

Fort Napier



Fort Napier and its imperial garrison was one of the most significant institutions in Pietermaritzburg and indeed in the whole country.

Established on 31 August 1843 to house the British garrison in Natal after the area was annexed by Britain and became the Colony of Natal. The 45th Regiment initially provided the garrison but many other regiments took their turn and the fort was an extremely important base for the British during the Anglo Zulu War of 1879 and during the two Anglo Boer Wars.

The last British troops left the fort in 1914 and it was used as an internment camp for German nationals during WWI. In the 1920's the fort became known as the Fort Napier Psychiatric Hospital, and continues to serve the same function today despite the name changes to Town Hill Mental Hospital and now Fort Napier Hospital.

Still standing today among the original structures in the complex are a brick water tower, a recreation hall and the lovely wood and iron garrison officer's mess. Adjacent to the fort is St George's Garrison Church which was built in 1893 for the garrison to have somewhere close by to worship. It was used as a hospital during the Second Anglo Boer War.

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