

See also
ARC 2005-439 max file

N O R A D E N E

NORADENE PRIVATE HOSPITAL occupied a block of land 3 rods 2.74 perches, slightly elevated with a frontage, to Vivian Street and to Fulford Street; 5 minutes walk from the business centre of New Plymouth. It was built of heart kauri and rimu with oregon beams, marble mantle-pieces and surrounds; a total of some 35 rooms including 13 bedrooms, nurses' cottage, 2 lounges, together with other amenities and outbuildings. When it was finally demolished and the last timber sale made on January 25th 1973 the Hospital was thought to be approximately 93 years old.

It had been built as a family home by Mr W.V. Morey, draper and clothier, who founded his business in Devon Street in 1872. *nee Smith. Bill Adams.*

In 1922 Mrs Edith Annie Adams and Miss Eva Mary Livesey, later to become Mrs Whitcombe, who had been nursing overseas during World War I, purchased the property and converted the house into a private surgical hospital.

It was subsequently leased as a convalescent hospital to Mesdames Stewart & Stevenson until it was purchased by Mr George Alan Adamson, Jean Alice Adamson, his wife, and Miss Nellie Eileen McLurg on the 19th September 1950. *Miss McLurg.*

The two registered nurses and Mr Adamson as Manager, formed a private limited company and operated Noradene as a Private Hospital from 17th January 1951, able to take post-surgery and any medical cases. A copy of the first page of the Patients Register is attached and at first shared rooms were £6 per week and single rooms £7 per person per week. Later these charges were increased by £1 per week and with the advent of decimal currency became \$14 and \$16, where they remained without increase until 1970.

September 1952 saw the first Annual General Meeting of the company. It was held at 85 Vivian Street at the Hospital and George Adamson was confirmed as Secretary and Managing Director. Together with Jean and 'Max' as Miss McLurg preferred to be called, the young company decided to apply for a Government Subsidy. A frightening list of alterations were deemed necessary if their application was to succeed. They had paid just over £5,000 for Noradene and further £236 for furniture and chattels. The Hospital was licensed for 14 beds and Max and Jean were the Licencees.

First of all they needed to cut out one of the 3 bedrooomed wards to use as a staff sitting room.

They found that the buildings, the timber of the addition and furnishings had been very much neglected and would need considerable renewal and renovation if their licence was to be assured. The list of alterations would have to include :-

1. Alterations to the staff dining room
2. Re-modelling and rebuilding of the kitchen were urgently needed.
3. Extra bathroom and toilet block accommodation was needed for the patients
4. It was also desirable to replace the existing gas cooking arrangements which were found to be completely out of date, with an Aga cooker - at a price of £300 installed
5. The building itself needed considerable borer treatment and a large amount of timber needed replacing, except for the original building which was sound as the day it was built, being of heart kauri.
6. The roof leaked in several places and needed urgent attention.
7. Internal painting, paperhanging and floor coverings had been neglected for many years and now needed urgent renewal.
8. The furniture and chattels which they had taken over were very old and must be completely replaced very shortly. The furniture was also badly infested with borer.
9. Completely new mattresses would need to be fitted throughout the hospital

The much needed subsidy was approved and as revenue and hard work permitted, the alterations were carried out.

In addition, over the years, Noradene was completely painted four times. George had built a laundry block and workshop and the front and rear drives were both tar sealed. The land at the rear of the buildings was terraced and the front gardens and lawns landscaped. Under George's care the gardens produced fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers for the hospital, the hens supplied fresh eggs and when the lemon tree planted by Dr Home in earlier days did not produce the expected fruit, they left it to grow where he had planted it near the operating theatre (see plan attached), and bought an additional fruiting lemon, to add to the variety of fruit available to the patients in the way of grapefruit, feijoas and tree tomatoes from the garden. Every Sunday dinner tray bore flowers to cheer the patients under Noradene's roof.

In the front garden the old camphor tree bequested by

Murphy Bill / Adamson NK Ag Dept.
Rayson

previous owners flourished and provided good climbing for the Adamson's daughter Jeanette, and a host of her friends, and later for those other children of all ages made welcome and given a home by the Adamsons at Noradene. In 1970 or thereabouts the New Plymouth City Council denoted the old camphor tree as an historic tree.

Over the years the thirteen available beds were always full and had the hospital been much larger they could have filled it. Quietly and efficiently Jean and Max built up a special kind of hospital. A place where love and care and concern were the by-words for everyday living. Nothing ever spoilt the nurse/patient relationship for them. Relatives dealt with George over financial matters and if Staff had a problem, George as Managing Director of the Company dealt with it. The public liked having 'a man about the place' and Jean and Max were able to carry on their unstinting work of providing respite and recovery for those in need, whether in body or in spirit.

The years saw many changes financially as well as otherwise. In April 1951 the subsidy per occupied bed was 4 shillings and 6 pence per bed per day. In October 1952 this was advanced to 5 shillings & 3 pence. Finally, it topped a magnificent £ per day. When Noradene was purchased the City Council rates were £48 per annum. When it was sold in October 1972 the rates were £384. In December of 1950 when the Adamsons and Miss McLurg set up their hospital, single sheets 99x63 were 43/6d each. White towels 24 x 48 were 95/6d per dozen. Linen tea towels were 57/6d per dozen and pillow cases 61/6d per dozen. Teaspoons were 28/6d doz and in 1951 when George had a pair of golf shoes made to his order by Sucklings, they cost him £3. Strangely enough, golf made a coincidental tie with the previous owners. Returning from playing golf on a Veterans Tour in 1964 on a plane from India to New Zealand, George found himself sitting beside Mrs Adams brother from England. The previous owner, Mrs Adams came back to Noradene to avail herself of the nursing care and later died there.

Noradene was closed as a private hospital in April 1970 by the Adamsons and Miss McLurg. The door knocker on the front door, a replica of that on a famous monastery noted for never refusing sanctuary, was taken down and the Hospital that was a home and refuge also for all those who needed it - and no one was ever turned away - was closed.

Letters were written to the Taranaki papers, editorials were written, the Proprietors were interviewed, friends and patients, doctors, relatives of patients, Medical Officers of Health and grateful people from New Plymouth, Taranaki, and all over New Zealand wished the Adamsons and Miss McLurg well in their retirement and wondered what New Plymouth would do without this service. And wondered also what would be the future of Noradene?

Miss McLurg retired to Christchurch to live with her sister. The Adamsons went first to live at 9 Mission Hill, New Plymouth until that was sold and later to live at 199 Seddon Street, near their daughter Jeanette, in Rangiora.

Noradene's chattels were auctioned in September 1970 and many and varied were the uses which were proposed for the hospital when it was presented for sale.

On Saturday, May 8th 1971 the Daily News advised its readers that Noradene was being investigated as a possible venue for a community social centre involving various city clubs and organisations. The idea was put forward by the Pukekura Jaycee Chapter with the support of its President, Mr G.A. Gibson. The scheme also had the support of the Mayor of New Plymouth, Mr D.V. Sutherland. However this scheme fell through as did the scheme for purchasing Noradene as a Maori Hostel.

On the 18th January 1972 the Taranaki Herald carried an application from the Noradene Private Hospital Ltd for an order permitting the land to be used for 'medical practitioners, surgeries and consulting rooms being professional offices'. A group of medical practitioners, Dr R.M. Davie, obstetrical & gynaecological specialist; Mr L.H. Hansen, surgical specialist and Messrs V. Hadlow & D. Ludbrook, orthopaedic surgeons had decided to form a modern medical centre on the site of the former Noradene Private Hospital and on 10 October 1972 the sale was completed.

Noradene Holdings Ltd., was the name adopted by the new company and today the buildings modern Lockwood lines proudly carry on the tradition of Noradene.

(D. Alexander)