

Smeaton Grange

Jenny Akers

Smeaton Grange is the suburb bounded by Narellan, Mount Annan, Currans Hill, Catherine Field and Harrington Park. It is in the council of Camden Local Government Area in the southwest of Sydney. The 2001 census recorded that this area does not have any population which is understandable as it comprises mainly a recently developed (nineties and noughties) industrial estate, business park and catholic high school complex.

Before white settlement it was the land of the Tharawal and Gundungurra peoples. The white history of this suburb began with convicts and explorers but now includes priests and small businesses.

The most significant heritage item in this suburb is the property which gave the suburb its name. The property later known as Smeaton Grange was originally called Naralling Grange and was a land grant of 283 hectares (700 acres) by Governor Macquarie in 1816 to Captain William Hovell.

Smeeton was also an adjoining land grant to Charles Throsby who was an early settler and town leader in Campbelltown. Both of these landholdings were purchased by James Fitzpatrick who had come to Australia as a convict in 1822 and who worked as a servant of Hamilton Hume. Fitzpatrick accompanied Hume and Hovell on their famous 1824 expedition to Port Phillip Bay. He later became a prosperous farmer.

When Fitzpatrick died, three children inherited his land. His daughter Elizabeth married Edward Sedgewick and built the present house in 1894. On the property they first grew wheat, and when rust developed, moved into sheep production. Their son, Ted, born at Smeaton in 1896, went to war, returned in 1919 and carried on dairy farming there. The name of Sedgewick was associated with the property until well into the 20th century.

During World War Two the house was used as a residence for army officers and in the early 1950s it was leased by Mr. and Mrs. Dick & Lorna Inglis (of the well known local family of auctioneers) as a residence.

The Catholic Church acquired the property in the early 1960s and the Patrician Brothers Order used it as a religious house, retreat centre and novitiate till it was developed as part of the Magdalene High School in 2000. The famous novelist Morris West, then a priest, visited the house in May 1963 for the opening of the Narellan Novitiate.

In the early 1990s the area of land north of the house was zoned industrial by Camden Council in an effort to attract business into the area. The advantages of the locality were advertised as improved transport access to the Airport and southern highway to Melbourne as a result of the M5, access to a workforce who lived locally and spin off employment.

In 2003 there was a proposal to build an aluminium extrusion plant in Smeaton Grange. The local community ran a successful campaign against the proposal in an attempt to protect the semi-rural lifestyle.

The new industrial estate has been able to attract a wide range of business both large and small. The Coles Distribution Centre, built in 1999, is one of the buildings with the biggest floor area in NSW.

References:

- *The Fitzpatrick and Sedgwick families of Campbelltown* Ivor G. Thomas Memorial lecture
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- Assorted articles by John Wrigley from *The District Reporter* newspaper
- *Hume & Hovell 1824* Ed by Alan E.J. Andrews Blubber Head Press Tas 1981