

Castlecrag Timeline

1879-1919

- 1879 Willoughby Council requested the Government to survey a road from High Street, Willoughby to Sugarloaf Point, Middle Harbour. Following completion of the survey in the early 1880s, Council progressively, but slowly and crudely, stumped, cleared and formed further sections of what was to become Edinburgh Road. Landowners were called on to subscribe to the cost.
- 1880s The first house in the suburb, one of the historic foreshore cottages was built. In response to persistent demand for access to Sailors Bay Park, Rockley Street was formed. It was named in 1887 and Gazetted a parish road on 19 December 1896.
- 1880s Chinese market gardeners leased many areas of Willoughby, including the land along Edinburgh Road from Second Avenue (east side) to Fourth Avenue and extending through to Sugarloaf Creek.
- 1892 The Suspension Bridge (now Cammeray Bridge) over Long Bay gully was completed in January as one of Sydney's engineering wonders. The North Sydney Investment & Tramway Company was initiated in 1887 by Andrew Armstrong, an interested landowner, and James Alexander Brown to provide tramway access to the Middle Harbour peninsulas. The company planned a tramway from the St Leonards Government tramway in Miller Street near Ridge Street, across the suspension bridge to what is now Castle Cove. A branch line was planned into the Castlecrag Peninsula, terminating near the present 203 bus terminus. The company was a victim of the 1890s Depression and it went into liquidation in 1893. The Suspension Bridge was closed to all except pedestrian traffic in May 1936 and the rebuilt bridge was reopened as the Cammeray Bridge on 9 September 1939.
- 1895 Willoughby Council created Middle Harbour Ward on 10 January.
- 1898 An electric tramway was opened from the western end of Falcon Street (now Crows Nest) along Willoughby and Mowbray Roads into Penshurst Street to its intersection with Victoria Avenue. It was extended to Chatswood railway station in 1908
- 1904 Yachtville Estate, owned by William Thomas Muston, was subdivided and a number of Willoughby residents purchased lots. By this time, there were 14 boatsheds erected "on sufferance" located on this land along Sugarloaf Bay.
- 1904-1906 Two prefabricated weatherboard Hudson Homes in the Federation style were erected on the Yachtville Estate, being located on the foreshore of the Northern Escarpment below Edinburgh Road. An ex-fisherman's cottage and a stone cottage were added c1911. Known as the waterfront cottages, these buildings are listed as heritage items on Willoughby Council's LEP 1995 and by the National Trust.
- 1905 Willoughby Municipality's first public baths on Middle Harbour were opened at Sugarloaf Bay. Proposals had been put forward to enclose a portion of Sailors Bay with a shark-proof net from 1900. Rockley Street was constructed to provide access to the proposed baths but the matter was not proceeded with at this time. The Sugarloaf Bay baths were built by Joseph Knight Smith, the then proprietor of the Hotel Willoughby, on his own land. He built steps down to the baths from Edinburgh Road (north side). It was reported that the official party attending the opening proceeded along the unformed part of Mowbray Road which "provided all with the bumps and jolting necessary to induce the aldermen to wish the road were formed."

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- 1907 Francis Alfred Horsley was engaged in building and hiring boats on the Castlecrag foreshores. In 1914, he erected another boatshed, weatherboard cottage and stone house on the portion of land he had purchased in Yachtville Estate. RW (Bob) Carr leased the boatshed off Sailors Bay Park (now Castlecrag Boatshed) and it became a popular meeting place for families interested in hiring boats for picnics and outings, and for those seeking to moor and shelter their craft.



Horsley's boat shed at Castlecrag

- 1907 James John Stanford bought two blocks in Yachtville Estate and constructed the first brick house on the peninsula.
- 1911 Torquay Estate, located along the Sugarloaf Bay foreshores at the tip of the peninsula, was subdivided. The plan showed the Tor Walk by name. The adjoining Key of Torquay Estate followed in 1915.
- 1914 The electric tramway was extended from the Suspension Bridge (which had been reached in 1909) up Strathallen Avenue to Marana Road opened on 7 February. An extension along Sailors Bay Road to near the present Northbridge Primary School, opened on 21 March 1914.
- 1914 JR ('Reg') Warner established his 'Waratah' dairy on the ridge near the entrance to the peninsula and became Castlecrag's milkman. Straying cattle were often an agenda item at meetings of the Progress Association. His dairy and stables remain at the Sea Scouts' hall on Eastern Valley Way, while the milking sheds were on the site which is now occupied by The Quadrangle Shopping Centre. Most of Warner's milk came from a property he owned at Minto. Milk delivery was by horse-drawn carts, the horses being kept at the stables on Eastern Valley Way. Five cottages had been built on the run by 1941. Reg Warner donated a portion of his land to Willoughby Council in the 1940s, which is today's Warners Park.
- 1916 A public wharf, the first in Willoughby Municipality, was opened at Torquay Point (Sugarloaf Point) on 30 November. The vendors of Torquay Estate had contributed half the cost of the structure. A motor launch service to The Spit operated two days a week for many years. Passengers could connect with the tram to Spit Junction and St Leonards or Milsons Point. The wharf was demolished in the 1950s.
- 1919 Following continued frustration over bureaucratic inertia in realising his plans for Canberra, Walter Burley Griffin asked his Sydney architectural partners, George Thomas and Frederick Biggs, to search for a site on Sydney Harbour suitable for comprehensive development.