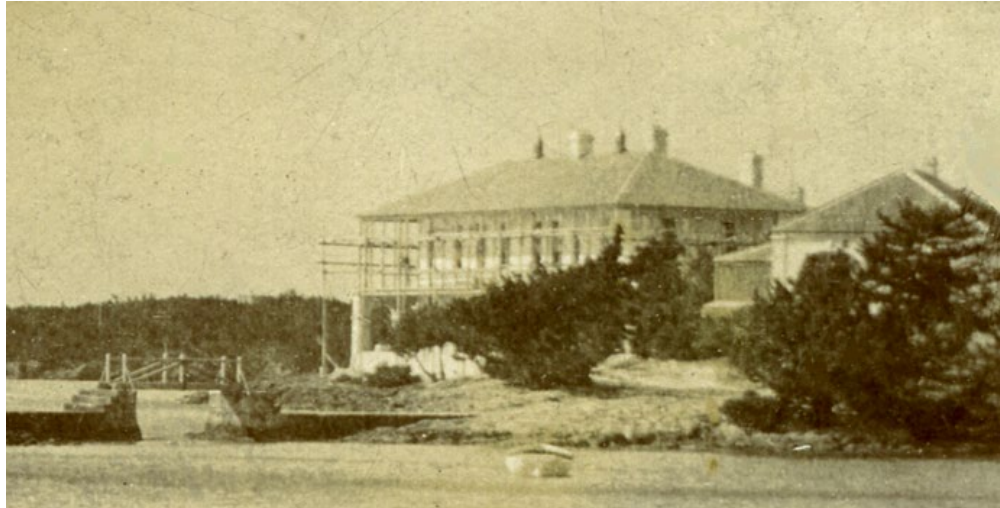




Lefroy House, 7 Lagoon Road



*The Zymotic or Isolation Hospital (later Lefroy House) around the time it was built in 1899.
Courtesy of the National Museum of Bermuda.*

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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.

When H.M. Dockyard closed on 31st March 1951 the Royal Navy began to sell its surplus property to the Bermuda Government. By 1956 all of these buildings were transferred to the newly-established Bermuda Crown Lands Corporation. Lefroy House is the best surviving example of a large Royal Navy building ancillary to the Dockyard establishment.



*Lefroy House was photographed by Ian Stranack around 1974 for his book,
The Andrew and the Onions.*



In 1899 a Zymotic Hospital (often referred to as the Isolation or Fever Hospital) was built on the water's edge of Ireland Island near Grey's Bridge. The building's long wrap-around verandah would have provided comfortable shade for those recovering from infectious diseases. The new building replaced a quarantine hospital on Ports Island that was deliberately burned down after two consecutive years of yellow fever before the mosquito was recognised as the source of this disease.

The Zymotic Hospital appears to have closed by 1948 when its roof was re-slatted and it was used by the Royal Naval Boys' Club before this organisation moved to The Parsonage.

When the neighbouring Royal Naval Hospital was closed in 1950, the House of Assembly discussed the need for a tuberculosis facility and it was noted that "at the Dockyard there is a very excellent hospital". This "excellent" building became another casualty of neglect when it was instead rented out as a chicken farm and subsequently deliberately burned down in 1972.

In 1952 the Zymotic Hospital was leased from the Crown Lands Corporation at £100 a month by the Committee of 25 charity who extensively renovated it for use as a children's convalescent hospital. Opened in May 1953, renovations and furnishings cost £8,000. The facility closed in October 1957 due to the high cost of maintenance and the decreasing number of children needing care.

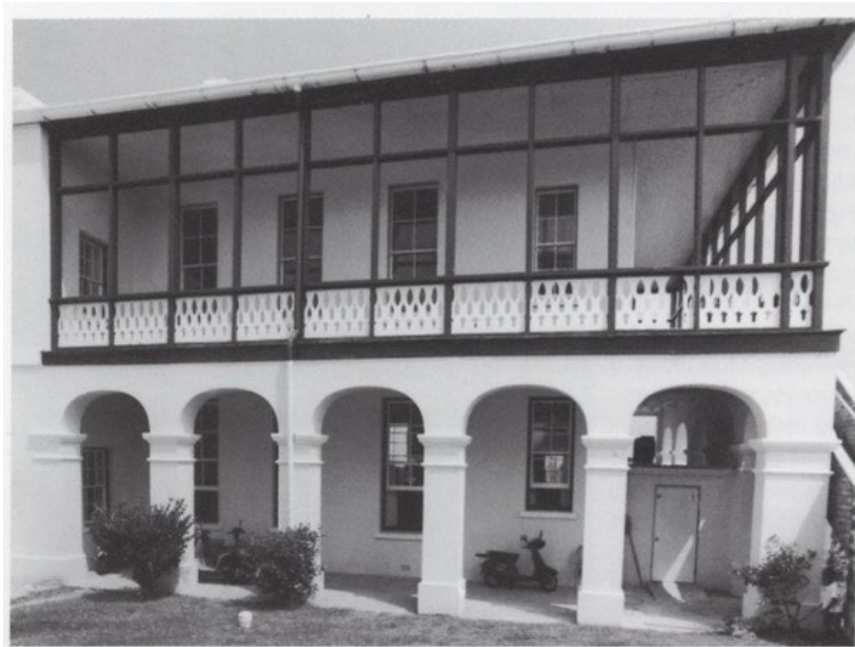


An otherwise plain building, Lefroy House's outstanding feature is the verandah on three sides of it. The east verandah is supported by metal columns. Photograph taken in 1999.



The Board of Health took over the operations of the former hospital in 1958 when it was becoming obvious that there was an increasingly-growing aged population. Director of Health Services, Dr Simon Frazer, admitted that “families sometimes can’t cope with old people”. There was then capacity for 24 patients with 15 already in residence. An elevator was desperately needed as patients had to be carried up and down the stairs.

The new care facility was named after John Henry Lefroy who served as Governor of Bermuda from 1871 until 1877 and who is best known as an early chronicler of Bermuda’s history. His two-volume *Lefroy’s Memorials* was published in 1877.



Lefroy House’s west and south verandahs sit on a row of concrete or stone arches, parts of which have been filled in. A vital fire escape has also been added. Photograph taken in 1999.

Lefroy House was damaged by Hurricane Fabian in 2003, by which time a single storey annex had been built. Living there at the time were 14 disabled residents who had been moved from semi-derelict Hope Homes and now had to move out of Lefroy House into cramped accommodation nearby. By 2006 the roof had still not been repaired. In



2011 then Shadow Minister for Seniors Louise Jackson called it scandalous that Lefroy House had not been overhauled despite \$19 million having been set aside for its refurbishment in 2007. In 2019 plans to build a new facility that “offers better protection from storms than the present location” were announced. After an inspection in 2022 “significant areas of concern” relating to the building’s maintenance were identified and “immediate repairs will be carried out”.

It appears that nothing has happened and from outward appearances the old building is still in a sad state.



Lefroy House today.

Sources: *Bermuda’s Architectural Heritage Series: Sandys*, Bermuda National Trust; *The Andrew and the Onions*, Ian Stranack; *Bermuda: Growth of a Naval Base*, William Eric Brockman R.N. edited by William Cooke; *Bermuda Recorder*, 22 May 1953; *The Royal Gazette* 9 Mar 1950, 15 Nov 1952, 1 & 7 Feb 1953, 18 May 1953, 16 Mar 1954, 12 Oct 1957, 7 Nov 1957, 15 Feb 1958, 1 Nov 1965, 12 Dec 2003, 20 Jan 2004, 2 & 14 Jul 2004, 13 Jul 2011, 29 Feb 2012, 14 & 19 Mar 2019, 22 Nov 2022. Many thanks to Cecille Snaith-Simmons and Felicity Lunn.