

Site History: Reformed Church and Sanctuary

Location Addresses

2 Main RD, Penguin 7316 TAS

Title References

248428/1

Property Id

2701409



Originally part of the grant to J Long and others, this site forms part of the early settlement of Penguin. The previous home at 2 Main Rd Penguin was built for Washington H Brown, who resided there until his death in 1896. Mrs Brown remained on the property and in 1906 the property passed to her son, Charles Washington Brown. Dr R Martin purchased the property in 1928 and in 1929 sold it to Dr Alfred Hamilton, who lived there with his wife until his death in 1936. He ran the place as a four-bed hospital and employed a staff of two. It has been suggested that the building was once known as 'Brittmore Maternity hospital', but this has not been confirmed. During the period that Dr Hamilton ran the hospital, the building underwent many changes. An open verandah was added on two sides of the building to allow patients to be wheeled outside.

Outbuildings that were added included a wash house, an ale shed and a garage set away from the main building. There was also a vegetable garden that supplied the hospital. In 1937 Sister Amy Storey acquired the facility and ran it as a maternity hospital known as the 'Sanctuary'. Among the midwives who worked there between 1937 and 1945 were EL Smith, D Campbell, Ms Williamson, Ms Durnham and A Dixon. Sister Storey was born in Scotland in 1886. She migrated to Tasmania with her family in 1888. Before moving to Penguin, she worked for 8 to 9 years on Bruny Island, where she ran a private hospital at Simpsons Bay. In Penguin, she ran The Sanctuary until 1944. In all she practiced in the district from March 1937 to August 1945, delivering c200 babies. She moved to Launceston in 1957, and died there at the age of 81 in 1968. (PHG Health History Records & Bardenhagen, 2003).

In 1952 the Reformed Church of Australia purchased the Sanctuary and developed the site.

The Dutch community has a strong presence in the Central Coast and more generally across the North-West Coast. The Church community in Penguin and Ulverstone sponsored many Dutch families to migrate to Tasmania and arranged accommodation and employment for families upon their arrival. Initially, the Church used the former hospital as a place of assembly. In 1993 the congregation built a new church on a Dutch design, and converted the former hospital into three flats. They also moved outbuildings onto the site for use as a youth camp associated with the church, erected a toilet block and a new residence that was used as rental property.