

## UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND IPSWICH CAMPUS

11 Salisbury Road, Ipswich

**Former Name:** Challinor Centre

### History

A 'benevolent asylum' was planned for Sandy Gallop in 1877, intended to house elderly people from Dunwich and relieve congestion in hospitals. However, the original intention was quickly changed. The authorities decided that it was more important to relieve overcrowding at the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, now Wolston Park Hospital.



Fifty men were moved to the 'Ipswich Branch Asylum' in July 1878 and were lodged in the one-storey Arthur Pavilion built by Macgregor and Brown. This building was later extended to two storeys by its original builders and two wings were added, increasing its capacity to 100 patients. A letter held at the State Archives states that on 1 May 1906 there were 140 male patients on the 136 acre site, but that plans should be considered for increasing the capacity on site to 600. Subsequently the Blair pavilion was completed on 27 June 1908, and a similar female ward was completed on 22 December 1909. These pavilions were considered progressive buildings in their time. Instead of continuous high walls, sunken fences, remnants of which still exist, were constructed which contained patients but at the same time allowed them uninterrupted views beyond their perimeter.

Official reports show that the authorities had decided they didn't want the complex to grow on an ad hoc basis. The result was that the complex was carefully planned with buildings that were architecturally consistent. Extra land for the complex was acquired in 1911, and in that year a contract was let for the construction of an Administration building, including Matron's and Nurses' Quarters, kitchen block, bakery and bathrooms. By 1914 there were good electrical installations but still some trouble with the telephone installations, a large scale septic tank was in the course of construction, and the farm was continuing to operate at a profit. By 1915 further accommodation was approved – a male admission ward later named the Charles Pavilion, a female admission ward (Byron House), another female ward (Claire House), and a hospital ward (Grace House). These buildings were all of similar design, to provide single room accommodation. The conscious planning of this development is reflected in the design of the various buildings, each of which included a bell-shaped roof ventilator detail. Other facilities were also contracted at this time, including a recreation hall, store and morgue.

When all facilities were opened in 1917, there were 279 male and 53 female patients. By the end of 1936 there were 367 male and 141 female patients, with an increasing proportion of children. This increase in children was accommodated by the building of Dagmar House in 1933. To accommodate the increased staff needs required to handle the growing patient numbers a two storey, brick Nurse's Quarters adjacent to the Administration building was built in 1938. Piggeries, cowsheds and stables were also rebuilt at this time.

The year 1938 also saw the proclamation of the *Backward Person Act*, and the role of the Centre began to change from the provision of accommodation for mentally disturbed persons to the provision of services to those with intellectual disabilities. Up until that time the Challinor Centre was used to accommodate the most difficult and chronic patients from Wolston Park, and thus there were few discharges and the Centre's population continued to grow. However, in treating the intellectually handicapped there has been a trend towards equipping a client with the skills necessary to live in the community, and permanent patient numbers slowly declined. To reflect this change in role, the Centre was renamed in 1938 the Challinor Centre after Parliamentarian Dr. Henry Challinor, medical officer aboard the *Fortitude*, who held various medical public offices including Surgeon Superintendent of the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum from 1869 until 1872.

Associated with this change in role was some redevelopment of the Centre. The original 1878 Arthur Pavilion was demolished circa 1968-1969 and modern brick facilities with the same name were built on that site. The female ward similar to Blair Pavilion was demolished circa 1976-1978 and the accommodation was replaced with the modern Ellen House and Francis House to the north of the complex. The 1939 Nurses' Quarters was found later to have inadequate fire facilities, and the majority of the building was demolished in the early 1970s. The remaining core had a modern brick extension and was called the Allison Hostel. Most farming outbuildings were also demolished in the 1970s

Three houses on site were relocated in the 1960s to their present site in Salisbury Road. They were, from west to east, the chief attendant's house, the engineers quarters and the steward's quarters. Children were transferred to Basil Stafford Training Centre in 1977.

The morgue was demolished to make way for modern maintenance buildings, built to the west of the Charles Pavilion, circa 1979. A modern male ward was built to the east of the Charles Pavilion, circa 1962. A modern training block was built east of the amenities complex and northeast of the Administration building, and a modern canteen north of this. The engine house adjacent to the reservoir was badly damaged in a storm and replaced in the early 1970s. The early medical superintendent's residence to the southwest of the complex was burnt down circa 1980. Some of the site has been relinquished to the adjacent Ipswich Showground site, over time.

## **Description**

The Challinor Centre occupied most of a hilltop site, separated from the city centre by Denmark hill which overlooks this site from the north. It contains and is surrounded by relatively open landscape, with golf links and cemetery nearby to the south, and the showgrounds adjoining on the northeast. The Challinor group has been planned on a generous scale commanding a ridge with panoramic views, hence also a local landmark, with sweeping views and mature trees including pine, palm and eucalypts. The original buildings, with long horizontal roves punctuated with carefully detailed ventilator lanterns, dominate the skyline and unify the originally scattered group.

A conscious hierarchy of architectural treatment is apparent in the various buildings. The 908 Blair House, along two storied cement-rendered residential building, with hipped roof and remaining a single-storey verandah, predates the other major buildings. The imposing design of the two-storied 1911 Administrative Building, with polychromatic brick, stone string corners and baroque façade details and entry, later matched in cheaper materials by the adjacent 1938 Nurses' Quarters, contrast with the more workaday accommodation buildings such as the 1915 Grace House, which, however, is a most elegant single storey building of fine but unpretentious construction in brick and timber.

The two storey circa 1915 Recreation Hall building immediately behind the Administrative building has a brick lower storey, texture-rendered upper storey and 18-pane double hung windows with keystoned lined arches on the gable end. The other circa 1915 services buildings continuing in a northerly direction behind the Administrative building, are functional one and two storey buildings including a finely designed chimney stack dominating the skyline. A striking polygonal roofed reservoir sits in the lower area and to the northeast of the Nurses' Quarters building with the ground contours shaped close to the roof overhang.