

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUBURB

### NORTH PERTH

North Perth is bounded by Vincent, Norfolk, Walcott, Green, London, and Loftus streets and Anzac Road.

#### HISTORY

##### 1829-1890

The coming of the Europeans in 1829 disrupted the seasonal routine of the Aboriginal people, resulting in them gradually being restricted to living in camps on the outskirts of the colonized areas. Two of the lakes where they camped were Hyde Park and Lake Monger. Aboriginal people were known to be camping in the area in 1896 when *The West Australian* reported two women being attacked by dogs from the camps in North Perth.

Thomas Farmer, who had arrived in the colony as a young boy in 1829, was the first to acquire Swan Location 653 around 1881. However, subdivision did not occur until much later.

##### 1891-1919

The earliest subdivisions were developed in 1898 by Solomon Herman's Gold Estates of Australia, which acquired Lot 653 from heirs of Farmer's estate. The first subdivision was called Percy Estate. It covered the area south of Angove Street (named for surveyor William Angove), and included Olive, Peach, Vine and Persimmon streets. Angove Street was angled across the subdivision to link Fitzgerald Street and Scarborough Beach Road. The second subdivision was called Woodville. This was in the triangle formed by Angove, Farmer and Parker streets. Other early estates were Christmas Hill, Toorak, Forrest Hill, Lurline Park, View Park, Monastery Grounds Estate and North Perth Estate as part of the Highgate Hill subdivision.

Initially called Woodville and Toorak after the early estates, North Perth developed rapidly. By 1903 subdivision had gone on so rapidly that North Perth's street plan extended to the junction of Walcott Street and Wanneroo Road, although many of these were to remain bush tracks for years. Much of the housing in North Perth was built between 1895 and 1935. Angove Street was a commercial centre of the suburb and included the Police Station. View Street housed many of the public buildings.

Early residents relied upon tanks and wells for their water. In 1896 the Government created the Metropolitan Water Supply Company and mains were laid to Leederville and North Perth.

Trams from the city to North Perth ran along Fitzgerald Street from 1900 to 1953. Roads were constructed to provide a firm base for the tracks. The lines entered Fitzgerald from Bulwer Street with the first route ending at Forrest Street. The Fitzgerald Street line was continued north along Angove Street with the Albert Street terminus opening in 1906. The line extended to Charles Street in 1927. These extensions led to rapid growth in North Perth. Whereas only 12 per cent had been built on in 1904, this had increased to 36 per cent by 1911.

Originally serviced by the Perth Roads Board, the area was officially designated as the North Perth Roads Board in March 1899 and was reclassified as the North Perth Municipality in October 1901. The new municipality's road district boundaries were extended to include the future suburb of Mount Hawthorn. The Mayors of North Perth were 1902-03 Richard Haynes, 1904-05 Herbert Parker, 1906-09 John Milner, 1910 Robert Gamble, 1911-12 William Randell, 1913-14 Ernest Waugh.

On 22 December 1914, Perth, North Perth and Leederville municipalities united to form Greater Perth. From this date there was one council and one mayor.

North Perth bowling greens and croquet lawns were established in 1910 on Woodville Reserve, followed by tennis courts in 1915. During World War II Woodville Reserve had searchlights, anti-aircraft guns and air raid shelters around the edge.

### **1920-1946**

In 1929, North Perth was concerned that Mt Hawthorn was receiving all of the funds for road and footpath improvements. The situation appears to have improved by 1937 when a report lists North Perth as having 50 miles of footpaths, leaving 35 miles unmade and 40 miles of road constructed with 5 miles remaining. The annual rateable value in North Perth in 1937 was £166,236 compared to £52,611 in 1915.

38 acres of parks and recreation land were created between 1914 and 1937, including Menzies Park, Smith's Lake, Kyilla Park and a children's playground adjoining the Town Hall in View Street.

In 1921, North Perth Primary School was the largest primary school in the state. Between 1939 and 1941 a number of Workers Homes Board residences were constructed in Selkirk Street. To cater for these children the Public Works Department arranged for a timber school to be moved from Herne Hill to Selkirk Street but, as the houses in the area were brick, the residents refused to accept a timber school. It was November 1944 before a brick school was built; in the meantime the children used public transport to attend other schools in the area. When the Kyilla Infant School opened in 1945 there were 150 children of infant school age in the immediate area.

### **1947-1972**

North Perth experienced an influx of migrants in the 1940s following World War II. Affordable land and house prices attracted Greek and Italian migrants. Changes were seen in the residential character of the area as houses were built and remodeled in a European style, reminiscent of those left behind.

The Empire and Commonwealth Games in 1962 led to the construction of the Beatty Park Aquatic Centre, which greatly enhanced the sporting facilities of the suburb.

### **1973-2014**

The Mitchell and Kwinana freeways were major developments during the 1970s and Charles Street became a link from North Perth to the Narrows Bridge.

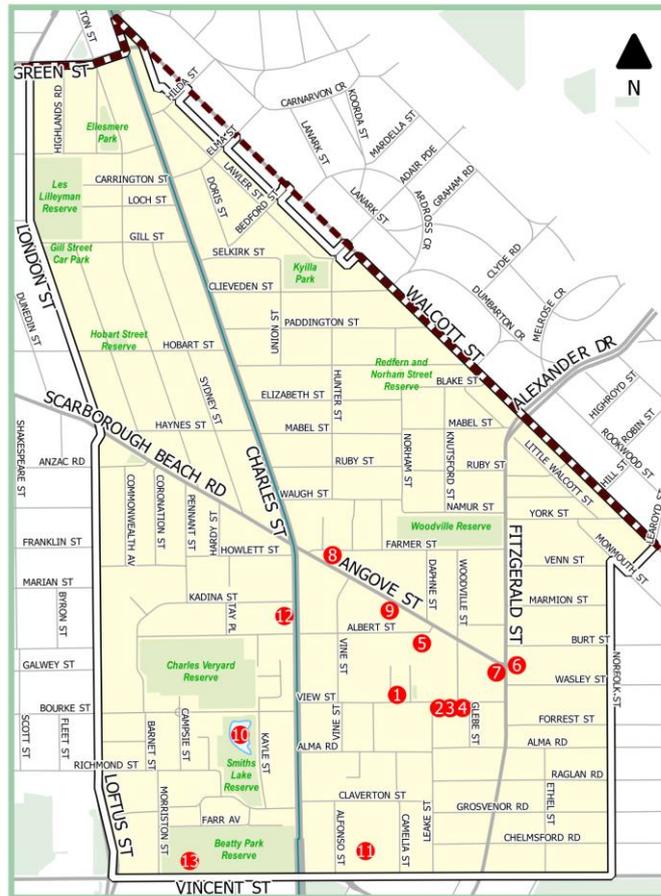
Commercial development in North Perth was concentrated primarily along Angove and Fitzgerald streets. In 1977 the North Perth Plaza was proposed and subsequently built incorporating a large supermarket to improve shopping facilities in the area. In the 2000s Angove Street has been revitalized as a café and boutique shopping hub.

During the 1970s and 80s, migrants from Vietnam, Korea, Burma and other Asian countries, many of them refugees, settled in North Perth creating a culturally diverse community. This diversity is evident in the number of churches built in the suburb reflecting their many religions. The North Perth Migrant Resource Centre was established at 66 Angove Street in 1981. The aims were to offer settlement and welfare services and community education activities to culturally and linguistically diverse persons. The centre moved to the old Town Hall complex a few years later, until getting its own purpose built building, Multicultural House, at 20 View Street in 1999.

From the 1980s as many of the ageing residents have moved on, younger people have moved in and either renovated the old houses or demolished them to rebuild.

With the division of the City of Perth into four municipalities in 1994, North Perth became part of the Town of Vincent. In 2010 the Town was re-designated as the City of Vincent.

## PLACES OF INTEREST



### 1. North Perth Town Hall, 24-26 View Street

The original building, now known as the Lesser Hall, was constructed in 1902. The architect was HJ Prockter and the builder, RA Gamble. The larger main hall was constructed in 1910 with alterations and additions in 1933. North Perth ceased having its own council from 1914. The halls have been used as a venue for major civic, social and cultural activities since then.



### 2. North Perth Post Office, cnr Leake and View streets



A postal service in the form of a receiving office began in 1902 in Angove Street, until North Perth got its own Post Office in 1916. Architect Michael Cavanagh sold the land on the corner of Leake and View streets, opposite the North Perth Town Hall, to the Post Master General's department in 1905, although construction was not until 1916. The Post Office and residence were designed by Hillson Beasley at a cost of £1,720. This operated until 1966 when a new Post Office opened on the corner of View and Fitzgerald streets, closer to the main business and shopping area. The original building became an Australia Post administrative centre, but since 2006 it has been the Post Emporium business of fashion designer Aurelio Costarella. State Heritage listed in 1998.

### 3. North Perth Fire Station, 21 View Street

[The first North Perth Fire Station was a wooden building, corner of Fitzgerald and Forrest streets.]

Prior to World War I fire brigades had tended to be manned by volunteers, but it was deemed preferable to employ permanent and auxiliary staff at a fire station. Built in 1926, one of the first designed by KC Duncan, himself a volunteer firefighter, who designed many of the suburban fire stations built between 1930 and 1960. Situated amongst public buildings (Post Office and Town Halls), a practice which became uncommon soon after. Operated as a fire station until 1956. From 1957 it became the first fire training school in Western Australia, remaining with the Fire Brigades Board until 1962 for training and to accommodate electrical workshops. Purchased in 1963 by North Perth master baker Jury Tolcon and divided into commercial use downstairs, residential upstairs. State heritage listed in 2004. The property is currently occupied by the United Fire Fighters of Australia.



### 4. St Hilda's Anglican Church, View Street (cnr Glebe Street)



At the turn of the twentieth century, the North Perth Anglican parish of All Saints, Woodville, held Sunday school classes in Hahn's tower house on the corner of Daphne and Angove streets. Church services were conducted in Gibson Hall, on the corner of Daphne and Angove streets, and in North Perth Primary School. A wooden building was transported from Canning Mills and erected on the corner of Rose (Glebe) and View streets in 1904. This was used for church services until St Hilda's Anglican Church was constructed in 1915 in View Street on the corner of Glebe Street, with the rectory in Glebe Street.

### 5. North Perth Primary School, Albert Street



In 1897 1½ acres of the Toorak Estate was purchased for a school. The school opened on 30 January 1899, with 131 students. It consisted of a brick building with two main classrooms which could be divided by an iron shutter. By 1921 North Perth Primary School was the largest in the state and its resources were stretched. The girls walked to Leederville School for domestic science classes, and the boys walked to Highgate School for manual arts. In January 1922 the North Perth Infant School opened to cater for the large number of students.

In 1943 a school playing field was created and named Goonderup, 'a meeting place'. This was constructed during the war years, using students for the manual labour of moving sand to create a flat area where the oval could be planted.

In 1990 the Infant School was incorporated into the main school after numbers dropped to 80. This became the School of Instrumental Music, the Education Department base for music teachers in the State. There were 220 pupils at the school in 2004.

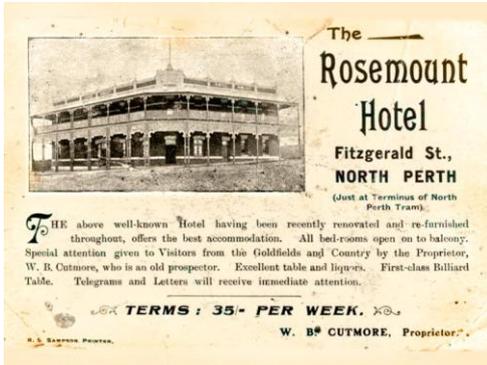
### 6. Rosemount Theatre, later to be Rosemount Bowl, 464 Fitzgerald Street

The Regent Theatre in Fitzgerald Street, North Perth, opened in 1927. This was later renamed the Rosemount Theatre. Seating capacity 400. Although of plain appearance on the outside, it "exuded nostalgia on the inside". The roof could be partially opened in the summertime. The Theatre and associated Picture



Gardens were both closed in 1967. The theatre was remodelled with the upstairs gallery turned into a bowling alley and the lower part into a hall for the Police and Citizens Club.

## 7. Rosemount Hotel, cnr Fitzgerald and Angove streets



The influx of wealth and men seeking accommodation following the Gold Rush meant that many hotels were constructed. The original hotel was two-storey brick and iron, constructed in 1902, in the Federation Filigree style. There was a continuous decorative two-story timber verandah. None of this façade remains. In the late 1930s the hotel was extensively renovated in the art deco style. The bar remained noisy and smoky, but the dining and accommodation aspired to a more up-market clientele. Further renovations were carried out in the 2000s, with the facilities now including the Four5Nine Bar and Lounge, The

Rosemount Backyard (beer garden) and the main bar, all of which are available for hire. It is a popular venue for live music from local, inter-state and international bands.

## 8. The Stone House, 116 Angove Street

John Roberts, a stonemason, bought the block in 1904 and lived with his family in a wooden one-room shed whilst he saved money and slowly built the house from Donnybrook Stone. It was completed in 1920. His son Henry Roberts, also a stonemason, later lived in the house.



## 9. North Perth Police Station, 81 Angove Street

The North Perth Police Station was built in Angove Street in 1908. Designed by Hillson Beasley, the building cost £816. State Heritage listed, *"The building, with its double-arched front porch decorated with the distinctive 'blood and bandages' design of horizontal striping formed by brickwork and white-painted render, was an example of the exuberance of architectural style in the later gold boom era."*



Originally the Officer in Charge and his family would have lived there.

## 10. Smith's Lake, Kayle Street



Originally much larger than the current lake, Smith's Lake was named Danjanberup by the Aboriginal community. The Claisebrook drain was extended to the lake in the 1920s reducing the surface water. The land was used for market gardening. The Gooley family of Albert Street were well known Chinese market gardeners in the area for many years until their land was resumed by the Perth City Council in 1959. The council decided to drain the swamp and convert it into land for building and recreational use. The reclamation was achieved by using the area as a rubbish dump for many years. In the 1960s the land was filled and

subdivided. There were 76 residential lots and 10 commercial lots in the scheme. Part of the land was developed as a recreation reserve, named after Charles Veryard, a Perth City Councillor from 1927 to 1964 and Mayor of Perth from 1964 to his death in 1967.

Smith's Lake has recently been changed from a concrete and lawn edged lake back to a more natural setting, with fringing vegetation of entirely local species of plants. This is to provide habitat for frogs, invertebrates and nesting sites for water birds.  
(Lake,S 2001)

### 11. Redemptorist Monastery, 190 Vincent Street

Built in 1903, the new monastery and church were dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. With the generosity of the people in the early years it was possible to add a second wing in 1912 and 10 years later the church was completed by the addition of the sanctuary and transept. The murals in the sanctuary were painted in 1962 by Croatian artist Karl Macek. As well as being a residence for the Brothers, the monastery is used as an annual retreat for the clergy of the diocese. The community is also welcome to attend the church services.



### 12. Browne's Dairy, 299 Charles Street



Edward Browne purchased the Whole Farmers Dairy Co-operative in 1915, when the name changed to Browne's Dairy. Milk was purchased from farmers, brine cooled and sold to retailers and consumers. Lack of refrigeration meant that milk had to be processed near the market. Walter Browne lived across the road in Charles Street.

In 1930 Browne's purchased the Wattle Ice cream Co., installed their equipment in the North Perth plant and started to make ice cream and butter. In 1932 after a trip to the USA, Walter introduced the *Eskimo Pie* chocolate coated ice cream. Demand soon outstripped their ability to supply so an arrangement was made with Peters to supply Browne's with bulk ice cream.

The Depression led to farmers abandoning their land or halting production and a shortage of milk. Browne's had to cease butter and ice cream manufacture at North Perth. In the early 1930s they began ice production. With the post-war boom the plant was modernized, and the new factory opened in 1949. This produced pasteurised milk in bottles for the first time in WA, under the name 'Golden Seal'. Browne's also introduced the state's first chocolate milk in 1951 and the first yoghurt in 1959. Peter's acquired Browne's Dairy Ltd in 1962.

In 1970 Browne's built a new factory on the site on the south side of Kadina Street. This was used to make cottage and feta cheese, yoghurt, sour cream and Classic Dessert. Juice and flavoured milk continued to be produced in the main factory and a second milk bottling line was also installed. Milk cartons were introduced in 1974. Milk was put into glass bottles for the last time in 1986. In 1998 the dairy moved to Balcatta after more than 80 years in North Perth.

A growers market and six retail shops are housed within the original building with town houses constructed in Kadina Street - a plan known as The Village North Perth.

### 13. Beatty Park Leisure Centre, 220 Vincent Street

(Beatty Park was named after World War I hero Vice Admiral Sir David Beatty, Beatty Park Reserve was gazetted in 1910, having been used as a site where night soil and rubbish were trenched by the City of Perth from 1890.)

The Beatty Park Aquatic Centre was built on part of this reserve in 1962 for the VII British Empire and Commonwealth Games.



Designed by City of Perth staff, WA Mcl Green, Town Clerk; M Boyce, architect; and LH Steenbohm, Director of Parks & Gardens. This was the first purpose-built aquatic centre in Western Australia for international competition. Officially opened to the public on 4 December 1962, it housed an eight-lane Olympic pool, children and learners' pool, a diving pool and seating for 5,500 people. The centre played a prominent role in the development of swimming and swimming education in Western Australia.

The facility was refurbished in 1994 to include an indoor leisure complex with a dining area, freeform beach entry and lap pool. There is also a sauna, spa and steamroom. The older section was remodelled to include a creche, gym and aerobics facility. A new frontage was added with an expansive foyer and retail shop.

In 2012 the facility was completely remodeled. The outdoor pool was upgraded to 10 lanes, the indoor pools refurbished, new change rooms created, the café relocated and a large purpose built gym added to meet growing demand. A geothermal heating system was also installed.

## SOURCES AND FURTHER READING IN THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

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### Maps and Real Estate subdivision posters

### Street Vertical Files, Subject Vertical Files

### Oral History interviews & transcripts

**City of Vincent Municipal Heritage Inventory:** [www.vincentheritage.com.au](http://www.vincentheritage.com.au)

**Local History Image Library:** [www.vincent.wa.gov.au/library](http://www.vincent.wa.gov.au/library)

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