

LISTER HOUSE PRIVATE HOSPITAL

by
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Lister House, a two storey structure on the northern side of Smith Street, Wollongong in the vicinity of Wollongong Public School, was officially opened in January 1939 as Lister Private Hospital. A combination of state of the art Modern Science and Art gave Wollongong the most modern private hospital in Australia. This was achieved by the Architecture of J Noller of Elizabeth Street, Sydney and Wollongong builder Norman Morris.

The ground floor consisted of a Maternity Ward, Operating Theatre, a children's ward and a children's room that was bright and sunny with fairytale characters on each bed.

The floor covering in the theatre was a new "composite rubber", guaranteed to prevent people slipping on it. Luxurious carpet covered the upper floor and wards. The hospital could accommodate 17 patients at one time.

A large area of the northerly wall of the building was taken up by glass bricks, to light the internal staircase and hallways. Amongst the more outstanding features was the colour scheme; walls painted cream with border trims. Lister House was advertised as having spared no expense in decorating its rooms with handworked cloths and vases of flowers.

Spacious verandahs were another feature where patients could look out on magnificent gardens and enjoy the fresh air. The "State of the Art" Lister House had other features such as doors that closed silently so as not to disturb the patients; the installation of buzzers and red lights described as "An infallible system for summoning a nurse by showing a red light outside the patient's room and in the nurses' day room after a patient pressed a button with the red light continuing to show until a nurse switched it off in the patient's room".

Besides having a ambulance drive-way and waiting room along with comfortable nurses' quarters Wollongong newest private hospital incorporated many continental, British and American ideas in the new building which was hailed as a major asset to the town.

Within a month all the cribs in the nursery were full.

As a teenager in 1962 I remember entering the then Social Security building, a dark and gloomy place when my mother commented: "This is where you were born, though then it was known as Lister House".

My recollections were far from the Lister House that was advertised in 1939.