

Lindfield

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Lindfield was originally the traditional land of the Kuringgai (also spelt Guringai) people. It is located on the north shore, 13 kilometres from central Sydney. The name for the railway station and suburb was taken from Lindfield, meaning a clearing in the lime forest, the name of the cottage built by early resident, Francis John List, in 1884 and later moved to Narrabeen.¹ It is assumed that the house was named after the town of Lindfield in Sussex, England.² The suburb is bordered by Treatts and Stanhope roads, Garigal National Park, Carnarvon Street, Chelmsford Avenue and Waimea Road to the east of Pacific Highway, and Bayswater and Provincial roads and Lane Cove National Park to the west. It has an area of 517 hectares.

Early development

Apart from the early explorers, the first Europeans to arrive in the district were timber-getters. A government convict timber-getting camp was set up about 1810 and known as the Lane Cove Sawing Establishment.

Fiddens Wharf Road led from the sawing establishment and was heavily used by the timber-getters. The timber was transported by jinkers to the Lane Cove River and floated down to Sydney to be used in the rapidly expanding city.

The first land grant was in 1815 with most of the settlement near the Lane Cove River as this was the main transport artery. Once the valuable timber was removed, orchardists and farmers were more readily able to cultivate the land. While landowners still harvested the timber, from the 1840s fruit growing and farming gradually became the primary industries.

Roads and railway

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the highway emerged as the major transportation route, with a subsequent increase in settlement. With improvements in roads and the coming of the railway in 1890, fruit growers diversified their plantings, as it became possible to take soft fruit to market.

Along the railway line, land began to increase in value as suburbanisation commenced. Business and professional people moved to the area, which was advertised as offering a healthy lifestyle for their families away from the pollution of the city but with easy rail access to the city.

Situated on Lane Cove Road, now the Pacific Highway, Lindfield, Tom Coleman's dairy supplied milk for many of the new residents in Roseville, Lindfield and Killara. As many residents kept one or two cows for milk the local police had to deal with the problem of cattle straying from

homes and dairies. The Lindfield branch of the Ku-ring-gai Municipal Library now occupies the site of Coleman's dairy.

Ethel Turner, the author of the Australian classic *Seven Little Australians*, started her novel in 1893 when she lived in Lindfield at the family home, Inglewood, now called Woodlands.³

Progress and local government

List's house, Lindfield, became the family home of William Cowan, the first president of Ku-ring-gai Shire Council. In 1897 Cowan and his neighbours formed the Lindfield Progress Association. In the absence of a council, the association was concerned with the provision of electricity, railway services and the establishment of a school.

By the early twentieth century Lindfield was an established suburb with a post office, churches, schools, cricket and tennis clubs, a chess and whist club for gentlemen and retail shops.

In 1924 Ku-ring-gai Council (incorporated in 1906), planned a new suburb called Bradfield, now West Lindfield. Although initial land sales in the area were slow, a major access road, Lady Game Drive, was built using labour funded through a government scheme to provide for unemployed workers.

Scouts from all over the world came to Bradfield for the Australasian Scout Jamboree in December 1938 and January 1939. This was held in Bradfield Park, an old racecourse once known as Cook's flat, which had once been a cattle-tethering area for the convict camp. Following the Jamboree, the site became a training depot for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) during World War II, and after the war, the site of the Bradfield Park Migrant Hostel.⁴

All Saints Air Force Memorial Church, West Lindfield, was dedicated as a memorial to the Air Force servicemen who undertook their initial training at Bradfield Park during the World War II. It was one of the largest RAAF bases in Australia. In October 2006 a second memorial was unveiled featuring a sculpture and plaque.

The population of Bradfield increased due to the conversion of the RAAF huts for use as a camp for migrants, mostly of British origin. In 1955 it was used by the Housing Commission and finally closed in the 1960s when the CSIRO's National Measurement Laboratory took the site.⁵

East Lindfield is an established residential area with areas of bushland located around the waterways, including Gordon Creek in the north, Middle Harbour in the east, and Moore's Creek Reserve. Other significant park areas are Garigal National Park, Lindfield Soldiers Memorial Park and East Lindfield Park.

Swain Gardens in Lindfield is a shady landscaped garden of camellias, magnolias, Japanese maples and rhododendrons. Council now administers the gardens.

Postwar development

One of the most significant sites in Lindfield is the Ku-ring-gai College of Advanced Education, which encompasses 55 acres (22.3 hectares). The building won the Sulman Medal in 1978, a 1972 Royal Australian Institute of Architects Merit Award and a Royal Australian Horticultural Society Award for Bush Landscape Design. In January 1990 the college merged with the University of Technology, Sydney. In 2008 the future of the site is unclear.

Lindfield's shopping centre developed between the wars with a second block of shops along Lindfield Avenue. Significant growth occurred in the postwar years and more recently many units have been built along the Pacific Highway and Lindfield Avenue. Lindfield experienced a small increase in population between 1996 and 2001, as a result of new dwellings built in the area.

More significant changes in Lindfield are likely. In 2006 Ku-ring-gai Council prepared plans in response to a direction from the Minister for Planning to provide denser housing in and around key commercial centres and to help increase retail and commercial development to cater for the needs of the local community. There is some resistance to this trend towards urban consolidation in a suburb that prides itself on its leafy gardens and relaxed suburban lifestyle.

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References

Margaret Wyatt, Louise Proudman, artwork, *Lindfield*, Ku-ring-gai Historical Society, Lindfield, undated

Focus on Ku-ring-gai, Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Inc, Gordon NSW, 1996

Ethel Turner, *The Diaries of Ethel Turner*, compiled by Philippa Poole, Lansdowne Press, Sydney, 1979

Endnotes

¹ *Focus on Ku-ring-gai*, Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Inc, Gordon NSW, 1996, p 37

² Margaret Wyatt, Louise Proudman, artwork, *Lindfield*, Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Inc, Lindfield, p 5

³ Ethel Turner, *The Diaries of Ethel Turner*, compiled by Philippa Poole, Lansdowne Press, Sydney, 1979, p 92

⁴ Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council Catalogue notes

⁵ *Focus on Ku-ring-gai*, Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Inc, Gordon NSW, 1996, p 45