

## 5. THE SUBURB OF EASTLAKES



Eastlakes is situated at the northern edge of the former Botany LGA marked as (5) on the above aerial.

The suburb of Eastlakes covers the area from Maloney Street to Eastlakes Golf Club, and from Gardeners Road down to Wentworth Avenue. It was named after the great wetland lake system that sits within it, however Eastlakes as it exists today has changed a great deal.

Originally the land that now makes up the suburb of Eastlakes was a collection of land grants and Crown Land purchases, dominated by the 417 acres made to T.W.M. Winder. Winder was granted this land for its industrial potential due to the abundant water supply, but it was never intensively developed and has continued to be largely open space into the 21st century. The boundaries of some smaller holdings are clearly marked by the road pattern. These smaller parcels were purchased from the Crown and used for market gardens. Owners within the Eastlakes area included James Holt, J. Newton and Charles Whitney.

The wetlands environment of Eastlakes was a significant deterrent for housing and industrial development which was being seen in surrounding areas of North Botany (Mascot), Botany and Banksmeadow at the time. The Eastlakes area remained relatively undeveloped until the 20th century, when its wetlands proved to be instead a considerable advantage for one particular use – golf. In 1928 two golf courses were established on the land surrounding the wetlands; the Lakes Golf Club and Eastlake Golf Club (the latter being a public course). Whereas golf courses usually were designed to suit the existing terrain, the Lakes

Golf course was designed to have the mounds and rolls constructed in the positions where they should ideally be. This added technical skill and enjoyment to the course. In May 1934 the Lakes Golf Club organised the first international golf match held in Australia, and was also host to the Lakes Open and NSW Open and Closed Championships.

One of the most obvious changes to Eastlakes over the years has been the addition of Southern Cross Drive which now dissects the suburb. The government's decision to build Southern Cross Drive in 1968 led to the Lakes course being closed to be redesigned around it.

The other major attraction to the area in the 20th century was Rosebery Park Racecourse, which, although named Rosebery, was situated in Eastlakes. It was the second 'Rosebery Racecourse' (the first being constructed just outside of the former Botany Bay LGA, on the north-eastern junction of Gardeners Road and Botany Road) and was built in 1906, with a new grandstand estimated at £12,000. It was a very successful attraction and regularly held meets with thousands of attendees. In both world wars, Rosebery Park Racecourse was used as a parade ground and military training ground (including for the 1st Light Horse Brigade in World War I) and became the headquarters of the 8th Division of the Australian Imperial Force in World War II.

In 1961 the Sydney Turf Club sold Rosebery Park Racecourse to Parkes Developments Pty Ltd. Over the next ten years the old racecourse was replaced by the Lakes Shopping Centre, and over 65 red brick 'walk-up' style apartments, as well as a handful of public housing developments – including a complex designed by noted architect, Harry Seidler (1923-2006). The remainder of the suburb was developed for detached residential cottages.

*(top) The area covered by the subdivision plans at BCHA.*

*(below) The suburb of Eastlakes in 2014. Approximately two-thirds is within the area of two of the earliest land grants in the Botany District, the 417 acres to Winder and 600 acres to Simeon Lord. They remain wetlands and open space, although now bisected by the elevated carriageway of Southern Cross Drive. The residential area is mostly low density early 20th century detached housing with some areas of higher density, particularly in the area of the former Rosebery Racecourse.*

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# A Thematic History of the former City of Botany Bay

prepared by  
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for

Bayside Council

This history has been written as part of the  
2015-2017 Heritage Review of the former City of Botany Bay

Cover image: *1873 Watercolour of Old Botany Road, looking towards the Bay.*

By Samuel Elyard

(State Library of NSW - DGD 5/a2085018)

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### WARNING

This report contains images and names of deceased Aboriginal persons.

This report contains several old images and drawings of Aboriginal people from the early decades of European settlement, as well as historical accounts from that time.

These are presented verbatim, and the language used may be of concern to some readers, however no offence or disrespect is intended and the material has been included for historical accuracy only.

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