

Ormond, Thornleigh

28 October 1946 – 1962

Other Names:

- Thornleigh Girls' Home
- Ormond House
- Training School for Girls, Thornleigh
- Thornleigh Training School for Girls

Details

Ormond, Thornleigh, also known as Thornleigh Training School for Girls and Thornleigh Girls' Home, was established in Duffy Avenue at Thornleigh in 1946 by the Child Welfare Department. It was an annexe to the Parramatta Girls Training School, and housed Parramatta girls who were defined as being 'privilege': they were at the end of their sentences and had 'responded well to their training'. Some children were transferred from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and placed in this Home. Ormond became Ormond Training School in 1962. The Duffy Avenue area later became known as Westleigh.

Ormond House was originally intended to replace the Girls Training School at Parramatta. The Child Welfare Department's 1960 Annual Report described extensive plans that were developed in the post-war period for the Ormond House site:

In 1945 a plan was drawn up to develop a new institution to replace the girls' training school, Parramatta. The plan provided for a refractory block, a privilege section, cottages for the segregation of young from older detainees, an admission block and a hospital for venereal disease cases. The plan was not implemented however, except for the privilege establishment, which was duly built, named Thornleigh, and passed into the Department's service in 1946.

The original plan was inspired by large wartime populations at Parramatta, a difficult type of girl and a high incidence of venereal disease; the facilities envisaged for the treatment of this disease were very extensive. The widespread use of antibiotics in VD treatment after the war, however, cancelled the need for such elaborate facilities. Smaller populations at Parramatta permitted the Department to concentrate on other more urgent accommodation needs.

As the feared wartime outbreak of sexually transmitted diseases did not eventuate, the Child Welfare Department made Ormond an annexe to the Parramatta Girls Home. Girls who were defined as 'better' behaved could be segregated from those seen as bad influences.

Ormond was opened on 8 October 1946. It provided two cottage like facilities which could accommodate up to 28 girls who had 'proven their ability to conform to the discipline of socially acceptable patterns of behaviour'. It was an 'open' institution devoid of the usual prison like constraints and was managed by a Matron. The programme emphasised cultural pursuits. The maximum length of stay was set at three months but, as was the case at Parramatta, was determined by the Superintendent.

A 16mm colour film held by the State Library of New South Wales, *Towards a Clearer Sky*, was made in 1959 by the Child Welfare Department to promote Ormond. It shows scenes throughout the Ormond school and promotes the institution by telling the story of 'Valerie', a girl transferred to the school, showing her learning to sew, cook, clean, and work outside the home. She is played by an actor.

Gallery



Main Building, Thornleigh Girls' Home

Description: This image shows the outside of Ormond, Thornleigh.



Dining room, Thornleigh Girls' Home

Description: This image shows the dining room of Ormond, Thornleigh.



Violin lessons, Thornleigh Girls' Home

Description: This is a photograph of girls receiving music lessons at Ormond, Thornleigh. It shows two girls standing by a piano playing violin, another playing piano, and another seated nearby reading a book.



Vigoro game, Thornleigh Girls' Home

Description: This is a photograph of girls at Ormond, Thornleigh playing a game of Vigoro in the field behind the home.



Girls room, Thornleigh Girls' Home

Description: This is a photograph of a bedroom at Ormond, Thornleigh. It shows a small room containing a single bed, armchair, dresser and wardrobe.



Cooking classes, Thornleigh Girls' Home

Description: This is a photograph of a cooking class at Ormond, Thornleigh. It shows girls in white uniforms and headscarves performing various tasks in the kitchen under the supervision of a staff member. In the foreground one of the girls is icing a three-tiered wedding cake.



Washing & ironing, Thornleigh Girls' Home

Description: This is a photograph of girls working in the laundry at Ormond, Thornleigh. It shows five girls all in white uniforms and headscarves, ironing, washing, and folding clothes, under the supervision of a staff member.

More info

Chronology

- **Ormond, Thornleigh (28 October 1946 – 1962)**
 - Ormond Training School (1962 - 1980)
 - Ormond School (1980 - 1984)
 - Ormond Regional Youth Centre (1985 - 1998)

Related Entries

Run by

- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)

Related Events

- [Transfer of children from Australian Capital Territory \(ACT\) and Norfolk Island to New South Wales \(NSW\) \(1941 - 1986\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Quamby Youth Detention Centre \(1962 - 2008\)](#)
- [Mittagong Training School For Boys \(1947 - 1976\)](#)
- [Parramatta Girls Training School \(1946 - 1974\)](#)

Resources

- [Marie Wood interviewed by Ann-Mari Jordens in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 13 May 2010
- [Effie Ray interviewed by Joanna Penglase in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]](#), 28 November 2010 - 29 November 2010

Records

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

Records

- [Departmental Records relating to State Wards, New South Wales \(1918 - current\)](#)
- [Records of Girls' Industrial and Training Schools, State Archives NSW \(1867 - 1983\)](#)

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