry-work and needlework to help finance the Home. The women were not paid for this work, and so it proved to be very lucrative for the Home, and enabled it to be mainly self-supporting. This income, combined with income from public subscriptions, donations, and fundraising events such as fetes, bazaars, and sales of works produced by the women, enabled the Home to continually expand as required.

In 1899 the committee purchased the ‘Strathmore’ estate in Glebe in order to again grow the operations of the Home. In the year prior to the purchase there had been only 68 new admissions, a decrease in previous years due to lack of accommodation, and also due to women staying at the Home for longer periods of time. The new property had 30 rooms with capacity for at least 70 residents, and also included a dedicated chapel room, garden, and, from 1902, a specially built ironing room big enough to fit 40 workers at once. This goal to increase the number of women admitted to the Home was not immediately realised as, due to an outbreak of Bubonic Plague in Sydney in 1900, admissions had to be paused to prevent the spread of disease through the Home.

In 1903, the committee made the decision to expand their work again, and purchase Strathmore’s neighbouring property, [Avona](#), with the intention of running it as a girls’ home. This would allow the girls at Strathmore to be separated from the women, who the committee believed were a negative influence on the girls. Avona opened in 1904, and children were no longer admitted to Strathmore. Strathmore continued to operate as a Home for women. The operations of the girls’ home at Avona, and later also at the [girls’ training home at Tress-Manning](#), were financially supported by the laundry work of women at Strathmore.

On 8th February 1922, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the Church of England Homes committee had decided to convert Strathmore from a home for women to a home for girls. This decision was in response to the high number of applications the committee had received for the girls’ homes, many of whom, the article reported, were the “orphans” of soldiers. This would increase the number of girls able to live on the Glebe site by 50. Strathmore was officially re-opened as a girls’ home on 8th February 1923.

Gallery



Strathmore facing Glebe Point Road, with third storey

Description: This is a photograph of the building known as Strathmore at Glebe. It shows a large three-storey stone building with a small front portico in the middle of a lower-storey verandah. The sides of the verandah appear to have been partially enclosed, potentially for use as additional rooms. Strathmore was bought by the Church of England in 1899 for use as a women's rescue home, then as a girl's home. In the 1930s, when this photograph was taken, Strathmore was used as accommodation for homeless families.



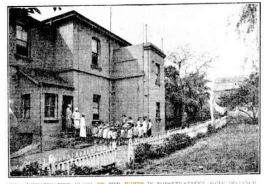
Strathmore Glebe Point

Description: This is sketch of Strathmore at Glebe. It shows a grand three-storey stone building on top of a small hill. The first two floors of the building have verandahs, and the third is slightly smaller with large windows overlooking the grounds of the Strathmore estate.



Strathmore - Glebe

Description: This is a photo of the Church Rescue Home at Glebe, also known as Strathmore. It shows a grand three-storey stone building situated on a slight hill.



C. of E. Girls' Homes at Glebe Point, for the transfer of which to Carlingford an appeal has been launched.

Description: This image shows the building known as 'Arden' when it formed part of the Church of England Girls' Home in Glebe. Girls from the Home can be seen standing outside the building. This image was published in The Sydney Morning Herald on 11 May 1928. The description reads: "The administrative block of the homes in Forsyth-Street, some distance from the main buildings in which the girls are accommodated."



C. of E. Girls' Homes at Glebe Point, for the transfer of which to Carlingford an appeal has been launched.

Description: This image shows buildings of the Church of England Girls' Homes in Glebe. The building in the foreground is Avona, then Tress-Manning behind it, and Strathmore in the background. Girls from the Home can be seen sitting on the steps outside of Avona. Avona and its grounds later became the Charlton Memorial Home. This image was published in The Sydney Morning Herald on 11 May 1928. The description reads: "The scattered and dilapidated buildings in which 150 girls are now housed. The building in the distance was formerly the residence of the late Sir George Wigram Allen."

More info

Chronology

- **Church Rescue Home (1885 – 1923)**
 - Church of England Girls' Home, Carlingford (1928 - 1977)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Church of England Homes \(c. 1884 - 1984\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Carlingford Children's Home \(1914 - 1920\)](#)
- [Church of England Training Home for Girls \(1909 - 1929\)](#)

The Church Rescue Home (Strathmore) and the Church of England Girls' Home (Tress-Manning) were located on the same site at Glebe.

- [Church of England Home for Girls \(1904 - 1929\)](#)

Church of England Home for Girls (Avona) was located on the same site as the Church Rescue Home (Strathmore). The first girls at Avona were transferred there from Strathmore.

- [Strathmore Girls' Home \(1923 - 1929\)](#)

Strathmore Girls' Home was located in the building that had previously been used as the Church Rescue Home.

- [Arden Girls' Home \(1919 - 1929\)](#)

Arden Girls' Home was located across the street from the Church Rescue Home (Strathmore)

Resources

- Lyn Collingwood, [Strathmore on Blackwattle Bay](#), The Glebe Society - Who Lived in Your Street?, August 2014
- [Glebe Care Homes for Children](#), The Glebe Society, 23 June 2013

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/church-rescue-home/>