

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUBURB

PERTH

Within the City of Vincent boundaries 'Perth' stretches northwards from Newcastle and Parry streets to Lincoln and Vincent streets, east to Fitzgerald Street and west to West Parade.

HISTORY

Pre-1870

The first inhabitants were Aborigines, attracted to Third Swamp (Hyde Park) and the other wetland areas by the abundance of fresh water and food.

Following European settlement, much of Perth was kept as Crown Land and reserved for future expansion. The exceptions to this were Thomas William Mews' acreage at 'Lakes Perth' and two other land grants, Swan Locations A4 and A3, which were allocated to WB Andrews and AH Stone. The southern portion of Perth was placed under the jurisdiction of the Perth Town Trust in 1838.

Large portions of Perth flooded during heavy winters. As the land proved to be ideal for growing vegetables and fruit the government began draining it in 1850. In 1858 William Phelps, the Colony's Assistant Surveyor, marked out lots around Thompson's and Stone's Lakes and up as far as Lincoln Street. In 1865 nine more farm lots were added in the area bounded by Lincoln, Lord and Beaufort streets.

1871-1890

Several more areas were drained including Second Swamp (area bounded by Lake and Bulwer streets) and five lots at Lake Henderson. Three of the latter were purchased in 1873 by ex-convict James Fox for a market garden.

In 1876 the North Ward was created, going north from Roe Street to Vincent Street to encourage suburban development. The Guildford Track (later Lord Street) was upgraded and several new roads including Summers and Palmerston streets were built. John S Brooking, a surveyor, built a substantial home 'Lakeside' at 106 Palmerston Street in 1885. The same year Richard Gallop was granted four acres of land on Palmerston/Lake Street, where he grew vegetables and planted an orange grove. At the southern end of Palmerston Street were small, wooden cottages for lower income earners, with some small scale factories scattered between them. The opening of East Perth station in 1881 led to settlement in that part. However, it also changed the geography of the area as streets such as Summers Street and Claisebrook Road were cut in two.

Third Swamp was reserved for public use sometime before 1877 and by 1883 it had become known as Hyde Park. Several weatherboard houses were erected opposite it in Glendower Street at this time.

1891-1899

At the beginning of the 1890s there were few houses as much of Perth was still scrubland. The 1890s Gold Rush brought a huge influx of prospectors to the State, many of whom became permanent settlers. Perth's proximity to the City (further improved by the Barrack Street Bridge in 1894) made the area attractive to settlers, but the excessive demand caused a tent city to develop in Hyde Park.

Continuing demand for housing led to several new subdivisions. 'Central Perth Estate' was developed in 1892 at Lake Thompson. Houses were erected on William, Newcastle, Lindsay and Money streets and several shops along Newcastle and William streets. Another subdivision was

carried out by the Colonial Finance Corporation between Brookman, Moir and Lake streets and Forbes Road, where factories were interspersed with workers cottages.

Zebina Lane & Co. was responsible for the Westralia (1895), Norwood (1896) and East Norwood subdivisions on the eastern side. A further, more expensive subdivision was the 1896 'Brooking Park Estate'. This consisted of nine lots in the area around Palmerston Street and Orange Avenue.

Some streets in these developments had more than one name, and when the Perth Council took over their responsibility in the 1890s the names were standardized. For example Newcastle Street had Ellen Street in the middle and Mangles Street to the east, but was gazetted Newcastle for its entire length in 1897. Street signs were also erected and a standardized numbering system introduced.

The development of Hyde Park took place during this period, to include two lakes with bird sanctuary islands in the middle.

While the area's proximity to the City meant that those who worked in Perth could walk to work, transport in the area was much improved with the introduction of electric trams along the main routes.

1900-1919

By 1900 Chinese immigrants were well established in commercial market gardening at Robertson Park, Birdwood Square and Stone's Lake. They worked the soil by hand, using makeshift tools and traditional Chinese methods. There were problems with flooding at Robertson Park (Lake Henderson) until 1908 when a special drain was constructed.

Robertson Park was designated as a park in 1913 and Birdwood Square (Lake Poulet) was also turned into a public reserve with a playing field. The latter led to the construction of more substantial homes opposite in Baker Avenue.

In 1907 the Wilson sisters established Ormiston College in Palmerston Street. This was later purchased by Presbyterian Ladies' College but continued to operate until 1918. Another private school, Bedford Ladies' College, opened at 91 Stirling Street.

Home building peaked around 1897 but with World War I, commercial and residential construction came almost to a halt.

1920-1946

There was a housing boom in the 1920s as many young couples and new migrants from countries such as Britain, Italy and Greece needed housing. The migrant influence meant Continental delicatessens began to appear.

Many local families were severely affected by the Great Depression, which began in 1929, resulting in little commercial development.

1947-1970

After World War II the suburb's popularity declined. People preferred the new suburbs as commercial expansion began to encroach on the residential areas, changing the character of the busier streets.

Changes in transport involved the substitution of trams for trolley buses in the early 1950s and later again by buses. Changes to the rail system included the new Westrail Centre on West Parade (1976) with interstate rail and bus terminals.

The drop in demand for housing in Perth led to lower rents in the 1960s and early 1970s and, with less income, many of the houses and shops became very dilapidated. The health authorities

condemned some of the worst of these buildings. Bakers Terrace was condemned in the 1950s, but was later saved and is now State Heritage listed.

1971-2014

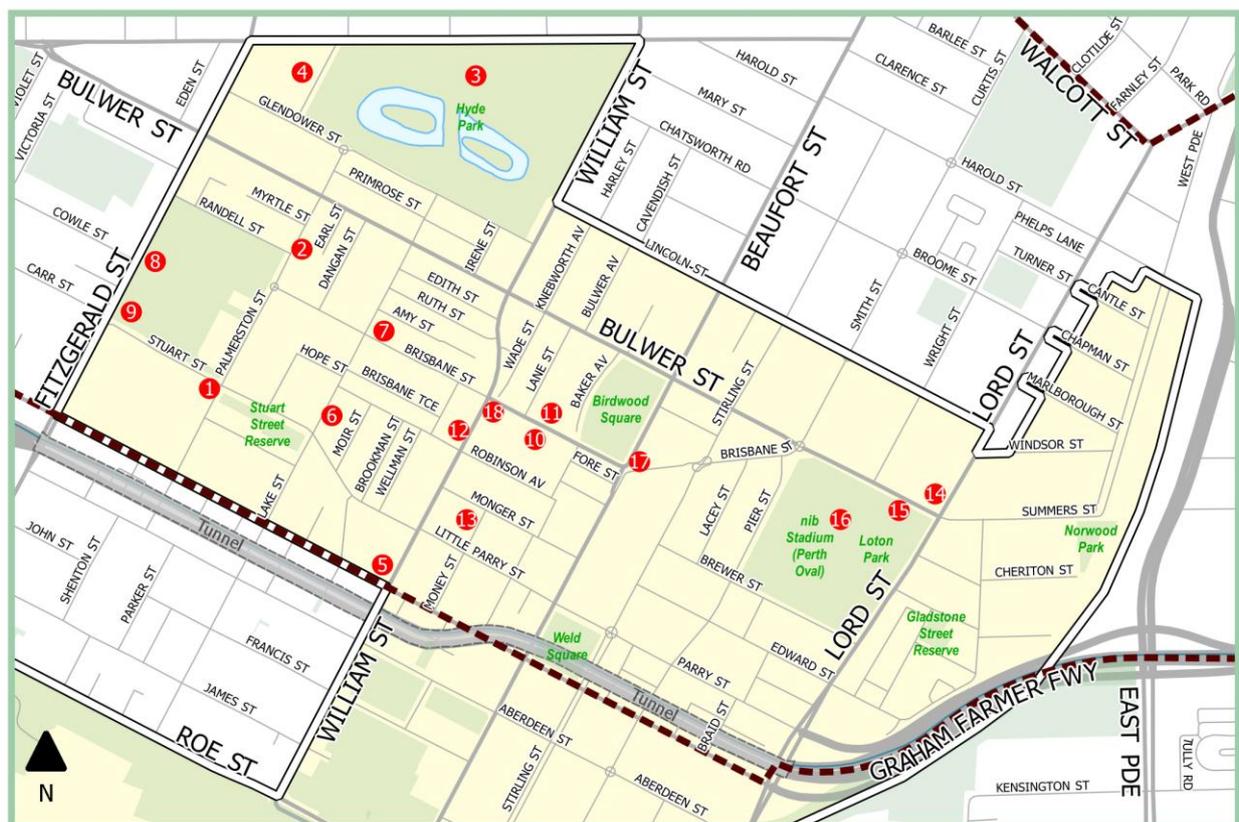
Some new residential building took place in the early 1970s with blocks of flats being erected, but the overall decline in numbers of residents forced many shopkeepers out. However, an influx of Asian immigrants from the late 1970s introduced some new enterprises into the area, and they took over the smaller retail outlets.

Larger commercial firms began to move into the area in the 1970s and 1980s. The busy streets of Newcastle, William and Beaufort were particularly vulnerable and the result was the demolition of numbers of small shops and dwellings. They were replaced by large scale outlets, warehouses, car yards and small office blocks. Those families who did remain in the old-style houses began to feel out of place.

The situation changed considerably with a later revival of inner city living. Old houses were renovated by young couples and developers moved in, replacing the older homes and business premises with town houses and low-level apartment complexes. A number of old factories were also turned into apartment complexes.

The 1990s saw the beginnings of large scale urban redevelopment, with much of it taking place after 1994 when the area became part of the newly created Town of Vincent. Since that time the profile of the area has improved, aided by the increased attention it now receives from a smaller local government authority.

PLACES OF INTEREST



1. The Maltings, cnr Stuart & Palmerston streets



Built in 1903 for Perth Pneumatic Malting Company by owner David William Harwood, to supply malt for Harwood's Brewing Company, located in West Perth. He moved the brewery to the Palmerston Street site by 1910. The Union Brewery of Kalgoorlie took it over in 1917. In 1928 A O Barrett purchased the site and made an agreement with the Swan Brewery to cease brewing and concentrate on malting. The Union Malting Company was registered the following year. The premises expanded over the following decades adding kilns and malthouses.

Victorian company Joe White Maltings purchased the property in 1986. Operations ceased in the late 1990s and it was converted to apartments in 1999. State heritage listed in 2000.

2. "The Witch's Hat" 148 Palmerston Street

Built in 1898 for William Dartnell, a railway engineer who developed Perth's railway infrastructure. He was one of the designers of the Horseshoe and Barrack Street bridges. A large two-storey residence with a bow verandah and a turret with Gothic influences, this lavish house was constructed by Frederick WG Liebe who also built His Majesty's Theatre.



3. Throssel House, 15 Throssell Street



Originally named 'Wedderburn', the house was designed by architect George W McMullen and built in 1901 by Richard Sparrow, a Perth attorney. He resided there until his death in 1941. The house has since had various owners making changes and additions.

(Street was named after George Throssell, the second Premier of Western Australia and MLC for the Eastern Province from 1907 until his death in 1910.)

4. Hyde Park, cnr William and Vincent Streets



Boojamooling or Third Swamp was an Aboriginal hunting and camping ground and later a camping ground for the bullock wagoners and men on their way to the Goldfields. Gazetted for public gardens in 1897 and renamed Hyde Park in 1899. In the care of the City of Perth Gardener John Braithwaite, trees were planted and remodelling included dividing it into two lakes with island bird sanctuaries in the middle. The original park layout was fenced and contained a large fountain at the Lake Street entrance, both of which have been removed. Shelters, picnic and barbecue areas, two playgrounds for children and a rotunda were all added in subsequent years. It has remained a popular park and in more recent years has been home to the annual Hyde Park Fair. Sculpture in the park is by local artist Judith Forrest. State heritage listed.

5. 323 William Street, (cnr of Newcastle and William streets)

Erected in 1935 in the Art Deco style and named Copley's Bank Buildings. The Blue Room Cabaret and Reception Rendezvous opened on the Newcastle street side in 1938. Dances were held several nights a week with old-time and modern dancing. The businesses along the William Street side included a garage with petrol pumps and motor mechanic and milk bar. In



1951 the Midland Bus Co. depot and offices were located there. It later returned to being occupied by a variety of shops, offices and food outlets. The clock was battery operated to avoid inaccuracies caused by power supply variations. A plaque on the pavement in front of the building tells the history of the area.

6. Bakers Terrace, 156-184 Lake Street



A row of 15 two storey residences erected in 1897. This row of terrace houses was named after Robert Baker, a cartage contractor who lived opposite at number 163. State heritage listed.

7. Hotel Northbridge, 210 Lake Street

Built in 1897, at the time of the early gold boom, and named the Royal Standard Hotel. Early records indicate that there was a shop as part of the hotel building. The Swan Brewery took over the hotel from 1915. The original verandahs were removed sometime between the 1930s and 1950s, but were replicated by the current owner during renovations completed in 1999. Between 1995 and 2005 the name changed from Northbridge Hotel to Hotel Northbridge. In 2014 this boutique style hotel has 48 (superior) rooms, restaurant, bars and function facilities.



8. Robertson Park, 176 Fitzgerald Street

A natural wetland known originally as Lake Henderson, it was first drained in 1852 for market gardening. James Fox, an ex-convict, worked the land there and by 1893, when it was sold to John Chipper, several farm buildings had been erected there. Sold to Dr Daniel Kenny in the 1890s. Used as a Chinese market garden. Established as a council reserve in 1913. Tennis courts and pavilion were built in 1929, plus children's library and playground established in 1930s.



From 1947 the City of Perth band had their practice rooms in the park in a timber and iron building constructed as a theatrette in 1940, on the corner of Stuart and Fitzgerald streets. In 1970 Halvorsen Hall was constructed as the band's room and they remained until 1999. A recycling bottle factory operated on the south-east corner. The park increased in size between 1965 and 1987 with the acquisition of the sites of Palmerston House, Perth Jewish Association and the bottle yard. In 1990 and 2004 there were extensive upgrades to tennis facilities. Conservation work and recreation of a wetland began in 2002.

9. Lee Hop's Cottage, 176 Fitzgerald Street

Originally a four roomed brick and iron cottage. built in the corner of Robertson Park in 1903 by Dr Daniel Kenny, who had purchased the land in the 1890s. Either an individual named Lee Hop or Hop Lee and Co, a group of gardeners who worked this land, occupied the cottage from 1904 to 1914. Altogether around six Chinese men worked the 18



acres of market garden. Perth City Council bought the house and land from Kenny in 1914. Lake Henderson was filled in during the early 1920s and by 1928 the market gardening had ceased. Later residents of the cottage included the park's first caretaker, James Imray. Owned by the City of Vincent since 1995, conservation works were completed in 2003 by Central TAFE students from the Aboriginal Programs Centre. Leased in 2003 to Great Mates WA, an organisation which assists disadvantaged and at risk youth.

10. Brisbane Street Post Office (former), 115 Brisbane Street



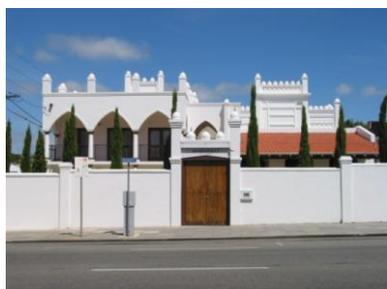
Constructed in 1896, with living quarters alongside for the postmaster. It is the most complete example of a late 1890s suburban post office in Perth and is State Heritage listed. The building was sold and converted to commercial /office premises in 1994. The rear of the block has been developed with five residential units.

11. Co-Masonic Temple, 110 Brisbane Street

Designed by WG Bennett and built in the Art Deco style in 1936 at a cost of £1,930. St Cuthbert's Lodge, was established in 1916 by Brother Olive J Farmer; the Co-Masons being open to both men and women. The first meetings were held at her home in Guildford which was named 'St. Cuthbert's' hence the Lodge adopted this name rather than Perth Lodge. This remains as a Hall with the Co-Masonic Lodge.



12. Perth Mosque, 427-429 William Street, (cnr of William and Robinson streets)



Funds were raised from 1904 largely by Afghan camel drivers who drove the camel teams which carried supplies from Perth to the Goldfields. Other Muslim communities in WA at that time also contributed. It was only the second purpose built Mosque in any Australian capital city. Designed by Din Mohammed in 1905, the foundation stone was laid on 13 November 1905. The Mosque was in use by the end of 1906, but not completed due to lack of funds. Walter James MP and Premier provided a loan to assist completion by 1907. It remains Western Australia's principle Mosque.

13. Buddhist Temple, 45 Money Street

One of the few Buddhist temples in Perth it was erected by the Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Western Australia in 1990. Perth's Vietnamese community grew after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Practicing Mahayana Buddhism, religious celebrations are conducted there every three months. A shrine in the temple garden depicting a four-headed Thai Buddha was a gift from a Thai national. The building is of simple modern brick construction.

14. Dilhorn House, 2 Bulwer Street



This heritage-listed mansion was designed by Talbot Hobbs for William Thorley Loton and erected in 1897 at a cost of £4,684. Loton, a wealthy merchant with large land holdings in the north-west of the State, was Lord Mayor of Perth from 1901 to 1903 and knighted in 1923. After Lady Loton's death in 1927, Dilhorn had various owners and was used as a boarding house. In 1952 the Commonwealth Government purchased it for £13,000 for the headquarters for various army units and later the Army Museum of WA. In 2001 it was sold to a private buyer.

15. Loton Park Tennis Pavilion, 29 Bulwer Street (cnr Bulwer and Lord streets)

In 1913-14 four tennis courts were constructed by the Perth Council at Loton Park. The Loton Park Tennis Club was formed in December 1916 when the council agreed to let a private group use three of the courts. In 1922 the club erected the pavilion, designed by Eales and Cohen, with two rooms and a wide, raised verandah for spectators. The exotic planting on the bank at the rear was done when the pavilion was built. It was extended in 1932 to provide extra changing facilities and showers installed in 1953. State heritage listed.



16. Perth Oval, Lord Street

William Loton sold Loton's Paddock to the Perth City Council in 1904 to be used as a public reserve. In 1906 it was adopted by the East Perth Football Club as its home ground. It became officially known as Perth Oval in 1910. An open-air picture garden operated near the entrance gates during summer from 1911 to 1921. In 1932 large metal gates were erected to provide an impressive new entry to the ground. A new grandstand and clubrooms followed in 1956 and the orientation of the ground was changed from east-west to north-south. When East Perth's tenancy finished in 2004, the oval was revamped as a multi-purpose rectangular sports stadium and leased to the Perth Glory Soccer Club. Sponsorship deals meant it was variously known as Members Equity Stadium and nib Stadium. As part of the State Government's \$95 million redevelopment of the stadium announced in 2010, the 1932 heritage listed gates were restored in 2012. Perth Oval was State heritage listed in 1998.



17. Brisbane Hotel, 292 Beaufort Street (cnr Beaufort and Brisbane streets)

Built 1898. A flatiron shaped landmark at the junction of Beaufort and Brisbane streets. The upstairs guest rooms attracted travellers as there were stables at the rear. In the 1960s the hotel housed a prestigious upstairs restaurant and from the 1990s the second floor was converted to a space for the Effie Crump Theatre. The hotel and theatre were closed for extensive renovations in 2003. The hotel reopened under new management at the end of 2004, regaining much of the popularity it had in the 1960s.



18. Shops 452 – 460 William Street

Built 1915. Rare example of Federation Art Nouveau style, featuring stucco bands. A row of two storey-shops, with retail premises on the ground floor and living quarters for the shop keepers above, marking the entry to Northbridge. The first occupants of the five shops were a hairdresser and tobacconist, draper, Champion Boot and Shoe Manufacturing, fruiterer, with a chemist on the Brisbane Street corner.



SOURCES AND FURTHER READING IN THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Books

Darcy, Roma, *Report on Heritage Places in Highgate: Hyde Park Precinct*
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Davidson, J and Laurie, M, *Early Businesses of Vincent: a local history*
Leederville, Town of Vincent, 2010 994.11 EAR

Stannage, CT, *The People of Perth*
Perth: City of Perth, 1979. 994.11 STA

Subject Vertical Files,

Street Vertical Files

Maps and Real Estate subdivision posters

Oral History interviews & transcripts

City of Vincent Municipal Heritage Inventory: www.vincentheritage.com.au

Local History Image Library: www.vincent.wa.gov.au/library

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