



# Garrison Hospital (now Chelsea Apartments), 11 Redcoat Lane, St George's



*Figure 1: The earliest image is this photogravure taken around 1910 which shows the original stone Garrison Hospital with its new wooden wings and verandah. St George's Historical Society Collection, Bermuda Archives.*

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*This is part of a series of architectural articles by the Bermuda National Trust that will highlight some of Bermuda's endangered historic buildings.*

Located to the east of what once was the Royal Barracks with views of the sea on one side and the parade ground on the other is the old Garrison Hospital. It was built away from the barracks to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and to benefit from the ocean breezes then thought to be essential to the recovery of invalids. The Garrison Hospital was the largest and the last of the four military hospitals in St George's and was built around 1819 on nine acres purchased from the Honourable Joseph Hutchison. A Member of Council and the health officer for the port of St George's, Hutchison sold the War Department another ten-acre tract in 1830 before he returned to England.



*Figure 2: The Garrison Hospital when photographed in 1998. The wooden extensions on the wings were removed some time before 1941.*

The new hospital was intended to cope with the yellow fever epidemic which was proving particularly devastating to garrison personnel. It is interesting to compare the sentiment of some then to some in our current Covid situation today. When the Bermuda Gazette of 23 October 1819 reported that the number of deaths had exceeded 250, it was accused of an “invidious attempt to exaggerate the destructive effects of fever ... and having no scruples of injuring the mercantile interests of St George’s”.



*Figure 3: Seen from the rear, the building was without a roof when this photograph was taken in 2019.*



The original building was a two-storey structure with a wide central pediment and imposing entry porch. The two wings on either side had military style cast iron verandahs. A walled enclosure at the back contained a variety of outbuildings that included the cook room and bakery, privies, guard room, pump house and morgue. Sometime after 1899 the building was enlarged by adding wooden extensions to both wings.

By 1941 the wooden sections had been removed and the building restored to its original size. In 1952 when 130 acres of land and buildings in St George's were purchased from the British Government many of the former military buildings were adapted for housing. A small village atmosphere was imagined. The Garrison Hospital came under the control of the Bermuda Housing Corporation and was renamed Chelsea Apartments.

The Grade 3 listed building was allowed to deteriorate and by 2019 the roof had been removed. It has since been re-roofed. However, in 2022 the main building would appear to be unoccupied as no rental units are listed on the Land Valuation website, although the outbuildings at the rear have been repaired and repainted. Let us hope that this article is premature, and the building is being restored and will soon be available for rent.



*Figure 4 & 5: In 2022 Chelsea Apartments would appear to be a work in progress; however, there doesn't seem to be any work currently being done.*

**Sources:** Bermuda's Architectural Heritage Series, St George's; The Royal Gazette, 20 July 1952; 1941 aerial photograph, Bermuda Planning Department website.