At the Archives

Foxborough Hall stands test of time

FOXBOROUGH Hall (located in Hardy Avenue) has been well-known in Wagga as a distinguished residence for almost as long as the township itself has existed, and has been called “home” by a number of prominent Wagga identities and families.

The original Foxborough Hall Estate comprised 40 acres (16 hectares) and was first purchased by Thomas Fox, a publican, on October 30, 1856 for the sum of £90.

Interestingly, Portion 78 as it was known at the time had not attracted one bid when it had been offered up at auction just six months earlier in.

Fox built the original Foxborough Hall residence in 1857 - a brick building with two wings, on the hill with a commanding view over the growing township of Wagga.

Fox named the property “Foxborough” after his wife’s parents’ the home in Ireland.

After Fox’s death in 1859, the estate was sold to another publican, Thomas Byrne, who then sold it to Thomas Darlow in March 1863 for £1300.

Darlow was the co-founder of the Wagga Wagga Advertiser with Ather Jones.

James Gormly, a well-known Wagga politician, bought Foxborough Hall and the estate on July 8, 1882.

During the mid-1880s, Gormly (who was at the time mayor of Wagga) often offered up portions of the Foxborough Estate for ploughing competitions.

Sadly, the original Foxborough Hall residence was destroyed by fire on February 10, 1887. The cause of the disastrous fire was said to be a burst kerosene lamp. Thankfully none of the Gormly family were hurt in the fire, but nothing of the original residence could be saved and only a detached brick building used as a kitchen survived the blaze.

The Wagga Wagga Advertiser reported: “...the building destroyed may be fifty termed one of the old landmarks of Wagga.”

Gormly decided to rebuild Foxborough Hall on the same spot in 1889 (picture right).

Amazingly, another fire on July 13, 1880 resulted in the stables being burnt down, but the new homestead was not damaged.

With the entire Foxborough Estate now some 80 acres, Gormly sold the western side of the estate (totaling 40 acres) to Charles Hardy and his son, Henry, in 1892.

By 1913, ownership of Foxborough had passed to R J B Gormly (James’s son) and a large part of the remaining estate was subdivided in 1922 into 178 building allotments bordered by Coleman Street and Cullen Road.

In 1925, R J B Gormly sold the Foxborough Hall residence and an adjoining 20 acres of land to the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary. Costing £3000 pounds, the residence and site was used as a temporary private hospital (while Lewisham Hospital was constructed) able to accommodate between 12 and 14 patients.

On the afternoon of November 17, 1928, the temporary hospital at Foxborough was officially opened by Bishop Dwyer.

More recently, complete renovations of the homestead were undertaken by Graham and Betty Hornbrook beginning in 1989.

Prior to this, Foxborough had been operating as a residence comprising of 13 small flats. The Hornbrook’s lived in the house for several years until selling the property in 1992.

Foxborough Hall is currently owned by Dr Paul Latimer who has transformed the residence into medical consulting rooms.

Special thanks to Graham and Betty Hornbrook for their assistance in providing historical information about Foxborough Hall.


LONG HISTORY: The rebuilt Foxborough Hall from the Eastern side of the residence (DA, 03/06/1995).

ONCE AN OWNER: Mr James Gormly, long-term owner of Foxborough Hall. The residence belonged to the Gormly Family from 1882-1928 (CSU Regional Archives - RW6822).

INFO

The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building on the campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with inquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straight-forward inquiries for a fee of $5 per hour including copying and postage.

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