

# Thornbury Lodge

c. 1958 – c. 1990

## Details

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Thornbury Lodge was a children's and infants' home established at Baulkham Hills in 1958 or 1959, by the Child Welfare Department. It was a receiving home, and was set up to increase facilities for children in transit from foster homes to hospitals, institutions or other placements as Bidura had become too crowded. Thornbury Lodge housed 30 preschool-aged children, initially just girls but by the 1970s housed both sexes. It had closed by 1990.

The NSW State Records Archives Investigator site states that Thornbury Lodge was established to ease overcrowding at Bidura, in Glebe, by increasing reception facilities. It appears to have served the same function as Bidura, which was temporary accommodation for children in transit from foster homes to hospital or other establishments, and between Children's Court appearances.

Thornbury Lodge was established in a historic house on Seven Hills Road, Baulkham Hills. According to a 1990 archaeological study by Wendy Thorp, the land was first granted in 1802 to James Pye but the house is thought to have been built in the 1870s or 1880s, possibly by the Best family. The house passed through many hands until 1957, when it was transferred to the government, for use by the Child Welfare Department.

The Child Welfare Department carried out major works in the gardens and house. Thorp describes it as opening as a 'Foster Home' in 1959, but the Child Welfare Department's Annual Reports describe it as 'a new home for preschool children' in the previous year, 1958. It is clear from photographs of the time that school-aged girls were also housed there.

The 1959 Child Welfare Department Annual Report notes that the building required extensive renovation and building work before it could be used as a children's home.

As a supplement to Bidura, it was originally a girls' home, but at some point in the late 1960s began to admit both boys and girls. There was space for 30 boys and girls in the home.

By the 1970s Thornbury Lodge seems to have changed into use as a 'Family Group Home', a form of accommodation for children in 'community style homes under the care of a Housemother', and in which children attended local schools.

By 1990 the house was disused, but was still in the ownership of what was then called the Department of Family and Community Services.

Thornbury Lodge was listed as a heritage item on The Hills Shire Council's Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2012. It appears the land around the building has been subdivided, and a new street created at the rear of the property, Owen Avenue. In 2012 the address recorded by the Council for the property was 9-13 Owen Avenue, although the house is still visible from Seven Hills Road.

## Gallery



## Thornbury Lodge

**Description:** This photo is undated, the date included is an estimate.



## Future Citizens - "Thornbury Lodge"

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1958.



## "Thornbury Lodge": A new home for Pre-school children

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1958.



## At work on a school project at Thornbury Lodge

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1961.



## Thornbury Lodge girls come home from school

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1968.



## Ballet at Thornbury Lodge

**Description:** This is a copy of an image that appeared in the Child Welfare Department of New South Wales Annual Report of 1968.



## Best's Thornbury Lodge, Seven Hills Road, 1980

# More info

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, State Government of New South Wales \(1970 - 1973\)](#)
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1973 - 1975\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)
- [Department of Youth and Community Services, State Government of New South Wales \(1976 - 1988\)](#)
- [Department of Youth, Ethnic and Community Affairs, State Government of New South Wales \(1975 - 1976\)](#)

## Related Organisations

- [Bidura \(1920 - 1977\)](#)

Thornbury Lodge was opened by the Child Welfare Department to ease capacity at Bidura, which was becoming overcrowded. It is likely children were transferred between the two institutions.

## Resources

- Boyle, Brian, *The Child Welfare Schools: Recollections of these unique schools and the men and women who taught in them often under considerable difficulty*, 1996

## Records

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For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

### Records held by other organisations

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)
- [Thornbury Lodge records, State Archives NSW \(1957 - 1979\)](#)

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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/thornbury-lodge-2/>