
1947-1972

Post World War II saw a population boom when the Australian Government embarked on an immigration campaign, and displaced persons began to arrive from Europe in 1947. The demand for housing materials far outstripped the supply available. The pressure on existing dwellings saw many divided into flats, makeshift extensions added and verandahs enclosed.

1973-2005

Highgate has again become a popular residential area. It is attractive for its proximity to the CBD, the nightlife of Northbridge, and for those who work in the City but don't want a long commute, or to spend their weekends tending to a quarter-acre block.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING IN THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Books

Ker, Margaret, *Children of the same God: celebrating 100 years of Catholic education in Highgate, Western Australia.*

Mt Lawley: Sacred Heart Primary School, 1997. 372.99

Highgate Primary School conservation plan

prepared by Hocking Planning & Architecture in association with Lucy Williams, historian.

Perth: Hocking Planning & Arch., 2002. Q727.1 HIG

D'Arcy, Rima. *Hyde Park Precinct, Highgate: report on the heritage places in the Hyde Park Precinct.*

Perth, National Trust, 1990. Q994.11 HIG

Town Of Vincent Municipal Heritage Inventory

Vertical Files

Highgate
Churches
Sacred Heart Church, Convent & School
Schools & Colleges – Highgate
Police

Oral History Interviews

Elsie Meacham b.1892 OH0013

Phyllis Donovan b.1923 OH0040

Sr Mary Magdala Green b.1906 OH0047

Patricia Delfs b.1923 OH0048

Local Studies and History Collection

Town of Vincent Library

99 Loftus Street, Leederville WA 6007

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TOWN OF VINCENT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUBURB HIGHGATE



St Alban's Church, 423 Beaufort St. 2001

The area currently known as Highgate is bounded by Lincoln, Lord, Harold and William streets. It is believed to have been named 'Highgate Hill' after the town of Highgate in Kent, England.

HISTORY

1829-1870

The area was bounded by wetlands, which flooded in winter and were a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The surrounding lakes were Stone's Lake (later known as Loton's Paddock, Perth Oval and Loton Park), Lake Poulet (First Swamp, now Birdwood Square), Lake Thompson (Mews Swamp between Lake, Brisbane and Beaufort streets) and Third Swamp (Hyde Park).

In establishing the site for the town of Perth, Captain James Stirling was instructed to 'take care that a square of three miles be reserved for... (the town's) future extension'. Land in this area could only be leased and not secured by permanent grant.

In 1858 town lots began to appear around Stone's Lake towards the Highgate area. These were around 1.2 hectares to allow space for a productive garden as well as a residence. In 1865, Suburban Lots 140 to 149 bounded by Beaufort, Walcott, Lord and Lincoln streets were added. These were around nine hectares and may have been planned for use as market gardens and small farms, including dairies.

There would have been a cottage or two on these lots. The earliest residences were simple two or four-room buildings constructed in mud brick with a thatch roof. These gave way to cottages of brick and shingle. There were also some prefabricated timber residences transported from Britain.



Cottage with shingle roof

1871-1890

Heavy flooding of the wetlands in 1872 prompted efforts to improve drainage. Third Swamp was nominated for a public garden. Lake Poulet was drained and first used as a rubbish dump.

The subdivision of Highgate Hill was one of the first suburbs on the north side of Perth. It consisted of a small number of

workmen's cottages, clustered together in a hollow at the eastern side of Beaufort Street.

The site at Highgate Hill, Perth Suburban Lot 166, of 5 acres, was granted to the Church of England in 1874, but remained unused until 1888 when, in response to the increase in their congregation, open air services commenced on the site under a large gum tree. In February 1889, the foundation stone for Highgate's St Alban's Church was laid and the church opened for service in June 1889. This was named after St Alban's Cathedral in Highgate, England. In 1903 the block was split, thus forming St Alban's Avenue, and much of that site underwent subdivision.

New roads developed as the subdivisions grew. Harry Pratley ran a hansom cab service to the area in the late 1880s, but despite these refinements, Highgate did not grow rapidly. Few of the early residences built in this area have survived.

1891-1919

In 1884 the population of the Perth district was just over 6,000; by 1911 it had reached 87,000. In 1891 Beaufort Street was only bitumenised a little beyond St Alban's Church and beyond that there was very little development. The open bushland (which was later to become the Mount Heart Estate) and the 'Crows Nest' (a very tall lookout tree) were very popular with weekend picnickers. In 1891 the land was owned by a prominent Perth businessman, James Grave, but Mayor of Perth Alexander Forrest had financed the deal. In 1893 it was officially acquired by Forrest.

The subdivision known as Mount Heart Estate was bounded by Mary, Margaret (Harold), Beaufort and William streets. An area of two acres on Mary Street, in the centre of the subdivision, was reserved as Alacoque Square, named after the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St Margaret Mary Alacoque.

Alacoque Square was acquired by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth, Mathew Gibney, for a very moderate sum considering its market value, and it has been suggested that he and developer Forrest had a prior arrangement. By 1896 the majority of the lots in the estate had been sold to prominent Perth families.

The Roman Catholic Diocese subdivided a triangular portion of its land, near the intersection of Vincent and Beaufort streets, in 1891. They erected cottages for members of the parish. By 1899, the Monastery of Our Lady of the Missions, incorporating a school, was erected on Alacoque Square and was followed by the



Interior of original Sacred Heart Church Mary Street, Highgate

Woodley Park Estate, also referred to as the Highgate Hill extension, was offered for sale in March 1897. It encompassed a section of Guildford Road (Lord Street), Broome, Turner and Wright streets, and was advertised as comprising 'magnificent building sites and garden land'.



A view of two of the houses on George Shenton's Estate, 16-36 Lincoln Street.

construction of St Mary's Church in 1906, and the Sacred Heart Primary School in 1914, on the same site. The Monastery was occupied by a congregation of Our Lady of the Missions.

Woodley Park Estate, also referred to as the Highgate Hill extension, was offered for sale in March 1897. It encompassed a section of Guildford

George Shenton, who was probably the wealthiest man in Western Australia before the gold rushes of the 1890s, and was Mayor of Perth for most of the 1880s, invested in land on Lincoln Street near Lord Street in the late 1890s. In 1904 he was leasing six houses on Lincoln Street, which today are situated at 16-36 Lincoln Street.

Many of the streets in the estates established during this period were owned and maintained by the developers, and had been named by them. In the mid to late 1890s, Perth City Council took over control of them, and streets were renamed and numbered so a street passing through a number of estates had the same name for the whole length. For example in 1897 the street known as William Street in the city and Hutt Street north of the railway line became William Street for its entire length.

The Highgate Primary School at 147 Lincoln Street opened in 1895, and the Highgate Police Station at 57 Lincoln Street was established in 1897. This was the first police station and lock-up built to the immediate north of Perth.

1920-1946

In the short period post World War I and the late 1920s there was a building boom where residential infill occurred. A number of the small, cheaply made timber homes built in the 1890s were replaced by more substantial homes in brick.



PLACES OF INTEREST

TOWN OF VINCENT

1 Highgate Hill Police Station

57 Lincoln Street

Built in 1897, with the Police Quarters added in 1906. Architect Hillson Beasley. This was the first police station and lock-up erected to the north of Perth, when the development of the surrounding suburbs was in its very early stages. The station was originally staffed by one sergeant and seven 'foot' constables. In November 1940 it was closed. In April 1942 the police wireless facility was secretly transferred there from East Perth, where it was considered too vulnerable should the Japanese bomb Perth. This building remained the hub of the police wireless section until 1975. State Heritage listed, the station is considered architecturally unique as it is one of the few remaining stations with a charge room and double cell layout, and the only one with verandahs on all sides.



Highgate Hill Police Station (left) and residence

2 Lincoln Street Ventilating Tower

cnr Lincoln and Smith streets

An Art Deco tower built in 1941 to vent sewage fumes into the atmosphere. The tower is 38 metres tall and the second tallest sewer vent in Australia. Inadequate design led residents to complain of unpleasant smells, particularly during certain weather conditions. The base of the tower was cemented over to render it non-functional. The tower was referred to as Dumas' Folly after the engineer RJ Dumas.



Lincoln Street Ventilating Tower

In early 1942, the police wireless facility was secretly moved to the Highgate Hill Police Station as the tower served as an excellent antennae mast. It was not until 1956 that the location of the wireless section became public knowledge. The tower was used for an antennae mast for police wireless communications until 1975. It is now listed by the National Trust.

3 John Hyde's House

118 Lincoln Street

John Hyde was a police constable who arrived in Fremantle in 1857. This house was built circa 1893 when he retired.



John Hyde's Estate was actually 104-114 Lincoln Street and around 1897 he built a number of other dwellings on the land, including terraced houses and a shop with an attached residence. These were rented to various people over time and some of the cottages were occupied by two of his sons. After his death circa 1904 his estate was distributed to each of his surviving children. The shop at 102 is still trading.



102 Lincoln Street

4 Sir George Shenton's Highgate Estate

16-36 Lincoln Street

Shenton was Mayor of Perth for most of the 1880s. He invested in land on Lincoln Street and by 1904 was leasing six houses.



5 Highgate Primary School

147 Lincoln Street

The original two-room school was built in 1895. Due to the rapid increase in pupils, a separate infants school was built in 1900. Additions were added



Highgate School 1895



regularly to both schools until 1913. The existing buildings reflect the size of the 1913 buildings. Highgate was one of the larger metropolitan schools, with enrolments of 646 in the senior school and 786 in the junior school in 1936. Around this time there were 72 Jewish children and 102 children of foreign extraction. The multicultural nature of the school continues, with more than 50 nationalities represented in 2002. State Heritage listed.

6 Sacred Heart Convent and School

40-42 Mary Street

The school began in 1897, with the building erected in 1898. This is the oldest Catholic primary school still operating in Perth. The original building had an Elementary School on the ground floor and a small High School on the upper level, with various extensions over the years. The High School closed down in 1980 and the Primary School gained access to those areas. The school was operated by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, who lived in a monastery on the premises. Five sisters were chosen from the order in Christchurch to establish the mission and school in Highgate. State Heritage listed.



Convent of Our Lady of the Missions (2000)

7 Sacred Heart Catholic Church

64 Mary Street

The first church at Highgate Hill was a small iron building, which was opened in 1897. This was replaced by the current church built of Donnybrook stone in 1905. Bishop Gibney opened Sacred Heart Church with a Solemn High Mass in February 1906. (Bishop Gibney lived at 50 Vincent Street from 1910 to his death in 1925.)



Sacred Heart Church

8 St Alban's Anglican Church

423 Beaufort Street

Built in 1889. In 1893, a visitor to the church described the place: 'Just a mile from the Cathedral you found a little stone church with a rough fence around it. I suppose it would hold about 80 people; it had just been improved by the addition of a porch and a vestry. It stood in a block of five acres of bush, where beautiful wild flowers grew.'



Lincoln Street is named after Abraham Lincoln, who was the chief organist and choirmaster at the church.

9 The Queens Hotel

520 Beaufort Street

Built 1897 as a private residence for John A Gent. Became a hotel from 1898. Originally brick and iron. The original verandahs were later replaced with brick verandahs. The exterior remains intact, although it was dramatically renovated in the 1980s, winning an architecture design award in 1988.



10 Beaufort Street

Named after the Duke of Beaufort, became one of the first shopping strips north of Perth. There are many examples of early shops still to be seen.



476 Beaufort Street.

11 St Mark's International College (formerly Christian Brothers College)

369-373 Stirling Street (cnr Harold Street)

In February 1936 the Christian Brothers Intermediate School was opened to provide upper primary and secondary education for the boys from Sacred Heart Primary School and surrounding areas. There was a school section, financed by the parish, and a residence for the Brothers, financed by the Christian Brothers. The first enrolment was 160 pupils and within a year the numbers had increased to over 200. In 1949 two classrooms and an assembly hall were added. By this time the school was known as Christian Brothers High School.

The building has been occupied by St Mark's International College since 1991. The college provides courses for improving English speaking, reading, listening and writing skills for all levels of ability.



12 Silver Chain Nursing Association

19 Wright Street

Built 1910. From 4 August 1916 the house was occupied by the Silver Chain Nursing League and opened as the first Silver Chain Cottage Home for aged people. The Silver Chain officially commenced on 3 June 1905, growing out of community concern for poor children in the days before there was a children's hospital. It began from a children's column in the *Western Mail*, where a society for 'mutual helpfulness' was established, known as the Silver Chain, with members as Silver Links who paid one shilling membership each year. Adults then began to get involved with cash donations. Money raised went to pay a district nurse from 1907, who visited sick children. The movement led to the establishment of the Infant Health Association and infant health centres, and then diversified into aged care when the house was opened as a hostel in 1916, with purpose-built cottages added from 1920. In 1924 there were 18 residents aged from 60 to 92 years. New wings were added in 1924, 1937 and 1955. In 1956 the Silver Chain Nursing Association moved its administration offices to the Wright Street premises.



Town of Vincent is a TravelSmart town and encourages residents to walk, cycle or catch public transport for local trips.



It's how you get there that counts