

1973-2005

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

The Loftus Recreation and Community Centre was opened in 1988. This housed not only the Leederville/Wembley Community Centre but also the Leederville Library, and provided facilities for indoor sport and community activities.

In 1987 the Leederville shopping area on Oxford Street underwent redevelopment.

During the 1980s and 1990s Leederville, along with other inner city suburbs, saw property values increase rapidly. As older residents left the suburb, many of the older houses were either renovated or demolished and newer homes built on the site. Subdivision of the blocks meant the creation of new building lots. Changes were also reflected in the style of the houses built.

During the 1990s Oxford Street changed into a popular café strip. Many of the businesses underwent refurbishment and the area took on a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

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

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



SOURCES AND FURTHER READING IN THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Books

Leederville Oval: draft conservation plan prepared by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd et al
Leederville: Town of Vincent, 1999. 994.11 LEE

Leederville Hotel heritage evaluation prepared by Hooke and Smith, 1998. 647.9509 LEE

Town of Vincent Municipal Heritage Inventory

Vertical Files

Aranmore	Leederville History
Businesses	Leederville Oval
Cafes and Restaurants	Leederville Police Station
Chinese Market Gardens	Leederville School
Churches	Leederville/Wembley Community Centre
Cinemas	Loftus Centre
Festivals	Mitchell Freeway
Hotels	Monger Family
Lake Monger	Trams
Leeder Family	Venables
Leederville - General	

Oral History Interviews & Transcripts

There are many interviews with former residents of Leederville in the collection. There are also interviews as part of a special project on businesses of Oxford Street.

Local Studies and History Collection

Town of Vincent Library

99 Loftus Street, Leederville WA 6007

Ph 9273 6090

People with specific requirements can ask to have this brochure provided in Braille, a language other than English, large print, on computer disk or audiotape.



TOWN OF VINCENT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUBURB LEEDERVILLE



Luna Cinema (2000)

The current suburb of Leederville is bounded by Britannia and Anzac roads, Loftus Street, Leederville Parade and the Mitchell Freeway.

HISTORY

Leederville formed part of Boorloo – tribal land belonging to the local Nyungar people. Lake Monger, or Galup as it was known, was used by the Aborigines as a camp site. As the area was teeming with birds and other wildlife, the lake was also used for hunting and fishing.

1829-1870

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

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

1871-1890 (Pre Gold Boom)

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

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

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

1891-1919

The gold boom marked a significant period of development in Perth. In 1884 the Perth district population was just over 6,000. By 1911, the population had expanded rapidly to around 87,000 and Perth was experiencing problems with overcrowding.

The demand for housing led to the Monger Estate being subdivided in 1890. In 1891 the Leeder Estate sold 19 blocks of land, with five between the railway, Vincent Street and Monger's Lake being sold later that year. A third subdivision saw the creation of large garden lots ranging in size from 2 to 10 acres between Anzac Road and Bourke Street.

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



Water Supply building corner of Newcastle and Loftus streets 1912

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

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

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

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

December 1897 saw the construction and implementation of a tramway network to assist workers by providing transport to

their place of employment. Initially, the tramlines operated in the northern parts of the City. By 1900, however, the tram network had been expanded to include Loftus Street, along Newcastle and Oxford streets to Anzac Road.

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

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

1920-1946

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

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

1947-1972

Post World War II saw another population boom and overcrowding once again became a problem. The difficulties arose from shortages of housing and building materials.

Changes in government policy relating to immigration meant new arrivals of migrants from Europe. These migrants were instrumental in changing the architectural landscape, with many of them renovating or building residences in styles similar to those they had left behind.

In 1948, a technical trade school was built in Leederville. It was part of an Army training scheme and was open for students by 1949. This is now the Leederville TAFE.

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

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



PLACES OF INTEREST

TOWN OF VINCENT

1 St Mary's Church cnr Franklin and Shakespeare streets



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

2 Aranmore Catholic College Franklin Street



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

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

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



Leederville School 1909

The Leederville Public School opened in 1894 in response to a petition from the parents of 99 children for a local school in the area. The school was built between 1896 and 1901, with attendance in 1901 rising to 257. Over the years the school expanded to meet increasing numbers. A 'household management centre' was opened at the school, and pupils from neighbouring schools would walk to Leederville for domestic science classes.

With only 85 pupils enrolled in 1992, Leederville Primary was listed for closure. Despite vigorous protests it was closed in 1993, just months short of its Centenary. The site was taken over by the Distance Education Service.

4 Leederville Post Office (former) cnr Oxford and Vincent streets



The Leederville Post Office, built in 1897, features a terracotta Marseilles pattern tiled roof and was constructed in the Federation Arts and Crafts style. The post office was one of five built to service the needs of the rapidly expanding inner city suburbs that sprang up in response to the gold rush of the 1890s.

When the post office underwent renovations in 1999 a time capsule was discovered. This had been buried in the foundations when the post office was first built. The original seal was by HE Wittenoom, then Minister for Post and Telegraphs. In 1995 the post office was State Heritage listed. Leederville's postal

requirements eventually outgrew the building and a new postal facility was provided around the corner in Vincent Street. In 1999 the post office was converted into a café.

5 Oxford Hotel 368 Oxford Street (cnr Anzac Road)



Built c.1904. The licensee in 1905 was Mrs Annie McDonald. Over the years the building has been modified several times to accommodate

the changing needs of hotel patrons. The rooms upstairs were offered as cheap accommodation for single men into the late 1980s. In 1999 Peter Hayes became the licensee and closed the hotel for extensive renovation and refurbishment. In 2004 the upstairs was converted to a large function room, as well as meeting rooms, bar, lounge and kitchen.

6 Luna Cinema (formerly New Oxford Theatre) cnr Oxford and Vincent streets



In the 1920s theatre going and watching the 'talkies' were popular pastimes for many West Australians. Demand was high for such entertainments and

one of the earliest venues was the New Oxford Theatre, built in 1927. The cinema also included an open-air picture garden and offered a varied program featuring vaudeville, musicals, plays and films. The picture gardens closed in 1964. In 1966 the cinema was renamed the Nickelodeon, then in 1972 renamed the Olympia and for the next seven years showed mainly Greek and Italian films, reflecting the changing community. After some refurbishment in 1979 the cinema reopened as the New Oxford showing family type films and later R-rated films. In the mid 1980s after full refurbishment the cinema began to show independent films, and in the 1990s was renamed the Luna Cinema.

7 Leederville Hotel 742 Newcastle Street



Leederville Hotel 2004

A two-storey brick and iron building constructed in 1897 (architect unknown). The first licensee was Charles Winter. In 1914 the hotel was purchased by the Swan Brewing Company Ltd. Extensive alterations and additions were made in 1928 and again in the 1960s. The Swan Brewery sold the hotel in 1980 to a group of owners as tenants in common. The owners have changed many times in the subsequent years.

8 Leederville Oval 246 Vincent Street



R.P. Fletcher Grandstand

Originally part of the wetlands, the land was first vested in the Leederville Municipality as a Reserve in 1900. It was known as the Recreation Grounds. In 1915 Leederville Oval was developed and a timber and brick grandstand built. It was opened as the home for West Perth Football Club on 24 July 1915.

Extensive works commenced in 1958 to make the stadium a suitable venue for track and field events for the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in 1962. The new work involved the demolition of the timber part of the former stand, and shrouding the brick base with the current structure. The stand was named the RP Fletcher stand in honour of the President of the West Perth Football Club between 1946 and 1962. The West Perth Football Club vacated the premises in 1994 and moved to Joondalup.

The newly-created Town of Vincent had its headquarters in the football stand until its administration centre was built. In 2003 the East Perth Football Club relocated their headquarters to Leederville Oval, to be joined in 2004 by the Subiaco Football Club.

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



9 RAAF Air Training Corps, Drill Hall & Mechanics Institute (former) 314 Vincent Street



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

10 Lake Monger

Although cut off from Leederville by the building of the Mitchell Freeway, and then placed within the boundaries of the Town of Cambridge when City of Perth was restructured in 1994, Lake Monger has a significant place in the history of Leederville.

The original wetland was a traditional Aboriginal camping, hunting and fishing area, named Galup. To the European settlers it was known as Large Lake and then in 1831 it was named Monger's Lake after JH Monger. This was changed to Lake Monger in 1932. The Monger's Lake Board was gazetted in 1895 to manage the lake. In 1904 the clearing of reeds commenced. In 1907 reclamation of the swamp began with the dumping of rubbish in order to reclaim the foreshore down from Monger Street (now Northwood Street). Playgrounds and bathing sheds were established, fish were released into the lake for fishing, and boating was a popular pastime. In 1917 it was amalgamated into the Perth City Council. During the Depression the lake reached its height of popularity. There were yachting carnivals, swimming regattas, bands, fishing or promenading along the shores. After a tragic accident in 1949 all boating on the lake was stopped and swimming discouraged. A rubbish tip continued to be used on the eastern bank and caused a terrible stench until it was covered over in 1965 and lawn planted.

Since 1995 the Town of Cambridge has worked on rehabilitating the lake into a healthy ecosystem with revegetation and improved water quality.

11 245 Vincent Street



Built in 1915 by Albert Bourne. This is a typical example of a weatherboard cottage. Owned by the Bourne family until 1973 when it was purchased by the City of Perth, as a consequence of the widening of Loftus Street. In 1995 ownership was transferred to the Town of Vincent. In 2000 the house was renovated by Aboriginal youth, under a skills training program, and refurbished for leasing.