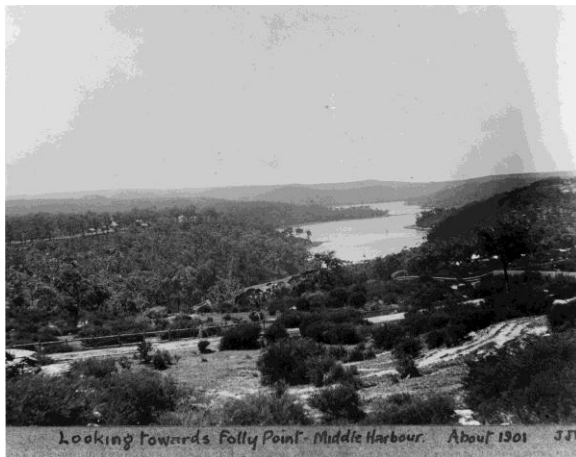


From Bushland to Parkland

A walking tour of Cammeray

Distance: **4.6 km**
Approximate time: **3.3 hours**
Grading: **medium to high**



Introduction

Cammeray takes its name from the Cammeraygal people, an Aboriginal clan who once occupied the lower North Shore. Radiometric dating (carbon dating) indicates that indigenous peoples lived in the Cammeray area at least 5,800 years ago and Aboriginal shell middens have been discovered at Folly Point and cave paintings in Primrose Park.

By the 1880s the population of the St Leonards Township (present day North Sydney) and surrounds was well established. The township had a thriving commercial centre and many grand houses. In contrast, the area we today call Cammeray was slow to develop mainly due to its steep topography and remoteness from transport.

Despite the land boom of the 1880s and plans for a suspension bridge across Flat Rock Creek, development in the area was mostly confined to the south of the suburb. The rest of the district was very rural consisting of either bushland or dairies (Bell's dairy in the West and Ernest Streets precinct and the Lillis Dairy in Ernest and Walker Streets precinct). Vegetable/market gardens, owned by A. War, were located near Willoughby Falls Creek. There were also boatmen's houses on Folly Point.

During the 1890s Depression a shanty settlement known as "Tin Town" was established in the bush around Folly Point. The settlement was still extant in the Great Depression of the 1930s where the unemployed lived in rough shacks.

Despite the development of the Cooliatta Estate in 1891, the sale of land in this period was largely unsuccessful until the early 1900s.



Land sales revived in 1909 when the tramway along Miller Street was extended. A string of subdivisions followed including the Bell's Estate (1909).

By the 1920s the area's name 'Suspension Bridge' was giving way to Cammeray. Estates established in the 1920s and 30s included the Morning Glow Estate (1921), Cammeray Estate (1932) and Green's Estate (1935).



View along Cammeray Road showing the extensive Three Oaks Dairy, 1936. (North Sydney Heritage Centre, PF 712)

By the 1940s motor transport made the area more accessible and many waterfront houses were built. The last substantial subdivision in Cammeray was of the 'Three Oaks Dairy' in 1942, including the patriotically-named Churchill Crescent. It is recorded, however, that as late as 1958 dairy cattle still grazed at Cammeray.

In the 1960s Cammeray's residential progress was interrupted when the Warringah Expressway cut through most of the North Sydney including Cammeray. Portions of St Thomas' Cemetery and Cammeray Park were resumed, as well as numerous houses, particularly in the area between Falcon and Amherst Streets. The Warringah Expressway also divides Cammeray, with the only crossing points being at West, Miller, Ernest and Falcon Streets.

Our walk begins at the Suspension Bridge

The **Suspension Bridge** is built over Flat Rock Creek which links North Sydney and Willoughby Councils along Long Bay. The bridge remains one of North Sydney's most notable landmarks and Cammeray was originally known as Suspension Bridge.

The Bridge is one of the more interesting and eccentric features of North Sydney planned during the land boom of the 1880s. It was the brain child of local resident, William Twemlow who owned large tracts of land in the area, including Cammeray and Northbridge. Twemlow saw there was a need to connect the gorges over Flat Rock Creek and sought Government approval to build a suspension bridge to open up North Sydney to Sydney.

In the late 1880s a syndicate called the North Sydney Investment & Tramway Company financed the construction of the bridge which took under three years to complete. The company planned a tramway from the Government Tramways Depot in Miller St near Ridge St across the Suspension Bridge to what is now Castle Cove. Unfortunately, by the time the bridge was completed in 1892, the land boom had ended and NSW entered a period of economic depression. The syndicate collapsed, its assets taken over by the Association of North Sydney Debenture Holders and the projected tramway was never built.



*View across the Suspension Bridge, 1905.
(North Sydney Heritage Centre, PC 148)*

The bridge's designers, W H Warren and J E F Coyle chose an ornate suspension structure which was the largest of its type in Australia at the time and the fourth largest in the world. It took nearly 3 years to build. It had a total length of 775 ft (236 metres), with three spans of 100 ft, 500 ft and 125 ft, respectively, the breadth being 28 ft (8.5 metres). Steel wire cables from turreted sandstone towers supported the bridge.

The building of the bridge commenced at each end. Stone was brought from Middle Harbour by steamer and punt. Cast iron palisades and steel were imported from Clyde, Scotland. Cables suspending the bridge came from Warwick, England. Its stone battlements represented 112 guns.

The Suspension Bridge opened with much acclaim becoming an instant tourist attraction featured on postcards and in many glossy publications of the day. Initially the Bridge operated as a foot bridge only with a toll charge of threepence return for adults and one penny for children.

An electric tram was extended to the southern end of the Suspension Bridge in 1909 and extended over the bridge to Northbridge in 1914.

The bridge was taken over by the State Government in 1912.

In 1936 serious structural faults were discovered and the Bridge was closed for repair until 1939. When it re-opened it was no longer a suspension bridge as a new concrete arch supported the bridge deck. Although the name Cammeray Bridge was attached to the newly restored bridge, the popular name Suspension Bridge survives to the present day.

In 1939 the Wynyard to Northbridge bus service replaced the tram service but wartime petrol shortages brought the tram back in July 1941, and they continued running until the Northbridge line closed in January 1948.

Walk a short distance along The Boulevarde

No. 5 The Boulevarde

With greater levels of car ownership in the 1930s and improved building technology, the steeper parts of Cammeray, with their bush and water views, became more attractive. This dramatic Inter-War Functionalist home is a fine example of the period. It was built in 1938 and the architect was L M Osborne.

Walk along The Boulevarde and Rowlinson Pde. Turn down Brothers Ave to Tunks Park

During the Depression, work apparently by the public works department in Long Bay, resulted in the reclamation of approximately 20 acres of the headwaters of the Bay.

In 1941 the Department of Lands took over 20 acres of land from the Maritime Services Board. In 1948 the boundaries of the Municipality were varied to incorporate the whole of the land within

the boundary of the Municipality of North Sydney.

In the same year the North Sydney Boys High School Parents and Citizens Association (Old Boys Union) anxious to create a Memorial to the soldiers of the First and Second World Wars submitted a proposal for the utilisation of the reclaimed area by the setting up of an oval and playing fields for cricket, football and athletics. It was indicated that a financial contribution would be made towards the cost.

An agreement was entered into between the North Sydney Council and the Trustees of the Falcon Memorial Playing Field Fund. The agreement called for the contribution of £10,000 by the trustees which granted exclusive use by the North Sydney Boys High School on each Wednesday afternoon for match play and two afternoons each week for practice use, together with nine Saturdays. The park is now used by local sporting teams.

The area was officially opened in May 1956 with the playing fields known as the **Falcon Memorial Playing Fields** and the Park on Council's decision, named **Tunks Park** after William Tunks the first mayor of St Leonards from 1867 to 1883.

William Tunks (1816-1883) was born in New South Wales. He trained as a carpenter, and became a major contractor to North Sydney Council and Sydney streets for the supply of blue metal for roads. He had a house in Walker Street. Tunks was also a publican

He was elected mayor of St Leonards in 1867 and was the representative of St Leonards in Legislative Assembly, 1864-1874. He was a founding member of the local St Leonards Lodge and the School of Arts.



Tunks (left) has been described as an early environmentalist as he was an advocate of preserving recreational land for public use. He persistently attacked the idea of harbour foreshore under private ownership. He was in the forefront of

declaring reserves and parks. His crowning achievement in public life was St Leonards Park (then known as the Reserve) an area of 40 acres nominated for a town square or for public recreation in 1838. A memorial fountain was erected to him in St Leonards Park 1885. He was also a keen cricketer (having captained the NSW side).

Leave Tunks Park and walk back up Brothers Ave. Take steps and path up to Pine St East. Take steps at Pine St East. Turn right and walk along Cowdroy St

Note on the left the entrance to the **Cammeray Marina**. There has been a boatshed on this site since the 1880s. The marina has been owned by the Rabbit family since the 1960s and they continue to carry on a long tradition of boating at this site (note the plaque on the wall at the top of the steps).

Continue along Cowdroy Ave to Cammeray Rd

Pause here to view the **Barcroft Boake Memorial Tree**. This tree commemorates **Barcroft Henry Boake**, a writer and bush poet best known for his poem *Out Where the Dead Men Lie*.

*Out on the wastes of the Never Never
That's where the dead men lie
There where the heat-waves dance for ever –
That's where the dead men lie
That's where the Earth's loved sons are keeping
Endless tryst: not the west wind sweeping
Feverish pinions can wake their sleeping –
Out where the dead men lie.*

He was born in 1866 in Balmain. The family later moved to Sailors Bay on Middle Harbour. He left school at 17 to become a surveyor's assistant which led him to his first contact with the bush in the Snowy River country. He found the outback exhilarating and had no wish to return to the city. When his surveyor's job ended he became a boundary rider and driver in the back country between Narromine and the Queensland border. His time in the outback influenced his poetry which dwelt on social wrongs, drought, heat and death. Unable to find work in the 1890s Depression he hanged himself with his stockwhip from a tree on Folly Point in 1892, aged 26. The tree which grew near this intersection is thought to have died in the early 1990s.

Whilst here look left across Long Bay to **Salt Pan Creek** (formerly Old Shipwreck Bay) where the skeleton of a shipwreck protrudes from the water below the Northbridge Golf Course. A number of boats were scuttled in this bay. The barque *Italia* caught fire and exploded at Newcastle in 1906. It was towed to Sydney and abandoned on the mud flats where her hull is still visible. The *Coraki* (1946) was also abandoned here after service in the Second World War.

Walk downhill in Cammeray Rd to the end

The origin of the name **Folly Point** is uncertain. It could have been named by Captain Charles McKinnon, commander of the explosives hulks moored near Seaforth but the reference to a 'folly' remains a mystery.

Early maps often show Folly Point as being located in a small peninsula in Willoughby Bay, now part of Primrose Park. By 1880s the name Folly Point referred to its current location and this prime waterfront location attracted a number of boatmen including Charles Lyon and John Taylor plus attendant services such as refreshment rooms and shops owned by Chatfield and Lutwyche.

The current Folly Point has also been known as Cammeray Point. In 1889 Folly Point was subdivided as part of the Parraween Estate.

To the right is Willoughby Bay which in April 1877 was the setting for Melbourne-born



showman, **Harry (Henri) L'Estrange's** high wire crossing of the Bay on a 433 metre tight rope suspended 105 metres above the water. L'Estrange (left) had been inspired by the French hire wire artist Blondin who had captured the world's imagination with his

walk across Niagara Falls. Le'Strange became known as the 'Australian Blondin'. His deeds were recorded in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Across the bay from Folly Point is **Warringah Lodge** (No. 6 Lodge Rd) - one of the first residences of the area. It was built for brothers

Joseph and Edward Macpherson, possibly as a 'weekender'.

The 1890s Depression, led to the establishment of a shanty settlement known as **Tin Town** in the bush around Folly Point. Tin Town was still extant in the Great Depression of the 1930s where the unemployed lived in rough shacks.

Walk back uphill a short distance in Cammeray Rd and take path on left to Primrose Park (marked by sign). Walk along bush track and pause at wooden platform

Note the shell middens and Aboriginal art in the rock shelter. Radiometric dating shows Aboriginal occupation in this area 5,700 years ago.

Continue along path

Primrose Park

This park is named after a former Mayor of North Sydney, H.L Primrose (1926-32). Mayor Primrose was a former NSW Minister for Health. (M.L.A.1932-1941).

By the middle of the 19th century, Sydney's outfall sewers drained stormwater and sewage into the harbour. In 1873 a Sewerage and Health Board was formed to propose a sewerage scheme for Sydney and its suburbs.

By 1890 there was an ocean outfall at Bondi and a sewerage farm at Botany servicing the southern shore of the Harbour. However, North Shore waste still flowed into the Harbour.

The growing suburban population of Willoughby, Mosman and North Sydney required a better method of treating sewage. A scheme was first proposed in 1886 for a system to serve the

North Sydney area with an outfall treatment works on vacant land in Willoughby Bay. By 1891 two hectares of Crown land were appropriated at the head of the Bay, with a further 2.6 ha reclaimed by dredging. It was the first sewerage treatment farm on the North Shore.



Filter and septic tanks, 1918. (North Sydney Heritage Centre, PF 660).

Initially sewage from the North Sydney area and surrounding suburbs flowed to the Works through 38km of pipes and was pumped into five open precipitating (settling) tanks having been dosed with lime.

After settling was complete, the clarified liquid was run off via the effluent channel and distributed over the trickling sand filter beds. The sand filter beds were constructed on the site of the present playing fields. The remaining sludge was dried, compressed and burnt in a furnace (hence the chimney). The ash was used for fill.

During its years of operation the works underwent numerous alterations and additions to cope with the population growth of the area.

As more subdivisions were proposed for North Sydney there was a need for increased capacity in the treatment works. By the early 1900s septic

tanks which did not require the expense of lime dosing and fuel burning replaced precipitating tanks. In 1901 the sand filter beds were planted with crops primarily to hasten the breakdown on the sewage.

The present tennis courts are located on the original covered settling tanks. Encroaching suburban development led to increasing complaints over the smell emanating from the works. In 1919 the trustees of the Cooper Estate which owned much of the surrounding land took Equity Court proceedings against the Metropolitan Board of Water Supply and Sewerage which operated the plant. An injunction was issued against the Board which was ordered not to create any nuisance, severely curtailing any potential expansion of the plant.

In 1920 the chimney was demolished to make way for a Compressor House built in 1922. Compressed air was added to the tanks to hasten decomposition. These operations ceased in 1926 after construction of the Northern Suburbs Ocean Outfall Sewer to North Head (Manly).

The Willoughby Bay Works closed in 1927 and were leased to North Sydney Municipal Council by the Department of Land for recreational purposes in 1930. The filter beds were transformed into playing fields and the buildings turned over to community use.

The Compressor House became a scout hall from 1938 to 1984. The Engine house became a hockey club. In 1987 funding was obtained to renovate the old buildings and by 1989 it was opened as an Art and Craft Centre. The centre has a thriving paper arts program, including papermaking, calligraphy, bookbinding and photography and art gallery.

The building is a good example of turn of the century industrial architecture still in good condition.

Continue along path to end and cross over pedestrian bridge

Willoughby Falls were named shortly after the creation of the Parish of Willoughby in 1835. John Skinner Prout painted the falls in the early 1840s. By the 1880s the area had become a popular picnic spot where people visited by horse and buggy or boat. Numerous other photographers and artists including F C Terry, Robert Hunt and Kerry and Co (*see 1892 photograph below – North Sydney Heritage Centre, PF 316*) produced images of the falls surrounded by untouched bushland.



Sourcing reliable fresh water was a problem for local residents in the 1800s. Fifty acres of land upstream of Willoughby Falls Creek was reserved for access to fresh water in 1869. Most of this land became Cammeray Park in 1886.

However the creek above the falls was replaced by a stormwater drain, and the lower part of the water course fed the sewerage works in the 1890s.

Walk around the left (southern) edge of the courts to pick up a zigzag bush track behind them that leads up to Grafton St and the top of the falls. Cross over Grafton St to Fall St, turn right at Park Avenue and left into Cammeray Rd

This part of the suburb was largely developed by the former Mayor of North Sydney, Alderman Henry Green as a speculative subdivision of modest housing about 1910-1920.

Green Park was named in his honour in 1926. Henry Green was a local builder who came originally from Warwickshire, England. He came to live in North Sydney and started to buy land and built houses. He is reported to have built over 300 houses in the area, including in Amherst, Tiley, Avon, Colin, Cairo, Wilson, Nisbett, Morden, Lumsden, Carter, Arkland, and Echo Sts, Warringa Rd and Warwick Ave. Green built his home **Guyscliff** in what became Greens Drive in 1898.

Green became an Alderman on North Sydney Council from 1896-1925 and was elected Mayor in 1922.

Within Green Park is the **Kendall Community Centre** which has its origins in the TOC H movement who established a branch in 1937 in Cammeray. A free children's library was set up at **No. 20 Carter St** in 1946 by then TOC H Chairman, Tom Kendall. The first part of the present community centre building was completed in 1952 with extensions in 1962 and 1979.



Toc H Childrens Library in Green Park, c1948. North Sydney Heritage Centre, PF 717)

Across the road is the **Cammeray Golf Course** which was established in 1906. The present club house was built in 1938.

Cammeray Park was dedicated for public recreation and access to water in 1869 and the Council appointed as trustee. The **Cammeray Croquet Club** (near Ernest St) was established in the park in 1930 while the **Cammeray Tennis Club** (corner Park Ave and Ernest St) were built next door in the 1920s.

Proceed along Amherst St

Take note of the many Federation and interwar houses in this area, including those built by Henry Green.

No. 83 Amherst St

Known as either **Roscarl (or) Rosecare**, this is a reasonably intact Federation bungalow with later renovations. The house was built by Henry Green in 1917 for John James Maher.

No. 102 Amherst St

Cardiff was built by Henry Green circa 1914-16. It stayed in the hands of the executors of the estate of Henry Green until the 1950s. It is a typical Federation/interwar bungalow in that it has a hipped terracotta tiled roof and terracotta ridge capping, asymmetrical plan and gabled

end. It is face brick on a rendered base and the veranda has cement capped brick piers. It has double hung timber sashed windows with rendered sills and note also the terracotta tiled window hood on timber brackets on the front facade. It is set back from the street with a brick fence of the period.

No. 100 Amherst St

This is a very good example of a Federation corner bungalow. Hipped terracotta tiled roof and terracotta ridge capping, asymmetrical plan with gabled end; face brick; return veranda addressing the corner with turned timber posts, carved brackets and rail, and simple valance; double hung timber sash windows; timber shingled window hood on timber brackets.

No. 75 Amherst St

This house was originally known as **The Braes** and was built circa 1913 for Mr Thomas Pelquest, a shipwright. Henry Green was the builder. The federation style front facade was replaced in 1939 with an oceanliner style facade typical of the interwar period of architecture in Sydney. The double curved frontage as existing today was built under the ownership of Thomas Pelquest by a builder named Mr E Lutwyche.

No. 76 Amherst St

First appeared in the Sands Directory in 1914 as **Fanmark** and occupied by Morris Marks. For much of its history it was tenanted. It is a modest but well detailed bungalow with a hipped terracotta tiled roof. It is of an asymmetrical plan featuring a gabled end, face brick construction with paired double hung timber slashed windows and terracotta tiled window hood on timber brackets. Then house also has a verandah with turned timber posts, carved brackets and simple valance.

No. 72 Amherst St

This house is a good example of a simple late Federation Bungalow which along with No. 74 makes a positive contribution to the landscape. Good terracotta tiled roof and terracotta ridge capping and finials; asymmetrical plan and gabled verge; face brick; double hung timber sash windows with rendered reveals and coloured glass panes. Note the veranda has turned timber posts, carved brackets and a valance.

No. 61 Amherst St built by Henry Green 1911-1913 for Mrs A Driderickson and then Mrs Violet Reddall.

At this point in the walk you can make a small diversion. Continue along Amherst St cross over Miller Street lights and stop outside No. 3 Amherst St

Tarella is one of the earliest and most substantial homes in Cammeray built in 1885 by Sir Joseph Palmer Abbott. It is a fine example of a grand Victorian Italianate mansion.

Return back along Amherst St over Miller St. Turn left into Bellevue St

No. 135 Bellevue St

This is a finely detailed timber cottage from the late 19th century, circa 1912. It is a single storey double-fronted weatherboard cottage in the Federation Queen Anne style with projecting gabled bay and verandah bay. The verandah has elaborate timber bargeboards, valences, screens and balustrade, and gable bay has timber finial, gable screen and bracketed rain hood over window. The hipped and gabled roof has been tiled but was probably originally corrugated iron.

Take a short detour on the right into Carter St

All Saints Anglican Church

The first church in Carter Street was founded in 1910 as a branch of the Mission Church of St Thomas Church, North Sydney. The original wooden church was blown over in its first weeks but re-erected. Additions to church and hall were built in 1912. In 1920 it became a separate parish from St Thomas. The present brick church was erected in 1923. It has good glass and woodwork, with carved cedar pews from St Thomas.

Return to Bellevue St. Turn right Cammeray Public School

By the end of World War I much of Cammeray had been subdivided, homes and shops emerged, and churches and schools were built to service the new population. Suspension Bridge Public School (now Cammeray Public School) opened in February 1915 was opened. Mr A. Uren was the first headmaster and enrolments of 260 children soon increased to 450.



Kindergarten class, Cammeray Public School, 1939. (North Sydney Heritage Centre, PF 2097)

The school bell is on perpetual loan from United States Navy from the destroyer *USS Paul Jones*. By 1924 the large number of residents now settled in Cammeray necessitated major extensions to fulfil the enrolment of 700 children.

Continue along Bellevue St to steps at end before Pine St

Electricity substation

This large converted brick electricity substation on your right was built in 1915 in the Victorian Free Gothic style to complement the Suspension Bridge.

Note the free interpretation of the Tudor Gothic motifs to the facade. Also the openings in semi circular arched openings with stucco archivolt lined to simulate smooth faced ashlar, parapeted gable ends, squat square brick towers carried on stucco corbels and a profusion of crenulations at the skyline.

By 1915 electricity was supplied in bulk to the North Shore by cables laid across the harbour from the Sydney Municipal Council's generation plant at Pyrmont. A series of large substations were built on the North Shore for domestic reticulation, the Cammeray substation being one of them.

Take the steps down to Pine St and then cross to North Ave where a path leads to the Suspension Bridge

Our *From Bushland to Parkland* walking tour ends here at the Suspension Bridge.

These walking tour notes were compiled by the Historical Services team in Heritage Week 2009 from resources held in the North Sydney Heritage Centre, Stanton Library. Ph: 99368400