

Pictured outlined in red (left), is a proposed extension to the infirmary dated c.1865-1874. This image shows the first floor and the additional ward as part of the extension is a good example of a 'Nightingale' ward. There are 20 beds proposed, an ideal number, as according to Nightingale less than 20 increased the number of attendants needed to supervise and number of corners to prevent ventilation. More than 32 beds is undesirable because this required a greater ceiling height to allow proper airflow. In this plan there is a maximum of two beds per window allowing good sunlight and air in. Also the WC and bath are at the opposite end of the ward to the entrance and on the outer wall, a strict stipulation in *Notes on Hospitals*.

Unfortunately, these plans were rejected and this extension never built, but due to the demands on the hospital by the city's growing population, extra room was still needed. In 1865 the roof was raised creating an extra floor to accommodate the expanding hospital. Nightingale would likely have been much in favour of the extension and largely opposed to the addition of an extra storey. She also predicted these situations when she condemned the choice of city locations for hospitals:

'Land in towns is too expensive for hospitals to be built as to secure the conditions of ventilation and of light, and of spreading the inmates over a large surface-area – conditions now known to be essential to speedy recovery – instead of piling them up three or four stories high, in regions contaminated with coal smoke and nuisances'. *Notes on Hospitals* 

4, Buckland Crescent, N.W.
August 17th, 1882.

Dear Mr. Watkins,

During the past week over 200 medical men were shown over the
Worcester Infirmary. They comprised Hospital Physicians and
Surgeons and Sanitarians from not only all parts of Gt. Britain but
also from America, and it must be a matter for congratulation for the
Committee and Staff to know, that from all I received words of praise
and commendation, spoken with a genuineness of which there could

Whilst many were struck with the excellence of the out-patient be no doubt. department, others were no less so of the wards and all were delighted with the purity of the atmosphere in the whole building and were much impressed with the working of the new drains and sanitary apparatus. It has been my pride to have shown the noble Institution to so many able critics, and though I was very anxious as to the result, I am sure the verdict of "well done" from so many able men cannot but be a great pleasure to all those concerned in our latest improvements and to whom we owe a deep debt of gratitude. To the physicians and surgeons of the Infirmary great praise is due, for through their kindness I was enabled to show many interesting cases and results to our professional brethren and many were greatly surprised and pleased with the work that is done at our County Infirmary and though the excellence of the building could not but be admitted, but this, combined with the results of medical and surgical cases added, I have no doubt, to the plain but welcome verdict. Hoping that Worcester Infirmary will continue to receive that support which the Committee and Hony. Staff so thoroughly deserve.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
J. PRINCE STALLARD.

In 1874 the outpatient department was built and around the same time the sluice towers (for waste water) were added to improve sanitation. Left is a letter from 1882, praising the infirmary's new department and the drains and sanitary equipment. It also mentions the 'purity of atmosphere' which Nightingale always held in the highest esteem.

Over the next 100 years the infirmary sprawled as hospital requirements changed and technology advanced. The plan below of the site in 1985 shows the original building (in blue) in amongst the rest of the Castle Street branch of the Worcester Royal Infirmary before this building finally closed in 2002.

WORCESTER ROYAL INFIRMARY - CASTLE ST. BRANCH

What do you think about the layout of the current Worcestershire Royal Hospital? Is Florence Nightingale's *Notes on Hospitals* still relevant? Join the conversation on Facebook or Twitter.

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