

Earlsferry

1952 – 1989

Other Names:

- Nat Harper Homes
- Nathaniel Harper Homes

Details

Earlsferry was established for ten girls, aged 11 to 18, from the [Claremont Mental Hospital](#) who had cognitive disabilities. Earlsferry, with [Fairholme](#), made up the Nathaniel Harper Homes, which were owned and run by the government of Western Australia, and located on opposite sides of the Swan River. In 1988, ownership passed to the Authority for Intellectually Handicapped Persons. In April 1989, when Earlsferry was damaged by a fire due to 'misadventure', residents were relocated and the property sold.

Earlsferry was opened by the Minister for Health, Dame Florence Cardell Oliver, on 27 September 1952.

Nathaniel Harper, who had a son with Down's Syndrome, donated money to the Mental Hospitals Department in order to improve service provision to children with cognitive disabilities., marking the beginning of a change in the way these services were delivered.

Prior to Harper's philanthropy, children with cognitive disabilities were engaged in basic industrial work, whereas children at the Harper homes undertook a special education program facilitated by the Education Department. The Homes were run by nursing staff, with visits from Claremont Mental Hospital psychologists.

The young people and adults at Nathaniel Harper Homes were also engaged in work, taking some of the overflow from the industrial rehabilitation workshop at Claremont Mental Hospital making glass pipettes and cleaned and re-assembled bottle-tops.

When the government purchased Earlsferry, a number of renovations were made. These included adding a laundry, removing the outhouses and building a cottage for the Matron in what had been the orchard. Security wire mesh fences were put up around the boundary, a large tree and rose beds were removed and the driveway was bitumised and kerbed.

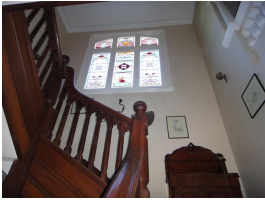
By the 1980s, Fairholme and Earlsferry were better known as separate hostels rather than collectively as the Nathaniel Harper Homes. Earlsferry continues as a private home.

Gallery



Earlsferry

Description: This is a digital copy of a photograph held by the Heritage Council of Western Australia. It shows Earlsferry from the rear, facing the Swan River. It is part of Earlsferry's 1999 heritage assessment. The photograph shows Earlsferry in its restored condition, not as it was when used as a hostel for people with intellectual disabilities. This photograph was taken by Sian Ferraz.



Earlsferry stairs

Description: This is a digital copy of a photograph held by the Heritage Council of Western Australia. It shows the staircase inside Earlsferry and is part of Earlsferry's 1999 heritage assessment. The photograph shows Earlsferry in its restored condition, not as it was when used as a hostel for people with intellectual disabilities. This photograph was taken by Sian Ferraz.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Mental Hospitals Department, State Government of Western Australia \(1934 - 1954\)](#)
- [Mental Health Services, State Government of Western Australia \(1954 - 1984\)](#)
- [Authority for Intellectually Handicapped Persons \(1986 - 1993\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Claremont Mental Hospital \(1903 - 1972\)](#)
Girls were transferred from the Claremont Mental Hospital
- [Fairholme \(1952 - 1984\)](#)
Earlsferry and Fairholme were opposite each other on the Swan River at Bassendean and Guildford. Together, they were known as the Nathaniel Harper Homes, named after the man who donated £20,000 for residential facilities for children with intellectual disabilities.

Resources

- [Editorial \[intellectual disability\]](#), The Daily News, 6 November 1950

Records

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

Records

- [Files - Community Welfare \("A" Series\), State Records Office of Western Australia \(25 August 1908 - 23 December 1990\)](#)
 - [Correspondence files, single number series with 'B' \[Child Endowment\] prefix \(1904 - 1974\)](#)
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