NORTH MELBOURNE HERITAGE REVIEW

THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

March 2022

Prepared for

CITY OF MELBOURNE

Prepared by

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Cover image: North Melbourne, Canning Place, 1935 (detail), H2001.291/53, F. Oswald Barnett Collection, State Library of Victoria

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Abbreviations

AAL	Aboriginal Advancement League
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
CoM	City of Melbourne
CPO	Central Plan Office, Landata, Victorian Land Registry Services
HCV	Housing Commission of Victoria
MCC	Melbourne City Council
MMBW	Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works
NMA	North Melbourne Association
PROV	Public Record Office Victoria
SLV	State Library of Victoria
VHD	Victorian Heritage Database

INTRODUCTION

This thematic environmental history has been prepared as part of the North Melbourne Heritage Review, Lovell Chen and Extent Heritage, 2022. It addresses the study area of this heritage review (Figure 1) as well as the broader suburb, to present the historical themes that have influenced North Melbourne's built form and character.

The history and development of North Melbourne have been affected by numerous factors including its Traditional Owners living on Country, location close to the developing Melbourne city centre, its topography and a distinct identity stemming from its status as a municipality for nearly 50 formative years.

The area now known as North Melbourne is believed to have been known by the Kulin name *Yern-da-ville* (Gibson, Gardner and Morey 2018). In the pre-colonial environment a creek ran south-west through the area, from the high ground of what is now Royal Park, into what was the West Melbourne Swamp. This creek would have traversed plains woodland and plains grassy woodland (pre-1750 'Ecological Vegetation Class', Victorian Government), alive with a range of birds, animals and plant species, providing Traditional Owners with a wide variety of natural resources.

North Melbourne has historically been a predominantly working-class suburb, but it also includes areas which were developed by those with wealth and standing. The suburb also provides evidence of a variety of events and themes through the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including shifts in demographics and redevelopment.

North Melbourne has been subject to extensive historical research previously, particularly by local residents and history groups, and this work has underpinned the development of this thematic history. Special acknowledgement is made of the historical research and writings of the Hotham History Project, both published and online.

The Elders and officers from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Boon Wurrung Foundation provided valuable direction for this research. The history has benefitted from the direct input of the Hotham History Project and other community members through consultation and drop-in sessions for the study and via Council's *Participate Melbourne* Website.

This wealth of material has been drawn on to explore the known and established historical themes of the suburb, and to draw out the nuances of distinctly North Melbourne themes, land uses and built form. The report references and draws on Context's *Thematic History – A history of the City of Melbourne's Urban Environment*, 2012 which covered the whole of the municipality. This history also references the themes set out in *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes,* produced by the Heritage Council of Victoria; and the *Indigenous cultural heritage and history within the Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation Area report produced for the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council, by Canning and Thiele, 2010.*

This report reflects the continuing intention of the City of Melbourne to engage directly with Traditional Owner groups to elevate their histories, stories and experiences in our understanding of the City of Melbourne. In accordance with the City of Melbourne's policy of engagement with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Boon Wurrung Foundation Traditional Owner groups, the Aboriginal history components of the Thematic Environmental History include information obtained from both primary and secondary

sources. This includes during consultation with Elders from the Wurundjeri (18 November 2019, 3 April 2019), Bunurong (22 January 2020, 5 March 2020) and Boon Wurrung (9 April 2020) groups.

These components are included within the thematic framework discussed below, with no new or additional themes identified as a result of this research and consultation, save that the Traditional Owners' preference for 'pre-colonial' rather than 'pre-contact' environment has been honoured.

This document is not intended as a comprehensive history of North Melbourne, and does not follow a strict chronological order. Instead, a brief chronological overview is presented at the beginning, to give context to the discussion of themes that follow. The history is structured with the main theme as each chapter, and relevant sub-themes which are explored in detail. Places within the suburb are identified as relating to these themes and sub-themes. The history also references places which are outside the study area of the North Melbourne Heritage Review, including at the fringes of the suburb, as well as outside the suburb itself. This recognises that adjoining development, and individual places, contribute to an understanding of the evolution of North Melbourne and in some cases were influential in the pre-colonial habitation and subsequent history of the suburb.

While many of the themes in previous municipal thematic histories are relevant, a distinct combination of themes emerged for North Melbourne and these are identified below. These combine to form a distinct local historical narrative of considerable interest in the context of the municipality as a whole. The resulting framework is specific to the place and reflects the individual history of North Melbourne. While much of the suburb's nineteenth century history has previously been recognised, further research could be undertaken on a number of the major themes in this report, including the women's welfare and politics, the mid-twentieth century transformation of parts of the suburb as a result of the Housing Commission of Victoria's 'slum clearance' work, and the impact of migration over the course of the twentieth century.

The main themes that form this history are:

- Pre-colonial environment: North Melbourne's original inhabitants

- Building North Melbourne: early subdivision and sale; nineteenth century development and twentieth century consolidation, including the influence of North Melbourne's topography on the built environment and the significant impact of the slum clearance movement

- Peopling North Melbourne: Traditional Owners; nineteenth century arrivals; twentieth century changes, including its historically working-class character

- North Melbourne's industry and workforce: manufacturing; working; retailing

- Governing North Melbourne: the formative years of municipal government; law and order

- Connecting North Melbourne: pre-colonial routes; linking North Melbourne by road; public transport; postal service

- Community life: religion and places of worship; welfare; education; women and children's welfare; hotels and temperance

- Shaping North Melbourne's political, cultural and creative life: struggling for political rights; sports and recreation; gathering and socialising; entertainment and performance

Figure 1   North Melbourne Heritage Review study area
                      Source: Nearmap (base map)

Chronology of contextual history

Pre-1835	Area that became known as North Melbourne inhabited by the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung speaking peoples of the Kulin Nation, and believed to have been known by the Kulin name *Yern-da-ville*
1835	Melbourne founded
Late 1840s	Calls to extend city boundaries to the north
1849	Land sales outside the Melbourne town reserve boundary, at the north-west of North Melbourne
1850	Foundation stone of the Benevolent Asylum laid
1851	Victoria's gold rushes commence
1852	First survey plans prepared for North Melbourne as an extension to Melbourne. Land sales took place.
1855	Hotham ward of Melbourne declared
1858	Allotments in Hotham Hill sold in Crown Land sales
1859	On 30 September 1859, the Municipal District of Hotham proclaimed.
1862-63	First town hall constructed on corner of Queensberry and Errol streets
1869	North Melbourne Football Club formed
1874	North Melbourne Primary School opened
1875-6	Hotham Town Hall constructed, designed by architect George Johnson
1880s	Peak of Melbourne's building boom
1887	Municipality's name changed from Hotham to North Melbourne
1890s	Economic depression following building boom
1905	North Melbourne incorporated back into the City of Melbourne
1911	Closure of Melbourne Benevolent Asylum, and subsequent subdivision and sale of residential land
Late 1920s	Start of the Great Depression
1930s	Rise of slum clearance movement
1940	Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) declares area bound by Abbotsford, Haines, Curzon and Molesworth streets to be a slum recreation area.
1940s onward	Demolition and replacement of housing by HCV in 'Happy Valley' and west of suburb
Late 1950s	Sale of 'own-your-own' flats in first stage of Hotham Gardens estate
Late 1960s	High rise public housing towers by HCV constructed in Hotham Estate, west of Melrose Street
1966	North Melbourne Association formed
1983	First municipal heritage study undertaken in North Melbourne

CHAPTER 1: PRE-COLONIAL ENVIRONMENT

- North Melbourne's original inhabitants

North Melbourne's original inhabitants

The pre-colonial environment of North Melbourne was inhabited by the Woiwurrung and Boon Wurrung speaking peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation, on undulating lands to the north of the Yarra River and east of the West Melbourne Swamp and the salt water lagoon known as the 'Blue Lake' (Sornig 2018). The broader area is likely to have stood at the interface between the lands of the Kurnaje-berreing clan of the Woi Wurrung between the Maribyrnong River and Birrarung (Yarra River) and the coastal lands of the Yalukut Weelam of the Boon Wurrung (Canning and Thiele, 4-5; Meyer 2014).[1] The study area is bounded by the Moonee Ponds Creek to the north and by Royal Park to the north-east, occupying a landscape that was historically characterised by gullies and high grounds, interspersed with creeks and ponds. The land was part of those areas that were affected by changes in the coastline over a long period, which one Elder related to the story of the 'Time of Chaos' in which Bunjil used his spear first to flood the land, and then again to stem the rising waters (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owners engagement, December 2019-April 2020). This area of plains woodland and plains grassy woodland would have provided Traditional Owners with a wide variety of natural resources. Albert Mattingley (Mattingley 1916: 83), who recorded his recollections of the pre-colonial context of the study area, notes how Traditional Owners 'used to camp and occasionally would hold a corroboree in these park-like lands', an observation corroborated by another early European resident who described a *nargee* (or corroboree) of approximately 200 people in the early 1840s in or just to the south of the study area:

> We went out one evening into the "bush" at the back of the Flag-staff Hill to witness […] a corroboree of the aborigines, camped then in some force in the immediate neighbourhood (McCrae 2012: 121).

As McBryde (cited in Canning and Thiele 2010: 4) notes, such gatherings in the pre-colonial period could count up to 800 people at a time in what is now the Melbourne Metropolitan area.

Visible in the 1850s map as a thin grey line running diagonally (Figure 2), North Melbourne's pre-colonial landscape was transected by a creek that collected run-off from Royal Park and Parkville and carried it west toward the West Melbourne Swamp and what is known as 'the Blue Lake'. Twentieth century recollections also noted the presence of a large gully running through the eastern portion of the study area. In 1934, 'Highett' wrote to *The Age*, noting, 'There was a gully, I remember, which ran from where the Hay Market now stands to the swamp…' (*The Age*, 6 October 1934, 6). This 'gorge', as it was referred to in 1882, provided drainage of the country on the northern side of the study area, including a large portion of Parkville (*North Melbourne Advertiser*, 11 August 1882, 3). In 1934, it was further noted that Parkville to the east of the study area was similarly characterised by 'a series of gullies' which were later filled in (*The Age*, 26 July 1934, 11). This is a significant detail for understanding the pre-colonial environment of North Melbourne, for as Canning and Thiele (2010, 7) note, 'deeply incised river and creek valleys' common in what is now the metropolitan Melbourne area 'would have provided the most

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[1] Note that in August 2017 the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages revised the spelling of the clan name to Yalukut Weelam, which explains the discrepancy between the name used here and that title of Eidelson's publication: see https://heritage.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Aboriginal_heritage/Yalukit_Willam_The_River_People_of_Port_Phillip, accessed 27 May 2020.

advantageous settlement localities for Aboriginal people throughout the history of human settlement in the region'.

Just south-west of North Melbourne, another important geographical feature to note is the Blue Lake (See Figure 3), a once-sizable lagoon that George Gordon McCrae saw in 1841, recalling in 1912:

> a real lake, intensely blue, nearly oval, and full of the clearest salt water … fringed gaily all round by … pig face … in full bloom, it seemed in the broad sunshine as though girdled about with a belt of magenta fire … the whole air heavy with the … odours of the golden Myrniong flowers. (McCrae 1912: 117)

He further described the lagoon as '…having a bottom of solid blue clay and laying at the high water level while the flats surrounding it were about one metre above high tide…' (McCrae 1912: 117).

In an article on the Blue Lake, Sornig described the Yarra River delta as 'once a fertile landscape dominated by a large blue saltwater lagoon', above which in 1835 John Batman described 'a cloud of a thousand quail flying over the miles of wetlands, while the lagoon was "upwards of a mile across, and full of swans, ducks, geese, etc."' (Sornig, SLV, 2018).

Figure 2   Plan of Melbourne, c. 1850s showing parts of Royal Park and North Melbourne. The pre-colonial creek is shown emerging from the southern boundary of Royal Park (yellow highlight).
Source: Vale Collection, State Library of Victoria
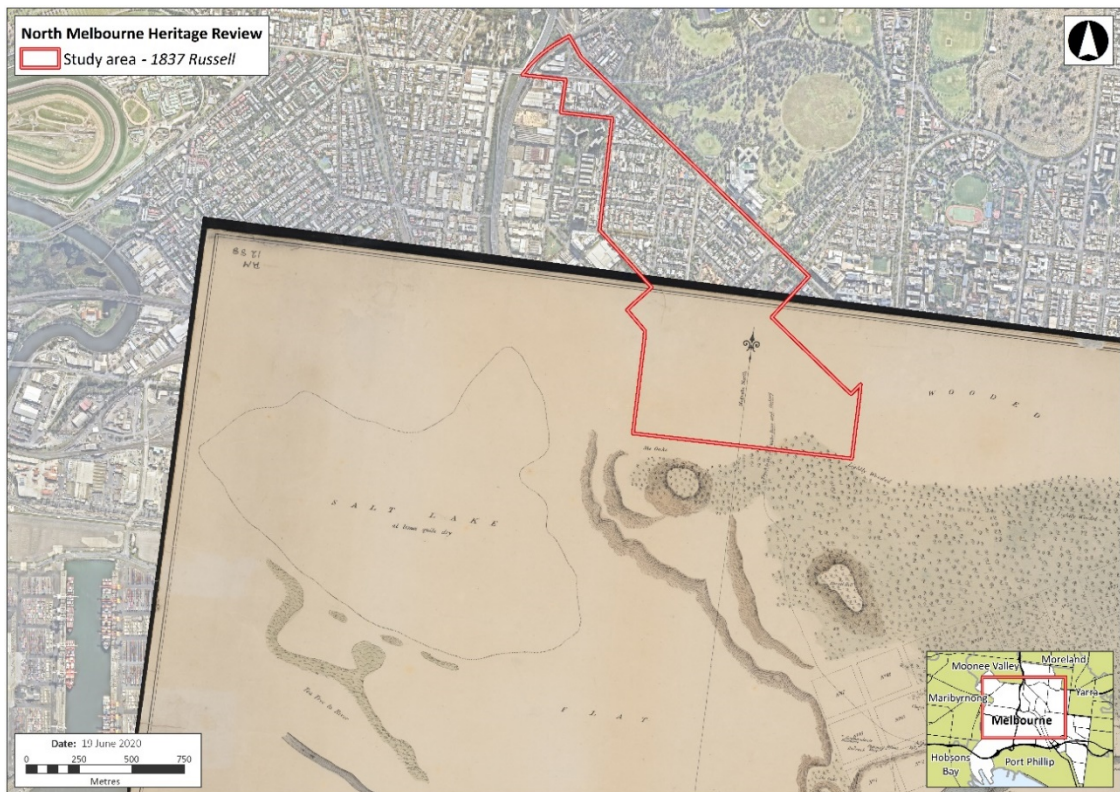
Figure 3   Map showing North Melbourne Heritage Review study area against a combination of part of Robert Russell's 1837 map of Melbourne and current aerial imagery, clearly showing the location of the 'Blue Lake' (labelled 'Salt Lake') to the south west and indicating the pre-colonial terrain to the south of the study area.
Sources: State Library of Victoria, Nearmap.

Albert Mattingley recalled his memories of these wetlands in 1852:

> I have already mentioned that a large marsh, at first called Batman's but which some years afterwards was called the West Melbourne Swamp, formed a portion of the western boundary of North Melbourne. It also formed a portion of the western boundary of West Melbourne, and extended southward nearly to the Yarra River. Between it and the river the land was slightly raised, and on this mound a fine belt of tea-tree grew about 25 feet in height, from which the settlers obtained their clothes-props. Snakes were frequently met with... On the waters of the large marsh or swamp lying between North Melbourne and the Saltwater River graceful swans, pelicans, geese, black, brown, and grey ducks, teal, cormorants, water-hens, sea-gulls and other aquatic birds disported themselves; while curlews, spur-winged plover, cranes, snipe, sand-pipers and dotterels either waded in its shallows or ran along its margin; and quail and stone plover, particularly the former, were very plentiful on its high banks (Mattingley 1916: 82-3).

Contemporary Traditional Owners have interpreted the presence of many of these bird species as likely food sources, and further noted the possible use of tea-trees adjoining the lake as a source of tannin for the curing of hides, as well as for medicinal purposes and shelter (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owners engagement, December 2019-April 2020). The Myrnong, (*Microseris scapigera*, also known as the Yam Daisy) was and remains a very important food source for Aboriginal people, being a staple in the pre-

colonial era both in the Melbourne area and beyond (Canning and Thiele: 6). This richness in natural resources reinforces the importance of such coastal lagoons and swamps for Aboriginal people in the pre-colonial era, which were drawn on to provide a broad range of seafoods, plants and animals, and with their limited seasonal fluctuations provided for dense occupation (Canning and Thiele: 7).

James Calder painted a view of the Blue Lake in the early 1860s, showing the study area largely undeveloped with a fringe of littoral vegetation (Figure 4). This painting illustrates the undulations of the land, and the proximity to water and resources. Another slightly later image, published in 1881, shows what appears to have been part of the Blue Lake from Flagstaff Hill, reiterating the size and distinctive oval shape observed by Mattingley (Figure 5).

Figure 4.   An 1860s view of the study area from Royal Park, with North Melbourne in the
             foreground, the Blue Lake behind it and Port Phillip Bay in the background.
             Source: James Calder, artist, Deutscher and Hackett

VIEW FROM FLAGSTAFF-HILL, WEST MELBOURNE, IN 1841.
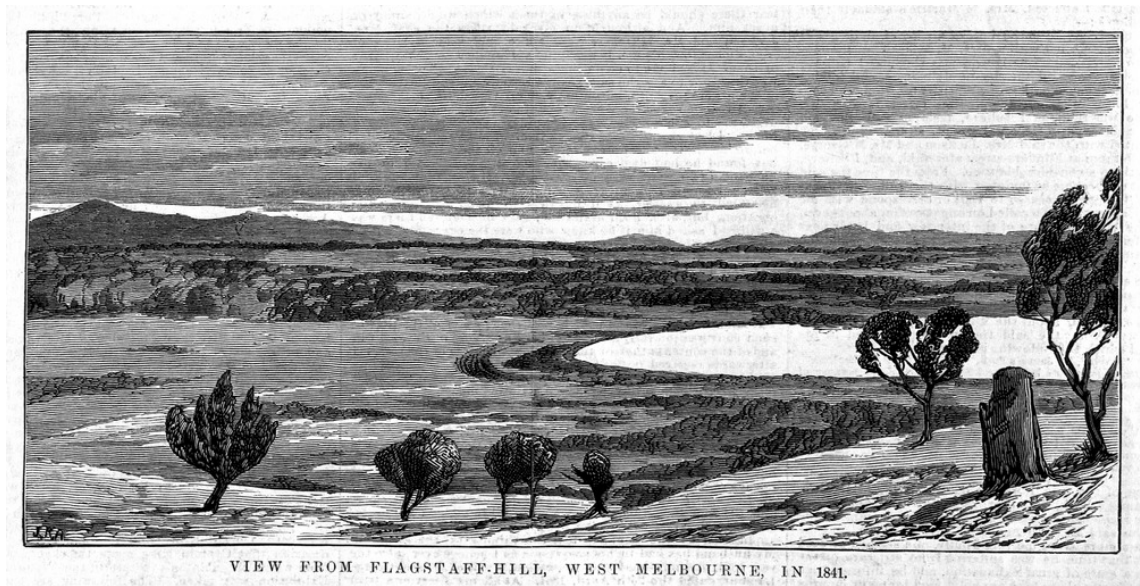
Figure 5   An 1881 image showing an 1841 perspective of the Blue Lake from Flagstaff Hill
Source: A/S09/04/81/124, State Library of Victoria

Places

- *Channelised creek* (HO3): The creek running from Royal Park in the north-east toward the former West Melbourne Swamp to the south west, now channelised (HO3)

CHAPTER 2: BUILDING NORTH MELBOURNE

- Early survey and land sales

- Nineteenth century development

- Twentieth century

Early survey and land sales

The majority of North Melbourne sits within what was the early Melbourne town reserve, although in the 1830s and 1840s, Crown land sales and development were concentrated to the south-east near the Yarra River. At the town reserve's western edge was the 'chain of waterholes known as the Moonee Moonee Ponds ('Moonee Ponds', eMelbourne). The crossing of this waterway at the north-west of North Melbourne was to become important in the early routes to Geelong and later to the goldfields to the north-west of the growing city.

By the mid to late 1840s, there were growing calls for the boundaries of the city of Melbourne to be extended (Plan of North Melbourne, c. 1846, SLV). In 1849, a site was chosen for the city's major early welfare institution, the Benevolent Asylum, on 'the summit of the hill overlooking the junction of the Moonee Moonee Ponds with the Salt Water swamp' (*The Argus* 6 September 1849: 6). The foundation stone was laid in June 1850, and the asylum opened in 1851 (Kehoe 1998: 13). For over 60 years the position of the asylum at the then western end of Victoria Street prevented the westward extension of Victoria Street.

In 1852, during Robert Hoddle's tenure as Surveyor-General, survey plans were prepared by Charles Laing for the first residential allotments north of Victoria Street in what became Carlton and North Melbourne. With this survey, the extension of the city to its north was effectively formalised ('Plan of City of Melbourne and Extension Northwards', Laing 1852, SLV). The new streets north of Victoria Street followed a generally rigorous grid, on a north-south and east-west alignment. Flemington Road, on the northern boundary of North Melbourne, was based on the earlier track to Geelong.

From the perspective of the Traditional Owners however, the period of surveying and the Crown land sales that followed coincided with the State Government policy of 'protection', as the people who had inhabited the area in the pre-colonial period were now displaced from their traditional lands without compensation. This was followed by generations who were subject to successive discriminatory policies and the impacts of introduced disease, such as the 1847 influenza epidemic that decimated the Aboriginal population (Canning and Thiele 2010, 18). Few if any material traces remain from this period, increasing our reliance on the historical records of the colonisers to attempt to understand the upheaval that would have been experienced. In a sense this displacement and upheaval resulted in a double-dispossession, as the disruption to intergenerational oral history became a further legacy of policies that first dislocated Traditional Owners from their lands, and then deprived subsequent generations of Traditional Owners of the direct transmission of collective memory for a critical period of their history.

A Crown land survey plan of 1852 indicates that the term 'North Melbourne' referred to the allotments along Spencer and King streets in West Melbourne, with an area called 'Parkside' located to the north of Victoria Street (Figure 6). Parkside took in parts of what are now Parkville and North Melbourne, with allotments laid out to either side of Flemington Road, and along Queensberry Street West. The survey plan, which was updated with purchasers' names, shows a number of reserves for institutions, including for the Benevolent Asylum, the Presbyterians, a Wesleyan Church, a market reserve (meat market), a reserve for 'baths and wash houses', and a mechanics' institute and town hall on the block bounded by

Curzon, Arden, Errol and O'Shanassy streets. The rear of allotments on Baillie, Provost and Lothian streets were served by looped rights-of-way, a town planning device that was not repeated elsewhere in the suburb. Allotments east of Curzon Street, between Victoria and Queensberry streets, were auctioned in September 1852, with allotments in Dryburgh and Abbotsford streets sold in March 1853 (Jika Jika M314 (13) CPO; *The Argus* 8 March 1853: 3). The sales attracted purchases by a number of early investors including Hugh Glass, A H Knight and J Allison, all of whom had purchased allotments in other Crown land sales in the period.

A subsequent Crown land sale in September 1854 for town lots in Baillie and Provost streets was 'well attended', and the 'very animated competition' produced high prices (*The Argus* 28 September 1854: 5). By 1853, notices of intent to build had been registered with the City of Melbourne Council for North Melbourne, although given that the name was used for parts Carlton in this early period, it is unclear whether these buildings were within the suburb. Equally, family notices published in Melbourne newspapers confirm European residents in North Melbourne by late 1853, with births and deaths variously listed for Villiers, Errol, and Curzon streets (*The Argus* 14 November 1853: 4, 3 December: 4, 12 December 1853: 5).

The Kearney plan of 1855 (Figure 7) shows the northern part of North Melbourne was intended to address Royal Park, with radial allotments around London-style circuses incorporating small parks and squares. However, the pressures of the population boom following the start of the gold rushes saw this scheme modified in the late 1850s, increasing the number of allotments within this area. A subdivision to the north of Arden Street was prepared in 1858 and this replaced the small parks and curved streets with a more regular grid arrangement, with Molesworth and Chapman streets laid out to follow the alignment of Flemington Road (Figure 8). This subdivision also established O'Shanassy, Haines and Erskine streets among others running east-west, with the extension of existing north-south streets, Abbotsford and Dryburgh streets.
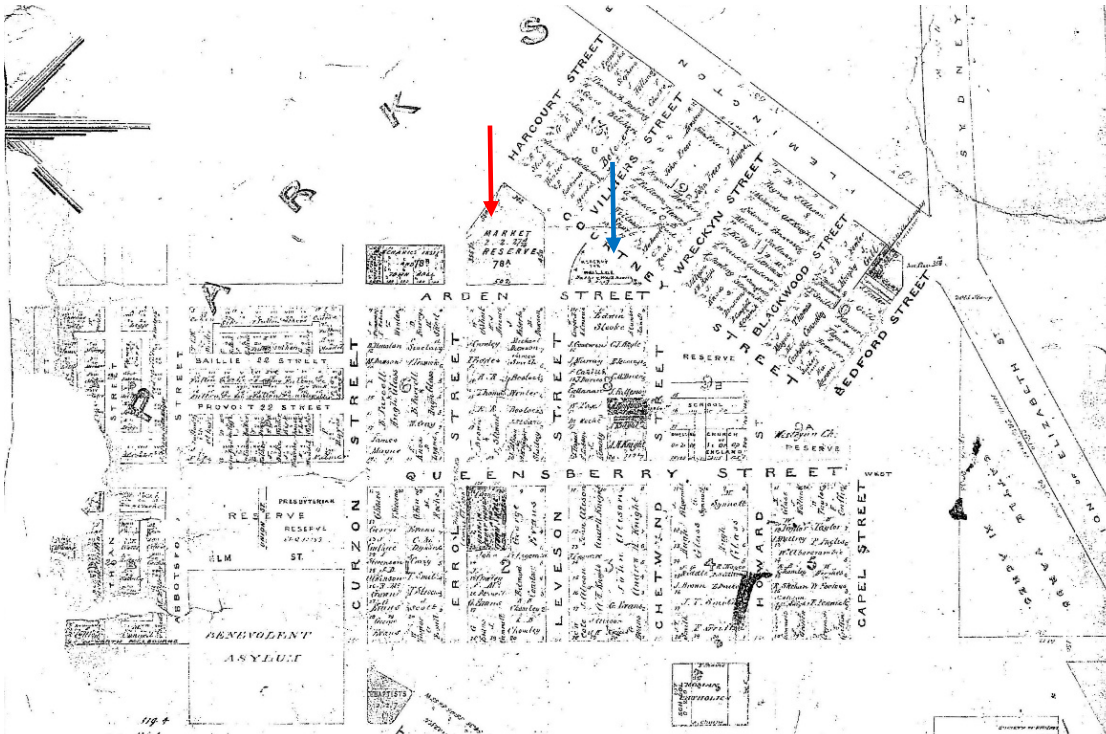
Figure 6   Department of Lands and Survey plan showing early Crown subdivision of 'Parkside' (North Melbourne), 1852. The site reserved for 'mechanics inst [institute] and town hall' is indicated by red arrow, market reserve indicated by blue arrow
Source: M313(1), Central Plan Office, Landata, Victorian Land Registry Services
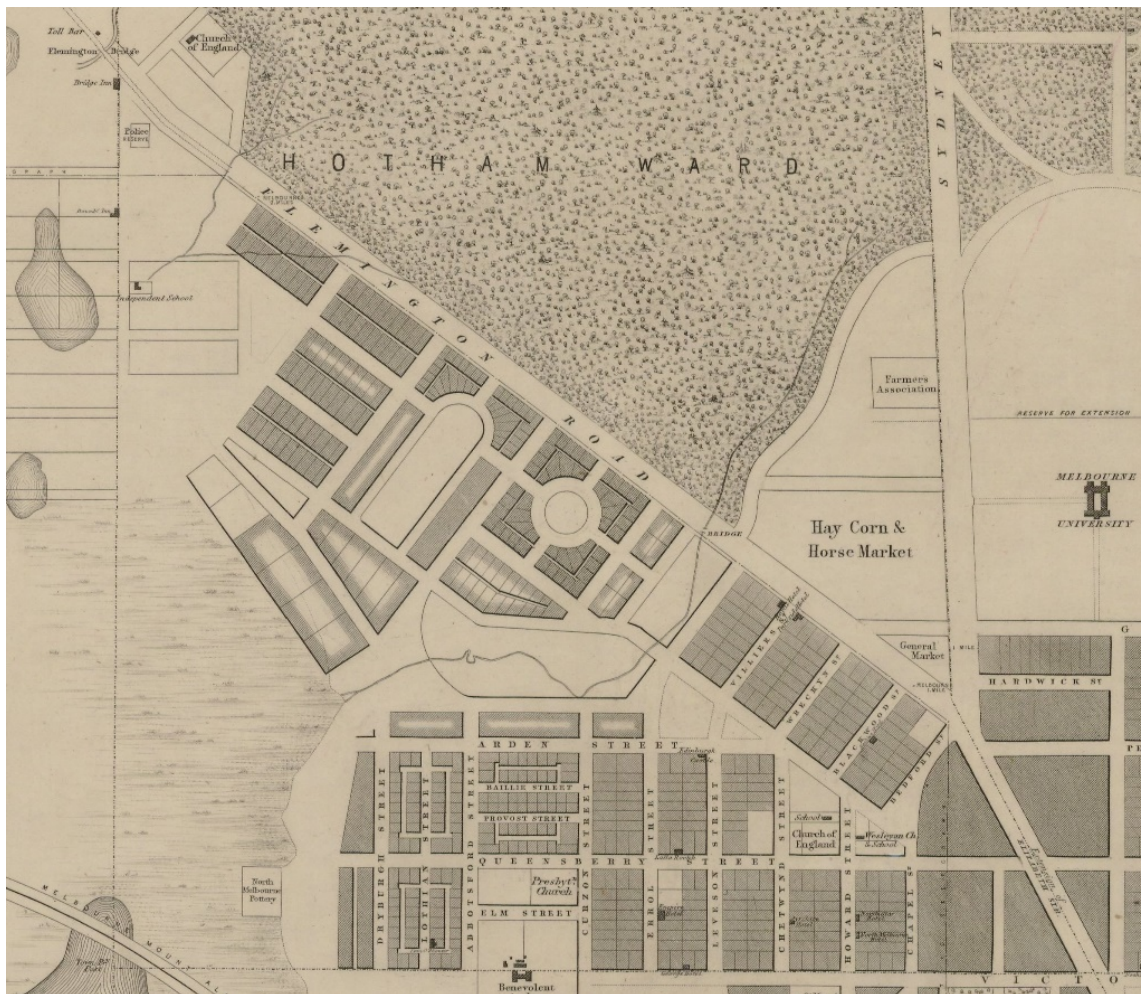
Figure 7   Detail of 1855 Kearney map of Melbourne, showing surveys (both actual and planned) of
North Melbourne. Note the subdivision layout of Hotham Hill area differs from what was
sold in the late 1850s, as shown in Figure 4
Source: James Kearney, State Library of Victoria

The elevated area along Molesworth, Chapman, Erskine and Brougham streets became known as
'Hotham Hill', and allotments were sold in stages from 1858 into the mid-1860s. With land between
Haines and O'Shanassy streets not subdivided until the early 1870s, Hotham Hill was somewhat
geographically separated from the urban development of North Melbourne to the south.

Interestingly, despite the removal of areas for public reserves from the earlier plan, there were new
public reserves shown along the alignment of the creek between Haines and O'Shanassy streets, a
location evidently not then suitable for residential development (Figure 8). A 'proposed reserve for a
public square', bound by Erskine, Dryburgh, Canning and Abbotsford streets, was the site of a quarry in
the 1850s (Town Allotments North Melbourne and Parkside, 1858, SLV, Figure 9). These reserves,
however, were given over to residential use in in the early 1870s. This included the 1870s subdivision of
126 residential allotments between Haines and O'Shanassy streets, bisected by the bluestone drain
which by then carried the creek (Hotham M373(A), 1872 CPO, Figure 10). Likewise in 1872, Carroll Street
was created with building allotments surveyed on the quarry site previously proposed for a public
square (Hotham M381(C) CPO). The former baths site and the market reserve were also resurveyed and

sold for residential purposes (Jika Jika M314(13) CPO). Such changes demonstrate the developmental pressure on the suburb as Melbourne's population boomed.

The north-west of North Melbourne was sold earlier than the rest of the suburb, as it was initially located outside the Melbourne town reserve. This section was in the Parish of Doutta Galla, to the west of the appropriately named Boundary Road, near the important crossing of Flemington Road over the Moonee Ponds Creek. Sales of two acres lots in Portion 16 of Doutta Galla commenced in 1849, with earlier purchasers including G Kirk, S Craig, W Smith and W Plummer on Boundary Road (Doutta Galla D85(8) Sheet 3 CPO). An early parish plan of this portion of Doutta Galla, however, shows the impediment to permanent development on this land, with the 'bed of the Moonee Ponds' shown west of Boundary Road (Figure 11).

Figure 8   Detail of 'Plan of North Melbourne and Parkside', Public Lands Office subdivision plan, 1858, showing changed arrangement of streets and allotments in the north of the suburb. Note public and plantation reserves along creek alignment (indicated)
Source: Vale Collection, State Library of Victoria
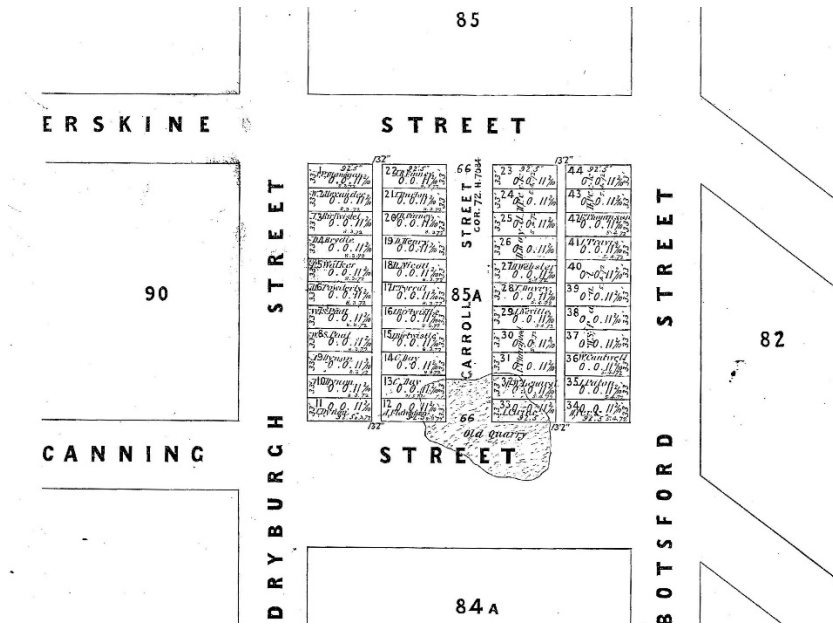
Figure 9   Small subdivision of 1872 on site of former quarry
                    Source: M381C, Central Plan Office, Landata, Victorian Land Registry Services
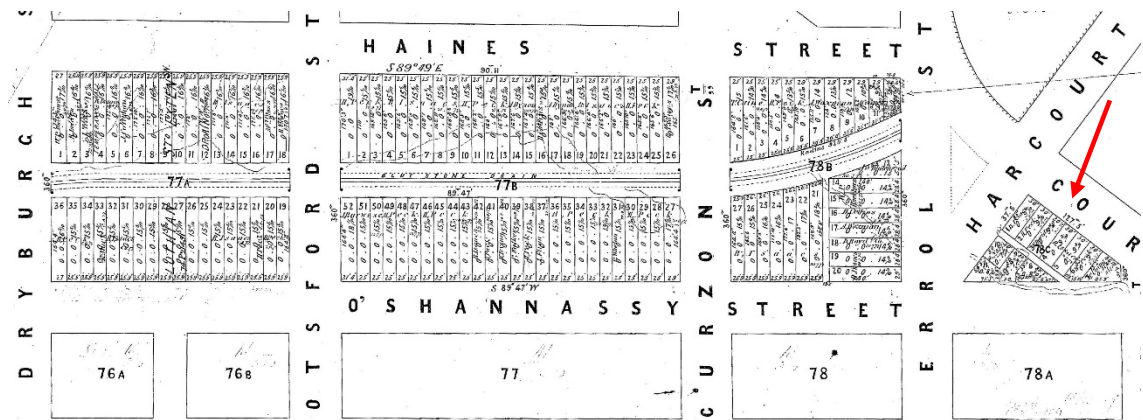
Figure 10   Subdivision comprising residential allotments between O'Shanassy and Haines streets, 1872, replacing earlier public reserves, including the former market reserve (indicated)
                    Source: M373A, Central Plan Office, Landata, Victorian Land Registry Services
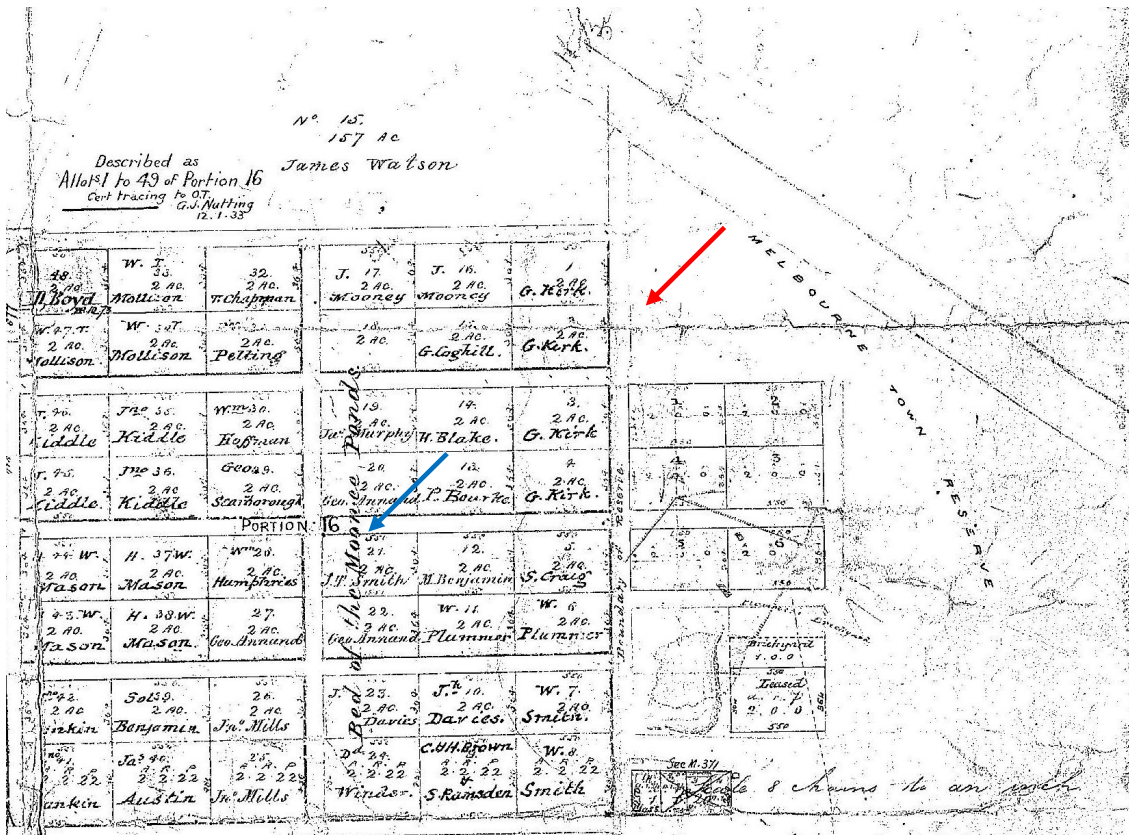
Figure 11   Detail of plan of Parish of Doutta Galla, showing allotments along Boundary Road (red arrow) at edge of Melbourne town reserve. Note reference to 'bed of the Moonee Ponds' (blue arrow)
Source: D84, Put-Away Plan, Central Plan Office, Landata, Victorian Land Registry Services

Nineteenth century development

Residential and civic development in North Melbourne was influenced both by the official subdivision of Crown land and the topography of the suburb. Due to it being bounded by heavily trafficked main roads, the suburb is physically separate from other localities, giving it an almost 'island' and insular character. As a general rule, while the elevated Hotham Hill area to the north retained relatively generous allotment sizes and developed with larger buildings, and the commercial and civic heart grew at the south of the suburb, the 'valley' in the centre was where much of the more modest housing was located. The first house was reportedly in Bendigo Street, a four-roomed timber building built in 1852, occupied by the Mattingley family (Mattingley 1916: 84).

Such was the growth of North Melbourne, that in January 1855, it was proclaimed as the Hotham ward of the City of Melbourne, after colonial Lieutenant-Governor Sir Charles Hotham (Hannah 2006: 17). The first rates assessment of the ward was undertaken in mid-1855; this comprised the first areas sold in the 1850s Crown land sales. The rate books show that the vast majority of early residences in the suburb were cottages constructed of wood, most often of two rooms, while dwellings of three or more rooms were rare in this early period. Iron buildings and tents were also relatively common, with a much smaller number of brick or stone buildings. Little Howard Street, for example, located at the suburb's south-east, was listed with seven rateable properties, all wooden houses, six of two rooms, one with an attic, and a single three-roomed dwelling (CoM rate books, Hotham ward, 1855, rate nos 128-135, VPRS

5707/P3 PROV). A small group of more substantial residences was situated at the corner of Victoria and Errol streets, with five houses ranging from three to six rooms (CoM rate books, Hotham ward, 1855, rate nos 305-309, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV). One of these included the six-room timber house of Francis Gell, a solicitor who later stood as a Hotham ward councillor (*The Age* 7 February 1856: 3).

A relatively large and early residence which is still extant in the suburb is Osborne House (Figure 12) at 456 Victoria Street, which was constructed for the prominent ship owner and merchant, George Ward Cole, in 1854. The two-storey timber house appears to have been rented out by Cole, whose main residence was in Brighton. Rate book entries list a 10 room house on Victoria Street as variously occupied by W H Hart in 1855, Charles Payne in 1856 and Joshua Thompson in 1863 ('VHR H0101 – Osborne House' VHD; CoM rate books, Hotham ward, 1855 rate no. 168, 1856 rate no 162; Hotham rate books, 1863 rate no. 311, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV). From as early as 1863, the Misses Haynes operated a Ladies College from the house (*The Argus* 16 February 1863: 8).

Ten years after the first sales of land in North Melbourne, the southern part of the suburb was substantially occupied with buildings. By this time, the suburb had separated from Melbourne and had become a separate municipality, with access to a rate base. Although small wooden cottages remained as the most common residential building type, brick buildings were beginning to proliferate, indicating the increased wealth and sense of permanency of both the suburb, and Melbourne more broadly (Figure 13). Rows of terraces and cottage pairs had been developed, with landlords commonly owning multiple dwellings in a single group to lease out to tenants. For example, a Mrs Collins was recorded in the 1863 rate books as owning two wooden houses and two brick houses in Baillie Street, none of which she resided in (Hotham rate books, 1863, rate nos 995-998, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV). Henry Johnston owned four brick houses in the same street, leasing three and residing in the fourth, which was the largest of the row (Hotham rate books, 1863, rate nos 1006-1009, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV). While tents appear to have all but disappeared from North Melbourne by 1863, iron dwellings still remained.

The suburb's little streets – lanes and rights-of-way – had also been developed for housing, indicating the pressure for residential accommodation in Melbourne in this period. Small wooden and iron dwellings and some brick houses were all recorded as rateable properties in Little Lothian and Little Dryburgh streets (Hotham rate books, 1863, rate nos 553-556, 572-573, 620-623, 636-638, 806-809, 821-823, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV). Likewise, a group of small brick cottages had been constructed in Little Provost Street by the late 1850s (Hotham rate books, 1863, rate nos 867-869, 884-884, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV), and these survive today.

A commercial and civic precinct had also developed by this time, centred on Queensberry, Errol and Leveson streets. Hotels were prominent, including the bluestone Lalla Rookh in Queensberry Street and the Empire Hotel in Errol Street; bakers, grocers and butchers; and small-scale manufacturers including saddle and boot makers were also operating (*Sands & Kenny* 1857). Development along Victoria Street related to its role as a main thoroughfare out of the city, and its proximity to the market, now Queen Victoria Market. The presence of saddle and tent makers, farriers and veterinarians, also demonstrates the importance of these early North Melbourne commercial activities in servicing the growing goldfields traffic and migration of people to the gold rush centres north-west of Melbourne (*Sands & Kenny* 1857).

Figure 12   Osborne House, Victoria Street, photographed in c. 1970
             Source: 17838, City of Melbourne Libraries

Figure 13   View of south side of Queensberry Street from Howard Street towards Errol Street,
             c. 1875. The 'Dr Moore' building in the photograph is extant at 429 Queensberry Street.
             Source: American and Australasian Photographic Company, State Library of New South
             Wales

Hotham Hill

With its elevated position, and its geographic separation from the commercial and civic centre of North Melbourne to the south, the area known as Hotham Hill developed a somewhat genteel reputation. Many of its allotments were of more generous proportions than the earlier subdivisions to the south and it was developed with some substantial residences (Roberts 2002: 17). By the mid-1870s, as noted by the *North Melbourne Advertiser,* houses were 'springing up in all directions' and Hotham Hill was 'rapidly progressing' (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 7 July 1876: 2). As noted by Winsome Roberts for the Hotham History Project:

> The prominent members of civic Hotham were to settle along Flemington Road or Chapman Street … The socially prominent and civic leaders of Hotham would enjoy their hillside views of the bay and parkside breezes … (Roberts 2002: 17)

While timber was a dominant early building material in the southern part of the suburb, the use of brick was more common on Hotham Hill. In Chapman Street, for example, six of the seven houses constructed by 1866 were of brick, demonstrating the relative level of wealth in this area. Residents at this time included 'successful entrepreneurs' John Barwise and Samuel King (Roberts 2002: 20).

The more substantial houses constructed in this area received attention in the suburb's newspapers, the *North Melbourne Advertiser* and the *North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser.* The newly completed Milton Hall, at the corner of Dryburgh and Curran streets was described in 1884 by the *North Melbourne Advertiser* as*:*

> … one of the most handsome structures in town, and for its architectural lines, is prominent to all persons passing … In a word, Milton Hall is replete with every comfort, and has been completed in a style regardless of cost (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 5 September 1884: 3).

Milton Hall was the residence of Hotham's mayor Robert Langford and his wife, and its completion was celebrated by a large gathering of 'well known local residents' (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 5 September 1884: 3).

Real estate advertising of the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s also promoted a sense of the relative exclusivity of this area, with descriptions of properties in Hotham Hill including:

> Beautiful healthy situation … (*The Argus* 22 September 1868: 8).

> … on the very summit of Hotham Hill, and commands an extensive view of the bay and surrounding country (*The Argus* 4 February 1869: 2).

> … commanding a most magnificent view of the Bay, with Melbourne and its Suburbs so grouped as to relieve any weariness to the senses, thus ensuring a thorough change from business after the heat and toil of the day (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 2 April 1875: 2).

> The auctioneers particularly draw the attention of gentlemen and professional men to this property which besides containing a substantial villa of 7 rooms … stands on a spacious block of land with a good frontage and large depth to one of the best streets on the hill (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 21 May 1886: 2).

A number of services were in place in Hotham Hill by the 1880s, including a group of shops on Molesworth Street to the west of Curzon Street, and a Wesleyan Chapel and a Bible Christian Chapel on Brougham Street (*Sands & McDougall* 1885). A police station was in operation at 59 Brougham Street

by 1890, following calls by locals for a dedicated and closer police presence to deal with issues of larrikinism (*Sands & McDougall* 1890; *The Herald* 29 July 1887: 4).

End of the nineteenth century

By 1891, the Town of North Melbourne had 4,306 rateable properties, with an average of 4.9 people per dwelling *(Victorian Year Book* 1890-91: 252, 258). The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plans of the mid-1890s demonstrate the difference in situation for the residents of Hotham Hill and the 'valley', colloquially sometimes known as Happy Valley (Figure 14). Buildings along Chapman Street are shown as detached villas, typically of brick, which is denoted by diagonal hatching. These properties had substantial gardens, and the residences were often set back from the street. While there are terrace rows of various sizes, they were built of brick and many were set back from Chapman Street. Meanwhile, closer to the valley, the almost triangular block bounded by Molesworth, Abbotsford, Haines and Curzon streets, presents as a much more crowded neighbourhood. The terrace houses to Abbotsford Street are shown as constructed closely together with no setback from the street. Numerous houses had been built in the rights-of-way, by then named laneways, behind the main streets, with small timber and brick dwellings fronting these minor streets. It was this area that was to later become the focus of the slum clearance movement and the efforts of the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV).

To the south, the commercial and civic precinct at Errol and Queensberry streets was also substantially developed, with the imposing town hall as its centrepiece, the clock tower visible from the surrounding streets. Many of the early timber dwellings on main thoroughfares had been replaced with brick houses, as had early shops and hotels with more substantial two-storey structures.

Places:

- *Osborne House, 456 Victoria Street (VHR H0101)*: Substantial two-storey timber residence of 1854

- *95 and 97 Chapman Street (*HO3): A pair of single-storey early Victorian bluestone dwellings, no. 95 was built in 1866 with the adjacent no. 97 built in 1875

- *347 Flemington Road (*HO3): A substantial 1892 freestanding villa

- *2 Haines Place (HO3)*: Rare surviving early Victorian single room brick cottage

- *James Terrace, 22-30 Wood Street (*HO3): A row of polychrome brick single storey terraces constructed in 1889 on an elevated site

- *Little Provost Street (HO3)*: group of modest residences and cottages of c. 1859 and 1868, demonstrative of early laneway residential development

- *Former Lalla Rookh Hotel, 509-511 Queensberry Street (HO3):* Early bluestone hotel building, c. 1857

Figure 14   MMBW 160:1 plan of the north part of North Melbourne, showing buildings on
               Molesworth, Chapman and part of Harker streets, 1895
               Source: State Library of Victoria

Twentieth century consolidation

Edwardian and interwar period

Two significant events appear to have buoyed development in North Melbourne in the first decades of the twentieth century. Firstly, the financially troubled municipality of North Melbourne was amalgamated back into the City of Melbourne in 1905, and secondly the Benevolent Asylum was closed, and the site subdivided and sold for residential development.

The closure of the asylum in 1911 (see Chapter 7) opened up residential allotments in both North Melbourne and West Melbourne, and this enabled the connection of the western and eastern sections of Victoria Street. In October 1912, it was reported that the land was 'at last being prepared for subdivision and sale' (*The Herald* 2 October 1912: 4). The sale took place in February 1913, and the site attracted 'considerable attention', given the rarity of such an amount of land so close to the city (*The Herald* 30 January 1913: 3). *The Argus* reported on the auction of the 53 allotments:

> … bidding was exceedingly brisk. There was a very large attendance of buyers (*The Argus* 24 February 1913: 13).

Interestingly, as reported by *The Age*, it was the North Melbourne allotments proving to be most popular with bidders, despite these being 'not considered to be so good as … the West Melbourne side' (*The Age* 24 February 1913: 13). The earliest residences were constructed in Abbotsford and Victoria streets in 1914-1916 and by 1920, the former asylum site had been substantially built upon, with 11 houses constructed on Elm Street, six on Abbotsford Street and five on Curzon Street. The newly created section of Victoria Street incorporated both houses and commercial sites, as well as the substantial Loco Hall of 1914, built for railway workers (*Sands & McDougall* 1920). Such rapid development of this area indicates the rarity of vacant residential allotments so close to the city.

It was not only the former asylum site that saw the construction of new residences, with the regeneration of vacant or underdeveloped land in pockets across North Melbourne. In 1914, a terrace row of brick cottages was constructed by landowner Clement Davidson on a sloping site on the east side of Errol Street (CoM, registration no. 466, 30 January 1914, via Miles Lewis Australian Architectural Index). Likewise, in the north of the suburb, a group of semidetached brick pairs was constructed in c. 1916 in Canning Street (CoM Building Application Index, 59 Canning Street, BA 187, 7 June 1916). Civic and welfare institutions, too, constructed new premises, including the North Melbourne Court House, the Salvation Army, the North Melbourne crèche, the Presbyterian neglected children's home and two religious schools. Residential development continued through to the interwar period, although the lack of available space meant that smaller numbers of buildings were constructed in the twentieth century than in the nineteenth century.

'Improving' North Melbourne

It was during the early part of the twentieth century that some efforts were made to 'improve' or 'beautify' the suburb through the planting of medians and small parks. Pleasance Gardens, for example, was established in a wide section of Canning Street in 1902, when it was suggested something 'might be done to it. A rockery might be made of cheap stone' (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 2 May 1902: 2). A tree reserve was gazetted in 1905, and limited planting took place in 1906 (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 7 July 1905: 2, 21 September 1906: 2). Gardiner Reserve was reserved as an ornamental reserve in the 1880s, and was partly fenced by the 1890s, with the open drain of the creek bisecting it. It was not formally developed for recreation until the interwar period when it was proposed to install a playground and boundary planting took place (*The*

Argus, 17 December 1921: 16). Both Gardiner Reserve and Errol Reserve include substations which were constructed in the interwar period. Streets within the suburb were also planted, most notably Harris Street and Plane Tree Way, following the line of the creek, which was planted by the North Melbourne council in 1905, just prior to amalgamation with the City of Melbourne. The works were spurred by a petition from residents received by the council at its February 1905 meeting, asking that trees be planted in Harris Street (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 3 March 1905: 2).

'Slum clearance' and the Housing Commission of Victoria

As with other inner city suburbs of Melbourne, North Melbourne became a target of the Housing Commission of Victoria's (HCV) so-called 'slum clearance' efforts from the 1930s. The suburb in this period comprised mostly nineteenth century residential buildings which had been constructed as densely developed areas (Figure 15). Although the slum clearance movement – which comprised the reclamation of large areas, the demolition of houses identified as sub-standard and their replacement with new dwellings – stemmed from a desire to improve living conditions of Melbourne's most poor, it also had the effect of displacing communities, many of whom had longstanding connections to the area. The work of the HCV was to have a significant impact on the built fabric of the western half of North Melbourne, as well as the lives of its residents.

Frederick Oswald Barnett was studying at Melbourne University in the late 1920s and early 1930s and established a study group of people from a number of community organisations. Initially meeting to discuss housing reform, the group evolved as the nucleus of the slum abolition movement. Barnett was appointed as a member of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board established by Premier Albert Dunstan in 1936, and the vice-chairman of the subsequent HCV (Russell 1979, 'Barnett, Frederick Oswald', ADB). In 1934, a year before the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Melbourne, Barnett described action on the slums of Melbourne as 'a centenary duty' and an 'investment for the state' (*The Herald* 16 January 1934: 6). Barnett surveyed the inner suburbs of Melbourne, and documented the laneways, housing and residents of parts of North Melbourne. His photographs observe the 'fine wide streets' of the suburb, but focus on subjects including an 'un-named lane off Byron Street' and houses with 'external bathing facilities' (Figure 16-Figure 18, F Oswald Barnett collection, SLV). One photograph of Hardwicke Street (Figure 16) was accompanied with the caption which noted the economic considerations of redeveloping such areas:

> Dilapidated houses. Rusty roofs. City Council has proposed rebuilding of this area. The first scheme was cottages. Each cottage, with land to cost £1,375. That scheme was abandoned and the present scheme under discussion is one of tenement buildings (H2001.291/56, F Oswald Barnett Collection, SLV).

In late 1940, the HCV declared the 4.7 acre (2 hectare) area bound by Abbotsford, Haines, Curzon and Molesworth streets as a slum reclamation area, the first such declared area in Melbourne (Howe 1988: 42). The triangular area also included smaller streets, being Hardwicke Street and the small lanes Pool Street and Avon Place, all of which gave access to small residences. Although prepared some 30 years earlier, the MMBW detail plan of the area illustrates the density of development and numerous small residences in the reclamation area (Figure 19). Notices of eviction were sent in early 1941, causing great concern for residents, owners, and the broader community, and nearly 50 appeals were lodged by owners with the North Melbourne Court to protest the demolition orders (*The Age* 6 March 1941: 11). One correspondent to *The Age* worried about the fate of those who might not be able to afford alternative accommodation*:*

> What is going to happen to some of those old-age pensioners who have already been evicted, and other pensioners, owners of small freeholds, who will not receive an adequate sum to provide a home in substitution for the homes they lose? (*The Age* 27 February 1941: 6)

The development of this site was drawn out, and hindered by the war effort and recovery in the early-mid 1940s, when the HCV's efforts were instead directed towards addressing the housing shortage by constructing large estates elsewhere in Melbourne (Mills 2010: 30-31).

However, despite the delays, the public housing estate known as the Molesworth Estate was to be the location of the HCV's 'first excursion into flat-building', as noted in the *Argus* in 1945:

> … the general layout will include a bedroom and living room, each opening on to a sun balcony through glass doors and windows. Behind these two large rooms will be a second bedroom, toilet, bathroom, hallway and kitchen, with a small storeroom on the porch of landing outside the hall door (*The Argus* 21 December 1945: 3).

There were discussions between the HCV and Melbourne City Council (MCC) as to the size of the proposed flats, with criticism of the two-bedroom dwellings proposed as 'not suitable for family life' (*The Herald* 7 March 1946: 7). By this time the MCC had begun to step away from its involvement in the redevelopment of the area, apparently spooked by the difficulties encountered of high costs and the resistance by local residents (Mills 2010: 32).

Progressive demolition of houses and construction of the numerous two and three-storey blocks of flats across the site took place in the second half of the 1940s and into the early 1950s. Residents moved into the first two blocks of flats in 1948, the eight families that took up residence indicating that concerns about the size of the dwellings had been addressed (*The Herald* 8 March 1948: 3). Development of the Molesworth Estate was notable for its use of experimental concrete construction techniques, with the HCV's Holmesglen factory supplying prefabricated walls and internal partitions for the blocks constructed on Molesworth Street in 1949-50. The HCV's stated object was:

> … to test the practicability of extending the scope of the factory which at present is limited to the production of single houses or pairs (HCV Annual Report 1949-50: 8).

In 1953, a second smaller area of North Melbourne, bounded by Lothian, Arden, O'Shanassy and Abbotsford streets, was also declared a reclamation area. It comprised 'about 23 old houses in various stages of dilapidation and a shop' (HCV Annual Report 1953-53: 8). In 1954, *The Age* reported that the 'slum block', was to be demolished and replaced with HCV flats (*The Age* 30 April 1954: 5). The three blocks of flats were completed and occupied during 1955 (HCV Annual Report 1955-56: 41).

During the 1960s, however, the focus of the HCV shifted to the construction of the much larger scale Hotham Estate on Boundary Road at the west of the suburb. It was here that the high-rise towers were built, providing significantly more flats than the low-rise Molesworth and Arden Estates. This estate was to provide accommodation for over 1,600 people, replacing the homes of 396 residents (Mills 2010: 204). While undoubtedly affecting a broad range of residents, consultation with Traditional Owners highlighted in particular how a number of Aboriginal families were affected by the slum clearances. One Wurundjeri Elder was born on Balston Street, which used to run between Boundary, Alfred, Melrose and Sutton Streets, an area adjoining the study area that was subsequently cleared for the development of the public housing that stands there today (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owner engagement, December 2019-April 2020).

Figure 15   1931 aerial photograph of the area bound by Dryburgh, Arden, Errol and Chapman streets, subject to slum reclamation declarations by the Housing Commission of Victoria
Source: Historical Aerial Photography Collection, Landata, Victorian Land Registry Services

Figure 16   View south along Hardwicke Street, North Melbourne, 1935, with small houses either side
Source: H2001.291/56, F Oswald Barnett, State Library of Victoria

Figure 17   View south along Avon Place, 1935, with four timber residences fronting this street. A
             house on Haines Street can be seen at the end of the lane
             Source: H2001.291/54, F Oswald Barnett collection, State Library of Victoria

Figure 18   Man presumed to be F Oswald Barnett in front of two iron houses in Byron Street, c. 1935
             Source: H2001.291/65, F Oswald Barnett Collection, State Library of Victoria
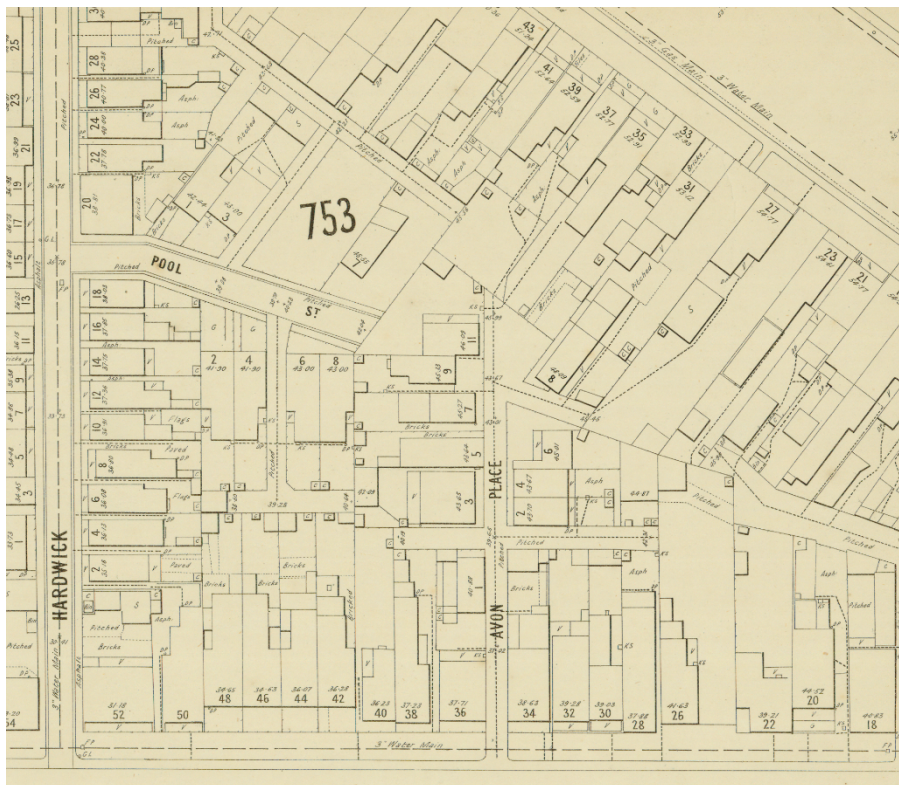
Figure 19   Section of MMBW detail plan no. 753, showing the numerous residences accessed from
            Hardwick Street, Pool Street and Avon Place, 1897
            Source: State Library of Victoria
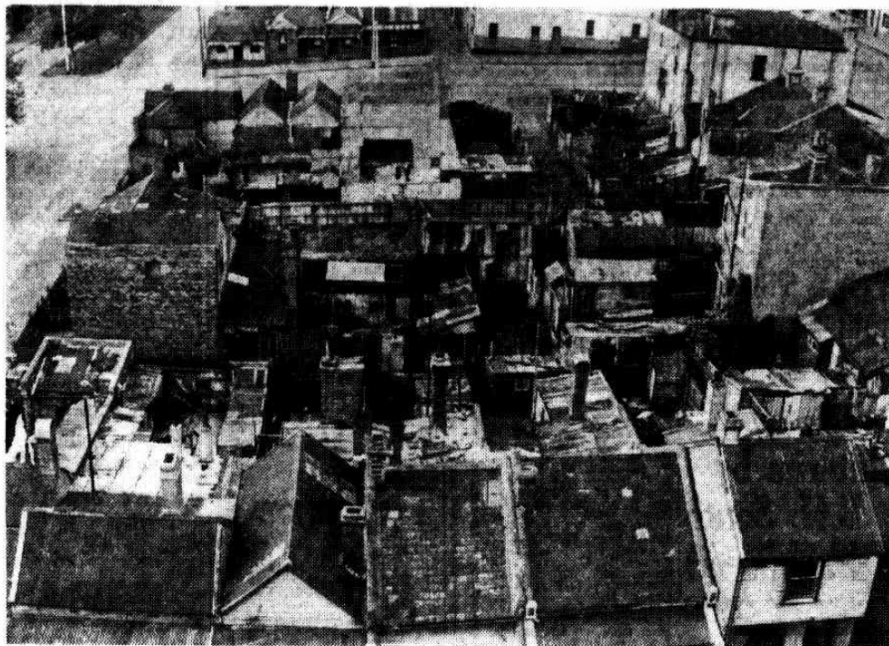
Figure 20   Oblique aerial of the Arden estate prior to demolition of houses and redevelopment by
            HCV, 1954-55
            Source: *The Age*, 30 April 1954, p. 5.

Brick Flats set in spacious well kept lawns at North Melbourne

Figure 21   View of buildings in the Molesworth Estate
             Source: Housing Commission of Victoria, *Annual Report,* 1955-56, p. 26

'Own-your-own' developments and urban renewal

As well as the public housing estates in North Melbourne, a further large area of land in the centre of the suburb was given over to a new and pioneering model of development overseen by the HCV from the late 1950s. Rather than the HCV constructing more public housing residential blocks between Arden and Haines streets, 'a new avenue of reclamation work' was commenced with assistance from private enterprise. The HCV took control of the properties, cleared them of housing and then invited tenders for the purchase and redevelopment of the land as 'own-your-own' flats which were to be sold at a price fixed by the HCV (HCV Annual Report 1958-59: 8). The development in North Melbourne was the first time the HCV had 'entered the field of subsidised urban redevelopment', and it opened up 'new opportunities for expediting slum reclamation' (HCV *Annual Report* 1958-59: 8). The fixed price was to ensure that the new residences were not developed as a profit-making exercise (*Cross-Section* February 1961: 2).

The first of these developments became known as Hotham Gardens, which occupied the three blocks bounded by Arden, Haines, Abbotsford and Curzon streets, as well as at the block on the south side of Wood Street, between Dryburgh and Abbotsford streets. The Master Builders Association proposed to prepare architectural plans for the development and 'organise all construction', with any profits to fund further redevelopment of the site (*Cross-Section* May 1958: 2). The result was the formation of Master Builders (Associated) Redevelopment Ltd, 'in which Melbourne's biggest building firms and companies are the shareholders', which included prominent builders and developers such as A V Jennings and Clements Langford (*The Herald* 14 August 1958: 24; Garden 1992: 145). The Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) appointed a panel of architects to design the projects (*The Herald* 14 August 1958: 24). The panel comprised a number of prominent architects of the period, including Roy Grounds and John Mockridge; John Murphy of John and Phyllis Murphy; Roy Simpson of Yuncken Freeman; and Phillip Pearce of Bates Smart & McCutcheon (*Cross-Section* February 1961: 2). The development attracted

industry attention, particularly from the University of Melbourne's *Cross-Section* journal and Neil Clerehan for *The Age*'s Small Home Service.

Stage 1 was in the south of the site, and consisted of 108 flats in six three-level clusters (Figure 22). Builder Clements Langford was appointed to the project, drawn from the ballot of 18, commencing work in mid-1959 (*Cross-Section* June 1959: 1).

Following its completion, *Cross-Section* published a generally complimentary review of the scheme in early 1961, although it was somewhat disapproving of some internal planning and the quality of finishes:

> The first impression of HG [Hotham Gardens] is very favourable. The entire block forms an architectural element … Facades are well handled & the slightly sloping site is pleasantly broken by terraces … The interiors of the flats are, however, open to criticism (*Cross-Section* February 1961: 2).

Cross-Section also observed the tension between the supposed purpose of the HCV's slum clearance work and the outcome of this new development:

> It is interesting to note, for instance, that the finished units are now occupied by a different class of people from the original inhabitants whose present whereabouts are not generally known (*Cross-Section* February 1961: 2).

The HCV, however, was satisfied with the endeavour, concluding in its annual report of 1959-60, that the 'test case' development had 'proved that the Commission and private enterprise can combine in the work of slum reclamation' (HCV 1959-1960: 30).

The second stage (Figure 23), which fronted Haines Street, was completed by early 1962, with the design work handled by architectural firms Yuncken Freeman, and Bates, Smart and McCutcheon. This stage adopted an 'H' style arrangement of blocks (Figure 24).
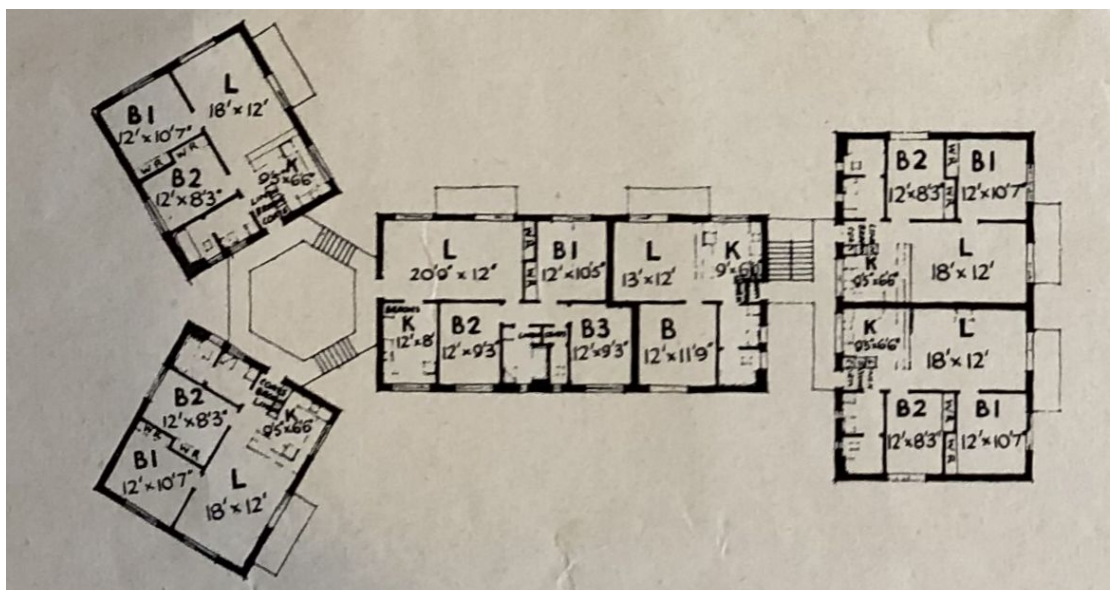
Figure 22   Floor plan layout of the six flats in each cluster of the first stage of Hotham Gardens
Source: *Cross-Section*, University of Melbourne Department of Architecture, No. 100, 1 February 1961, p. 3.

Figure 23   Oblique aerial view of Hotham Gardens development, c. 1962, looking south-west from the corner of Haines and Curzon streets to Arden Street. Stage 1 indicated by red arrow and Stage 2 (under construction) indicated by blue arrow
Source: H2012.140/1040, A V Jennings albums, State Library of Victoria
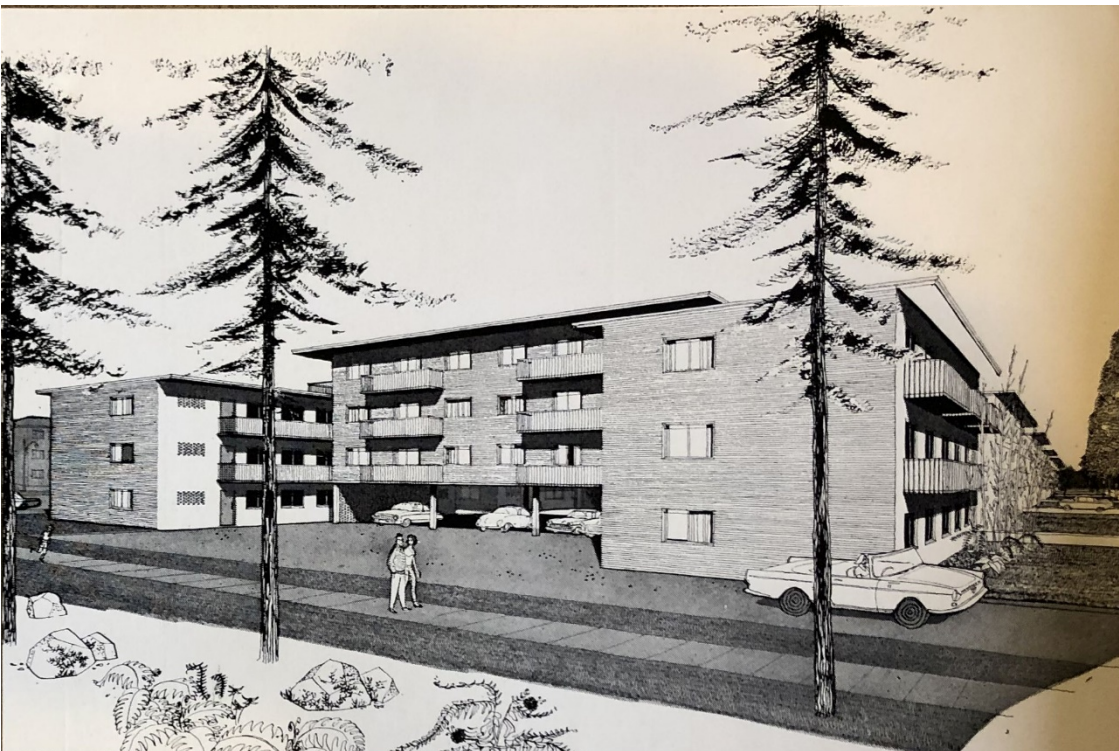
Figure 24   Sketch of the second stage of Hotham Gardens, c. 1969
Source: Hotham Gardens North Development, LTAD 201, State Library of Victoria

By the time of the completion of the third stage, in the centre of the development, the June 1967 edition of *Cross-Section* was cautiously positive about the success of the development, but remained critical of its short-comings:

> … they have proved to be extraordinarily sought after, particularly amongst professional people wishing to live close to the city, and as own-your-own home units have doubled in market value since their completion. It seemed like a propitious start for more advanced notions of city dwelling. Since then, more units have been built, less imaginative in site layout and no less conservative in design, but for all that, preserving the quality of the development and continuing the scale, character and calmness of the area. A fundamental principle was eventually to close Harris Street to through traffic and treat the area as a park for the inhabitants. But … According to their plan, cars will use Harris Street as an access way to carports (of which there is only one for every three flats) and parallel street parking will bring rows of cars within 15 ft. of the double glazed doors and balconies of the pleasant block which faces south to Harris St (*Cross-Section* June 1967: 2).

The fourth stage of Hotham Gardens was to the north-west, in the block bound by Haines, Abbotsford, Wood and Dryburgh streets, and was completed between 1968 and the early 1970s. The layout adopted was flats, with three building structures arranged around a central core, with each block comprising 1, 2 and 3 bedroom flats. A questionnaire of the new residents of the flats found that there was 'high proportion of business and professional' residents, women and unmarried people, and fewer migrants and children, compared to the rest of North Melbourne (Crow 1981: 1). Despite this, it appears that some form of public housing was retained in the development. From consultation with Traditional Owners it is understood prominent Aboriginal civil rights advocate Margaret (Lilardia) 'Marge' Tucker MBE lived in public housing at Hotham Gardens, opposite the Morning Star Hotel on the north-west corner of Abbotsford/Haines Streets (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owner engagement, December 2019-April 2020).

A later development, City Gardens, was designed by architect Peter McIntyre for builders Inge Brothers who had been the successful tenderers for the site bound by Dryburgh, Haines and Abbotsford streets and Harris Street (now Plane Tree Way). The development replaced nineteenth century housing and new residential townhouses were constructed either side of the 1939 Lady Huntingfield kindergarten (now demolished). Inge Brothers were real estate agents and project housing developers of the 1970s, with other developments in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne and in Canberra. Peter McIntyre designed the four blocks of the development: A, B and C block form three sides of a square at the eastern end of the site and were completed by the mid-1970s, with D block, which fronts Dryburgh Street, constructed later. McIntyre later recalled that the developers had to be convinced of his design intent for the estate:

> [Inge Brothers were] 'looking at it just from the commercial point of view', seeking to maximise their profit rather than provide good design … 'That's what they were wanting … I didn't give it to them!' (Paul, City Gardens, https://www.citygardens.org.au/history)

McIntyre instead 'wanted to break up the levels, the facades … break it all up' with split levels and facades (Paul, City Gardens, https://www.citygardens.org.au/history). Proposals for the site included a restaurant and pool, as well as a landscaped Harris Street with limited access for cars (McIntyre & McIntyre, BA 44484, plans, 1972-1973). The first three blocks were constructed at the corner of Abbotsford and Haines streets, around a central garden, below which was car parking for residents. An

economic downturn soon after construction was complete meant that Alex Inge, who retained a financial stake in the development, struggled to sell the apartments, instead reportedly leasing empty dwellings to touring performers (Paul, City Gardens, https://www.citygardens.org.au/history).

Places:

- *430-434 Dryburgh Street (HO3)*: One of three adjoining red brick Edwardian terraces with a distinctive design incorporating steeply pitched transverse gable roof form, ending in a distinctive north gable end to Erskine Street

- *Benevolent Asylum Estate (HO3)*: Redevelopment of site with Edwardian dwellings on Victoria, Curzon, Abbotsford and Elm streets, typically of red brick with setbacks

- *Molesworth Estate:* Large housing estate of the late 1940s-1950s. One of the first slum reclamation areas redeveloped by the Housing Commission of Victoria in North Melbourne, currently undergoing redevelopment

- *Hotham Gardens (New HO recommended):* First public-private partnership housing development by the HCV and the Master Builders (Redevelopment) Association. Blocks of own-your-own flats, designed by a panel of prominent mid-century architects

CHAPTER 3: PEOPLING NORTH MELBOURNE

- Traditional owners

- Nineteenth century arrivals

- Twentieth century changes

Traditional owners

The original inhabitants of North Melbourne included the Kurnaje-berreing clan of the Woi Wurrung speaking peoples between the Maribyrnong River and Birrarung (Yarra River) and the Yalukut Weelam of the Boon Wurrung speaking peoples, of the nearby coastal lands (Canning and Thiele, 4-5; Meyer 2014). Pre-colonialism, Traditional Owners lived in Victoria's south east for at least the last 30,000 years (Canning and Thiele, 1,2010). Following European colonialism, North Melbourne, like other inner-suburbs, witnessed the forced and economic displacement of Aboriginal families and communities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Following European colonisation, the Traditional Owners of the land were largely dispossessed and dislocated through successive policies of protection (until 1849) and separation onto mission and reserve sites away from Melbourne (from 1849 until the mid-1950s) (Gibson, Gardner and Morey 2018, 15, 17).

Nineteenth century arrivals

The population of North Melbourne grew quickly through the 1850s and into the 1860s, buoyed by the population increase of the gold rush period, and the demand for land to accommodate houses, businesses and institutions. By 1861, two years after the creation of the municipality, Hotham had a population of over 7,000, although it remained smaller than the earlier established suburban municipalities such as East Collingwood, Richmond and Prahran (*The Age* 24 July 1861: 5). The *Sands & McDougall* directories of the 1860s and 1870s indicate that the majority of North Melbourne's residents and business owners had a British (particularly Scottish) background, and there were also substantial numbers of Irish. The names of early pubs in the suburb - such as the Loughmore Castle, Tam O'Shanter, Limerick Castle and Ayrshire – reflect community connections with Ireland and Scotland (*Sands & Kenny* 1860, *Sands & McDougall* 1870). Similarly, laneways and small cross-streets bear the names of places in Britain and Ireland, examples are Lancashire Lane, Loughmore Lane, and Scotia Street.

Between 1881 and 1891, the population of North Melbourne grew from 17,839 to 20,985, which was a relatively small increase compared to other municipalities. While it had a smaller population than other inner suburbs including Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy, North Melbourne had the highest density of population, with over 37 people per acre in 1890-91, compared with 35 in Fitzroy and 27 in Richmond, and 8 in Hawthorn (*Victorian Year Book* 1890-91: 216). By the time North Melbourne was annexed to the City of Melbourne in 1905, however, its population had fallen again, returning to 17,650 (*Victorian Year Book* 1904: 114). It remained, however, a very densely populated municipality, the second only to Fitzroy in the early twentieth century (*Victorian Year Book* 1904: 115).

As noted, North Melbourne had a significant Irish population, and during the nineteenth century it was said to be 'the most Irish locality' in Melbourne ('Irish', eMelbourne). Marriage and baptism records of the 1860s indicate that '73% of married, unskilled workers' in the area were Irish, and this proportion remained above 50% in the 1870s (Butler 1983 Volume 1: xi). A large gathering of the North Melbourne Irish Catholic community, believed to be in the main hall of the North Melbourne Town Hall, is shown at

Figure 25. This was in the period that the St Michael's parish was developing a significant presence in the suburb, culminating in the construction of the school (1918) and church (1907) on Hotham Hill.

Figure 25   Irish Catholic gathering, North Melbourne, c. 1900s
                 Source: City of Melbourne Libraries

Twentieth century changes

The demographics of the suburb slowly diversified through the early twentieth century, with the arrival of residents and business owners from Mediterranean Europe and China. However, the relatively small numbers of people from non-British backgrounds in North Melbourne in the interwar period is suggested by the 1930 edition of the *Sands & McDougall* directory. The directory gives unidentified listings of 'Italians', 'Maltese' and 'Chinese' at a number of properties; a refusal to list names demonstrating a tendency to see a migrant background rather than individual people, or the result of language barriers encountered during surveys for the directory (*Sands & McDougall* 1930).

Indeed, it was through businesses that the beginnings of North Melbourne's post-war diversity are demonstrated. Two of the more prominent Italian family names of the early part of the twentieth century could be seen in partnership of Fabbri and Gardini, wine merchants. The partnership was located at the southern end of Chetwynd Street, near the Queen Victoria Market, from the 1910s, starting in Blair Place before expanding from the laneway to the main street. A substantial showroom was constructed at no. 47-51 Chetwynd Street in c. 1927 (CoM BA Index 47-51 Chetwynd Street BA9892, 8 August 1927). The company became known for their Mount Buffalo vermouth, which the company manufactured from 1909. At the time of Bruto Gardini's death in 1934, it was noted that the immigrant from northern Italy was a 'leading member of the Italian community' (*The Argus* 6 January 1934: 18).

The effects of Australia's post-war migration scheme were also felt in North Melbourne, particularly the Displaced Person Scheme, which enabled assisted passage to refugees from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania,

Poland, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the former Yugoslavia in exchange for two years' contracted work from 1947 (Context 2011: 6-7). The Sands and McDougall directories of the 1950s and 1960s reflect a significantly more diverse community, with residents from Italian, Greek, Maltese and Eastern European backgrounds more common (*Sands & McDougall* 1950, 1960). Such were the numbers in these migrant communities that businesses, clubs and churches began to reflect their presence. These include the construction of the Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Cathedral in 1963 and the opening of the Lithuanian Club on Errol Street in c. 1965. Loco Hall began screening foreign language films by the late 1950s, and in the 1970s and 1980s was known as the Marconi Ballroom (or Marconi Hall, Figure 26) (Manne 2007, 'The lost picture palaces of North and West Melbourne'; *Sands & McDougall* 1974). By the 1980s, a popular Maltese café was in operation at the south end of Errol Street (Community consultation, 31 October 2019). North Melbourne's churches have also become important places for migrant groups of the late twentieth century, including the Vietnamese community (Community consultation, North Melbourne Language and Learning Centre, 27 November 2019). More recently, premises for the Czech and Slovak community of Melbourne have been opened at 497 Queensberry Street, offering both a language school and community venue.

From the late twentieth century and into the first decades of the twenty-first century, North Melbourne has undergone a process of gentrification, consistent with a broader trend in the traditional working class suburbs of Melbourne. Along with broader socio-demographic shifts in the population associated with movements in and out of the suburb, Traditional Owner consultation highlighted specifically how, for Aboriginal people, these trends manifested as yet another wave of movement of Aboriginal people from the suburb. Families that were part of the return of Aboriginal people to North Melbourne earlier in the twentieth century relocated to middle and outer suburbs as industries moved, including to the industrial west and south east of Melbourne, with the establishment of General Motors Holden in Dandenong, for example. For many Aboriginal people, this enabled them to move from crowded rented accommodation, often in rooming houses, to suburbs where they could aspire to own their own family home. Yet in the meantime, in the words of one Elder, Aboriginal people 'made their mark' on the suburb (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owner engagement, December 2019-April 2020).

The process of change continues today, with inflated property prices and the relocation or closure of older businesses seeing a further shift in the demographics of the suburb. The appeal of the locality has grown, with the nineteenth century character of North Melbourne and its wide streets and heritage streetscapes are highly valued by new and longer-term residents alike.

Places

- *Limerick Castle Hotel, 161 Errol Street (HO3)*: Corner pub established in 1860s, with Irish connection in name

- *St Michael's Primary School and Catholic Church, Brougham and Dryburgh streets (HO3):* Catholic school and church with connection to local Irish community

- *Former Fabbri & Gardini warehouse, 47-51 Chetwynd Street (HO3):* Large store built in 1927 for the wine merchants, Italian-born Fabbri & Gardini

- *Lithuanian Club, 44 Errol Street (HO3)*: Long-operating community centre and venue for post-war migrant community

- *Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, 35 Canning Street (HO3):* Substantial cathedral building of 1963, constructed for the Ukrainian community which increased significantly in the post-war period.

Figure 26   Ground floor of the Marconi Ballroom, 1984
             Source: 753018, City of Melbourne Libraries

CHAPTER 4: NORTH MELBOURNE'S INDUSTRIES AND WORKFORCE

- Manufacturing

- Working

- Retailing

Manufacturing

For a predominantly residential suburb, North Melbourne has developed with a number of pockets of warehouses, small factories and other light industrial buildings. In the nineteenth century, industry and manufacturing tended to be located at the fringes of the suburb, at its east near the markets, and its west near the Moonee Ponds Creek. Small-scale workshops, such as bootmakers, were located through the suburb, where they could service the needs of the local community.

Early industry in the study area included brickworks on Boundary Road in the late 1840s, which were situated in the vicinity of what is now Mark and Sutton streets ('D84 – Doutta Galla, Plan of 48 Allotments marked in Portion 16 of Section No. 2', c. 1849, CPO). On Flemington Road, light industrial businesses and services reflected its use as a major route north-west from the city. This pattern was established early, with the 1860 *Sands & Kenny Melbourne directory* listing wheelwrights and farriers in a concentration near the Haymarket intersection. The importance of this road for travel from the city remained, and through the nineteenth century, the *Sands & McDougall directory* shows coach painters, saddlers, blacksmiths and coachbuilders as operating along the thoroughfare (*Sands & McDougall*, 1890). Set back from Flemington Road, James Howie's 'shoeing forge' at 2 Curran Street was constructed in 1889. Howie's property (Figure 27) combined both his residence and the forge, with the chamfered corner at Curran Street and laneway providing the entry to the workshop. The site was operated as a forge into the twentieth century, but by 1945, it was vacant, likely a victim of the shift from horse to car transport. Another combined residence and workshop was located at the corner of O'Shanassy and Leveson streets, where James Gardiner occupied a two-storey terrace house, with an attached pram factory from the late 1880s (*Sands & McDougall*, 1885, 1890).

A number of larger manufacturing or industrial operations were also established in the nineteenth century. Hugh Gracie's Hotham sawmill on Victoria Street was a prominent structure for the almost 20 years of its operation (Figure 28). Established in the early 1870s, it produced doors, sashes, mouldings and architraves, as well as apparently operating as ironmongers manufacturing galvanised iron and spouting, according to the painted signage on the timber building (*The Argus*, .17 June 1873: 1). The Melbourne Gas Company established an 'outpost' in North Melbourne on Macaulay Road near Boundary Road in 1887, with a substantial brick gas regulating house constructed, as well as gasometers, which were to dominate the skyline at the suburb's west ('VHR H1731 – Gas Regulating House', VHD).

King & King's drapery, clothing and furniture at Errol and Bendigo streets was a substantial complex by the end of the nineteenth century, although only the workshop on Bendigo Street remains. The *North Melbourne Advertiser* dedicated an effusive column to the enterprise in March 1890:

> The business was one of the first started north of the city proper, and has grown
> and prospered with North Melbourne until it has attained its present size … The
> trade carried on consists principally of three main branches, the drapery, the
> clothing, and last but not least, the furniture … between 150 and 200 hands are

employed, varying according to the season. The building in which these are employed … covers nearly an acre of ground … the town of North Melbourne owes a heavy debt to them for circulating in our midst year after year such large sums of money (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 28 March 1890: 4).

King & King manufactured drapery, millinery, haberdashery, blankets as well as clothing and furniture, and the company had decided not to import goods for sale where they could be made locally (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 28 March 1890: 4). The scale of the complex can be seen on the MMBW plan with King & King's retail premises, factory, workshops and stores located on Errol and Bendigo streets and Lancashire Lane (Figure 29).

Figure 27   The former J Howie's shoeing forge and residence, c. 1970s
Source: City of Melbourne Libraries
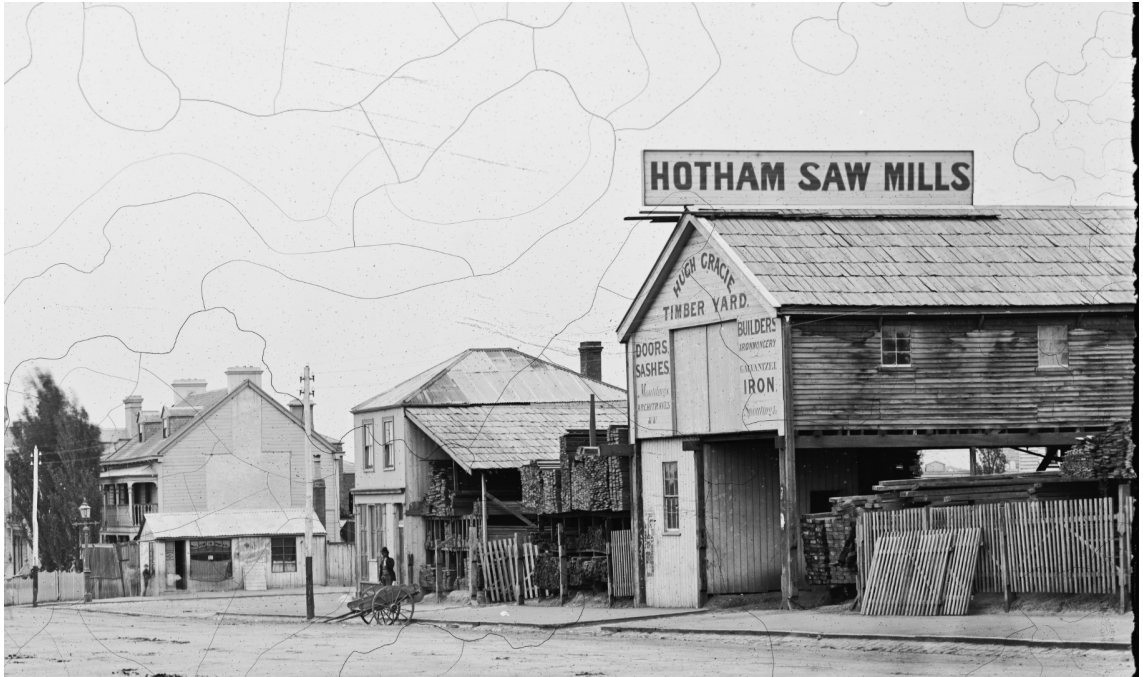
Figure 28   View of Hotham Saw Mills, Victoria Street, c. 1875
             Source: American & Australasian Photographic Company, State Library of New South
             Wales
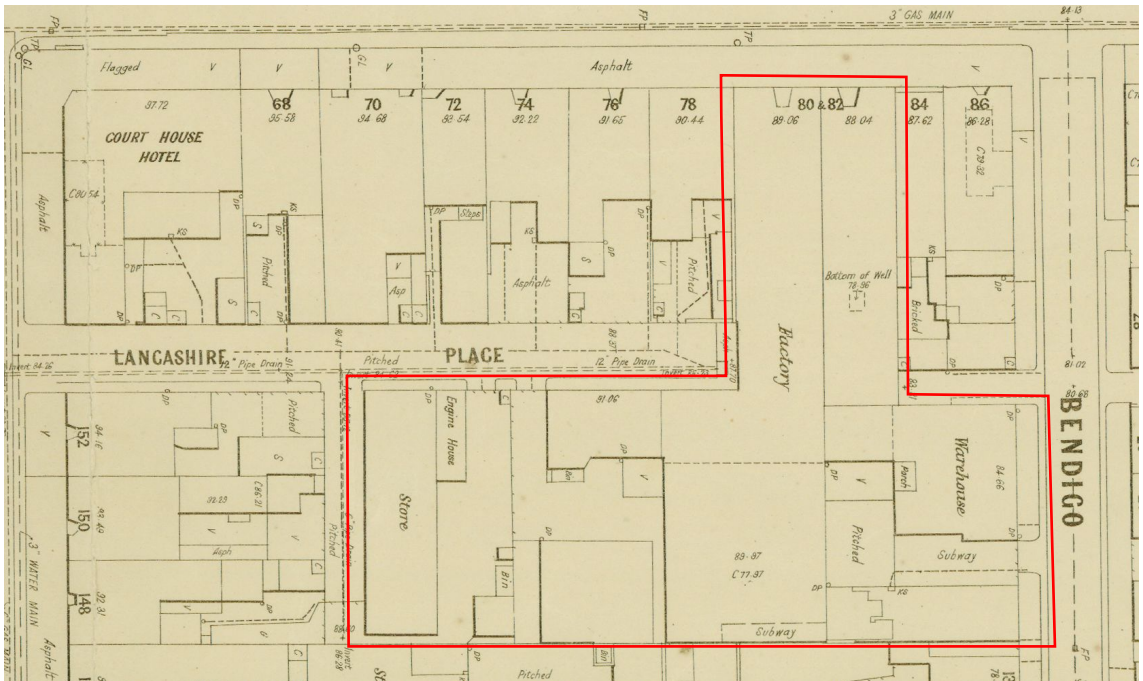
Figure 29   MMBW detail plan no. 759 showing King & King's premises fronting Errol and Bendigo
             streets, 1896, including factory, warehouse, store, and engine house (indicated)
             Source: State Library of Victoria

From the early decades of the twentieth century, small-scale factories expanded through Melbourne suburbs, taking over sites which had previously been occupied by residences. These new buildings were often constructed on laneways, replacing numerous small dwellings with one larger brick building. In North Melbourne, for example, John McCabe's glass works was established at the northern end of Buncle Street near Flemington Road in c. 1900 (*Sands & McDougall,* 1895, 1900). The company went on to become J McCabe & Sons, and constructed a two-storey brick factory operating at the site into the 1940s (*Sands & McDougall,* 1945). Similarly, *The Herald* reported the 1912 opening of George Rath's substantial bakery premises on the small Purcell Street, just to the north of the suburb's main commercial centre. The factory represented a shift away from small-scale operations which had traditionally been attached to dwellings, to purpose-built baking manufacturing:

> The latest methods in bread manufacture are provided for in the new factory … On the ground floor is a bakehouse … a mixing and manufacturing room, apartments for cool storage, packing, despatch and store rooms … Care has been taken to arrange the apartments to provide convenience in working and facilitate the speed of manufacture … (*The Herald,* 12 February 1912: 3)

North Melbourne was identified in 1909 as an 'important manufacturing centre', this reference was to particular areas in the suburb - the flour and biscuit factories in the suburb's west and industrial complexes, including agricultural implement works, in its east (*The Age* 5 November 1909: 8).

Such was the trend for property owners to demolish houses and offer sites for factory development, that in 1940, that concern was expressed by City of Melbourne councillors, and it was proposed to re-zone the suburb as residential only. However, others questioned the point of such an approach, 'when this suburb is already honeycombed with factories' (*The Age* 5 November 1940: 8). A letter to the editor of *The Age* reflected:

> … it is difficult to understand how a far-seeing, thinking people have allowed this matter to go so far, considering the splendid location … (*The Age* 22 November 1938: 10)

By the mid-1930s, the rise of factories within the suburb was also cited as a reason for the rise in 'slum pockets' (*The Age* 31 November 1939: 8). A number of residents wrote to *The Age* to complain about the way in which the Melbourne City Council had contributed to the situation. The Council's approach was criticised in the newspaper, in which it was noted:

> The letters [from residents] constitute a temperate but emphatic condemnation of the City Council for allowing factories to be built in North Melbourne in residential areas while there is ample vacant land suitable for factories in other areas. It is feared that if the council continues to neglect the welfare of the residents … and encourages the building of factories in residential areas, the residents will be driven out, and North Melbourne will become almost entirely a factory area with slum pockets scattered about in proximity to the factories (*The Age* 5 July 1938: 8).

However, factory and warehouse development continued into the post-war period. One example was the substantial brick factory of plumbers, J L Williams at 5 Provost Street. This was constructed in 1957, replacing two houses, one which fronted Little Provost Street (CoM Building Application Index, 5 Provost Street, 18 April 1957, BA38910). The building occupied the length of the block, resulting in three street frontages.

Although small-scale manufacturing and industrial uses remain, particularly at the fringes of the suburb, North Melbourne's proximity to the city has seen it return to a favoured residential locality and the prominence of industry has diminished.

Places:

- *Residence and former forge, 2 Curran Street* (HO3): adjoining residence and corner workshop

- *Former King & King warehouse, 15 Bendigo Street* (HO3): Two storey warehouse of 1881

- Arden, Baillie and Provost streets: Mixed streetscapes of nineteenth century residences with interwar and post-war factories and warehouses

Working

In the nineteenth century, the working population of North Melbourne was diverse, comprising people employed in labour/industry, commercial/retail and professional occupations. While many ran small businesses within the locality, others were employed in industries and professions in neighbouring suburbs and the nearby city.

However, despite some notable exceptions in Hotham Hill, residents of North Melbourne were predominantly employed in the trades or labour workforce. The suburb was predominantly working class in nature, accommodating workers and their families associated with many diverse commercial, manufacturing and small and large-scale industrial and construction operations. In the nineteenth century, more than 70 percent of North Melbourne's male workers were employed in 'manual occupations' (Larson 1986: 31). The approximately 600 entries which comprise the Western ward of the 1875 rate books, and included streets such as Haines, Carroll, Brougham, Shiel streets and Flemington Road, show both the diversity of work undertaken by the suburb's occupants, and the relative lack of office or 'white collar' professions. Labourers (56), carters (33), tanners (30) and carpenters (25) were the most common occupations in this ward, with single entries for chemist, wheelwright, watchmaker, clothier and candle manufacturer. This compares with seven engineers, 14 clerks, four teachers and two civil servants (North Melbourne, rate books, 1875, Western Ward, rate nos 3166-3760, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV).

This continued into the late nineteenth century, with the occupants of a row of terraces at 461 to 483 Queensberry Street, owned by prominent local resident John Stedeford, including carpenters, a waiter, labourer, slipper maker, cab proprietor, tinsmith, broom maker, banker and a boarding house operator. Of the 12 properties in Scotia Street in this period, seven were occupied by labourers, with a bootmaker, joiner, saddler and folder also listed in the municipal rate books (North Melbourne rate books, 1890, Middle Ward, rate nos 1976-1988, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV). Likewise, residents of the south end of Chetwynd Street included a carrier, engine driver, traveller, barman, lithographer, boilermaker and a blacksmith (North Melbourne, rate books, 1890, Eastern Ward, rate nos 656-673, 1890, VPRS 5707/P3 PROV).

With a significant proportion of workers engaged in the construction industry, the sudden end of the building boom in the early 1890s impacted North Melbourne, as it did other inner suburbs of Melbourne. Numerous articles in the local and metropolitan newspapers discuss the 'work question' and in 1899, councillors passed a motion of sympathy recognising 'the intense suffering that prevails in our midst on account of the lack of employment' (*The Age* 10 May 1899: 6). Many of North Melbourne's residents relied on welfare and religious organisations for support during this period (see Chapter 7) (*The Age* 25 January 1894: 7).

Transport industries served as major employers of North Melbourne residents, including the tramways, but most notably the railways; with the south-west of the suburb in proximity to the railway yards and workshops (Butler 1983: *xiii*). The construction of the Loco Hall on Victoria Street, by the Federated Locomotive Engine Drivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Association in 1914, is evidence of a significant community of railway workers in the area in the early twentieth century (*The Age* 14 December 1914: 12). The opening of this hall, which could hold 1,500 people, was celebrated in December 1914 as an achievement of the trade union (*The Age* 14 December 1914: 12). A photograph published in the *Weekly Times* a few weeks later of a 'smoke night' shows the hall was well patronised (Figure 30).

While North Melbourne remained a predominantly residential suburb through the early decades of the twentieth century, numerous factories and warehouses were constructed alongside and within residential areas and these businesses are likely to have employed local workers. More broadly, the development of industrial areas in the west of the suburb and also in neighbouring Kensington would likely have also been a source of employment for North Melbourne residents. The suburb's workers were again impacted by the economic depression of the interwar period, with many seeking employment through sustenance work. The North and West Melbourne Unemployed Relief Committee was registered as a charity in February 1931, and had 800 people registered on its records (*The Age* 7 February 1931: 12).

While many workers were unionised and part of the broader movement to improve workers' conditions, more marginalised groups were likely to be employed in highly casualised sectors of industry. These included Aboriginal people, who tended to be employed in what one Elder describes as 'dirty work'. This included in North Melbourne's many tanneries, the meat market and adjoining Queen Victoria Market, abattoirs and 'skin sheds', with Aboriginal women likely to be hired as factory hands. Particular places mentioned in and around the study area include Gladstone's cake factory, the meatworks on Steele Street and the old metropolitan ice works on Smithfield Road, Kensington (Extent, Traditional Owners Engagement, December 2019-April 2020).

The construction of own-your-own flats and gentrification through the second half of the twentieth century has meant that many of North Melbourne's workers are no longer employed in the suburb. Rather its proximity to the central business district of Melbourne has seen a rise in workers engaged in more white collar professions residing in North Melbourne.

Figure 30   Smoke night at the newly opened Loco Hall, 1914
                 Source: *Weekly Times*, 26 December 1914: 28

Places

- *Nineteenth century workers' cottages and residences (HO3)*: Small residences throughout the suburb, which demonstrate North Melbourne's historically 'working class' character

- *Loco Hall, 570-578 Victoria Street* (HO3): Substantial hall of 1914, constructed for local railway workers by the Federated Locomotive Engine Drivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Association

Retailing

The commercial heart of North Melbourne has long been concentrated on Errol Street, supported by businesses on Victoria and Queensberry streets. However, typical of nineteenth century life, numerous small service centres were located throughout the suburb, providing local residents with groceries and other daily necessities. The east-west thoroughfare Queensberry Street, which eventually extended from the Carlton Gardens to Laurens Street, was another early established commercial street, with a mix of retail businesses occupying it from the 1860s.

With its proximity to the market (now Queen Victoria Market), and Elizabeth Street, the heavily trafficked thoroughfare from the city, the Victoria Street end of North Melbourne developed a retail and commercial character through the second half of the nineteenth century. This is reflected in the *Sands & McDougall* directories, which shows concentration of shops on Howard and Leveson streets and to a lesser extent, on Chetwynd Street. The entries for the west side of Leveson Street between Victoria and Arden streets were almost totally commercial, and included fruiterers, butchers, bakers, confectioners, a watchmaker and the Hotham Arms hotel (*Sands & McDougall* 1860). Errol Street likewise had a similar assortment of small, specialised businesses, including the provision of food, as well as important

supplies for new residents of the locality, such as drapers and oil and colour merchants (*Sands & McDougall* 1860).

The early character of Errol Street can be seen in a photograph of the c. 1870s of the west side of the street at Figure 31. William Reddish's pawnbroking store is at right, with other small retail outlets, and Charles Atkin's druggist and 'chymist' premises at left (*Sands & McDougall* 1870). The Ellis Auction Rooms enterprise had been established by the 1880, operating from the site at 103-107 Errol Street into the interwar period (Figure 32) (*Sands & McDougall*, 1880 and 1920). The area's central role was cemented with the construction of the town hall in the 1870s, with the 1880s municipal building to the south incorporating shops to generate income for the council (VHR H2224 - Former North Melbourne Town Hall and Municipal Buildings VHD). In contrast, by 1890, Howard Street had shifted to a more residential street, however, Leveson Street continued to be occupied by commercial buildings.

Errol Street continued to be the commercial centre of the suburb through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century (Figure 34). It drew visitors from other suburbs, with Friday nights particularly popular for socialising and family outings in the interwar period. The Salvation Army Band would provide entertainment for shoppers. The Fitzgerald Brothers' drapery and department store was another drawcard in the area (Figure 33), with a large new showroom at 44-50 Errol Street constructed in late 1897 (*Weekly Times* 1 January 1898: 24). The business was known for its mail order service, and was also an employer of many of the suburb's young women (Hotham History Project, June 2020).

Furthermore, women-owned or operated businesses in North Melbourne were not uncommon during the nineteenth century. The types of businesses which were run by women were typically in areas deemed more appropriate for women, including hospitality, hotels, and clothing outlets, such as the dressmakers in Victoria Street, operated by the Misses Jones (254 Victoria Street, Figure 35). Late nineteenth century suffragist and feminist Brettena Smyth took over her late husband's greengrocery in Errol Street (nos. 49 and 51), developing the business to a fancy repository, milliners and drapery (Kelly 1990, ADB; *Sands & McDougall*, 1880, 1890).

Places

- *Shops and residences, 237-259 Abbotsford Street* (HO3)*:* unusual Victorian group of alternating shops and residences

- *Errol and Victoria street commercial sub-precinct* (HO3, sub-precinct recommended): historically the commercial and retail centre of the suburb, whose built form reflects this longstanding use, and renewal of built form

Figure 31   Reddish's buildings on the west side of Errol Street, near Queensberry Street (now 83 Errol Street)
Source: 756028, City of Melbourne Libraries

Figure 32   Ellis's Auction Rooms and Furniture Warehouse, Errol Street, c. 1900s
Source: 19330, City of Melbourne Libraries

Figure 33   The Fitzgerald Brothers, 'a well-known drapery establishment in North Melbourne'
             Source: *North Melbourne Leader*, 17 July 1909, p. 29

Figure 34   Errol Street, 1964
             Source: K J Halla, H36133/352, State Library of Victoria

Figure 35   Late nineteenth century photograph of women gathered in front of the Misses Jones'
               dressmakers shop at 254 Victoria Street
               Source: John Etkins collection, H2005.34/216, State Library of Victoria

CHAPTER 5: GOVERNING NORTH MELBOURNE

- Municipal government

- Law & order: keeping North Melbourne safe

Municipal government

Unlike other City of Melbourne suburbs including Carlton and South Yarra, North Melbourne was an independent municipality for 45 years, a period which was to have a significant influence on the character of the suburb.

North Melbourne was designated as a separate ward of the Corporation of Melbourne, in late 1854 (*The Age* 8 December 1854: 5), and named Hotham Ward after the recently appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, Sir Charles Hotham. The boundaries of the ward, and the Corporation of Melbourne can be seen in a plan of the area prepared in the mid-late 1850s (Figure 36). The *Municipal Corporations Act* was passed in 1854, allowing for the establishment of local councils to oversee the administration of the suburbs. The first localities to act and form municipalities were East Collingwood, Prahran, Richmond and St Kilda ('Municipal Government, eMelbourne). In March 1858, approximately six years following the subdivision and sale of land in the suburb, a reported 1,500 residents of Hotham met to agitate for separation from the City of Melbourne, indicating an early level of political engagement by the local residents. Speakers focussed on a sense that the residents of North Melbourne were paying taxes to the Corporation of Melbourne, yet seeing no benefit. 'What had the Government of the City Council done for them …?', asked one speaker (*The Argus* 30 March 1858: 4). A resolution was passed at this meeting:

> That the experience of the civic management of the affairs of the Hotham Ward
> [North Melbourne], and its neglected condition, justify its inhabitants in moving a
> resolution to introduce a change, and therefore this meeting resolves to apply to
> His Excellency the Governor in Council to declare this ward as a separate
> municipality (*The Argus* 30 March 1858: 4).

Residents of the Hotham Ward continued to hold meetings and petition the government for self-governance, with discussions through 1859 on the proposed boundaries of the municipality, particularly the area between Flemington Road and the now Royal Parade. The Corporation of Melbourne was keen to retain control of revenue-raising facilities, such as market sites, as well as the manure depot. It was said at the time that these boundary changes caused 'wrath' in the men of Hotham' (*The Argus* 20 September 1859: 5).

On 30 September 1859, the Municipal District of Hotham was proclaimed. It was bound by Victoria Street at the south, Elizabeth Street at its south-east, Flemington Road at the north and the boundary of the Corporation of Melbourne at its west (Victoria Government Gazette, Gazette 155, 30 September 1859: 2048). This was a reduction in area when compared with the extent of the former Hotham Ward, and Hotham was the smallest of the municipalities, covering a mere 0.75 square miles (194 hectares) ('Municipal Government, eMelbourne). The first election of councillors was held in October 1859, with John Davies elected as mayor (McKay 2006: 97).

The municipal council was responsible for the maintenance of roads, waste management, reserves and drainage, with committees including parks and gardens, and public works. For their efforts, some councillors were remembered by the naming of streets and reserves in the suburb, including John Barwise (Barwise Street), and Gardiner Reserve, named after former mayor, James Gardiner (McKay

2006: *x*, 17, 42). Early issues considered by the Hotham borough council included renting temporary premises as municipal chambers, and advertising for a town clerk and town surveyor (*The Argus* 26 October 1859: 4). A deputation was soon made to the Melbourne City Council for the relocation of the manure depot, which was affecting the sale of land at the north-east of the municipality (*The Argus* 29 November 1859: 6).

Figure 36   Plan of Melbourne, c. 1850s showing boundary of Hotham Ward (red lines) and the western boundary of the Corporation of Melbourne (blue line)
              Source: Vale Collection, State Library of Victoria

Infrastructure works also took place through the nineteenth century, as the Hotham Council aimed to improve streets and drainage as the population grew. From as early as the mid-1860s, the council raised the prospect of constructing a drain from Royal Park to the West Melbourne swamp, to manage the creek that traversed the suburb (*The Argus* 17 August 1864: 7). By late 1866, it appears that these works were underway, with *The Argus* reporting that councillors had requested a further grant from the government to assist with the costs of the 'entire scheme to carry off the storm water from the Royal park … the works constructed and in progress amount to £2,748 16s' (*The Argus* 18 December 1866: 1). The government representative was not sympathetic, and concern was expressed about the precedent of funding local municipal works (*The Argus* 18 December 1866: 1). The works continued for a number of years, it appears, as the 'Hotham drain' was also reported as being 'in course of construction' in May 1870 (*The Australasian* 7 May 1870: 20).

As a result of these works, the former creek that ran through the suburb broadly from Royal Park south-west into the West Melbourne Swamp (See Chapter 1) was channelled in the late nineteenth century using bluestone drainage, and today runs under the North Melbourne Primary School, through Errol Street Reserve, down Harris Street and Plane Tree Way. Its channelised course can still be recognised to a degree from the arrangement of these streets and parks (Figure 37). In this period, the council was also undertaking works to metal, kerb and channel the streets, as well as providing street lighting (*The Herald* 19 July 1864: 4).

The first town hall was constructed on an elevated site at the corner of Queensberry and Errol streets in 1862-63, and was replaced in 1875-76 by the present municipal complex designed by noted architect George Johnson (Figure 38) (VHR H2224 - Former North Melbourne Town Hall and Municipal Buildings VHD). At the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone, it was noted that the council had 'laid down' over 16 years:

> 14 ½ miles of metalled streets and roads, 19 ½ miles of kerbing and channelling and 14,314 square yards of pavement (*The Age* 3 May 1875: 3).

The new complex was opened little more than 12 months later, having 'risen in astonishing rapidity' (*Weekly Times* 1 July 1876: 15). On the prominent site at the corner of Queensberry and Errol streets, and with its 150-foot tall tower (45.72m), the 'handsome public building' was immediately a landmark. The building accommodated all council's services: large hall, offices for the town clerk, town surveyor, the rate collector, inspector of nuisances, mayor's room, committee rooms, post and telegraph office, courthouse and magistrate's offices (*Advocate* 1 July 1876: 16).

Figure 37. The original course of the creek flowing through the Study Area in comparison to its channelised course.

Figure 38   'Town Hall Hotham', c. 1876
               Source: Wanda Berman collection, State Library of Victoria

In the mid-1880s, discussions were raised to change the name of the Town of Hotham to North
Melbourne, in a period when a named association with the booming city was seen as advantageous (VA
3153, North Melbourne, agency description, PROV). Interestingly, Brunswick council and Carlton
residents had also made claim to the name 'North Melbourne' (Dr R. Blanchard, Northern Advertiser,
'Northern History: When Hotham made the name change', 29 March 1973, via Hotham History Project).
Brunswick's location 'due north' of the city and its increasing population were given as reasons why it
was fairly entitled, but Hotham's existing association with the name - including an electorate, a railway

station and land surveys - were seen as equally sound argument. As the mayor, Samuel King, stated at a meeting on the matter, the 'name of North Melbourne linked them to a great and world-renowned city and they would never give it up' (*The Argus*, 21 January 1887: 7). In August 1887, the change to North Melbourne was officially gazetted (*Victoria Government Gazette* 26 August 1887: 2538).

In 1905, the Town of North Melbourne was incorporated back into the City of Melbourne as the Hopetoun (North Melbourne) ward (VA 3153, North Melbourne, agency description, PROV). The lead up to annexation was preceded by much deliberation:

> The question, whether there is more to be gained by being part of the city or remaining a suburb … is so manifest that it would be almost superfluous to discuss … The advantages are so patent that all property owners must realise that union with the city would increase the value of their property, reduce the rates, and give them better light and thoroughfares… The Town of North Melbourne is suffering from an insufficiency of available rate money to carry out to the full the improvements claimed and deserved by those who pay their rates, because nearly one half of the revenue is absorbed in interest upon loans contracted in the boom period … (*North Melbourne Gazette* 22 June 1900: 5)

Aside from the reported economic benefits that would come from annexation, the move to join the City of Melbourne appears to have also stemmed from what was known as the 'Greater Melbourne' movement. This movement dated from the late nineteenth century and advocated for a single municipal council for the metropolitan area, to streamline services. Although it was never instituted, it was 'favoured by the Melbourne City Council', although its only success on this front was the 'absorption' of the North Melbourne, Flemington and Kensington municipalities (eMelbourne, Greater Melbourne Movement).

North Melbourne initially became the Hopetoun ward of the City of Melbourne, and from the 1930s, the Hotham Ward (VA 3153, North Melbourne, agency description, PROV). With municipal services moving to the city, the North Melbourne town hall was adapted for a variety of alternative uses, including as offices for the Railway and Defence departments (*The Age* 11 December 1922: 8). From the interwar period, public access was reinstated with entrainment uses, including concerts, dances screening of films. The complex still stands as a strong reminder of North Melbourne's history of municipal self-governance.

Places

- *North Melbourne Town Hall, 52-68 Errol Street* (VHR H2224)*:* Substantial municipal complex of 1875-76, with later extension, designed by architect George Johnson. It replaced the first town hall on this site

- *Gardiner Reserve* (HO3): Public park and playground, reserved as an ornamental reserve 1883 and a public park 1965, with installation of playground in the interwar period. Named after former North Melbourne mayor and councillor, James Gardiner

- *Harris Street and Plane Tree Way (*HO3, recommended individual Heritage Overlay): Avenue street plantings undertaken by North Melbourne council in early twentieth century

Law and order: keeping North Melbourne safe

Soon after the establishment of municipal government in North Melbourne, a number of services were established to maintain law and order in the suburb. The Hotham police court was in operation by 1860, hearing matters ranging from electoral roll revision, burglary, debt cases, assault, and stray animals (*The Argus* 27 June 1862: 4, 29 August 1862: 5, 19 September 1862: 4, 14 October 1864: 5). By 1870, a police station had been established in the suburb, adjacent to the court house in Errol Street (*Sands & McDougall* 1870), as part of a group of civic services with the early town hall. Both police and court services were accommodated within the new town hall. In c. 1895, a new purpose-built police station was constructed behind the town hall in Little Leveson Street. It comprised a two-storey residence and single-storey lockup flanking a central carriageway entrance.

In the late nineteenth century, crime - 'robberies, assaults and larrikinism', as well as murders - was 'rampant', and calls were being made for increased police presence in the suburb (*The Herald* 14 February 1891: 2). Crime was often exacerbated by alcohol, and the effect the economic downtown of the 1890s had on a predominately working-class community. 'Larrikinism', a term used to describe street brawling, petty crimes and assaults by groups of young men known as 'pushes', was also on the rise across the inner suburbs of Melbourne from the 1870s. One local 'push' that gained particular notoriety at the turn of the century was the Crutchy push or 'Crutchies', so named due to the use of crutches as weapons by its members (*North Melbourne Gazette* 10 March 1899: 3). While the term 'larrikin' currently implies a sense of harmless irreverence, during this period such groups were to be feared, and the newspapers regularly reported on the often misdemeanours of these groups:

> A prominent councillor had complained of bands of youths marching along these thoroughfares at nights, to the annoyance of respectable citizens, whose property also suffered considerably from their depredations. Cross and Howard streets seemed to be infested by larrikins of the worse type … streets fights and other disgraceful scenes … which seemed to be of nightly occurrence (*The Herald* 21 May 1891: 2)

> It is quite apparent to anyone whose business takes him into the streets of North Melbourne larrikinism prevails, and after dark gross indecency (*The Herald* 14 February 1891: 2).

Although larrikinism continued into the early years of the twentieth century, by the 1910s, it was remarked that larrikinism was 'dead', likely due to improved economic circumstances. Instead of assaults, members of pushes were by then instead said to be 'content to smoke and swear at the street corners' (*The Argus*, 19 March 1910: 21).

With court services pushed out of the former municipal town hall by the postal service in the early twentieth century, a new court house was constructed in the 1910s in Chetwynd Street, designed on 'modern lines' by the Victorian Public Works Department (*The Age* 31 May 1911: 11; *The Herald* 24 April 1912: 8). The proximity of the new court house to the police lock-up meant that there would 'no longer be any need to convey prisoners through the streets (*The Herald* 24 April 1912: 8). As is the case with many such institutions in inner Melbourne, both the court house and lock-up have significantly negative associations for Traditional Owners, who further recalled the role of the 'green van' operated by the City of Melbourne in the twentieth century, which would 'pick up, delouse and lock up' people believed to be drunk (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owner engagement, December 2019-April 2020).

Fire was an ever-present risk in North Melbourne. The prevalence of timber buildings, particularly dwellings, in the densely developed suburb increased the danger of fire spreading quickly, and injury

and loss of life were not uncommon. A local Hotham Fire Brigade was in existence by the mid-1860s, and appears to have become formalised in 1873, when the council resolved that it should consist of a 'captain, foreman and six men' (*The Age* 25 November 1865: 5; *The Argus* 23 May 1873: 3). The fire brigade was initially located with the court and police services, but in 1893, an 'imposing and substantial' new fire station, with residential quarters, was constructed in Curzon Street (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 15 September 1893: 2).

Places

- *Former police station complex, 32-36 Little Leveson Street* (HO3): A red brick former police station complex of c. 1895

- *Former court house, 87-91 Chetwynd Street* (HO3): A modest Edwardian court house building of 1912, with Art Nouveau detailing, located in proximity to the earlier police complex

- *Former fire station, 100-110 Curzon Street (HO3):* A substantial Victorian and Edwardian complex comprising several building components, including, unusually firemen's residences

CHAPTER 6: CONNECTING NORTH MELBOURNE

- Pre-colonial routes

- Establishing pathways

- Linking North Melbourne by road

- Travelling by tram

- Establishing and maintaining communications

Pre-colonial routes

Contemporary Traditional Owners note that due to the study area being located on the shortest path between Royal Park and the Blue Lake, in the pre-colonial era Traditional Owners would have likely travelled through North Melbourne to move between those important places (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owner engagement, December 2019-April 2020). The presence of a creek that links these places further increases this likelihood, given the known use of valleyed landscapes as naturally-forming pathways (DuCros cited in Canning and Thiele 2010, 7).

Linking North Melbourne by road

North Melbourne is bounded by two main thoroughfares from the city: Flemington Road and Victoria Street, physically separating it from nearby suburbs.

The northern boundary of North Melbourne is Flemington Road, which evolved from an 1840s track to Geelong. It subsequently became a stock route to the Newmarket livestock saleyards, opened by 1859-60 (Murphy 2004: 32). A ford was located at this point and this was said to be 'the first firm ground above the marshes' on the Moonee Moonee Ponds, as it was then known (Lay 2003: 95). By as early as 1839, a bridge had been constructed over the waterway; this was known as Main's Bridge. The bridge was reportedly the first vehicular bridge in the colony (Lay 2003: 95). It was later described by pastoralist Alfred Joyce, who had travelled from Melbourne in the mid-1840s, as:

> … a small temporary one [bridge] at the swamp on the Flemington Road called Main's bridge, which had been used by a contractor of that name for carting stone to the new gaol and the new, but now old, treasury (Joyce 1969: 31).

The bridge was upgraded by James Main in 1849, with funding from the government, before being replaced in 1851 by a more substantial bridge, likely the one shown in a c. 1851 sketch by William Jarrett, reproduced at Figure 39. Improvements were also made to the Flemington Road in May 1851 (*The Argus*: 15 May 1851: 4). These upgrades coincided with the increase of traffic associated with the gold rush period, as fortune-seekers headed north-west to the goldfields of Mount Alexander, Bendigo and Ballarat. By late 1852, real estate notices were pointing to Flemington Road as the 'direct route to all the gold fields' (*The Argus* 11 November 1852: 4). The Country Roads Board began funding further improvements to the road in 1853 (Lay 2003: 94).

The Kearney map of 1855 (Figure 40) shows the cluster of buildings near Flemington Bridge, including hotels, a church on the Parkville side of the road, and a police reserve. It is unclear, however, if the police reserve was ever used or gazetted and its inclusion in this map may have been indicative of a short-lived intent for a reserve at this site. A new bridge was constructed over the Moonee Ponds Creek in 1868, as well as 'great improvement in the approaches to the bridge' and the removal of the toll gate (*Leader* 4 July 1868: 10). The works also considered the problems arising from the frequent creek

flooding, with a flood culvert constructed to 'afford relief to the bridge in the event of any unforeseen pressure' (*Leader* 4 July 1868: 10).

The south-eastern end of Flemington Road was – and remains - an important and highly trafficked junction, known as the Haymarket, where Elizabeth Street North, Royal Parade and Flemington Road converge. Although located in Parkville, the Northern Market was located at this end of Flemington Road, operating both as a haymarket and cattle, horse and pig market (VHR 'H1920 – Northern Market Reserve Wall', VHD).

While the City of Melbourne (Parkville) side of Flemington Road was given a boulevard treatment by the mid-1890s, this was not the case on the North Melbourne side. The MMBW detail plans (Figure 41) show median plantations on the north side of the road, whereas, perhaps due to the poorer economic situation of the municipality, only a single row of street trees is shown on the North Melbourne side. In terms of built form, Flemington Road developed as a predominately residential street, with a mix of villas and terrace rows, with the expansive Royal Park opposite. The road continues as a major and heavily trafficked connector and has more recently become an access point to the CityLink tollway.

The suburb's southern boundary, Victoria Street, developed as a predominately commercial street. The siting of the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum at its western end prevented it becoming a major thoroughfare. Figure 42 shows the Victoria Street streetscape in the 1870s, with residences located on the more elevated section of the street, and shops closer to Errol Street. The asylum is a very clear termination point of the road. Following the closure and demolition of the asylum in the early twentieth century, the two sections of Victoria Street were connected and traffic could travel in a straight line for over six kilometres from Munster Terrace, North Melbourne, past Carlton, Fitzroy and Collingwood to the Yarra River.

The suburban streets in North Melbourne were generally surveyed in the mid-nineteenth century on a straight, grid-like pattern, their direction informed by the alignments of Flemington Road and Victoria Street, rather than the undulating topography. As the suburb developed, laneways were formed parallel or perpendicular to the main streets, allowing right-of-way access for nightsoil operators, or to connect between streets. The wide streets were characteristic of the suburb, particularly the north-south streets. This width enabled the planting of street trees and generous medians by council in the twentieth century. Acutely angled junctions, such as at the intersections at the north end of Errol Street, were developed as small parks and reserves. In the twenty-first century, these reserves have been expanded into the road reserves, creating green spaces and playground areas for local residents.
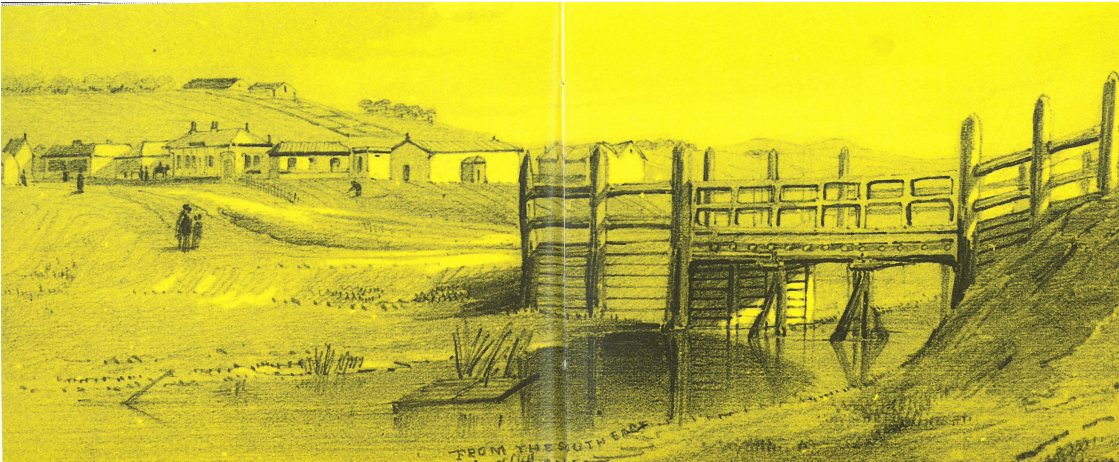
Figure 39   Timber bridge over Moonee Ponds Creek, as sketched by William Jarrett, 1851
Source: William Jarrett, 'Flemington, 1851, from the South East', Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, as reproduced in Michael Cannon, *Melbourne after the gold rush*, Loch Haven Books, 1993
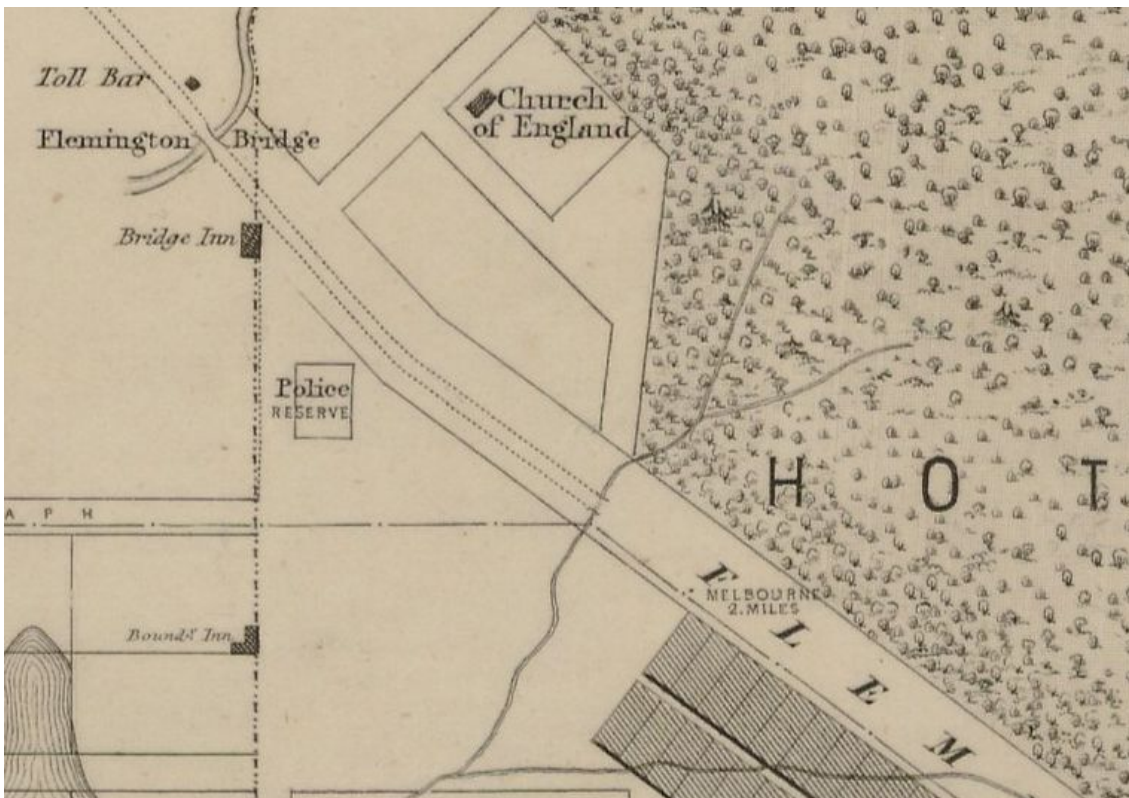
Figure 40   Detail of James Kearney's map, 'Melbourne and its suburbs', 1855, showing early development around Flemington Bridge
Source: State Library of Victoria
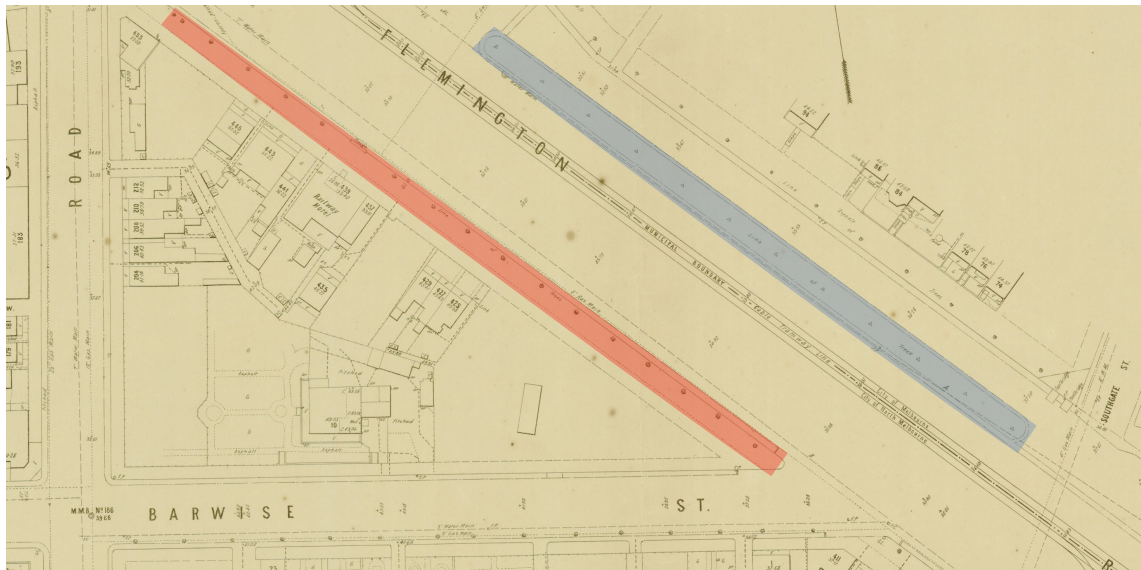
Figure 41   Section of Flemington Road, MMBW detail plan no. 740, 1897, showing median
             plantations (indicated by blue shading) on the City of Melbourne (Parkville) side of the
             road and line of trees to North Melbourne side (indicated by red shading).
             Source: State Library of Victoria

Figure 42   View west down Victoria Street from Chetwynd Street towards the Benevolent Asylum, c.
             1875
             Source: FL1249178, American & Australasian Photographic Company, State Library of New
             South Wales

Public transport

The Melbourne Omnibus Company was established by Francis Boardman Clapp, William McCulloch and Henry Hoyt in 1869. It was registered as a company in February 1869 for the 'purpose of providing omnibus accommodation for the public' (*The Argus* 22 February 1869: 6). The omnibus services were an immediate success, offering 'regular timetables and cheap fares' (Keep 1973: 25). In July 1869, a newspaper report noted that the company had purchased new carriages and constructed large stables at the corner of Brunswick and Johnston streets, Fitzroy, which could accommodate 200 horses (*Bunyip* 3 July 1869: 3). The success of the operation led to the expansion of the services throughout the inner suburbs. The company purchased a site in North Melbourne for stables in 1873 (*The Argus* 17 September 1873: 5). Building works commenced immediately, and the 1874-75 rate books record the site as 'brick and wood stores, stables and office', owned by the Melbourne Omnibus Company and valued at a NAV of £300 (Hotham, rate books, 1874-5, Western rates, rate no. 3718, VPRS 5707/P3, PROV). With the completion of the cable tram network through the mid-late 1880s, however omnibuses became obsolete, and the company sold the stables site in 1888 (*The Australasian* 17 March 1888: 54).

Cable trams used a system of continuously rotating cables situated between tram tracks, onto which the trams would 'grip', propelling them forward (VHR, 'H0988 - North Melbourne Cable Tramway Engine House and Cable Tram Track Formation', VHD). It appears that North Melbourne's representatives had to argue for the extension of the cable tram network to include the suburb, with the tramway company suggesting horse trams as an alternative due to costs of constructing the cables. Likewise, the route of the tramway was contested, with a deputation of retailers from Errol and Victoria streets presenting an argument to the mayor against any change of route away from the commercial centre of the suburb. One shopkeeper stated:

> [The change] would seriously affect the interests of local business people as well as the convenience of the public (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 18 June 1887: 3).

The North Melbourne cable tramway opened in March 1890, the line's green trams travelling from Flinders Street to Flemington Bridge (Figure 43) (*The Argus* 4 March 1890: 5).

It was even predicted by 'several' businessmen that the tram would:

> … increase considerably the value of property on Hotham Hill … and now that tenants can travel comfortably from Flinders street to their door, houses on the Hill should let well (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 7 March 1890: 2).

With the arrival of cable trams in North Melbourne, infrastructure was required to support the new form of public transport. The cable tram engine house on the corner of Queensberry and Abbotsford streets was constructed in c. 1890, likely to a design by the Melbourne Tramway Trust's architect, Robert Gordon. The route was electrified in 1935, and the present West Maribyrnong no. 57 tram follows this earlier route through North Melbourne (VHR, 'H0988 - North Melbourne Cable Tramway Engine House and Cable Tram Track Formation', VHD).
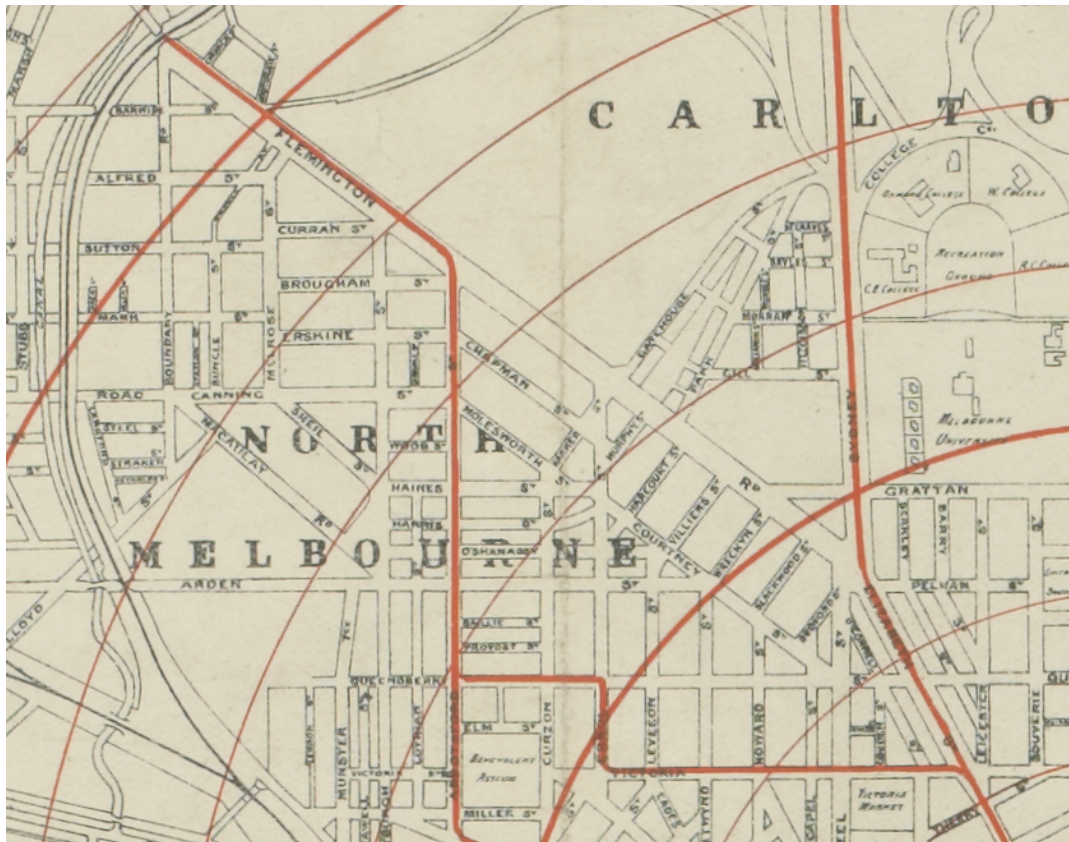
Figure 43   Detail of Sands & McDougall map of Melbourne, c. 1896, with cable tram routes in North
             Melbourne shown as red lines
             Source: State Library of Victoria

Figure 44   View of south side of Queensberry Street between Abbotsford and Lothian streets, with
             cable tram engine house at left
             Source: H36133/308, K J Halla, State Library of Victoria

Postal service

The first post office in North Melbourne was established by printer and stationer John MacGibbon in his Errol Street premises in 1855, although initially the service was limited to the sale of stamps and holding letters for collection (*The Argus* 25 October 1860: 4). After transferring his business to a newly constructed building at the corner of Queensberry Street and Lancashire Lane in c. 1858-60 (Figure 45), he was appointed Postmaster of Hotham in 1860 (*Sands & Kenny* 1858; *The Argus* 25 October 1860: 4). MacGibbon continued to hold this role until 1885, including transferring the business to the new post office in the town hall complex (*The Argus* 25 October 1860: 4). The new premises for the postmaster and his family were described in 1876:

> The post and telegraph offices are entered from Errol street, for which there are apartments measuring 28 feet by 18 feet, with a back office and a private room for the postmaster. Upstairs are five rooms, intended for the occupation of this office and his family, which are conveniently arranged (*Advocate*, 1 July 1876: 16).

Within 12 years, however, complaints were being made about the 'wretched accommodation' for the crowded post office (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 22 August 1890: 2). Likewise, when postal services were transferred to the Commonwealth following Federation, the new Postmaster-General's Office was 'not favourably impressed' with the town hall post office, and looked to alternatives within North Melbourne (*The Argus* 16 January 1911: 10). Alterations were made to the old court house within the town hall complex to provide more space for the post office. A new court house was constructed on Chetwynd Street. The *North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* complimented the new offices as 'ample and commodious' (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 21 July 11: 2). The post office continues to operate from this site.

A post office was also established on Hotham Hill, as early as 1894, following requests from local residents for more services in this part of the suburb (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 27 June 1890: 2; *The Argus* 20 March 1894: 7). It was located at 37 Melrose Street, and was reaccommodated in the Melrose Street shopping strip, when this area was redeveloped by the HCV in the 1960s (*Sands & McDougall directory,* 1930, 1974).

Figure 45   First Hotham Post Office, 518-520 Queensberry Street, 1860s
             Source: 18895, City of Melbourne Libraries

Places

- *Flemington Road*: major highway which has evolved from an 1840s track

- *Former Cable Tram Engine House* (VHR H0988): Brick engine house, which houses engine and machinery to operate the cable tram system between 1890 and 1935

- *518 Queensberry Street* (HO3): One of a pair of two-storey shops and residences of c. 1860, which housed the first Hotham Post Office

CHAPTER 7: COMMUNITY LIFE

- Religion and places of worship

- Welfare

- Education

- Hotels and temperance

Religion and places of worship

Religion has long played an important role in the lives of North Melbourne residents, and has shaped the built form of the suburb from the mid-nineteenth century and through the twentieth century. Between the first sales of 1850s and 1875, when the subdivision of Crown land across Hotham had been completed, parcels of land were reserved from sale for use by religious denominations. This included the Church of England and the Wesleyan Church on opposite sides of Howard Street in the earliest survey of North Melbourne; an island site for the Presbyterian Church bounded by Queensberry, Elm, Union and Curzon streets; and a school for the Catholic Church, at the corner of Dryburgh and Arden streets. The St Mary Star of the Sea complex was located nearby, on the West Melbourne side of Victoria Street, and serviced the local Catholic community.

The Church of England and Wesleyan reserves were permanently gazetted in 1854 and 1855 respectively. The first church on the St Mary's Anglican site was constructed in November 1853, a prefabricated corrugated zinc structure, which due to its highly uncomfortable environment was given the vivid nickname the 'Dutch Oven' (Figure 46) (Rickard 2008: 4). As the population of the suburb, and the local parish, increased, the need for a more substantial church grew. The foundation stone for the extant bluestone church was laid in October 1858. The architect for the new church was Lloyd Tayler, and it was one of his first big commissions. Tayler later became a well-respected and prolific architect, designing major commercial, residential and institutional buildings both throughout Victoria and interstate (Trethowan in Goad and Wills, 2012: 688-689). The church was built in stages, being mostly completed by 1868, however, notably the spire element included in Tayler's original design was never constructed. Despite the substantial size of the church, *The Argus* noted in 1868 that the congregation was 'with perhaps one or two exceptions, the least wealthy of any within the neighbourhood of Melbourne.' (*The Argus* 31 August 1868: 6).

Construction of a church building commenced in the late 1850s on the Presbyterian Church site on Curzon Street (Figure 47); this replaced an iron schoolhouse that had been used by the congregation since the mid-1850s. Architect John Donaldson's plans for a modest gable-roofed bluestone building were accepted, and the church was constructed by contractor Thomas Cattanach and opened in November 1859 (Robertson 1904: 24). A two-storey brick manse was constructed in 1868. By the late 1870s, the congregation had grown to such a size that increased accommodation was required. Rather than add to the 1859 church, it was pulled down, and the materials used to construct a church hall in Elm Street. The new brick church, with space for 1,000 people, and an imposing spire, was designed by architect Evander McIver (VHR, 'H0007 – Former Presbyterian Union Memorial Church Complex', VHD).

The Wesleyan (Methodist) community also had a strong presence in early North Melbourne. The Wesleyan Church reserve, on the north-east side of Queensberry and Howard streets, provided for a church, school and dwelling on the triangular site (M314(13) North Melbourne Parish of Jika Jika, Central Plan Office). A school and church were established by the mid-1860s (*Sands & McDougall* 1865), with the prominently located stone church designed by Thomas Taylor (Hotham History Project, June 2020).

The early church was described as 'primitive' and underwent significant works in the mid-1870s, giving 'an air of elegance' (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 12 February 1874: 2). It was in this period that a separate congregation was established in Brougham Street, with a new bluestone chapel constructed. However, although there had been a 'very large congregation in the North Melbourne Methodist Church' in the nineteenth century, it diminished in numbers by the early twentieth century. It was noted that the 'large decrease' was due to many Methodist families moving from North Melbourne to the 'suburban residences' (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 13 April 1906: 2). By the mid-twentieth century, the church in Queensberry Street had been demolished and replaced with a large warehouse, although the chapel building remains on Howard Street (Airspy 1946 H91.160/741 SLV).

While Methodism declined in North Melbourne in the twentieth century, the suburb's strong Irish community saw Catholicism grow, both in numbers and buildings. By 1916, the population of North Melbourne was 17,000, of which 50 % were Catholic (*Spectator and Methodist Chronicle* 11 February 1916: 179; Context 2012: 78). A new school and church were constructed Hotham Hill, with the substantial St Michael's Church opened in 1907, designed by architects Grainger, Kennedy and Little (*Advocate* 23 November 1907: 20; *The Argus* 10 June 1907: 8). Of note, the elevated site had been purchased by the congregation, rather than it being grant through a government reserve.

Although just outside North Melbourne, the former Baptist Church that once stood near the junction of King, Victoria and Errol Streets is remembered by Wurundjeri Elders as the site of the wedding of William Barak's grandniece, Julia Nevin (also known as Princess Bullum Bullum), to William Jones on 21 November 1936. The couple subsequently lived in Balston Street, North Melbourne. The wedding was reported as follows:

> To the accompaniment of … music supplied by a gumleaf band and the singing of an Aboriginal song, Boora Yara Yumna, an Aboriginal princess, Bullum Bullum, whose name means butterfly, was married to-day (*Sunday Mail*, 22 November 1936, p. 1.).

The cake was adorned by a boomerang, and the honeymoon took place in the Upper Yarra, where it is noted 'King Barrak, the bride's great-grand uncle, was married in that same locality over 90 years ago' (*Sunday Mail*, 22 November 1936, p. 1.).

Aside from the regular act of worship, religion was often the basis for community connections within North Melbourne. Church events, including dances, fundraisers, fetes, talks and prayer groups through the year provided a structure within which the community could form bonds and socialise. The social outreach and support programs of the churches have been critical in times of economic downturn, particularly in the 1890s and the Great Depression of the 1930s, when North Melbourne suffered high levels of unemployment. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, large Friday night social gatherings were held in parish hall at St Mary's: these included singing and activities to improve people's wellbeing ('H0010 St Mary's Church of England,' VHD). In 1946, St Mary's became the first church in the Melbourne Diocesan Centre, established 'for the purpose of strengthening church work in crowded inner suburbs' (Rickard 2008: 92).

The post-war diversification of North Melbourne is evident in the development of additional places of worship. One of these was a new Catholic cathedral for the Ukrainian community (*Sands & McDougall* 1950, 1960), designed by the Spanish-born Salvador Camacho Bracero of architectural practice, Smith & Tracey. The Ss Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral was completed by early 1963, and blessed by Bishop Ivan at Easter, 14 April 1963(Figure 48) (Babie 2007: 39). It continues to be used by the

Ukrainian Catholic community. Likewise, late twentieth century migration patterns have seen shifts in demographics of North Melbourne churches, including St Michael's Catholic Church, Brougham Street which has become an important place for Vietnamese priests and nuns (Community consultation, North Melbourne Language and Learning Centre, 27 November 2019). Since the 1990s, the Central Chinese Baptist Church has operated from a former office building in Capel Street.

Places

- *St Mary's Church of England, 408-434 Queensberry Street* (VHR H0010): Early church complex in North Melbourne, with the bluestone church building opening in 1860

- *St Michael's Catholic Church, 456-474 Dryburgh Street* (HO3): Substantial c. 1907 Catholic church, which is demonstrative of importance of Catholic Church in North Melbourne

- *Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, 35-37 Canning Street* (HO3): Imposing and significant cathedral of the 1960s, built for a post-war migrant community

Figure 46   Illustration of St Mary's Church of England, c. 1862. The Lloyd Tayler designed church is at right, shown prior to the additions of the 1860s.
Source: James Butler, H2134, State Library of Victoria

THE BLUESTONE CHURCH,
Erected 1859; Pulled down, 1878.

Figure 47   Original Union Presbyterian Church, Curzon Street, c. 1860s
                 Source: Reproduced from James T Robertson, *Union Memorial Presbyterian church, North Melbourne, jubilee history: a brief retrospect of the years 1854-1904*, North Melbourne, 1904, p. 27.

Figure 48   Perspective drawing of the Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, Smith and Tracey, architects
                 Source: Reproduced in *Cross-Section*, 1 July 1962, p. 3.

Welfare

The role of social welfare and charitable institutions in North Melbourne has been significant over its history and it is a theme that continues to play an important role in the character of the suburb to this day.

The first permanent building in North Melbourne was also its first welfare place.[2] The substantial institution, the Benevolent Asylum, was established prior to the survey of North Melbourne, before the gold rush period of the 1850s, and indeed earlier than the separation of the colony of Victoria from New South Wales. With the nascent town's population increasing through the 1840s it became clear that support and welfare services were needed. A number of welfare groups had been set up during the 1840s, but only one provided accommodation to those in need, and although New South Wales could provide support in extreme cases, a local welfare institution was required. In 1848, following a request from the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, Charles La Trobe, to the Governor Charles FitzRoy, the government agreed to supply £1,000, to be matched by local subscriptions, and to grant a site for the construction of an asylum (Kehoe 1998: 14). In September 1849, it was announced that an application would be made for 'a reserve of ten acres on the hill overlooking the junction of the Moonee Moonee Ponds (Moonee Ponds Creek) and the Salt Water Lagoon (West Melbourne Swamp), for the purpose of erecting a Benevolent Asylum' (*The Argus* 14 September 1849: 2).

The Argus observed that:

> The site selected is about the most magnificent that could well be imagined, the view being not only most extensive and beautiful in the extreme, but peculiarly eligible for a public building, from the fact of its commanding every entrance to the city, North, South, East and West, as well as forming a most prominent object of observation from the Bay (*The Argus* 6 September 1849: 2)*.*

The site terminated what became Victoria Street at Curzon Street, a situation that would later lead to calls for its relocation to allow the major east-west thoroughfare to continue further west. In November 1849, the Victorian Benevolent Society was formed, with its stated aims to 'relieve the aged, infirm, disabled, or destitute, of all creeds and nations, and to minister the comforts of religion' (Kehoe 1998: 14). After the design of architect Charles Laing was selected, the foundation stone of the building was laid on 24 June 1850, declared a public holiday for the purpose. The two-storey building was completed in mid-1851, and the first occupants arrived in November that year (Kehoe 1998: 19, 22). Its prominent siting and imposing form were consistent with a colony that took pride in its apparent generous approach to the welfare of its poor.

The building (Figure 49) was opened just prior to the commencement of the massive influx of immigrants to Victoria during the gold rush. While fortunes were made for some, for many the gold rush proved to bring on significant hardship, and although the Immigrants' Aid Society would assist many new arrivals, pressure on the Benevolent Asylum increased through the nineteenth century, commensurate with the rise in population of the colony. Additional wings were constructed during the 1850s to accommodate the numbers applying for assistance, many of whom were single men. It was renamed the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum in 1868 (Hotham History Project, June 2020).

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2   Information on the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum has been primarily drawn from Mary Kehoe, T*he Melbourne Benevolent Asylum: Hotham's premier building*, Hotham History Project, North Melbourne, 1998.

Figure 49   View of Benevolent Asylum, c. 1870, at intersection of Victoria and Curzon streets
             Source: D McDonald, photographer, H4249, State Library of Victoria

When the building was completed in 1870, it held 616 beds, an increase of over 500 beds from its first stage of construction in 1850-51. The 1890s economic depression again saw pressures on the asylum's limited number of beds, with hundreds turned away (Kehoe 1998: 21, 30, 64).

Along with more recent arrivals to Melbourne, the asylum provided accommodation to local Aboriginal people. The site is culturally significant to some local Traditional Owners as the place where notable Boon Wurrung clan-head, Derrimut, spent his final days before his death on 11 March 1864, following his transfer from the Melbourne Hospital (Clark 2005, 121-3). It was also noted by a Boon Wurrung Elder as the place where Boon Wurrung man Eric Briggs, grandfather of tennis player Evonne Goolagong Cawley AC MBE, died (Goolagong and Collins, 1975: 65; Extent Heritage, Traditional Owners engagement, December 2019-April 2020.).

By the 1870s, a combination of land values, limit in space and potential health hazards of the building, led the asylum's committee of management to investigate relocation to a more spacious site away from the city. The local community and the North Melbourne council also complained about the perceived and real health risks and reputational damage of the asylum's location in the now well-established suburb. It was not until the early 1900s, after years of negotiations, that legislation was finally passed allowing the sale of the site and the move of the asylum to Cheltenham (Kehoe 1998: 58, 66). The last occupants left the asylum in early 1911, with demolition of the buildings by Whelan the Wrecker occurring soon after (Figure 50) (*The Herald* 30 March 1911: 8).

Figure 50   Whelan the Wrecker demolishing the Benevolent Asylum buildings, 1911
             Source: Sydney Arnold & Co, H35792, State Library of Victoria

The *Weekly Times* reported on the mixed feelings of the departing residents, many of whom had been accommodated at the site for many years:

> The scene was one that no one could view without mingled feelings in which sadness predominated … Some are so old and feeble that they took little interest even in so momentous a break in the monotony of their lives, but others sat up and smiled cheerfully as they thought of the pleasanter quarters by-the-sea … Others shed tears at leaving the gloomy and antiquated, but presentable building that had sheltered them for so long (*Weekly Times* 1 April 1911: 14).

The Benevolent Asylum site was subsequently subdivided and sold for residential purposes, allowing the two sections of Victoria Street to finally be connected.

Although the Benevolent Asylum was the most prominent institution in North Melbourne, other charitable groups have also had an impact on the suburb. A number of other charities established a significant presence in North Melbourne, an indication of the growing need and ever present vulnerability of the population of North Melbourne.

The Salvation Army established an early and substantial complex on Arden Street in 1883. The hall was one of the earliest constructed in Australia, and at the time was reportedly the second largest outside of London (Lewis 1991: 54). The Salvation Army's outreach work saw it provide 'no questions asked' meals from its kitchen in North Melbourne during the Depression (*The Herald* 14 August 1929: 8). Among those for whom the Salvation Army provided services through the Depression period and in the post-

war years were Aboriginal families. Contemporary Traditional Owners recalled that in the mid-twentieth century a lot of Aboriginal people used to congregate at the complex, and indeed a number 'wore the [Salvation Army] uniform' (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owners engagement, December 2019-April 2020). It was similarly noted that some Traditional Owners were baptised at the Salvation Army citadel (Lewis 1991: 54).

The Melbourne City Mission had been established in the 1850s, and expanded its services in North Melbourne in the twentieth century. Such was the demand, that in 1926, new premises (Figure 51) were constructed, reflecting the 'extension of the mission's charitable and educational activities in North Melbourne' (*The Age* 3 December 1926: 11). The new headquarters, designed by E J and C L Ruck, and occupying a site at the corner of Arden and Abbotsford streets, comprised a spacious hall, classrooms, a club room for physical culture classes, shower-rooms, caretaker's rooms, and stores', with a kindergarten occupying the delicensed Prince Charlie Hotel building (*The Age* 3 December 1926: 11). In a similar vein, the Methodist Christian Mission's community centre in Errol Street, which opened in 1941, provided facilities for sport, recreation and worship (*The Age* 5 September 1941: 8).

Aside from the support provided by groups to those in need in North Melbourne, the suburb's residents also played a role in fundraising for charitable causes, both locally and internationally. Concerts were held in the Town Hall including for the Indian Famine Relief Fund in 1897, the Melbourne Hospital Bazaar in 1900 and for the 'distressed in the district' during the economic crash of the 1890s (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 16 April 1897: 2, 19 January 1900: 2, 28 February 1896: 3). Such events were an opportunity for local musicians and performers to provide entertainment, an event for residents to socialise at, and funds to be raised for good cause.

Welfare groups continue to play an important role in providing services to the North Melbourne community, particularly those in insecure housing situations. St Vincent de Paul's soup van operates from the Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre on Melrose Street; the Salvation Army's Open Door accommodation is situated on Boundary Road; and Wombat Housing has premises in the former Melrose Hotel in Flemington Road.

Places

- *Melbourne City Mission*, *260-274 Abbotsford Street* (HO3): Purpose-built premises for prominent welfare organisation which expanded its services in North Melbourne in the twentieth century

- *Salvation Army Barracks*, *68-74 Arden Street* (HO3): Early Salvation Army complex of 1883, which provided welfare services to the suburb's needy. Also has associations for Traditional Owners

- *Site of the Benevolent Asylum*, *Elm, Curzon, Abbotsford streets* (HO3): Site of the first welfare place in North Melbourne, which operated between 1851 and 1911. Also has associations for Traditional Owners

Figure 51   View of the new Melbourne City Mission North Melbourne headquarters at the end of the 1940s
Source: Excerpt from E Leeson, *Melbourne City Mission 1855-1949*

Education

Numerous schools have operated throughout North Melbourne, with institutions providing education from early childhood, primary and post-graduate levels.

Prior to the *Education Act* of 1872, education was provided by private operators, including churches, with the government's Denominational School Board funding schools by denomination, and the National Board overseeing non-sectarian schools ('Education, Prior to 1872', eMelbourne). Likely the first school established within the boundaries of the suburb was the independent school, associated with the Independent Church, on Boundary Road. As noted, this was the earliest part of North Melbourne, with land sales and development permitted as it was then located outside the Melbourne town boundary. The co-educational school opened in January 1853, with 24 boys and 18 girls enrolled, indicating the population of the area close to the road to the gold fields. From the 1860s, head teacher and assistant Thomas and Eliza Spencer operated the school until its closure in 1883 (Blake 1973 Vol. 3: 89). The school can be seen on the 1855 Kearney map (Figure 7), and by the 1890s was being used as a Sunday School for the Independent Church (*Sands & McDougall*, 1890).

As Hotham developed from the mid-1850s and through the 1860s, schools were established to cater for the burgeoning population at the suburb's south. In the absence of a government education department, such schools were generally run by churches. The Presbyterian Church school was operated in an iron building fronting Queensberry Street from early 1856, but was purchased by the

Education Department in 1877 (Blake 1973 Vol. 3: 29). A school was also established by the Wesleyan Church on Queensberry Street in the mid-1850s (Blake 1973 Vol. 3: 35). An 1850s school associated with St Mary's Church of England was taken over by the Education Department in the mid-1870s (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 3 September 1873: 2).

The 1872 *Education Act* set the foundation for the 'free, secular and compulsory' education of primary school children in Victoria, and saw public school buildings across Victoria constructed to designs by the Public Works Department ('Education, Prior to 1872', eMelbourne). The two-storey brick State School No. 307 building was constructed in 1882, and the school also operated as a practising school, in which young teachers were trained (Blake 1973 Vol. 3: 30). After being used for a number of purposes from the interwar period, including as premises for the Sustenance Branch of the Department of Labour and the Melbourne College of Printing and Graphics, it has recently been reinstated as a place of teacher training as the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership (Blake 1973 Vol. 3: 30). This institute is named after Henry Bastow, the Chief Architect and Surveyor for the Department of Education, who oversaw the schools building programme of the 1870s ('Our Story', Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership). Other education facilities were located within the town hall complex, including a school of design from the 1870s, and the free library and mechanics' institute (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 15 October 1873: 2; *Sands & McDougall* 1895). The Hotham school of design, which was operated through a government subsidy, is understood to have been 'one of the largest' such schools in Victoria (McKay 2006: *x*).

In the north-east of the suburb, the North Melbourne Primary School was opened as State School No. 1402 in its new building on Errol Street in 1874, with Albert Mattingley as head teacher (Blake 1973 Vol. 3: 64). The Mattingley family were well known for providing education in Hotham: Elizabeth Mattingley had set up an infant school in two rooms of her Errol Street residence in 1857, which was soon converted to a National School. By December 1857, 110 students had enrolled in the school (*The Argus*, 28 February 1860: 8; Warne 1974: 6-7). Elizabeth's son, Albert, established an upper level school within the National School system, with a school building constructed on a property at the corner of Queensberry and Errol streets, which was subsequently merged with the infant school. The school, officially the Errol Street National School No. 206, was colloquially known as Mattingley's School (Warne 1974: 8).

By 1873, the municipality of Hotham was home to 4,000 children, and with the passing of the Education Act, attendance at school became compulsory for these children (Warne 1974: 19). A new primary school was required that could accommodate the sudden upsurge in student numbers. A site was selected between Murphy/Errol Street and Harcourt Street, which previously had been set aside as a plantation reserve. The course of the creek from Royal Park ran through the site, but this had been sewered underground ('M314 – Allotments on and near Elizabeth, Queen and William Street, Sydney Road & c., Melbourne', CPO).

As the school neared completion in March 1874, the *Leader* newspaper described the institutions:

> The building itself consists of a main body and two wings, the front being
> constructed of dark bricks with white brick dressings. The class rooms are large,
> light, well-ventilated and well finished (*Leader* 28 March 1874: 13-14).

The new school, which the *North Melbourne Advertiser* called a 'credit to the Education Department', could accommodate 1,250 students, and it was predicted it would alleviate the severe overcrowding issues which had confronted parents of school aged children (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 8 May 1874: 2). A drinking fountain was unveiled in April 1919, dedicated as a memorial to the school's past students

who had served in World War I (*The Age* 21 April 1919: 9). During the economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, meals and milk were provided to undernourished children, indicating the impact that period had on North Melbourne families (Warne 1974: 47). Consultation with Traditional Owners revealed that many Aboriginal children attended the North Melbourne Primary School in Errol Street (and the Boundary Road public school), although they usually did not identify as Aboriginal. However, in the late twentieth century the number of Aboriginal children was more limited, with one younger Traditional Owner recalling that he was one of the only Aboriginal children to attend Errol Street, alongside noted musician Dan Sultan (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owners engagement, December 2019-April 2020).

Reflecting the increasing prominence of the denomination, Catholic education has had a strong presence in North Melbourne, with a number of Catholic schools constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. With the growth of the Catholic Church complex on Hotham Hill in the 1900s, St Michael's Primary School was opened in 1918 by the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Daniel Mannix (*Advocate* 9 February 1918: 15). The first St Michael's school had been established on the north side of Arden Street, near Lothian Street, by the 1870s (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 8 October 1875: 2). The new brick building of 1918 was designed by architect Bart Moriarty, and was situated near St Michael's Catholic Church of 1907. The *Advocate* newspaper, in reporting that between 5,000 and 6,000 had attended its opening, remarked that the building was:

> … perfectly planned and fitted up, forming one of the best schools in the State of Victoria. The facade to Brougham Street, whilst being simple in design, is most imposing and effective … the building being a very fine and important addition to the architecture of this important suburb (*Advocate* 9 February 1918: 15).

St Aloysius High School was in operation by the mid-1890s, at the Sisters of Mercy convent in Brougham Street (*North Melbourne and West Melbourne Courier* 25 March 1989: 2). The girls' high school was known by the early twentieth century for its musical education and tuition was given in 'a full course' of commercial subjects (*Advocate* 28 March 1903: 17, 8 March 1923: 15). It was not the only girls' school in North Melbourne, with small private schools in operation in the 1880s and 1890s, including the North Melbourne Ladies College which was located in Chetwynd Street (*Sands & McDougall directory* 1885, 1895).

The Christian Brothers' St Joseph's College in Queensberry Street of c. 1901 (Figure 53) was open to boys only. The Christian Brothers had not previously had a presence in North Melbourne, although the denomination operated a number of schools around Melbourne, including a high school in St Kilda. The school opened in 1903, and was described as:

> … a popular landmark in North Melbourne; and the building though perhaps severe in its plainness, is an imposing structure … [it is] a valuable addition to the agencies of Catholic education in this city (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 24 April 1903: 2)

While Catholic schools provided some migrant communities with a familiar conduit for their children's education, contemporary Traditional Owners recall that it was believed that Aboriginal children 'weren't allowed to go to Catholic schools because they weren't Catholic' (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owners engagement, December 2019-April 2020).

Places

- *North Melbourne Primary School, 210 Errol Street* (HO295)*:* The first State school in North Melbourne, and has provided education to local children since 1874. Also has associations for Traditional Owners

- *St Aloysius College, 31-55 Curran Street* (HO3): Catholic girls' secondary college, in operation since the early twentieth century

- *St Josephs College, 367-395 Queensberry Street* (HO3): A substantial three-storey brick Edwardian Christian Brothers school building, designed by architect for the Catholic Church, A A Fritsch in c. 1901

Figure 52   View of North Melbourne Primary School from Harcourt Street, 1964
              Source: K J Halla, H36133/307, State Library of Victoria

Figure 53   Christian Brothers North Melbourne School Assembly, 1909
             Source: 20373, Heritage Collection, City of Melbourne Library Service

Women and children's welfare

In 1903, a meeting was held at the town hall to consider a proposal to establish a creche in the municipality. Advocate Rev. J T Robertson outlined the benefits of providing such a facility:

> Poor women who went out to work could, at a small charge, leave their children at a creche, where they would be cared for, fed and amused during the day, while their parents were at work (*The Age* 31 July 1903: 6).

Other creches were in operation in Prahran, Brunswick, Richmond and Collingwood, all relatively poor suburbs in which it would not have been unusual for mothers to work. The Prahran and Collingwood creches, both established in the late nineteenth century, operated from residential buildings (The Age, 2 November 1889: 14, 13 January 1892: 6; MMBW detail plan no. 1236, 1901). Within a month of the initial meeting, the North Melbourne Creche committee (Figure 54) had rented a cottage at 5 Haines Street, and fundraising efforts commenced (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 21 August 1903: 2). Child care took place between 7 am and 6.30 pm on weekdays and 7 am to 1 pm on Saturday. The *North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* was confident of its value, commenting 'there is no doubt that the institution will prove exceedingly useful and beneficial' (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 18 September 1903: 2).

Such was the success of the institution, that by 1906 a fund was established to construct a permanent building. There was strong support within the community, and a torchlight process held as part of the 'creche society carnival', was reportedly well attended, with the local paper estimating a crowd of 'not less than 20,000 people' (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 5 October 1906: 2). After moving to larger leased premises at 8 Howard Street by 1905, in 1907, the creche purchased a site

'for a building of their own' at 28-34 Howard Street (*The Age* 17 March 1905: 2; *North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 20 September 1907: 2). The creche secured the support of the premier, Sir Thomas Bent, who acknowledged the importance of its work and that it 'needed far more extensive premises' (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 13 September 1907: 2). Bent noted the difficulty in raising money in the 'poor district' and agreed to a donation of £1,000 by the government, dependent on £500 being raised locally (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 13 September 1907: 2).

In 1909, a culmination of years of fundraising and petition saw the construction of the North Melbourne Creche on Howard Street (Figure 56). The foundation stone was laid in April (Figure 55) and the building was completed by August.

An article in *The Age* described the new premises as:

> Though the latest creche to be opened, it is the first built for specific use as a day nursery for children. The building is a well situated, handsome red brick structure, containing a large playroom, a large dormitory, a bathroom, cloakroom, committee room, and quarters for the matron and her assistant. Outside there is a large playground (*The Age* 12 August 1909: 10).[3]

By 1919, it was reported that the creche had cared for 74,160 in the 16 years since its establishment, although it is unclear if this is individual children or a total of daily attendance (*The Age* 15 December 1919: 7). The health of the children was also at the forefront of the committee's priorities through the interwar period, with a daily dose of cod liver oil administered, and milk supplied by the Metropolitan Milk Council (*The Age* 14 November 1935: 15).

The welfare work of the creche sometimes extended beyond those directly in its care. During the Depression of the early 1930s, siblings of children attending creche were given free meals, an indication of how that economic downturn had affected the local community (*The Age* 8 September 1930: 11. A proposal was even put forward in the 1920s to establish a night nursery at the creche for mothers that worked evenings, although it is unclear if the proposal was proceeded with (*The Herald* 7 September 1925: 10). Some changes have been made to the building through the twentieth century, including the construction of a class room at the front of the building in 1970 (CoM Building Application Index, 28/30 Howard Street, North Melbourne, BA 46144, 9 October 1970). The creche continues to operate as the North Melbourne Children's Centre.

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3   Note this article incorrectly attributes the location to Courtney Street.

Figure 54   The committee of the North Melbourne Creche, c. 1900s
            Source: 18134, City of Melbourne Libraries

NEW BUILDINGS FOR THE NORTH MELBOURNE CRECHE.
Photo by Sears, 252 Collins-st.   The Lord Mayor of Melbourne (Cr. Burston) laying the Foundation Stone on Tuesday, 30th March.

Figure 55   Gathering at ceremony to lay the foundation stone at the North Melbourne Creche, April
            1909
            Source: *Punch*, 8 April 1909, p. 18
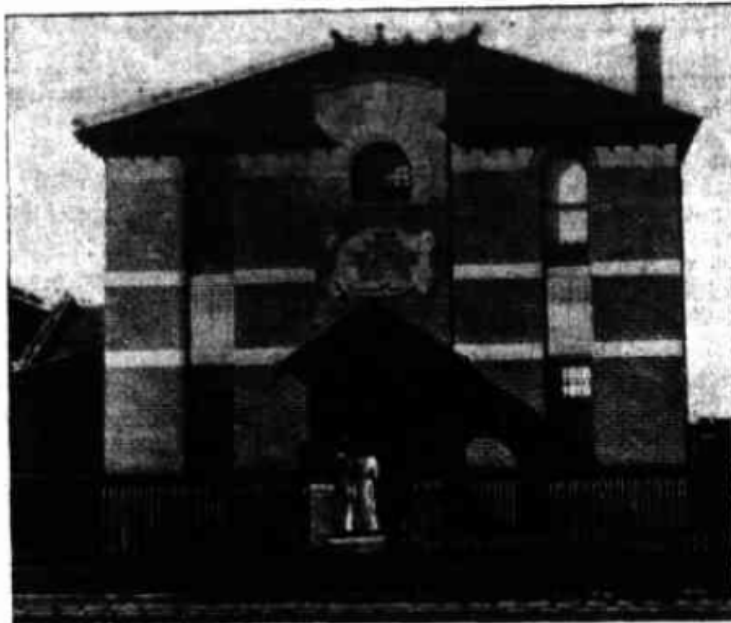
NORTH MELBOURNE CRECHE.
Opened on the 10th August by Lady Gibson-Carmichael.
y Tyro.

Figure 56   Photograph of North Melbourne Creche at time of its opening, 1909
               Source: *Punch*, 9 September 1909, p. 14.

A reflection of the increasing need for welfare in North Melbourne in the early twentieth century is the reconstruction of Presbyterian and Scots Neglected Children's Home on Flemington Road in 1914-15. The charitable society had purchased the property at 149 Flemington Road, with an existing residence, for use as a 'receiving home' in c. 1891, just as effects of the economic crash of the 1890s were beginning to be felt. With additions to that building the home could provide temporary accommodation for 29 children by 1914, an inadequate number for the needs of the society (*The Argus* 19 February 1914: 6.). By 1907, it appears this temporary accommodation was becoming more permanent, with a school established on the site, despite being in proximity to the local school, as a recognition of the complex needs of the children within its care (*The Age*, 2 August 1907: 6). It was later converted to a destitute women's hostel in 1939, and run by the Legion of Mary, a Catholic Welfare Agency. It provided 'a resting place' and 'a little encouragement' for up to 32 women, regardless of 'class, creed or colour' (*The Argus* 27 November 1938: 2).

During the interwar period, additional facilities for the care and education of young children were established in the suburb, reflecting an increasing concern in Victoria for the health of mothers and their children. The first baby health centre had been established in Richmond in 1917, with the voluntary Victorian Baby Health Centres Association formed the following year ('Infant Welfare, eMelbourne). In September 1924, the City Council's health committee decided to open a baby health centre in North Melbourne and purchased land for the centre in 1925. In May 1926, a single-storey interwar brick and roughcast render interwar building was opened as the Melbourne City Council Baby Health Care Centre at 505 Abbotsford Street. This centre was the first to be purpose-built by the City of Melbourne,

although Council provided financial assistance to a number of other centres in the municipality (*The Age* 12 September 1924:11; *The Argus* 3 July 1925: 18; *The Herald* 8 December 1925: 18).

The Baby Health Care Centre comprised:

> … a good sun porch, a large waiting room … consulting room … doctor's and sister's room and the kitchen. The rooms are all very airy and light, and the walls, woodwork, and furnishings are all white, as are the curtains at the windows (*The Australasian* 29 May 1926: 57).

The centre was staffed by nurses with post-graduate qualifications, a medical officer and a matron, and at the opening ceremony, the Lord Mayor Sir William Brunton, noted the importance of such centres in reducing infant mortality rates. Amongst the congratulations, Councillor Sir George Cuscaden acknowledged the efforts of women's committees associated with the council's baby health centres. Indeed, the number of child welfare centres in North Melbourne is testament to the efforts of numerous volunteer women.

Kindergartens were also an important support to young children in North Melbourne in gaining access to education which was more easily obtained by children in wealthier suburbs. The Free Kindergarten Union was established in Victoria in 1908 to implement the educational ideas of Fredrich Fröbel and was particularly focussed on working class and poorer suburbs. A Free Kindergarten was established in the Methodist Mission Hall at 68 Howard Street in 1911, which was associated with the creche (*The Age* 4 July 1911: 11). The kindergarten had relocated to a building at the North Melbourne Primary School by 1922, with an apparent closure between 1919 and 1922. A new building on this site was provided in 1929. Speaking at the opening, the local member and former premier and mayor of North Melbourne, G M Prendergast, noted the shift in opinion to the provision of such services, stating that 'the attitude of the Education department towards mothers' clubs had altered from open opposition to one of tolerance, and he hoped to see [e]very movement to enlarge the welfare of children would be encouraged' (*The Age* 12 September 1929: 12). Another kindergarten was established by the Presbyterian Church in Curzon Street in 1926, operating from the school hall on Elm Street (Figure 57).

With kindergartens operating at church sites in the suburb, in 1930 the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Melbourne, Dr John Dale, pushed again for the opening of a Free Kindergarten Union kindergarten in North Melbourne. Dale was a well-known public health and child welfare advocate and important influence within the municipality. Due to the onset of the Great Depression, the Free Kindergarten plan was abandoned, however in 1939, Dale again convinced the city of the necessity for childcare in the suburb. Later known as the Lady Huntingfield Children's Centre (LHCC), this was the first kindergarten in Australia to have its construction and establishment fully funded by a municipal council, noting that the Free Kindergarten Union and a local committee had to pay half of the yearly operating costs (Gardiner 1982: 79; *The Age* 10 July 1940: 8). The kindergarten was named for the Lady Huntingfield, the wife of the then Victorian Governor, who was heavily involved in fundraising for the kindergarten. The building was designed by the then City Architect, Eric Beilby and was constructed on what was then called Harris Street (now Plane Tree Way). The kindergarten operated through the twentieth century, and is currently undergoing redevelopment.

Figure 57   Children and teacher, Union Memorial Presbyterian Free Kindergarten, Curzon Street, North Melbourne, 1926
Source: 751403, City of Melbourne Libraries

Places

- *North Melbourne Creche, 28-34 Howard Street* (HO3): Constructed in 1909, this is reportedly the first purpose built creche in the metropolitan area, enabling local mothers to undertake work while their children were cared for. It continues to provide this function

- *North Melbourne Baby Health Care Centre*, 505-513 Abbotsford Street (HO3): A single-storey interwar brick and roughcast render interwar building of c. 1925, providing support and care for local mothers and their children

- *Anna House, 139-149 Flemington Road* (HO3): Initially the Presbyterian Neglected Baby Home, and later the Catholic-run Regina Coeli Home, it has provided accommodation to children and women in need

Hotels and temperance

Hotels were important gathering places in North Melbourne, and numerous hotels were constructed through the suburb from the mid-nineteenth century. Many houses were small, and did not afford residents space for socialising, gathering or relaxing; in this context hotels provided an essential neighbourhood service and most often drew patronage from their immediate local area.

The 1860 *Sands, Kenny & Co's Melbourne Directory* demonstrates both the importance and the proliferation of hotels in the developing suburb. Less than eight years after the first sales of land in North Melbourne, there were 19 hotels in operation, with names including Royal Park Hotel, North Star Hotel, Tam O'Shanter Hotel, Hotham Arms Hotel, North Melbourne Hotel, and Haymarket Hotel. Within

30 years, the number of hotels had increased to 71, the equivalent of one hotel for every 295 people (*Sands & McDougall directory* 1890; *Victorian Year Book* 1890-91: 216). With an absence of local halls, these hotels were also used for political gatherings, clubs and societies and other public meetings. Many hotels were constructed on corner sites, and often were the most substantial structures in the street.

Established in 1858 at corner of Queensberry and Errol streets, the Peacock Inn was the site of the first meeting of the Hotham Council in October 1859 (*The Age* 28 April 1858: 5; Hotham History Project, June 2020). It was subsequently renamed the Courthouse Hotel, by c. 1862, following the establishment of a court house on the reserve opposite (*The Argus*, 9 October 1862: 1). The Court House Hotel was owned by Samuel Lancashire, who soon after acquiring the premises auctioned off three adjacent houses in Errol Street, as well as land in the eponymous Lancashire Street (now Lancashire Lane) (*The Argus* 18 June 1863: 2.). An early photograph (Figure 58) shows the single-storey hotel with chamfered corner entry, steeply pitched roof and timber parapet on which the name of the hotel was painted. Lancashire owned the hotel until his death in 1907, a remarkably long tenure that spanned the earliest years of North Melbourne, the 1880s boom and 1890s depression. He had expanded the hotel in the c. late nineteenth century, and it was described as:

> … a two-storey brick building … containing Bar, 2 bar parlors [*sic.*], dining, sitting, drawing and billiard rooms, lodge room, 6 bedrooms, sewing room, bath room and conveniences (Samuel Lancashire, Probate and Administration Files, 22 December 1907, VPRS 28/P2/826, Item 105/472, PROV).

Figure 58   Photograph of the Courthouse Hotel, corner Queensberry and Errol streets, c. 1882
            Source: H26302, State Library of Victoria

With a relatively large number of hotels operating within the municipality, as well as a strong presence of religious, welfare and political groups, temperance emerged as a prominent issue in the suburb. A Hotham branch of the Band of Hope, a temperance society which educated children, had been formed by 1861 (*The Age* 21 February 1861: 5). A local lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars was

formed in 1872, as was a Hotham Tent of Rechabites by 1883, both international temperance societies (*The Age* 11 July 1872: 2, 16 August 1883: 7).

A temperance hall was constructed in 1874 on Queensberry Street, by a group of shareholders known as the Hotham Temperance Hall Company. The two-storey building was in close proximity to many of the suburb's early hotels. The building was designed by architects W H Ellerker & Co, who called for tenders for its construction in November 1873 (*The Argus* 8 November 1873: supplement 2). The opening of the building was 'celebrated … by a tea-meeting' in the hall, attended by 300 people, with 400-500 people attending a public meeting afterward to hear an address on the 'temperance principles' (*The Australasian* 4 April 1874: 19). The hall was to be made available to community groups, which included temperance societies such as the Hotham Lodge of the Good Templars, along with concerts and public meetings (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 17 December 1875: 2, 18 February 1876: 2, 17 December 1875: 2). The 1888 opening of the substantial four-storey Boom-style Oriental coffee palace, at 328 Victoria Street, was a sign of confidence in the temperance movement and the desire of the community to socialise without alcohol. The premises incorporated dining hall, temperance bar, public and private sitting rooms and 75 bedrooms and was expected to appeal to visitors arriving for the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 28 July 1888: 2).

As was the case across many of the inner suburbs of Melbourne, the investigations of the Licenses Reduction Board of the early twentieth century saw the closure of numerous hotels. The Licence Reduction Board was aided by the temperance movement; it was noted in an article on the local branch of the International Order of Rechabites in 1900 that:

> North Melbourne had the unenviable notoriety of having more hotels than any other district in the colony in proportion to its population. The statutory number of hotels for North Melbourne was 20, while there were no less than 57 within its boundaries. It was very apparent that a local option poll was necessary here to test the will of the people and find out whether they wished to retain so many. One way to combat the drinking customs of the land was to prevail on all young men to join temperance benefit societies (*North Melbourne Gazette* 12 October 1900: 4.).

At a subsequent public meeting it was stated that the Flemington Road division of North Melbourne, north of Canning and Molesworth streets and east of Curzon Street, had 'a public house for every 30 families', a statistic that had an adverse impact on the value of property in the municipality. The Hotham division, understood to be to the south-east of the Flemington division, contained 17 hotels, which was 8 more than statutorily permitted (*The Argus* 17 July 1902: 9).

The movement to hold a local poll on the question of reducing hotel numbers was taken up with 'much enthusiasm' by residents in 1902, with a well-attended meeting at the town hall resulting in the collection of donations and the formation of a committee (*The Age*, 22 July 1902: 4). Locals were canvassed to sign a petition to be presented to the Governor-in-Council to have the poll held, with the campaign supported by the local temperance movement and religious groups. The poll was scheduled for 30 October 1902, with the committee having secured in excess of the 600 signatures required. Not all supported the move, with a Cr Brown reportedly stating at a public meeting that 'the townspeople of North Melbourne protest against the 'unfair tactics of the teetotal party'', however, 'he was not taken seriously' (*The Argus* 10 October 1902: 7). Ahead of the poll, the community was presented with the views of Mayor Prendergast and Robert Lemon of the Victorian Licensed Victuallers' Association at a public meeting held at the town hall on 21 October (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 17 October 1902: 2).

The Herald noted the two sides of the argument:

> … on the one hand [residents] have been exhorted by the temperance advocates to vote for their reduction to 20, while on the other hand the licensed victuallers claim that there is a local legitimate demand for 40 public-houses (*The Herald*, 30 October 1902: 1).

The proposal to reduce the hotels in the division received 666 of the 1,268 votes made (*Leader* 1 November 1902: 23). By 1903, a proposal had been put forward as to which 38 out of the 58 hotels were to be closed in the Flemington division of North Melbourne (Figure 59) (*The Age* 13 December 1905: 8). This number included some long operating hotels, such as the Lalla Rookh Hotel on Queensberry Street and the North Melbourne Hotel in Howard Street.

The option poll resulted in the closure of 37 hotels in North Melbourne, including the Hit or Miss, the Hotham Arms, the Mona Arms, the North Melbourne and the Shannon and Shamrock hotels (*The Age* 15 June 1904: 8; *Bendigo Advertiser* 29 January 1904: 3). All these hotels were identified in the plan at Figure 59). By 1910, the Mona Arms at 18 Molesworth Street was a private residence (*Sands & McDougall directory* 1910). Many hotel buildings remain, having been repurposed as shops and residences.

Another consequence of the work of the Licenses Reduction Board's work was the upgrade of hotels deemed to be substandard, a requirement to retain licences. The Albion Hotel, which had operated at the corner of Haines and Curzon streets since c. 1874, was rebuilt in 1926 (Figure 60) (*The Argus* 7 February 1874: 11; CoM Building Application Index, 171 Curzon Street, BA 5446, 17 April 1926).
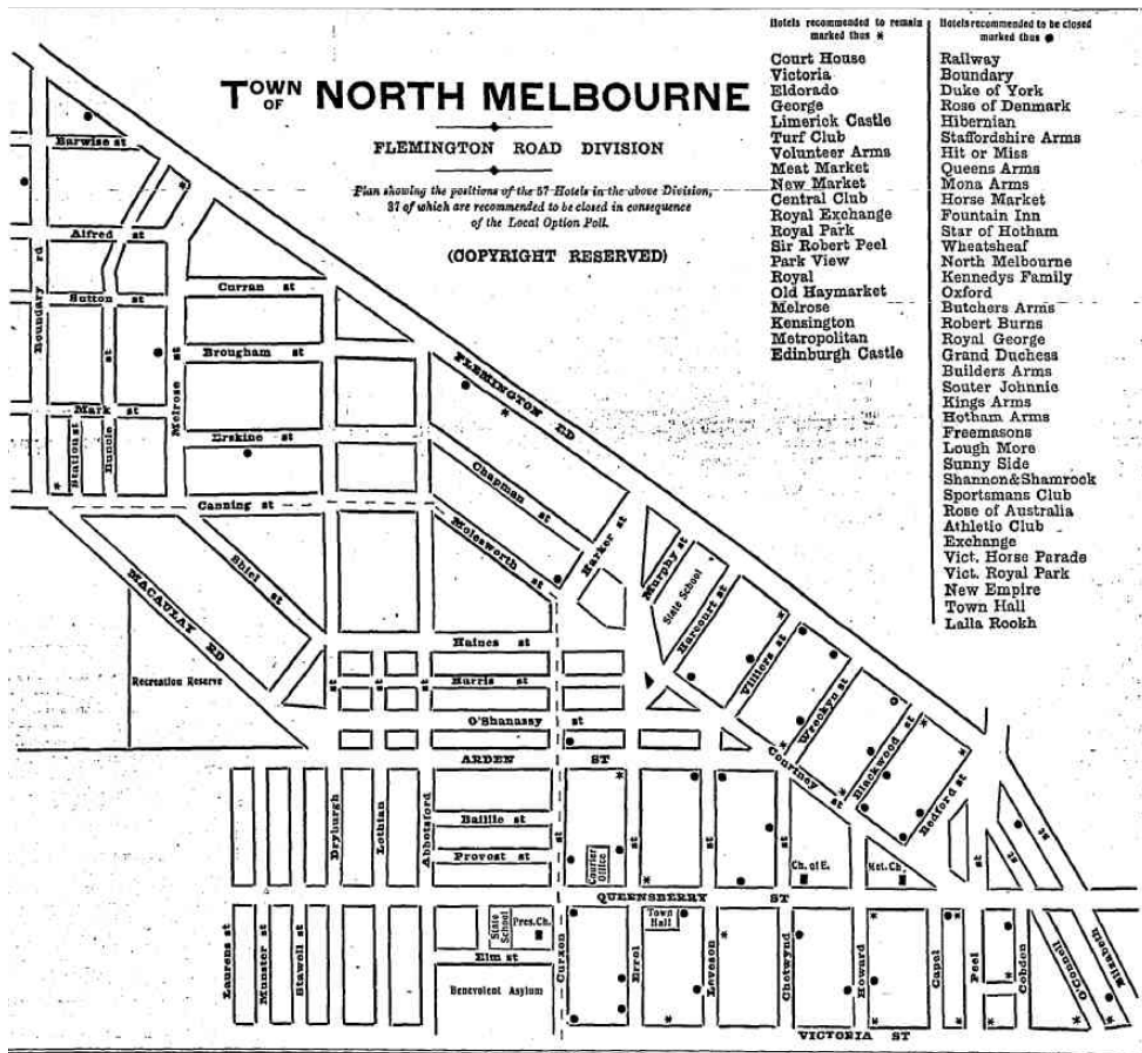
Figure 59   Plan of 37 hotels recommended for closure in the Flemington Division (dotted line)
            following the Local Option Poll, 1903
            Source: *North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser*, 13 November 1903, p. 3

Likewise, the Limerick Castle Hotel on Errol Street was given external alterations in the interwar period. In 1940, the Court House Hotel was substantially altered, giving its present moderne appearance (City of Melbourne Building Application Index, 86-90 Errol Street, North Melbourne, BA 21424, 20 July 1940).

However, while a substantial number of hotels were closed in the suburb, many also remained in operation, with 26 hotels listed within North Melbourne in the 1930 *Sands & McDougall* directory (*Sands & McDougall* 1930). Such hotel buildings were often upgraded or rebuilt in the first decades of the twentieth century to comply with the regulations of the Licences Reduction Board, including the Courthouse Hotel and the Limerick Castle Hotel in Errol Street. Others, such as the El Dorado (now The Leveson) Hotel, continued to operate in nineteenth century buildings. The numbers of operating hotels continued into the latter part of the twentieth century, indicating that pubs remained important social places in the suburb (*Sands & McDougall* 1974). Some hotels in or around the study area, including The Albion, Royal Exchange, Kensington (AKA 'Old Ma Flynn's') Hotel, Black Prince, the Morning Star, the Limerick Castle, The Homebush and The British have particular associations for members of the

Aboriginal communities that frequented them. Local Traditional Owner Daisy Peters played piano and sang in many of these hotels, among which the British, the Morning Star, The Black Prince, the Limerick, and Homebush Hotel were specifically mentioned. As with North Melbourne residents more generally, Traditional Owners often lived in crowded shared accommodation in this period, and hotels offered a place to meet and socialise (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owners engagement, December 2019-April 2020).

More recently, the number of hotels operating in the suburb has decreased considerably, reflecting both the diversification of restaurants, cafes and bars across the metropolitan area, and the process of gentrification of North Melbourne. Some former hotels have since been demolished, or adapted for residential or other purposes. However, those that still operate across the suburb remain popular places for the North Melbourne community to gather and socialise.

Places

- *Leveson Hotel, 46-50 Leveson Street* (HO3): Two-storey Victorian brick hotel, originally the El Dorado Hotel, of c. 1872

- *Town Hall Hotel, 33 Errol Street* (HO3): A two-storey hotel building dating from the c. 1870s, with alterations in the early twentieth century. The hotel has historical associations with the commercial centre of North Melbourne.

- *Albion Hotel, 171-173 Curzon Street* (HO recommended): An interwar hotel (1926) built on site of an earlier hotel and designed by noted hotel architects of the period Sydney Smith Ogg and Serpell. Also has associations for Traditional Owners.

- *Limerick Castle Hotel, 161-163 Errol Street* (HO3): Two-storey nineteenth century hotel, with interwar alterations, with particular associations for members of the Aboriginal community who frequented it.

- *Magnificat House, 456-458 Queensberry Street* (HO3): Two-storey temperance hall of 1874, established by the United Friendly Societies, reflecting presence of temperance movement in the suburb.

Figure 60   View west along Haines Street of the Albion Hotel, as rebuilt in 1926, in 1935
         Source: H2001.291_62, State Library of Victoria

CHAPTER 8: SHAPING NORTH MELBOURNE'S POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LIFE

Struggling for political rights

The community of North Melbourne has historically been politically engaged. This engagement is seen in the early moves to establish control of the suburb as a distinct municipality; the activities of local residents as representatives on the Hotham council; the agitation of women and workers of North Melbourne for better conditions; and, in the twentieth century, the formation of community groups engaged in a discourse around how the suburb should develop.

A political spirit was evident early. The North Melbourne or Hotham Political Association was formed in the late 1850s, discussing land and 'other important political questions' (*The Age* 29 June 1859: 5). Meetings were held in any space that could accommodate groups, including hotels, the town hall and other public venues. Local council elections were big events, with candidates and residents debating local issues in the North Melbourne newspapers. The Labor Party regularly fielded candidates and the Hotham Protection League was established in the 1870s 'for the purpose of exercising influence at elections' (North Melbourne Advertiser 5 November 1875: 2). The *North Melbourne Advertiser* in 1882, urging voters to consider their choice, noted that the selection of representatives was an important matter:

> There is no harm in a little reflection, even on Municipal matters … In our land of boasted freedom and education, we expect to see men in power who have some qualification for the office Councillor. We look for a moderate amount of common sense; a degree of address; a measure of politeness, and a decided stamp of respectability … It is a lamentable fact that we find men who have not one iota of qualification … thrust into the position of councillor (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 14 July 1882: 2).

Beyond municipal politics, other political issues were taken up in the suburb. As for many other suburbs, anti-conscription meetings were held in North Melbourne in World War I (*The Argus* 20 May 1859: 5, 10 January 1880: 5; *North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 14 July 1905: 2; *North Melbourne Advertiser* 23 June 1876: 2, 15 December 1888: 3; *The Age*, 2 October 1916: 9). First-wave feminism and women's political rights were also on the agenda in North Melbourne, with Women's Suffrage League meetings being held at the North Melbourne Town Hall in the 1880s and 1890s. The high-profile nineteenth century feminist and campaigner, Bridgetena (Brettena) Smyth, was based in North Melbourne. She was an early member of the Australian Women's Suffrage Society, and founded the 'breakaway', Victorian Women's Suffrage Society in the 1880s, which 'gave more emphasis to such issues as women's health, birth control and contraceptives' (Kelly 1990, ADB; 'A meeting of women in Melbourne founded the Women's Suffrage Society', Informit, document 8940420). *The Herald* newspaper in 1887 credited Smyth with being 'the first woman in the Australian colonies to deliver even a semi-political speech', which she delivered in front of 'nearly 1,000 persons', in support of Hugh Grace, a candidate for the council (*The Herald* 28 July 1887: 3). However, she was better known for her advocacy for women's health, having given a series of 'women's only' talks at the town hall on health, as well as other speeches on phrenology, consistent with her interest in eugenics (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 18 February 1898: 2). She was described in her eulogy as appearing to some as 'almost too candid and practical for a female', but she was clearly well regarded within the municipality (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 18 February 1898: 2). Her entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* noted:

Like a number of the early suffragists, Brettena Smyth was also a freethinker, opposed to orthodox religion and disposed to question other institutions and forms of authority. Her work was supported by the controversial Australasian Secular Association (Kelly 1990, ADB).

Traditional Owners recall that North Melbourne was home at one time to notable civil rights activist and Aboriginal Elder, Margaret (Lilardia) 'Marge' Tucker. Aunty Marge was well reputed for her fight for civil rights and the representation of Aboriginal people in the twentieth century. Working side-by-side with other prominent civil rights activists, including Pastor Doug Nicholls, William Cooper, Doris Blackburn, Stan Davey and Gordon Bryant, Margaret Tucker is regarded today as a champion of civil rights. This was further addressed in consultation with Traditional Owners, who recalled how the Aboriginal Advancement League (AAL) would meet regularly in North Melbourne at her residence in Hotham Gardens. The AAL was formed in 1957 in response 'to the plight of the Aboriginal people in the Warburton Ranges' (Aboriginal Advancement League, 2020). Formerly the Australian Aborigines Advancement League, established in 1932 by William Cooper, the AAL is regarded today as holding 'a special place in the Aboriginal Community' as the 'oldest Aboriginal Organisation in Victoria' (Deadly Story, n.d.).

The North Melbourne Association (NMA) was formed in the mid-1960s, developing as a result of demographic changes following the construction of the Hotham Gardens estate (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). A public meeting was held on 16 September 1966, where it was agreed that:

> … an association of North Melbourne residents be formed to initiate and carry out action designed to promote the development of North Melbourne and the well-being of the community (Crow 1981: 1).

The campaign work of the NMA was varied. In its first 16 years the NMA campaigned 'around the needs of young children and their parents', 'traffic and parking', organising social activities and the collection of material relating to the history of North Melbourne (Crow 1981: 1). Individual issues that the NMA protested about included the demolition of the 'Happy Valley' shops on Abbotsford Street (c. 1968-71); access to University High School for local children (1970); provision of a community resource centre (1974); and a campaign against redevelopment of Queen Victoria Market and the Capel Street Reclamation scheme (1976) (Crow 1981: 1). The association continues to exist, in the form of the North and West Melbourne Association, formed through the merging of the NMA with the North and West Melbourne Action Group in 1998 (North and West Melbourne Association, About Us).

Places

- *North Melbourne Town Hall*, *52-68 Errol Street* (VHR H2224)*:* Site of numerous local and broader political debates

- *Hotham Gardens Estate*, *Arden and O'Shanassy streets* (HO recommended): The post-war flat developments saw the establishment of residents' groups that advocated for services and commented on developments

Sports and recreation

Sporting activities and other recreation in North Melbourne historically have been concentrated to the south-west, where a recreation reserve was set aside at the intersection of Macaulay Road and Arden Street in the 1880s. This has long been the home of the North Melbourne football and cricket clubs, and remains the home of the AFL club, the North Melbourne Kangaroos.

Possibly the earliest sporting club established in the suburb was the Hotham (later North Melbourne) cricket club, which had been formed by 1860. The Arden Street oval is situated on land that was actually granted to the cricket club in 1873, the establishing of the reserve representing a long-held ambition of the community for a 'first class cricket club and ground to represent the borough of Hotham' (*The Age* 30 July 1873: 4). Dissatisfaction with the low-lying and swampy ground, led to protests by club members, and it was reportedly the efforts of local councillor, J H Gardiner, that stopped the recreation reserve reverting to the Crown (*North Melbourne Gazette*: 12 March 1897). Despite this, cricket continued to be a popular summer sport in North Melbourne.

In 1869, the North Melbourne Football Club was formed, and was one of the earliest Australian Rules football clubs. Its players were colloquially known as the 'shinboners', believed to be a reference to the local abattoir workers. The club's first games were played in Royal Park, and for a time it was known as the Hotham Football Club, however games were played at the Arden Street Oval from the 1880s. Football was a popular spectator sport during the nineteenth century, as it remains today. The club's matches attracted large crowds, with thousands of locals gathering at the reserve for the Saturday afternoon games. Matches were equally popular with women as with men, as one article observed, the 'large number of ladies … evinced the liveliest interest in the proceedings' (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 15 August 1884: 2). The North Melbourne home ground was improved in the 1890s, apparently transformed from a muddy 'glue-pot' to a 'proper' playing field (*The Herald* 29 April 1897: 3). The renovated ground also incorporated a track for bicycles, with cycling becoming a popular activity in the late nineteenth century. The North Melbourne team mascot, the kangaroo, was adopted in the 1950s, following a suggestion by Phonse Tobin, of the Tobin Brothers funeral homes, the club's then president (L Hannan, 'The North Melbourne Football Club, The Shinboners', *North & West News*, via Hotham History Project). The Arden Street ground has continued to be the training ground of the Kangaroos, a historically working class football club with its roots in the local community. Prominent players include Brownlow medallists Noel Teasdale, Keith Greig, and Ross Glendenning, Brownlow medallist and premiership plater Malcolm Blight, and double Premiership captain Wayne Carey. The club is also associated with Aboriginal players the Krakouer brothers (Phil and Jim), and premiership player Byron Pickett.

While the North Melbourne Kangaroos are the most prominent of the suburb's sporting teams, football was not the only sporting code played in the nineteenth century. Activities such as gymnastics, cycling and tennis took place across the suburb. The substantial Irish population established the North Melbourne Hurling Club in the late 1880s, (*The Herald* 21 September 1888: 8).

Figure 61   North Melbourne Seconds football team in front of the grandstand at the Arden Street
                oval, 1947
                Source: Charles Boyles, photographer, H2008.122/172, State Library of Victoria

The North Melbourne baths were established in the early twentieth century, on a section of the recreation reserve that had previously been excised due to the drain carrying the creek from Parkville, and adjacent to the Council's waste depot.[4] Although calls had been made for decades for bathing facilities, it was not until 1909 that the facility was opened, at a ceremony attended by the City of Melbourne's Lord Mayor, the Premier and local councillors. The baths were not only for recreation; with hygiene a concern for residents that did not have access to baths or shower facilities, 'showerbaths' were also provided. The facility was rebuilt in 1929, with a new concrete pool, 'germ-free water' and timber change facilities constructed. The pool was available for mixed bathing between 7 am and 9 pm. In 1938, the brick entrance pavilion was constructed. Following the closure of the pool in the 1990s, a community campaign aimed to reverse the Council's decision, highlighting the importance of the pools for active and passive recreation particularly for those living in the Housing Commission estates nearby. The campaign eventually succeeded, and in 1996 the pool was reopened as a Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) facility (Butler 2012: 399-400).

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[4]   Reference to the Arden Street oval and the North Melbourne pool have substantially been drawn from the *Arden Macaulay Heritage Review*, by Graeme Butler, 2012.

Places

- *North Melbourne Recreation Reserve, Arden Street and Macaulay Road (HO1106):* Recreation reserve of 1870s, and has been the site of numerous sporting and recreation activities in the suburb, and, most notably, is the home of the North Melbourne Football Club

Gathering and socialising

In both formal and informal settings, numerous festivals and events have been held in North Melbourne, many associated with different cultural groups and religious events. Examples include the Gaelic festival of the 1950s (*Advocate* 11 June 1953: 18), the Harvest Festival at the Queensberry Street Wesleyan Church (*North Melbourne Gazette* 4 March 1898: 2), and a garden fete at the Convent of Mercy (now St Aloysius College) in 1918 (*Tribune* 31 October 1918: 5). Celebratory dances and concerts were variously held at the town hall, schools and church halls. The North Melbourne Association hosted a number of events from the 1960s, part of its stated aim to promote the well-being of the community. This included a community fair and gala ball (Crow 1981: 2). More recently, the annual Spring Fling street festival has become an important event for the North Melbourne community, having commenced in the late 1970s (https://www.springflingstreetfestival.org.au/). The multicultural festival incorporates performances, market stalls, and activities.

The North Melbourne sporting clubs were also regular hosts of social events, with fundraising dinners, balls, and even a carnival for the football club held in 1911. Such was the popularity of the carnival, with its myriad stalls, demonstrations and activities, that the Freemason's Hall in Curzon Street was reportedly crowded beyond capacity (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser* 15 September 1911: 2). Fundraising events for charitable causes, as noted in Chapter 8, were also an opportunity for the community to gather.

Places

- *Errol Street and surrounds* (HO3): site of the annual Spring Fling street festival

Entertainment and performance

Performance has deep roots in North Melbourne. As noted in Chapter one, the *ngargee* (also known generically as corroboree, Figure 62) was practised prior to and continued into the colonial period in and around the study area, which was known for such gatherings. One particularly evocative early recollection provides remarkable detail about such performance rituals and their dramatic techniques, including use of lighting, costume and sound:

> There were said to have been about 200 men; these naked save for a small girdle whence depended a sort of apron made of long strings. Bunches of green gum leaves were twisted about their ankles, making a peculiar rustling as the dancers violently shook their knees, turned them in and drew them apart in the course of their leaping and bounding evolutions. Their faces, as well as their bodies and limbs, were adorned with stripes in dead white and red ochre, while feathers nodded from their forehead -bands. In either hand was held a short, stout stick of some kind of hardwood, one of which, made to strike against the other smartly during the dance, produced a strange succession of sounds, in perfect 'time' A large fire roaring up in front of the performers, they advanced 'in line' right up into the red glow, and retired, still facing the flames, into the gloom of the forest —a process repeated several times —while the white smoke from the pile of burning branches ascending to the sky, the thunder of the trampling feet which actually shook the ground beneath

them, and the choruses of the women squatted by the fire, together with the drum-like sound from the opossum rugs, beaten across their knees with the open hands, united to produce a weird and singular effect (McCrae 1912, 121).

Figure 62   '"A Corrorobby" (Victoria) (1840) [sic]', photograph by John Hunter Kerr
             Source: H82.277/10, State Library of Victoria

As part of the nineteenth century development of North Melbourne, a number of venues were used for performance and entertainment, although the suburb has never had a main entertainment centre. Rather, local hotels and halls across the suburb were used to host events. In the mid-nineteenth century, with few dedicated venues, concerts were held in the early town hall and in hotels. The Temperance Hall in Queensberry Street was a popular venue following its opening in the 1870s, hosting musical concerts and other entertainment (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 5 June 1874: 2*;* 14 July 1876: 2; 5 January 1894: 3). The 1876 Town Hall complex was altered in the mid-1880s, with a stage and dressing rooms added to the expanded main hall, enabling larger events to be held there (H2224 – North Melbourne Town Hall and Municipal buildings, VHD). The balconies of the town hall also enabled public performances, and were utilised for a jubilee concert by the North Melbourne Military Brass band in 1887, for example (*North Melbourne Advertiser* 25 June 1887: 3).

The Imperial Picture Theatre (Figure 63) was constructed in 1913 to a design by noted architect R J Haddon, representing a shift in entertainment available in North Melbourne (CoM, registration no. 3997, 18 April 1913, via Miles Lewis Australian Architectural Index). *The Age* described the cinema as comparable with 'the best buildings of its kind in the city, and suburbs', which was capable of holding an audience of 1600 (*The Age* 13 October 1913: 7). The large scale of the Imperial Picture Theatre was typical of early movie theatres. It was virtually destroyed by fire in the 1930s, with damage estimated at £15,000 (*The Age* 10 June 1930: 9). The site appears to have been subsequently used for storage in the mid-twentieth century (*Sands & McDougall directory* 1945), and was redeveloped as apartments in the

late twentieth century. Through the twentieth century, films were variously shown in the town hall, the Loco Hall in Victoria Street, and at the Seeres Model Open Air Theatre, a vacant block in Abbotsford Street (Manne 2007, 'The lost picture palaces of North and West Melbourne').

The North Melbourne Methodist Mission opened its community centre on Errol Street in 1941, in the former Fitzgerald Brothers' department store building at 44-50 Errol Street. The centre incorporated:

> … central hall, chapel, women's rest rooms, gymnasium hall, Sunday school rooms, and girls' and boys' clubs (*The Age* 5 September 1941: 8).

A theatre, known as the Central Theatre was opened in the building in 1942, a cinema of a more 'intimate' scale than the Imperial, indicating a shift in the movie-going experience that had occurred by the mid-twentieth century. It had 400 'tip up' seats, and 'spacious foyer lounges', with films to be shown five nights a week (*The Herald* 5 June 1942: 8). The building was taken over by the Lithuanian Club in c. 1965, and has since been used as a community centre and performance space.

In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, a number of venues opened in North Melbourne which expanded the range of entertainment in the suburb to include performance and theatre. Pubs and hotels have been host to small scale music performances. The first drag club in Melbourne, Trish's Coffee Lounge, was opened in Peel Street (outside the study area) in 1972 (Figure 64). The club was established by theatre actor Jon 'Trish' Barrie, and was located in a single storey retail building at 126 Peel Street. It operated until the mid-1990s (Heritage Alliance 2008: 100). Likewise, the City of Melbourne's Arts House was opened at the town hall in c. 1998, and has hosted a variety of contemporary performances, including shows by Chunky Move, the Next Wave Festival, Melbourne Fringe Festival, and the Yijala Yala Project (Arts House, https://www.artshouse.com.au/). A more recent addition to North Melbourne's entertainment venues is the Comic's Lounge in what was the Maples building at 20-26 Errol Street. The venue was opened in 2002, and is now a well-known comedy club.

Adjacent, but outside of the study area, located at the former North Melbourne Meat Market is the Ilbijerri Theatre Company. Described on their website, the Ilbijerri Theatre Company is 'one of Australia's leading theatre companies creating innovative works by First Nations artists'. Since forming in 1990, Ilbijerri has worked to 'explore a range of complex and controversial issues from a uniquely Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective'. Its production *Jack Charles v The Crown,* starring the pioneering actor, won a Helpman Award in 2014 (Ilbijerri Theatre Company, n.d.).

Hotels continued to play host to smaller or more informal music performances through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. Traditional Owners recalled Aboriginal woman Daisy Peters, a major entertainment figure, known to sing and play piano in many of North Melbourne's hotels, including the British, Black Prince, the Morning Star, the Limerick, and Homebush hotels (Extent Heritage, Traditional Owner engagement, December 2019-April 2020). The front bar of the Town Hall Hotel in Errol Street regularly hosts gigs, including notable local artists such as Roland S Howard, Conway Savage, Jet and Powder Monkeys (Town Hall Hotel, http://townhallhotelnorthmelbourne.com.au/bandarchives.html).

Places

- *Imperial Theatre Building*, *110-114 Errol Street* (HO3): Constructed in 1913 to a design by noted architect R J Haddon, it operated as a cinema for approximately 20 years before it was damaged by fire

- *Lithuanian House*, *44-50 Errol Street* (HO3): Former Fitzgerald Brothers department store building of 1898, converted to the Methodist Mission community centre in 1940, and then acquired by the Lithuanian Club in c. 1965

- *Comic's Lounge*, *20-26 Errol Street* (HO3): Comedy venue occupying part of the former Maples department store building

The Imperial picture theatre at 110–114 Errol Street, c1920s   Image: courtesy Gerry Duggan

Figure 63   Imperial Picture Theatre (indicated), c. 1920s
Source: Gerry Duggan, City of Melbourne Libraries, via Hotham History Project, https://www.hothamhistory.org.au/the-lost-picture-palaces-of-north-and-west-melbourne/, accessed 10 February 2020.

Figure 64   Performers on stage at Trish's, 1984
              Source: 748790, City of Melbourne Libraries

CONCLUSION

Historically, North Melbourne has been a place with a strong sense of itself, a place that is connected by proximity to the city and the surrounding inner suburbs, but is also separate, with its own identity and character formed by decades of municipal governance, a vibrant commercial and civic centre, and a strong sense of community.

The Thematic Environmental History of North Melbourne shows the Traditional Owners' continued presence within the study area has made a clearly identifiable impact on the character of the local area. This impact extends beyond inhabitation of the rich pre-colonial landscape that preceded the founding of Melbourne, Hotham and North Melbourne, and from which the Traditional Owners were dispossessed, displaced in the early colonial period. It continues through a twentieth-century cycle of return and further movement linked to associations with Country, family and community bonds, and economic opportunity. It is now conveyed in a strong and recognisable contemporary narrative of resilience and contribution to the community of North Melbourne across the many facets for which the suburb has become known.

North Melbourne, also known in the nineteenth century as Hotham, developed quickly as a predominantly residential suburb from the 1850s. The topography of the suburb influenced its built form; the elevated Hotham Hill became more prestigious, with larger houses and more generous allotments reflecting the relative wealth of its residents, while the development closer to the creek valley was more modest, in denser subdivisions, with a more working-class community. The suburb's municipal separation from 1859 until 1905 saw dedicated local services established, most prominently, the construction of the substantial town hall of 1875-6, with its corner clock tower. North Melbourne has also been shaped by its characterisation as 'working class', with the slum clearance movement altering much of the urban fabric in the mid-twentieth century.

Many North Melbourne residents identify strongly with their suburb, and value the Victorian buildings, wide and treed streetscapes, and the strong sense of community. This community and political spirit is a strong theme in the history of the suburb; it was evident both during the establishment decades of Hotham, with locals participating in the development of the municipality, and in the development of religious, educational and welfare institutions, including those that assisted women, children and the unemployed. North Melbourne was and remains a strongly 'local' place, with its residents working in the suburb's shops and factories, shopping in Errol Street, socialising in the neighbourhood hotels, and attending the local churches and schools.

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