HISTORY

Pre-1829

Leederville formed part of *Boorloo* - tribal land belonging to the local Nyoongar people. Lake Monger, or Galup as it was known, was used by the Aborigines as a camp site and for hunting and fishing.

THE SUBURB OF LEEDERVILLE IS BOUNDED BY BRITANNIA AND ANZAC ROADS, LOFTUS STREET, LEEDERVILLE PARADE AND THE MITCHELL FREEWAY.

1829-1870

Initial settlement was by private settlers William Leeder (after whom the suburb was named) and John Monger. Monger bought 200 acres close to Lake Monger, whilst Leeder acquired some 288 acres. By 1838 Leeder had established the Leeder Hotel in Perth and was leasing out his estate. His house was on the south-east corner of Lake Monger.

Between the years 1850 and 1868 the colony experienced an increase in the population due to the arrival of 10,000 convicts. This in turn resulted in demands for extra food production. The local wetlands and surrounding areas were largely used for market gardens, dairy farming and poultry farms.

1871-1890

Living conditions were difficult due to the problems of poor drainage, cesspits and the continual flooding. Several of the lakes north of Perth were drained. Lake Georgina on the Leeder lands located just south of the Leederville Oval was drained, which then permitted Newcastle Street to be extended westward.

With the completion of the Fremantle to Guildford railway line in 1881, the direction of the colony shifted away from the Swan River and promoted settlement to the west, north and east.

Residential development in the north, however, was not rapid before the 1890s. To the north of Vincent Street the district remained an area of large acreages with the majority belonging to the Leeder family.

1891-1919

The gold boom marked a significant period of development in Perth. In 1884 the Perth district population was just over 6000. By 1911, the population had expanded rapidly to around 87,000 and Perth was experiencing problems of overcrowding. The demand for housing led to the subdivision of the Monger Estate in 1890. In 1891 the Leeder Estate sold 19 blocks of land, with five between the railway, Vincent Street and Monger's Lake being sold later that year. A third subdivision saw the creation of large garden lots ranging in size from 2 to 10 acres between Anzac Road and Bourke Street.

For residents living in the new subdivisions there were few established facilities and services. People obtained their water through the use of storage tanks and wells. Conditions improved, however, when the State Government (taking over from a privately owned supplier) began to supply water by mains. By 1911 many Perth suburbs had access to good quality water supply.

The wetlands during this period were being cultivated by Chinese market gardeners. Some of these gardens were located along Oxford Street on what had once been Leeder lands.

A government reserve was created between Vincent and Richmond Streets. The western section of the reserve became the site of the Leederville Oval, Leederville Post Office (1897), Leederville Primary School (1894), Town Hall and Police Station.

The 1897 Public Works Department sewerage plans suggest that the predominant buildings were located along the western end of Newcastle Street and the area near Carr (then Leeder Street), Oxford, Vincent and Loftus streets, including the Leederville Hotel (1897).

In May 1895 the suburb became officially known as the Leederville Road District. In the following year, Leederville was made a municipality, as the area was deemed to have sufficient property to enable the payment of £300 in annual rates. The municipal area was divided into three wards – North, South and Central. Leederville's first mayor, James Stewart Bennet, was appointed.

1920-1946

The impact of the Great Depression was felt by many residents in the area, with some renters unable to meet the rent payments. Faced with the prospect of eviction, many resorted to living in very overcrowded conditions whilst others camped on crown reserves.

Changes to modes of transport saw motor taxis replacing horses and trams and railways carrying more passengers. With increased use of motorbuses and motorcars, some of the major roads had to be widened. Loftus Street was widened in 1926.

1947-1972

Post World War II saw another population boom and overcrowding once again became a problem. The difficulties arose from shortages of housing and building materials. Changes in government policy relating to immigration meant new arrivals of migrants from Europe. These migrants were instrumental in changing the architectural landscape, with many of them renovating or building residences in styles similar to those they had left behind.

Around Oxford and Newcastle streets, new shops and office buildings replaced many of the older residences as council restrictions were eased.

December 1897 saw the construction and implementation of a tramway network to assist workers by providing transport to their place of employment. Initially, the tramlines operated in the northern parts of the City. By 1900, however, the tram network had been expanded to include Loftus Street, along Newcastle and Oxford streets to Anzac Road.

Due to the City's rapidly expanding population, parks and recreation grounds became of increasing value. In 1903, Lake Monger was made a reserve for public park and recreation. Leederville Oval was established in 1915 with tennis courts and cycle tracks as well as football facilities.

In 1914, the Perth, North Perth and Leederville municipalities came together to form 'Greater Perth'.

In 1948, a technical trade school was built in Leederville. It was part of an Army training scheme and was open for students by 1949. This later became known as the Leederville TAFE and is currently the Central Institute of Technology.

Transport was changing in the 1950s with trams and trolleybuses being replaced by buses.

1973-2014

The advent of the Mitchell Freeway saw the suburb of Leederville virtually divided in half. It followed the line of the lake drain past Lake Monger and northward, creating a physical barrier to accessing Lake Monger from the east.

In 1987 the Leederville shopping area on Oxford Street underwent redevelopment, so that by the 1990s Oxford Street had changed into a popular café strip. Many of the businesses underwent refurbishment and the area took on a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

The Loftus Recreation and Community Centre was opened in 1988. This housed a Community Centre, the Leederville Library plus facilities for indoor sport. In 2008 a major redevelopment resulted in increased gym facilities with the City of Vincent Library and Local History Centre constructed at the Richmond Street end.

In 1994 the City of Perth was divided into four municipalities. The newly created Town of Vincent constructed its council offices in Leederville, on the corner of Loftus and Vincent Streets adjacent to the Loftus Centre. In 2010 the Town was re-designated as the City of Vincent.

During the 1990s Leederville saw property values increase rapidly. As older residents left the suburb, many of the older houses were demolished and newer homes built on the site. Subdivision of the blocks was also reflected in the style and density of the houses built.

The construction of the Northern Suburbs railway line, to provide rail transport for the outer suburbs, had a flow-on effect for Leederville. Residents gained easy access to rail transport with the building of Leederville Station at the southern end of Oxford Street.

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City of Vincent Local History Centre, located within the library at 99 Loftus Street, Leederville

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 4.45 pm (afternoon times variable, contact us to confirm)

Phone 9273 6534 Local.history@vincent.wa.gov.au

People with specific requirements can ask to have this brochure provided in alternative formats.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUBURB

LEEDERVILLE

1 Leederville Hotel, 742 Newcastle Street

A two-storey brick and iron building constructed in 1897 (architect unknown). The first licensee was Charles Winter. In 1914 the hotel was purchased by the Swan Brewing Company Ltd. The corner tower is a landmark, terminating the view along Newcastle Street. Extensive alterations and additions were made in 1928 and again in the 1960s. The Swan Brewery sold the hotel in 1980 to a group of owners as tenants in common. The owners have changed many times in the subsequent years. Renovations in the 2000s have opened up first floor and outdoor areas into more spaces for functions, bars, dining and entertainment.

2 Junction of Newcastle and Oxford streets

Over time, this intersection with Oxford Street has been named Leeder, Carr and Newcastle streets. It was first named after William J Leeder, an early colonist, then changed to Carr Street in 1915 after JGC Carr, a Perth merchant. After 1949 it was known as Carr Place.
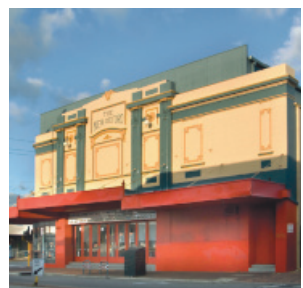
The building on the right in this 1907 photo of Leeder Street was designed by architect Michael Cavanagh and built in 1906. Businesses along here included a grocer on the corner, hairdresser and tobacconist and a confectioner. In 1913 Cavanagh also designed the shop and residence opposite, in front of the Leederville Hotel. This was a drapers store, followed by Jackson's Furniture from around 1916 to 1953, when it was the National Bank of Australia. It has been various café since the late 1980s.

3 Leederville Post Office (former) - cnr Oxford and Vincent streets

The Leederville Post Office was built in 1897; one of five built to service the needs of the rapidly expanding suburbs that sprang up in response to the gold rush of the 1890s. In 1998 a new post office was built nearby in Vincent Street and in 1999 the Post Office was converted into a café. Listed on the State Heritage Register in 1995.

4 Luna Cinema (formerly New Oxford Cinema), cnr Oxford & Vincent streets

The New Oxford Cinema was built in 1927. Designed by architect SB Rosenthal, the venue offered a varied program featuring vaudeville, musicals, plays and films. In 1966 the cinema was renamed the Nickelodeon, then in 1972 renamed the Olympia and for the next seven years showed mainly Greek and Italian films, reflecting the changing community. After some refurbishment in 1979 the cinema reopened as the New Oxford showing family films and later R rated films. In the mid-1980s, after full refurbishment, the cinema began to show independent films, and in the 1990s was renamed the Luna Cinema.

5 Leederville Oval - Vincent Street

The land was vested in the Leederville Municipality as a Reserve in 1900 and was known as the Recreation Grounds. In 1915 Leederville Oval was developed and a timber and brick grandstand built. It opened as the home for West Perth Football Club on 24 July 1915. Works commenced in 1958 to make the stadium a suitable venue for track and field events for the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games. This involved the demolition of the timber part of the former stand and shrouding the brick base with the current structure. The new stand was named after RP Fletcher, who was President of the West Perth Football Club from 1946 to 1962. The West Perth Football Club vacated the premises in 1994 and moved to Joondalup. The newly created Town of Vincent had its headquarters there until their administration centre was built in 1995. In 2003 the East Perth Football Club relocated their headquarters to Leederville Oval, to be joined in 2004 by the Subiaco Football Club. It is currently known as Medibank Stadium.

6 Schools of Isolated and Distance Education (formerly Leederville Primary School), 164 Oxford Street

A petition from the parents of 99 children for a school in Leederville resulted in the first classes for Leederville Public School being held on 20 August 1894 in the Sunday School room of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, corner of Oxford and Melrose streets. The Leederville Primary School and head teacher's residence were built at 164 Oxford Street in 1895. By 1901 attendance had risen to 257 pupils resulting in classrooms being added. An Infants' School opened in 1902 which amalgamated with the Primary School in 1909. Over the years the school expanded to meet increasing numbers. A 'household management centre' was opened at the school, and pupils from nearby schools walked there for domestic science classes. With only 85 pupils enrolled in 1992, the school was listed for closure. Despite vigorous protests it closed in 1993, months short of its Centenary. The site was taken over by the Schools of Isolated and Distance Education.

7 IOOF Buffaloes Lodge (former), 217-221 Oxford Street

Possibly the oldest building in Oxford Street, the foundation stone was laid by Premier Sir John Forrest on 3 November 1896. The Grand United Order of Oddfellows, later known as the International Order of Oddfellows, was established in Western Australia in July 1895 with three branches, including a Leederville branch. The organization was based on non-profit mutual self help, and a founding partner in the Friendly Societies Health Services (later HBF).The building, designed by architect AW Hoskins, comprised a timber hall with a two-storey stone façade with two rooms up and down. It was also used as a community hall by Leederville School and for local events. The front room became shops from around 1906, after the back portion burnt down. Brick additions were carried out in 1917 with further reconstruction work in 1960. Over the years the premises was used as various types of shop and restaurants. In the early 1980s it was purchased by Dr Pat Cranley, and 221 became his medical surgery. The practice became controversial for his revolutionary treatment of drug addicts. Following his death in 2004 the building was sold and the new owner completed extensive reconstruction and restoration work in 2008, which won the City's Building Design and Conservation Award in 2011. State Heritage listed.

8 St Mary's Church, cnr Franklin and Shakespeare streets

St Mary's Church Leederville was built in 1923, on the site of the Leeder family homestead, following the death of Theresa Leeder. It was erected in two stages, the first comprising the southern portion of the church with the entry porch and nave. The second stage, completed in 1938, saw the addition of transepts, a sanctuary and an impressive bell tower. Monsignor Maloney, the parish priest from 1919-1958, is generally held to have been instrumental in the design and development of the church. State Heritage listed.

9 Aranmore Catholic College, Franklin Street

In 1903 the Sisters of Mercy founded Aranmore School in a six-roomed cottage on the corner of Marian and Shakespeare streets. St Mary's Convent and School was built in 1933 with a primary school and high school section. St Mary's Boys School was added to the block in 1942. This became known as CBC (Christian Boys College) Leederville. A new primary and secondary school building (located between the convent and CBC buildings) was completed in 1954, and named St Mary's College. Due to growing numbers a new high school was constructed in 1965 on the site of the original weatherboard cottage where the school began. When a new primary school was built in Brentham Street, Leederville, in 1975, the St Mary's primary and secondary schools once again separated. With the pressures and costs of providing a quality education up to year 12, CBC Leederville and St Mary's School amalgamated, opening in 1987 as Aranmore College. A modern gymnasium addition was constructed 2012.

The Aranmore College Group, comprising St Mary's Church, Presbytery and Hall (former); St Mary's Convent and School buildings; CBC Leederville buildings, was listed on the State Heritage Register in 2005.

10 Oxford Hotel, 368 Oxford Street (cnr Anzac Road)

Built between 1900 and 1904. The licensee in 1905 was Mrs Annie McDonald. Over the years the building has been modified several times to accommodate the changing needs of hotel patrons. The rooms upstairs were offered as cheap accommodation for single men into the late 1980s. In 1999 Peter Hayes became the licensee and closed the hotel for extensive renovation and refurbishment of the ground floor and cellar. In 2004 the upstairs was converted into function rooms. A vacant block next door was developed into a beer garden and live performance venue in 2008.

11 RAAF Air Training Corps, Drill Hall & Mechanics Institute (former), 314-322 Vincent Street & 177 Oxford Street

The Leederville Mechanics Institute was built in 1909 to provide the working man with educational reading material and a place to meet for lectures. With World War I and the introduction of compulsory military training, the building was acquired by the Defence Department for use as a drill hall in 1913. Extra land was acquired adjoining the hall site for a parade ground. Around 1979 the Leederville Drill Hall was taken over by the RAAF for use by the Air Training Corps, who remained there until 2000. The site was developed into 58 apartments, 4 townhouses and 6 commercial tenancies, completed in 2002. The Drill Hall is listed on the State Heritage Register.

13 Venables Park, cnr Loftus and Vincent streets

The Venables family were pioneers of Leederville, arriving in 1891. John Risely Venables (b.1887) established an engineering business, hardware shop, service station and automotive services in Oxford Street, which his descendants continued. The building of the Mitchell Freeway in 1974 saw the demolition of many of the Venables buildings and the business were relocated. Venables and Lawrence hardware store closed 1999, after 80 years of trading at 99-101 Oxford Street. Venables Park was named in December 2000.