

**ATTACHMENT A    THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY**



# Carlton Heritage Review

## Thematic Environmental History



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HERITAGE ADVISORS  
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THE ASIA PACIFIC

Prepared for





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Front cover image:

'Lygon Street, Carlton', c. 1908, J D Meade postcard collection, H35249/73, State Library of Victoria



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## Thematic Environmental History<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Carlton has been shaped by both its proximity to Melbourne and its dual role as ‘a service and residential area.’<sup>2</sup> It is a diverse suburb both in terms of its built form and its population. It has, and has had, many identities. The historic themes of Carlton are outlined below, providing a local historical narrative that builds on Council’s 2012 thematic history.<sup>3</sup> The suburb and individual places within it have been subject to much historical research, including both published histories and heritage reports. These have been drawn on to delve deeper than the known and established themes, to shed more detailed light on the Carlton specific themes, and its diverse range of land uses and built form. The themes include the pre-contact environment; peopling Carlton; the suburb’s nineteenth century subdivision; Carlton’s historical working-class identity; the history of immigrants, students, academics and artists remaking the suburb’s character; and the varied built form which distinguished the nineteenth and twentieth century demographics and communities of the suburb.

This history draws on the themes set out in *Victoria’s Framework of Historical Themes*, produced by the Heritage Council of Victoria, which provides the overarching guide. However, not all themes in the Heritage Council document are addressed. For instance, agriculture and transport are not considered major themes in Carlton’s development. The document also references Context’s *Thematic History – A history of the City of Melbourne’s Urban Environment*, 2012 which covered the whole of the municipality. While linked to the development of the municipality, the history of Carlton is distinct, and this is reflected in the themes explored in this document. The history is structured with the main theme as each chapter, and relevant sub-themes drawn from the Heritage Council framework listed below. This is consistent with the typical approach to the structure of a Thematic Environmental History.

This document is not intended as a comprehensive history of the development and community of Carlton, and does not follow a strict chronological order. Instead a brief chronological overview is presented at the start of this report, to give context to the discussion of themes that follow. Carlton is a well-researched and documented place. However, further research could be undertaken on a number of the major themes in this report. This could include, for example, the various twentieth century music and cultural scenes in the suburb and the later work of the Housing Commission of Victoria.

The history also addresses places which are outside the study area. This recognises that adjoining development, and individual places, contribute to an understanding of the evolution of Carlton and in some cases were influential in the history of the suburb.

Recognition must be made of the publication, *Carlton: A History*, edited by Peter Yule and published by Melbourne University Press in 2004. It has been an indispensable resource for the development of this history, and it is recommended for further reading on a number of the themes explored in this history. Likewise, the Carlton Community History Group, the Carlton Residents Association, and the Elders and officers from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation provided valuable direction for this report.

### Aboriginal History

This report reflects the continuing intention of 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, Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung Traditional Owner groups, the Aboriginal history components of the Thematic Environmental History include information obtained from both primary and secondary sources, including during consultation with Elders from the Wurundjeri (5 December 2018, 25 February 2019) and Bunurong (11 December 2018, 13 February 2019) groups.<sup>4</sup> The components are included within the thematic framework discussed above, with no new or additional themes identified as a result of this research and consultation.

There are a number of themes where additional research could support further Aboriginal input; these possible future directions are identified (where relevant) under the themes.

In relation to Chapter 1 in particular, this work follows in the slipstream of a number of comprehensive broader studies of the City of Melbourne area's pre-contact environment/Aboriginal history, including the *City of Melbourne Indigenous Heritage Study* (2010)<sup>5</sup>; *Southbank Boulevard & Dodds Street, Ecological, Heritage and Cultural Place Assessment* (2015)<sup>6</sup>; *Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Volume 4: Aboriginal history)* (2018)<sup>7</sup>; and *City River Concept Plan* (2018)<sup>8</sup>. In light of these comprehensive studies, for this report the focus is specifically on the Carlton study area.

#### *Chronology of Contextual History*

Pre-1835	Area that became known as Carlton is occupied by the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation.
1835	Melbourne is founded
Late 1840s	Calls to extend city boundaries to the north
1850	Reservation of Melbourne General Cemetery
1851	Victoria's gold rushes commence
1852	First surveys plans prepared for North Melbourne, which incorporated what is now known as Carlton. Survey to south of Grattan Street. Carlton Gardens set aside.
1853	First sales of Crown allotments  Reservation of site of University of Melbourne
1856	Carlton Gardens laid out  Led by stonemasons at University of Melbourne, Melbourne workers win right to an eight-hour day
1857	Land between Grattan Street and Palmerston Street auctioned
1864	Land north of Palmerston Street subdivided and sold  Carlton Football Club formed
1880	Melbourne International Exhibition held in the Exhibition Buildings
1880s	Peak of the Melbourne building and economic 'boom'
1890s	Economic depression, particularly in building industry
1938	Housing Commission of Victoria formed, amid rise of slum clearance movement
1940s	Australia signs post-war immigration agreements with numerous European countries, including Italy
1957	Following Murray Committee report of 1957, the accessibility of university and tertiary education increases
1960s	Clearance of reclamation areas and construction of high-rise tower estates in Carlton
1960s-70s	Rise of heritage conservation movement
1960s onwards	Increasing gentrification of Carlton, although suburb known for its bohemian character and cultural diversity
1970s	First heritage studies undertaken in Carlton

## Chapter 1: Pre-contact Environment

- Living as Carlton's original inhabitants

The pre-contact environment of Carlton was first inhabited by the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, on alluvial lands to the north of the Yarra River. The continuously changing environmental conditions and sea levels made the study area a harsher and more difficult place to live than it is today.<sup>9</sup> However, Aboriginal people have always lived in close interaction with the surrounding environment, viewing themselves as 'part of the landscape, existing within an interconnected web of its flora and fauna, and being just one dimension of the whole that is Country'.<sup>10</sup> They sustainably cared for and used the land, living in harmony with the environment, and this resulted in a mutually beneficial relationship that is likely to have gradually altered the landscape through fire management and other agricultural practices.<sup>11</sup>

The study area was characterised by lightly wooded grassy plains with a mix of eucalypts and she oaks, dipping around the point where the intersection of Victoria and Swanston streets stands today, and where a swampy section marked the start of what became known as the Elizabeth Street creek.<sup>12</sup> The adjoining presence of the one of the many north to south running tributary creeks adjoining Birrarung (Yarra River) suggests a route through which Aboriginal groups travelled and camped.<sup>13</sup> It is also probable that the area was used for transit between a number of notable adjacent Aboriginal places such as the camps and ceremonial grounds surrounding the junction of Birrarung and the Merri Creek; the camp at New Town Hill (Fitzroy); and the Royal Park camping and corroboree ground.<sup>14</sup> The nearby presence of scarred trees at Melbourne Zoo and Princes Park further suggest a strong and vital pre-contact Aboriginal presence in the area.

## Chapter 2: Building Carlton

- Creating Melbourne
- Shaping the suburbs
- Making homes for Victorians
- Living on the fringes

### *Early development*

Carlton was developed as part of the extension of Melbourne to its north in the mid-nineteenth century. By the late 1840s, there were calls to extend the city boundaries to the north, with the *Argus* newspaper arguing 'there seems no good reason why the city should not be allowed to progress'.<sup>15</sup> In 1850, the site of the new Melbourne General Cemetery was approved, located a then suitable two miles from the north city boundary. 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.<sup>16</sup> The first sales of allotments south of Grattan Street took place in this period, and in 1853 the site of the University of Melbourne was reserved to the south of the new cemetery. An 1853 plan prepared by the Surveyor General's office shows the 'extension of Melbourne called Carlton' as being the area bounded by Victoria, Rathdowne, Grattan and Elizabeth streets.<sup>17</sup>

The slightly later 1855 Kearney plan shows subdivision of the suburb ending at a then unnamed Faraday Street and the site of the university (Figure 1). To the north lay undeveloped land, shown as lightly forested. By 1857, when land between Grattan and Palmerston streets was auctioned, government notices identified the area as being in 'North Melbourne at Carlton'.<sup>18</sup> The naming of the 'Carlton Gardens' reserve was another use of 'Carlton' as a designator of the area, although the suburb, or sections thereof, was still commonly referred to as North Melbourne through the 1860s.<sup>19</sup> The northern part of the suburb, to Princes Street, was subdivided in the 1860s, and included the introduction of the diagonal streets, Barkly, Neill and Keppel, which distinguish this part Carlton.

Numerous small buildings were constructed in Carlton in the early period of its development, many of which were one or two room timber cottages or shops.<sup>20</sup> These buildings were mostly replaced throughout the later nineteenth century with more substantial and permanent brick and stone dwellings. This also followed the introduction of tighter building regulations in the 1870s, with the extension of the *Building Act* to cover Carlton in 1872.<sup>21</sup>

The *Sands & Kenny* directory of 1857 identifies occupants of buildings in Bouverie, Cardigan, Drummond, Leicester, Lygon, Queensberry, Rathdowne and Victoria streets. Cardigan and Bouverie streets included some commercial development with grocers, general stores and butchers listed along with boot makers, coach makers, plumbers and cabinet makers.<sup>22</sup> In 1865, allotments along the western edge of Drummond Street were subdivided for sale, prompting objections by some residents as this portion of the suburb had originally been reserved for public uses.<sup>23</sup>

### *Places related to this theme*

- 101-111 Cardigan Street (HO30), terrace row housing of 1857-8.
- Russell Terrace, 68-72 Victoria Street (HO118), terrace row housing of 1871.
- Carlton Gardens (VHR H1501)
- Early bluestone residences, Murchison Street (HO1)



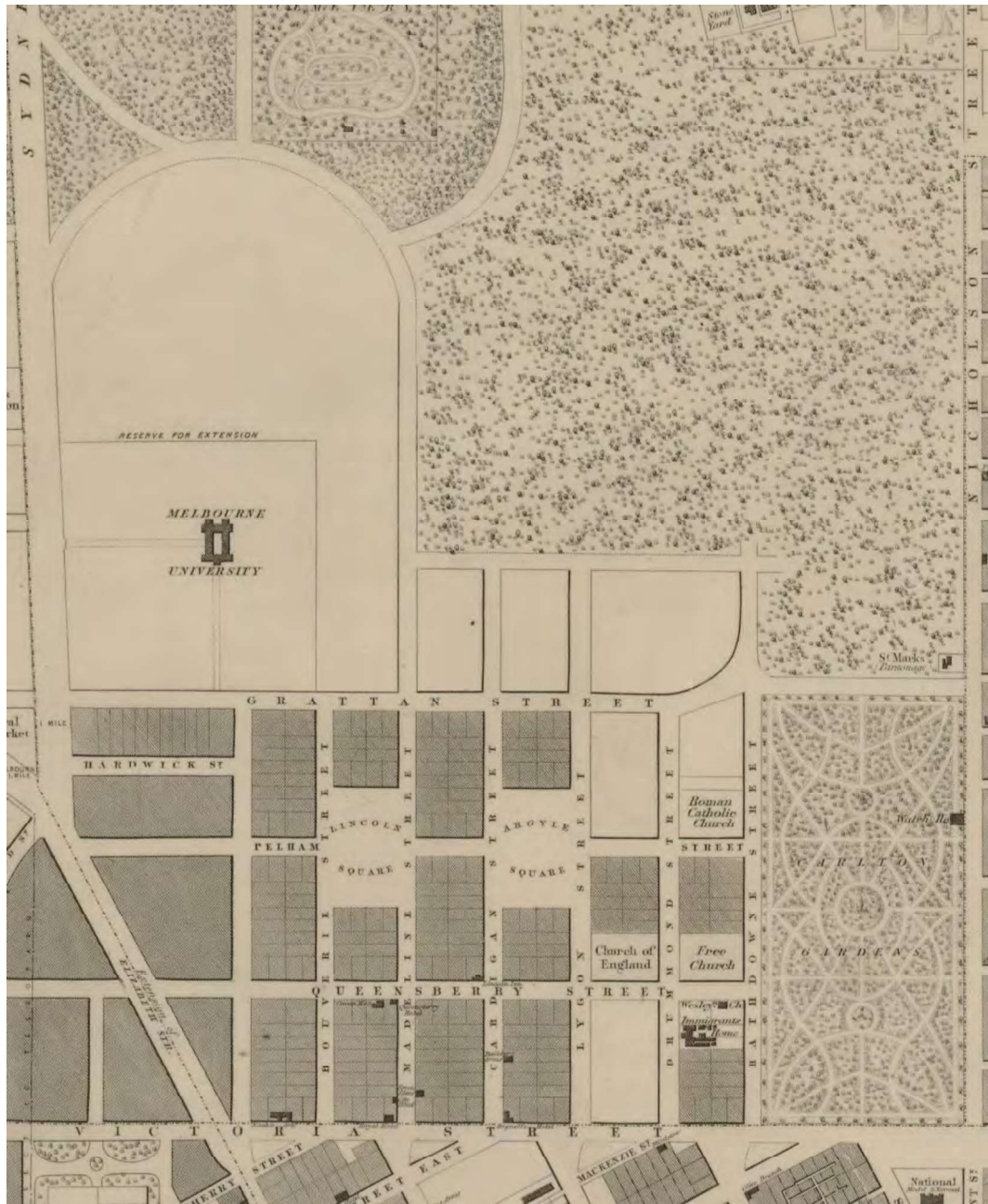


Figure 1 Detail of 'Melbourne and its suburbs' plan, compiled by James Kearney, 1855  
Source: State Library of Victoria

#### *Mid-late nineteenth century*

By the 1870s, Carlton was a substantially developed residential suburb (Figure 2).<sup>24</sup> Grand terrace rows had been constructed along Drummond Street to the south, including Carolina, Erin and Warwick terraces. On the diagonal Neill Street between Rathdowne and Canning streets, some 43 properties could be counted.<sup>25</sup> Concurrent with this development was the construction of hotels in the suburb, which numbered approximately 80 by 1873.<sup>26</sup> Local bluestone, which was readily available by the 1850s and more reliable than bricks produced at the time, was used in the construction of a relatively high proportion of early buildings, including houses.<sup>27</sup> The main material for the façade of seven of the ten houses constructed in Murchison Street by 1868, for example, was stone,<sup>28</sup> and many of these houses were built by Scottish stonemasons.<sup>29</sup> There remain a collection of bluestone cottages and houses on the north side of Murchison Street, dating from this early period.

The re-subdivision of earlier allotments and small-scale speculative development was also a feature of the second half of the nineteenth century in Carlton. This resulted in some irregular allotment sizes, and consequently atypical building plans and designs, including dwellings with asymmetrical frontages, terraces of inconsistent widths, and row houses off-alignment to the street.<sup>30</sup> One local resident who had a hand in the development of the suburb was William Ievers. Ievers was a prominent member of the community who established a real estate agency in Cardigan Street in 1859. As noted in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, his firm was 'one of the largest in Melbourne', and was particularly successful during the 1870s and 1880s. Ievers was involved in all aspects of real estate, selling properties for vendors, developing land for sale and leasing small residences. One of his terrace rows on Cardigan Street was named 'Mary's Terrace', after Ievers' wife of nearly 50 years, and the smaller cottages in the lane (Ievers Place) off Cardigan Street were also owned by him.<sup>31</sup> Ievers was also involved in local politics, as a municipal rate collector and valuer for 25 years and an elected councillor for the Smith ward of the City of Melbourne in 1895. He was a significant contributor to Church of Sacred Heart (St George's) in Carlton; a memorial to him was erected by his son in Argyle Place; and two small streets (Ievers Terrace and Ievers Place) and a park (Ievers Reserve, in Parkville) bear his name.

By the late nineteenth century, some distinction had emerged between development in the north and south of Carlton. With the construction of the Royal Exhibition Building and development of Carlton Gardens, the main thoroughfares in the south attracted more affluent middle-class development, including larger houses which often replaced earlier more modest dwellings, and named rows of terraces. The more prestigious developments in the suburb were complemented by the London-style residential squares, which were generally anticipated in the early subdivisions, with residences surrounding and facing the squares.

Small workers' cottages tended to be constructed on secondary streets, including narrow rights-of-way behind larger properties. In the north, modest cottage rows on small allotments were more typical, reflecting the working class demographic of this area of Carlton. However, cottage rows were still named, as evidenced by Canning Street to the north of Kay Street which was occupied by Theresa cottages, Crimble cottages and Henrietta cottages. Such cottages tended to be of three or four rooms, compared to the much larger residences of generally eight rooms to the south.<sup>32</sup>



Figure 2 View of Carlton between Queensberry and Victoria streets in 1870, looking east past Cardigan Street towards Carlton Gardens, 1870  
Source: Charles Nettleton, photographer, H96.160/1433, State Library of Victoria

## *Twentieth century*

With little in the way of available land in Carlton in the twentieth century, it was people rather than places that developed. In the early decades, as outlined above, the demographics of Carlton began to change, with recent arrivals from Eastern Europe including Jewish families.<sup>33</sup> The rapid development of the nineteenth century, which had included construction of tiny cottages in rear lanes, became the focus of the so-called 'slum clearance' movement from the interwar period. In some cases, laneway housing was replaced by interwar warehouses and factories, towards the south and west of the suburb. In the mid-twentieth century, Carlton remained characteristically a working-class suburb, its residents being predominantly low-income workers and immigrants.<sup>34</sup> The slum clearance movement literally resulted in the clearing of a number of areas occupied by nineteenth century housing, and their replacement with multi-storey 'Housing Commission towers', which in turn began to dominate the skyline in parts of the suburb. After World War II, Italian and other European migrants also made Carlton's residences their own, reshaping and altering nineteenth century detailing to a more Mediterranean aesthetic.

As noted above in Chapter 2, Aboriginal people also lived amongst Carlton's increasingly crowded predominantly terrace housing in the mid-twentieth century. For example, Cheryl Vickery recalled that 'when she was about nine years old her mother, Stella Nicholls lived in Neill Street Carlton where "we had the double room upstairs"'.<sup>35</sup> Aboriginal people were additionally among the residents of the high-rise public housing constructed by the Housing Commission in the second half of the twentieth century.

Changes in demographics through the post-war period also saw a reoccupation of earlier buildings, used for artistic endeavours such as the La Mama and Pram Factory theatres. Smaller infill housing instigated by the Housing Commission of Victoria in the 1980s aimed to blend in with the historic streetscapes of the suburb, signalling a shift in how the nineteenth century building stock was viewed. The infill housing program represented a new concept and direction in public housing, and a marked departure from the high density estates and towers of the post-war period. It involved private sector architects, including Edmond and Corrigan, Peter Crone and Gregory Burgess, working in conjunction with the state government, collaborating to design and build inexpensive homes.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Carlton again underwent a transformation, with further gentrification and intensified residential development. This resulted in the restoration of its many historic buildings, including boom-era commercial buildings on Faraday Street. There were also notable new residential developments in the suburb by contemporary architects, adapting the terrace form and medium density housing for the late twentieth century.

### *Places related to this theme*

- Shops, 198-204 Faraday Street (HO1)
- 1980s townhouses, 129-139 Canning Street (HO1)
- Cross Street Co-operative Housing, 422-432 Cardigan Street

### *Public parks*

A distinguishing feature of the planning of Carlton is the generous provision of public open space, part of the mid-nineteenth century government surveys of the suburb. These reserves range from the English-style residential squares, to the formal Carlton Gardens and Princes Park. Carlton Gardens, after which the suburb was named, was originally laid out by Edward Latrobe Bateman in the mid-1850s. The gardens were named by c. 1852, and early photographs show an enclosed reserve, but one which had not been formally laid out. Further redesign was undertaken in subsequent years, leading up to 1879-1880, when the gardens hosted the International Exhibition of October 1880, and the Royal Exhibition Building was completed. Many of the State's leading landscape designers and horticulturists, including Clement Hodgkinson, William Sangster, Nicholas Bickford, John Guilfoyle and architect Joseph Reed, have had input into the gardens landscape. The focus became ensuring a suitable setting for the Royal Exhibition Building, through the planned gardens, paths, entrances and other features.<sup>36</sup>

The Royal Exhibition Building was constructed to house the International Exhibition of 1880 and is the only major extant nineteenth century exhibition building in Australia and one of only a few remaining worldwide. International exhibitions were hugely popular in the nineteenth century, with the latest in industrial, commercial and technological developments from around the world shown to huge, and appreciative, crowds.

The Royal Exhibition Building (Figure 3) was designed by noted architect Joseph Reed, with prominent contractor, David Mitchell, as builder. The subsequent 1888 Centennial International Exhibition was one of the largest events staged in Victoria's history; and in May 1901 the Duke of York presided over the opening of the first Federal Parliament in the building. From that time until 1927 the western annexe of the building was used as a temporary State Parliament while the new Federal Parliament occupied the Victorian Houses of Parliament. The decorative scheme by John Anderson for the opening of Federal Parliament saw the dome decorated in imitation of the sky and the pendentives adorned with murals. Later uses of the Royal Exhibition Building, in addition to exhibitions, included it being used as an emergency hospital for influenza epidemic victims in 1919; military occupation during World War II; and a migrant reception centre from 1948 to 1961. Carlton Gardens are renowned for their nineteenth century 'Gardenesque' style featuring lakes, specimen trees, tree avenues and rows, and parterre garden beds, laid out in a symmetrical arrangement with axial views.

The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens were inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2004, in recognition of the World Heritage (outstanding universal) values of the place, as derived from it being a surviving 'Palace of Industry' in its original setting, associated with the international exhibition movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>37</sup> The Melbourne Museum, designed by architects Denton Corker Marshall and constructed in the gardens immediately to the north of the Royal Exhibition Building, opened in 2000.<sup>38</sup>

Largely separated from Carlton itself, Princes Park was part of an early large reservation north of the city, set aside by Charles La Trobe, Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, in the 1840s.<sup>39</sup> It subsequently evolved from a grazing ground and nightsoil depository, to a reserve used for recreation and sporting activities. Its establishment can also be understood in the context of a proposal, largely credited to La Trobe, to surround Melbourne with a ring of parks and gardens, including land set aside for public purposes. The result was an inner ring of gardens, including Fitzroy, Treasury, Parliament, Alexandra, Domain and the Royal Botanic Gardens; and an outer ring including Yarra, Albert, Fawkner, Royal and Princes parks. The former were generally more formally designed spaces, intended for passive recreation; while the latter were developed in a less sophisticated manner for both active and passive recreation.<sup>40</sup> Princes Park extends for approximately 39 hectares, stretching for two kilometres along the east side of Royal Parade. Princes Oval, Carlton Football Club's home ground and headquarters, is located in the centre of the park, with sporting fields to the south and passive recreation areas to the north. The park combines treed areas and open space, with the latter providing generous vistas across the park, including views of the established plantings and tree rows lining pathways and bordering the park. Surviving nineteenth century plantings include elm rows and avenues, Moreton Bay Figs, and River Red Gums. Later plantings include Canary Island Palm rows, the Princes Park Drive plantation, and various Mahogany Gums. Historic buildings include the Park Keeper's cottage (1885), tennis pavilion (1926), and north and south sports pavilions (1937).

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Carlton Gardens (VHR H1501)



Figure 3 View of Royal Exhibition Building from Nicholson Street, with Carlton Gardens in foreground, c. 1890  
Source: H44102, State Library of Victoria

### *Squares*

Aside from its generous public parks, Carlton is characterised by its many squares. The survey of the suburban allotments included these squares, and followed a pattern that was similar to that employed by Colonel William Light in his 1837 plan for Adelaide. It was a pattern that had been widely used in London, where open squares supported the apportionment of comparatively dense private allotments on surrounding blocks. The first two squares in Carlton were labelled from the outset 'Lincoln Square' and 'Argyle Square'. To the west, a group of irregular lots between diagonal streets were also labelled as reserves in the vicinity of what would become University Square, however this survey was later altered at the behest of the university to ensure an open approach to its entrance. Meanwhile, to the north of Carlton Gardens, two smaller squares each noted as 'Reserve for Ornamental Enclosure' were added when this area was laid out c. 1857; these squares would subsequently become known as Macarthur Square and Murchison Square.<sup>41</sup>

The provision of these squares was not universally supported, and in 1858, a number of councillors and landholders pushed for the extension of Pelham Street directly through Argyle Square and Lincoln Square. This reflected a simmering conflict over the primacy of roads versus public open spaces. Likewise, the crossing of Carlton Gardens would continue to be disputed into the 1870s when it would be ultimately decided at the Supreme Court of Victoria,<sup>42</sup> however the conservation of the smaller squares would be settled within a few months by motion of the Parliament of Victoria.<sup>43</sup> Opponents argued that the surrounding allotments had been bought in good faith from the Government, 'on the faith of these grants for reserves', and that a premium had been paid on the basis of their adjacency to the squares.<sup>44</sup> Passage of the *Sale of Crown Lands Act* 1860 allowed the status of these and other existing public reserves to be formalised. The permanent reservations of the Carlton squares were formally gazetted in 1864,<sup>45</sup> save for University Square, which was gazetted in 1867 (Figure 4).<sup>46</sup>

While governments reportedly dragged their feet on fencing and improving the squares,<sup>47</sup> local citizens may have taken matters into their own hands—one 1860 motion to the city council noted 'citizens in the vicinity of Lincoln Square having expressed their willingness to subscribe the sum of £10 towards the cost of picking, levelling, and sowing that enclosure with grass,' before referring the matter to the Health Committee.<sup>48</sup> With the limited funds available for the purpose from the colony's government, the



squares were eventually fenced and planted with trees, with the promise that the fencing was temporary and 'would be removed so soon as the trees which were [e]nclosed had grown up.'<sup>49</sup>

The squares were valuable open space reserves with the potential to host all manner of public or semi-private groups or uses that otherwise lacked the funds or influence to own or occupy private land. Despite their small size, the squares quickly proved desirable as recreational grounds for local clubs, with the northern half of Argyle Square set aside for the Carlton Bowling Club in 1868 and the northern part of University Square similarly occupied by the Victoria Bowling Club in c. 1875, as well as by an association of lawn tennis players.<sup>50</sup> Early newspapers occasionally published descriptions of the planted character of the squares. Lincoln Square in 1875 is described as containing:

...a parterre of flowers [which] has been planted on each side of the walks, which gives a bright and cheerful appearance to the grounds. There are also lawns of rye grass and clover, and plantations of cedar trees and blue gums to furnish a landscape.<sup>51</sup>

The introduction of c. 1880s avenue plantings of elms to a number of the squares has been attributed to Nicholas Bickford, the city's Parks and Gardens Curator from 1874-1890; some works including ornamental plantings were later introduced by his successor, John Guilfoyle, Curator of Metropolitan Parks and Gardens (and brother to William Guilfoyle, Director of the Botanic Gardens). The opening of Victoria's first children's playground in Lincoln Square in 1907 may be seen as the conclusion of this previous era of conflicted management and the beginning of a new era in which the public position and amenity of the squares became more certain. The playground was unveiled by then Premier Thomas Bent to an audience of dignitaries and a crowd of hundreds including cadets, children from State, Catholic and private schools, and neighbourhood residents. Constructed with equal contributions from the State Government and the Council, the original playground was reported to include swings, maypoles and see-saws.<sup>52</sup> Playground equipment is still present in Lincoln Square today, and it remains the only one of the five Carlton squares to include such a feature.

A renovation of Lincoln Square was undertaken during the early 1960s, with the installation of a formal plaza along the Swanston Street edge with a jet fountain and reflecting pool opposite Pelham Street. Throughout the twentieth century, various memorials and other monuments were installed in Carlton's squares, highlighting the civic dimension of their status as the principal local open spaces in Carlton. Since 2000, the squares have been the subject of works to modernise and adapt them for more contemporary expectations.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Carlton's squares, including Lincoln Square and Murchison Square (HO1)



Figure 4 Detail of plan of Carlton south of Elgin Street, 1881, with Carlton's squares indicated  
Source: Vale Collection, State Library of Victoria

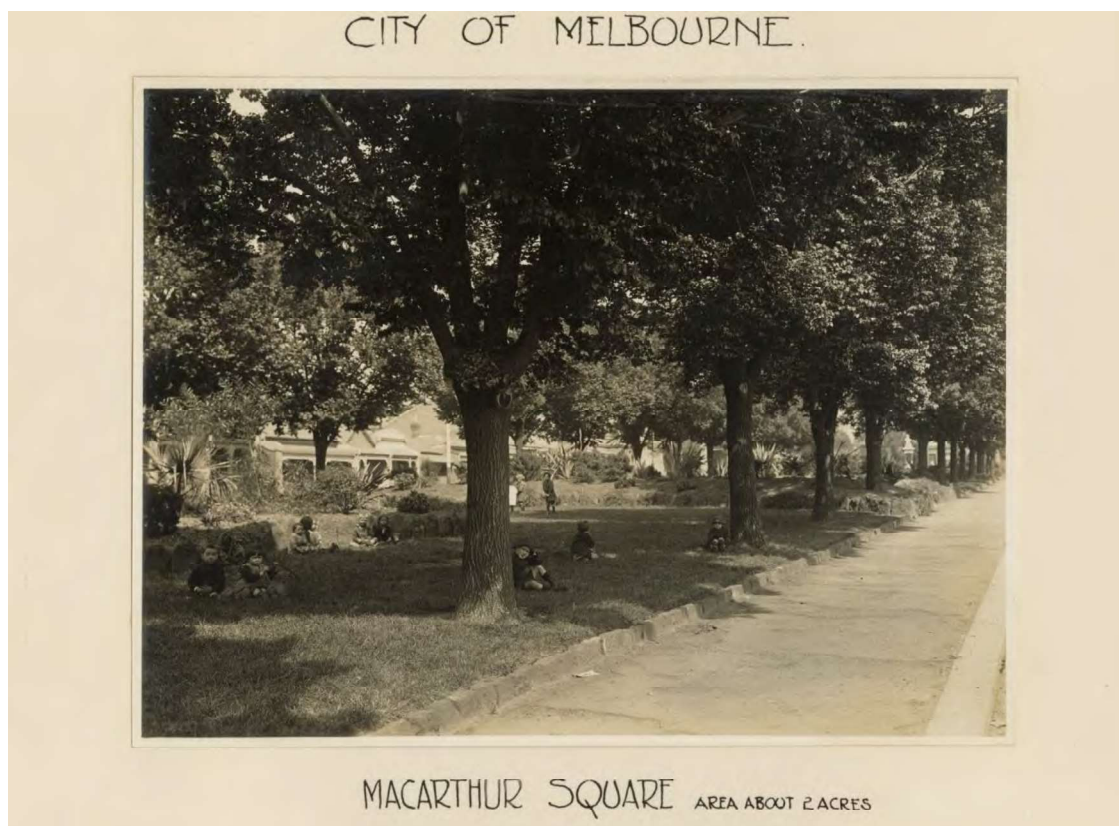


Figure 5 Macarthur Square, Carlton, c. 1920s  
Source: Image 1735489, City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection



Figure 6      Oblique aerial photograph looking south towards the city, 1927. Argyle (left) and Lincoln (right) squares are visible  
Source: Airspy collection, H2501, State Library of Victoria



### Chapter 3: Peopling Carlton

- Exploring, surveying and mapping
- Arriving in a new land
- Migrating and making a home
- Maintaining distinctive cultures
- Promoting settlement
- Fighting for identity

Carlton has long been recognised for the diversity of its residents. The suburb has been shaped by those that have lived, worked, shopped in and visited it from its establishment in the nineteenth century and through the twentieth century ‘cosmopolitan Carlton’.<sup>53</sup> Each of these communities has had an influence on the urban landscape of Carlton.

#### *Nineteenth century Carlton*

Carlton was surveyed in 1852 and, through the sale of Crown land, its development took place during the 1850s gold rush period. The suburb was populated at a time when a huge influx of people had arrived in Victoria, and the suburb’s western extremity was bordered by Elizabeth Street, the major thoroughfare to the goldfields to the north. The population of Carlton in the nineteenth century followed the immigration patterns of the broader metropolitan area, that is, one that was predominantly drawn from the British Isles. This population is responsible for much of the historic built form and character of Carlton, including its remnant nineteenth century residences, shops and churches.

Carlton’s relatively elevated position, in comparison to the nearby suburbs of Fitzroy and Collingwood, and the provision of wide streets and reserves for squares and gardens, meant that it initially attracted a number of notable, professional residents, including Justice Redmond Barry, who lived in Rathdowne Street. The publication *Melbourne Punch* devoted a column to Carlton in the first of its ‘Suburban Sketches’ series in 1869, which described its early character:

Carlton is variously described as an outskirt, a suburb, and an outlying district of the city ... Carlton taken as a whole is oppressively new – so new that there is not such a thing as a second hand shop, excepting perhaps on its utmost limits where it relapses into vulgar Elizabeth-street north, the region of wagon-builders, herb-doctors, smiths, millers, and such like low people. Carlton is genteel; its residents look happy and well-to-do; its maidens fresh and natty; its roads cleanly, and more goat-and-dog-less than other suburbs ... the exclusive street is that of Rathdowne, and it looks down with undisguised contempt upon every other street. It faces *the* gardens, it possesses a church with a real tower ...

Taking Carlton as a whole, it is a neat pleasant suburb, and not being too densely populated should be healthy ...<sup>54</sup>

This genteel character did not retain its dominance with development through the 1870s and 1880s. Carlton began to take on a more working-class character, with rows of smaller cottages constructed to the streets at the north of the suburb, and in laneways behind larger residences. This denser development ‘contribute[d] to a decline in Carlton as a fashionable suburb’.<sup>55</sup> A large proportion of the occupants of such dwellings rented from owners who owned multiple properties in the suburb, but these owners often no longer resided in Carlton having moved to the more fashionable suburbs south of the Yarra River. Given the prevalence of those engaged in the building trade living in Carlton, it is likely many of these terrace rows were constructed by residents of the suburb.

The City of Melbourne citizen list of 1879-1880 highlights the different economic lives of the suburb’s population in a period of consolidation after its initial development. While some correlation can be drawn between the wealth/profession of individual residents and the likelihood of property ownership, there were a number of exceptions, which also point to successes of the working population. Baker

Cameron Dugald, for example, is identified in the citizen list as owning 40 houses in Rathdowne, Drummond and Victoria streets, to a value of £830.<sup>56</sup> After migrating from Scotland, Dugald had established a bakery in the block bound by those streets. It was clearly a successful enterprise, and one that was redeveloped as the Owen & Dixon bakery in the early twentieth century.<sup>57</sup>

A comparison of occupations of the residents of two streets shown in the citizen list – Carlton Street and Charles Street – provides an indication of the character and demographics of the north and south of the suburb. The relative value of properties in these two streets demonstrates the higher prestige of the southern street, with individual properties generally valued at £40-£60 in Carlton Street, compared with £18-£20 in Charles Street. Carlton Street, located in Smith Ward and at the northern boundary of the Carlton Gardens, comprised larger houses and residents with independent wealth or professions, rather than trades. These included journalist Anthony B Robinson, Dr Frederick Hewlett, and members of the civil service George Milne and Francis McCann. Two successful building contractors, William Clark and John Gordon, each owned a number of other properties in the street, as well as residing there. The occupants of Charles Street, located in Victoria Ward, instead generally held occupations in small-scale industry and building trades, including storeman Joseph Keogh, tinsmith William Berry, mason Samuel Craven and carter Henry Fuhrhop. Interestingly, three constables, Michael O’Grady, William Nugent and Thomas Cale, resided in the relatively short street.<sup>58</sup> No women were included in the Melbourne citizen list, as they were not then entitled to vote in council elections.

Much of the extant building stock of Carlton reflects the patterns of development of Carlton’s early population.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Nineteenth century cottages, Charles Street
- Palmerston Place

#### *Aboriginal people*

The surveying and subsequent emergence of Carlton as an early suburb, in typifying the growth patterns of Melbourne in the early post-contact era, was a process which both ‘confirmed imperial power and allowed for the sale of Crown Land’.<sup>59</sup> For the Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples and other Aboriginal groups that had frequented the area, this process was experienced as dispossession and alienation from their pre-contact traditional land, camping grounds and travel routes. However, continued Aboriginal occupation within the study area demonstrated adaptation and resilience. Early accounts confirmed that Aboriginal people ‘continued to move through [colonised land], and use camps and meeting places’,<sup>60</sup> later dwelling in both terrace and public housing. One Bunurong Elder noted that a cousin lived in public housing near the corner of Nicholson and Elgin Streets, and described it as ‘a tough place’, while another Bunurong Elder referred to an Auntie who lived in a Carlton terrace house near Lygon Street, a fact that made the area important to her.<sup>61</sup>

Since pre-contact times, the study area was adjacent to a number of favoured temporary camping places for Aboriginal groups from elsewhere.<sup>62</sup> This presence has continued, as Carlton became one of many destinations for the ‘internal migration’ of Aboriginal people from other parts of Australia, often following the closure of Aboriginal missions. Consultation with a Wurundjeri Elder revealed that from the 1930s and 1940s a number of Aboriginal people moved into the area from after returning from Aboriginal missions, including Cummergunja on the Murray River in New South Wales.<sup>63</sup> Since 2001 the Church of All Nations, discussed in more detail below, has operated Indigenous Hospitality House to provide accommodation for Indigenous people supporting their relatives in hospital.<sup>64</sup>

#### *Jewish Carlton*

As Melbourne’s population diversified, so did Carlton, with new arrivals to the city settling in the suburb. Carlton attracted large numbers of Jewish people from Europe in the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century, and the Jewish population had a noticeable impact. This influx

formed one of Melbourne's (and Australia's) most lively centres of Jewish culture of the period. Julie Meadows, the editor of *A Shtetl in Ek Velt*, a collection of reflections of Carlton's Jewish residents, noted that:

Carlton was like a protective time bubble, a life raft for people coming from Europe ... For 40 years it was a thriving Jewish community, but by the mid-1970s few were left there.<sup>65</sup>

With rising anti-Semitism in Russia in the 1880s and 1890s, numerous Jewish people from Central and Eastern Europe arrived in the inner suburbs of Melbourne.<sup>66</sup> Jewish-operated businesses in Carlton included plumbers, the Israelowitz Bros who were based in Lygon Street, Barrett Finkelstein's grocery in Cardigan Street, and his brother Henry Finkelstein's tailor shop in Madeline (Swanston) Street.<sup>67</sup> Rev. Moses Rintel, the rabbi of the East Melbourne Synagogue resided in Drummond Street from as early as 1875.<sup>68</sup> Over subsequent decades, Carlton and Carlton North became the centre of this Jewish population, signalling a shift away from earlier synagogues in Bourke Street, Melbourne and the East Melbourne Synagogue. By the 1920s, the Carlton Jewish population was a 'vibrant, dynamic, functionally independent centre', with the numbers of new arrivals such that the European Jewish customs became part of life in Carlton.<sup>69</sup> Yiddish also became a commonly heard language in the suburb, and was 'the universal language of a large proportion of the Jewish residents of Carlton'.<sup>70</sup> Newly arrived from Poland, and Carlton resident, the writer Pinchas Goldhar established the first Yiddish newspaper in Australia in the 1930s, *Di Oystralier Leben*, to appeal 'to eastern Europeans living in Carlton'.<sup>71</sup> In the interwar period, there were a number of Jewish businesses operating in Carlton, including Zal Markov's chemist in the substantial Elgin Buildings at the corner of Elgin and Drummond streets. Goldhar described the impact of the Jewish community on the streets:

Drummond Street echoed to the sounds of many spoken languages. Jewish shops and small clothing factories were opened. The street was alive. The Jews worked hard, noisily. They and their wives and their children worked and saved penny upon penny. Good times came. The small businesses became large department stores and the little workshops, factories.<sup>72</sup>

Jewish community facilities were also established in this period, to cater for what was becoming a relatively large segment of the population. The nineteenth century commercial building at 313 Drummond Street was occupied by the Kadimah from 1915. The organisation had formed in 1911 in Bourke Street, but soon required larger premises.<sup>73</sup> The Kadimah Hall hosted lectures, and gatherings of various Jewish societies, before relocating to Carlton North in 1933. The building at 6 to 8 Grattan Street, part of the former Lemon Tree Hotel complex at the corner of Grattan and Rathdowne streets, was built c. 1871. Jewish groups used the building between 1909 and 1920 as a synagogue, social club and library centre, and later as the Carlton kadimah.<sup>74</sup> From 1919, a permanent home for the Woolf Davis Chevra was secured, with a Shul constructed at 10 Pitt Street.<sup>75</sup> A former Oddfellows Hall and dancing studio at 149 Canning Street became reportedly 'the first Jewish communal hall in Victoria' when it was reopened as Monash House following alterations in 1926.<sup>76</sup> Sir John Monash formally opened the hall.<sup>77</sup> Its opening represented a 'great day in the history of the Jewish community of Melbourne', and the building was used by the Judean League of Victoria, and for dances, competitions and lectures.<sup>78</sup> In 1927, the Carlton Synagogue – 'Melbourne's third synagogue' – was opened in Palmerston Street (Figure 7). From as early as c. 1960 until at least 1974, a site on the corner of Pitt and Canning streets, adjacent to the Pitt Street Shul, was occupied by the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha, the Jewish burial society.<sup>79</sup>

Carlton's status as the centre of Jewish Melbourne continued until around the middle of the twentieth century. As families established themselves in Melbourne many moved from the inner suburb south to the more desirable bayside suburbs. The Carlton synagogue was demolished in 1970, replaced by a primary school within the Carlton Housing Estate. The Pitt Street shul was closed in 1965.<sup>80</sup>



Figure 7 The newly opened Carlton Synagogue, Palmerston Street, 1927  
Source: *Herald*, 28 September 1927, p. 14.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Former Woolf Davis Shul, 10 Pitt Street (HO1)
- Elgin Buildings, 161-169 Elgin Street (HO1)
- Shops and residence, 313 Drummond Street (VHR, H0043)

#### *'Little Italy'*

Perhaps the most well-known of the migrant groups to make Carlton their own is the wave of Italian migrants that arrived in the suburb in the post-war period. It has been estimated that the number of Italians in Carlton rose from 800 in the mid-1940s to more than 5000 by 1960, representing at least 25% of the population of Carlton.<sup>81</sup> The shift in the character of Carlton in the twentieth century, and the importance of the suburb to the Italian community is hard to overstate:

Carlton has been the cradle of our migration to Melbourne; the gathering place for those arriving migrants who knew that someone, somewhere, was waiting for them, that some voice was speaking the same language.<sup>82</sup>

There were people of Italian background in Carlton from the 1860s, including Italian musician Alberto Zelman who resided in Drummond Street in 1879-80, and confectioner A Borzoni in Lygon Street in the 1880s. While the population was 'numerically small' before 1945, by the 1910s, there were a number of families in Argyle Square and Cardigan Street, as well as Italian run boarding houses. The overall population of Italians in the City of Melbourne increased significantly from 237 to 1612 in the interwar period, and although the numbers in Carlton have not been identified, it is understood that the majority lived in the suburb.<sup>83</sup> It was in this period that Italian social clubs and community groups began to be established, including the Circolo Democratico Italiano or Club Duca degli Abruzzi, which had its headquarters at the corner of Queensberry and Cardigan streets.<sup>84</sup> The elaborate 1890s residence at 48 Drummond Street, originally Benvenuta but now known as Medley Hall, was occupied as an Italian club in the 1930s, and the office of the Italian newspaper, *Il Giornale Italiano*.<sup>85</sup>

The Italian occupation of Carlton became highly visible after World War II. In 1951, an agreement was signed between Italy and Australia, giving Italian migrants eligibility to access assisted passage to Australia. However, most Italian migrants came to Australia unassisted, or with support from family. Such was the influx that the community's population in Victoria increased from 8305 to 91,075 between 1947 and 1961.<sup>86</sup> The increasing number of residents with Italian backgrounds, including the Australian-born children of post-war migrants, saw commensurate increase in Italian businesses and shops, some of which became landmarks or destinations in their own right. Italian children attended local schools and playgrounds. Support services were also established, both for children and adults, including English language classes and Italian schools, and the Committee of Assistance for Italians (Co.As.It) in 1967. The popular *Il Globo* newspaper was produced in Carlton, and became the most read Italian newspaper in the state, and an important advocate for Italian-Australian workers.<sup>87</sup> A well-known local landmark is Bosari's corner at Lygon and Grattan streets, named for the cycle shop established by Nino Bosari, the Italian gold-medal winning cyclist, in 1941. Bosari was an important member of the post-war Italian community in the suburb.<sup>88</sup> An early neon sign on the chamfered corner of the Victorian-era building advertises 'Bosari's corner' and 'Ex-Olympic Champion'.

Historian Robert Pascoe noted that Carlton became 'an environment where [Italian-Australians] could feel comfortable, surrounded by culturally familiar institutions.' Part of that comfort in the environment was created by public ceremony:

[S]treet festivals, church occasions, family functions and sporting fixtures ...  
[helping to] wield together a group of people who were feeling alienated, divided,  
powerless and homeless.<sup>89</sup>

The tradition of public ceremony continues. The Lygon Street Festa (Figure 9), which commenced in 1978 as an adjunct to the Italian Arts Festival, has been one of the more visible public expressions of Italian Carlton. Now known as the Carlton Italian Festa, its focus has more recently moved to Argyle Square.<sup>90</sup> This square has also in part been remodelled to present as a 'modest' Italian piazza, recognising the Italian community's importance to the suburb.<sup>91</sup> Lygon Street was also the site of impromptu celebrations, as explained by fourth generation Italian Carlton resident, Marco Donnini:

It's like everybody just knew where to come ... This was the case for many years, if  
Carlton won the grand final, if Italy was in the World Cup, every Friday and  
Saturday night, you couldn't get into Lygon Street, it was just the place to be.<sup>92</sup>

Post-war migration has changed the streetscapes of Carlton in a number of both subtle and more obvious ways. Aside from the proliferation of Italian businesses, many new residents of the suburb added to or changed the presentation of their houses. Ornate nineteenth century detailing to parapets, verandahs and fences was removed, and narrow sash windows were replaced with larger casement openings, all 'progressively modernising' Victorian era terraces (Figure 8).<sup>93</sup> As noted in the City of Melbourne *Thematic Environmental History*:

A few houses in suburbs like Carlton were given a full 'Mediterranean' treatment  
with cast-concrete columns to support the flat verandah roof and terrazzo  
flooring.<sup>94</sup>

Italian occupation of Carlton declined from the mid-1960s into the 1970s, when many left the suburb for larger houses and gardens in middle and outer suburbs. Carlton, however, maintains a strong connection with the Italian community, as well as its reputation as the heart of Italian Melbourne.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Bosari's Corner, 201-203 Lygon Street (HO1)
- Argyle Square (HO1)
- Co.As.It and Museo Italiano, Faraday Street (HO1)



Figure 8 Members of the Russo family in front of their house in Carlton (location not known), c. 1945  
Source: Russo Family Collection, H2009.17/11, State Library of Victoria



Figure 9 Waiters Race, Lygon Street Festival, 1984  
Source: Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive

### Post-war migrant Carlton

While the Italian migration to Carlton is well known, other migrant groups made the suburb home in the twentieth century. Compared with other parts of Melbourne, the suburb's housing remained relatively cheap. This, along with its proximity to the city, made Carlton an obvious place to establish a new life for those arriving with few resources. Other Mediterranean migrants, such as Greeks, Spanish and Lebanese people, as well as arrivals from South America, China and Vietnam came to reside in Carlton. The suburb also drew migrants from surrounding suburbs to socialise, shop and attend religious services.

Reflective of the multicultural character of the suburb is the development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, built in 1869-70, to become known as the Church of All Nations in the 1960s. Under the supervision of Reverend Norman Lowe, the church became an important community centre for the many migrants living in Carlton, and further afield. As well as services being simultaneously translated into four languages, the church initiated programs aimed to assist new arrivals to settle and integrate, including social activities and employment support (Figure 10). As described by Lowe in 1968:

We became associated with the smaller ethnic groups ... Argentinians, Chileans, Egyptians, Lebanese, Portuguese and Spanish – they all found us.<sup>95</sup>

### Places related to this theme

- Church of All Nations, 178-204 Palmerston Street (HO1)



Figure 10 An Egyptian family outside Church of All Nations, 1968, with multi-lingual signage behind  
Source: A12111, 1/1968/9/30, National Archives of Australia

### *'Slum' Carlton*

With the intense development of Carlton through the nineteenth century, and the increasing impetus to accommodate people in smaller residences, sections of Carlton became characterised as 'slums'. Although this was often a fairly loose – and prejudicial – term, it tended to describe the areas that included small residential buildings accessed from laneways and rights-of way. As early as the 1860s, newspapers were reporting on the 'back slums' of Melbourne.

Private subdivisions, such as that undertaken by William Ievers in Ievers Place off Cardigan Street, enabled the construction of small houses fronting laneways, away from the main thoroughfares. By the 1870s, numerous dwellings had been constructed 'off' the main streets, often having a single owner who rented them out. Thomas Squires, for example, owned six buildings, one in Cardigan Street and five to the rear. Of these, four were wooden cottages with a brick cottage and brick shop also identified in the municipal rate books of 1872. The smallest of the sites was 11 feet by 60 feet (3.35 metres by 18.3 metres).<sup>96</sup> Likewise, Edward Cornell, owner of Madeline House drapery at the corner of Queensberry and Madeline (Swanston) streets, also owned six two-roomed wood cottages in a laneway off Madeline Street, likely what is now known as Cornell Place.<sup>97</sup> These were timber buildings, with no party walls separating each residence.

By the 1890s, with Carlton's land area substantially developed, very small dwellings fronting laneways behind larger houses were relatively common. While Carlton to the north of Grattan Street was perhaps more characterised by its working-class identity and generally more modest houses, tiny dwellings in fact proliferated in the suburb. The larger allotments to the south, in streets such as Drummond and Lygon streets, had sufficient space behind to accommodate additional separate buildings to be constructed to the rear. The MMBW plans of the 1890s indicate just how much of Carlton's housing stock was located off the main grid of streets. One plan shows a number of small cottages in the laneways off Madeline and Queensberry streets, including Cornell's two-roomed cottages on Cornell Place (Figure 11). Others show the rear dwellings sharing the street numbering of the houses the rights-of-way adjoined, such as 254A, 254B and 254C Drummond Street, and 269A and 269B Rathdowne Street.<sup>98</sup>

It was such collections of buildings that attracted the attention of social campaigners and government officials, with a commonly held belief in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that slums 'bred' criminality, immorality and laziness, a belief often tied in with eugenicist thinking about race and environment.<sup>99</sup> Official concern was as much about the condition of buildings and the sharing of yards and water closets, as it was about the usually small number of rooms in each dwelling. The 1913 Joint Select Committee investigation into the 'housing of the people in the metropolis' described a number of the laneways in the area:

[Finlay Place] is a lane on ground 122 feet by 53 feet [37 metres by 16 metres]. There are ten houses on that lot. They are all wooden with the exception of one, which is bluestone ... [A]ll the houses in this lane are in a dilapidated state, and should be pulled down. They have recently been done up, but it has just been a coating of calcimo on the outside.

[Little Queensberry Street] runs north and south. There are eleven houses there. It is a 12-feet right-of-way. With the exception of one house, it is occupied by women and men of the lower class ... [No. 17] is practically not fit to live in.<sup>100</sup>

A witness described the owner of many of the properties in Little Queensberry Street as a member of the 'exorbitant class' who 'charges exorbitant rents for houses, and has taken advantage of the times.'<sup>101</sup> While witnesses at the hearings noted where 'respectable people' lived, the migrant background of others, particularly Italian or Chinese, was often identified. As observed by George Tibbits, Carlton's proximity to employment in the city was advantageous for those people that could not access public transport from suburbs further afield.<sup>102</sup>



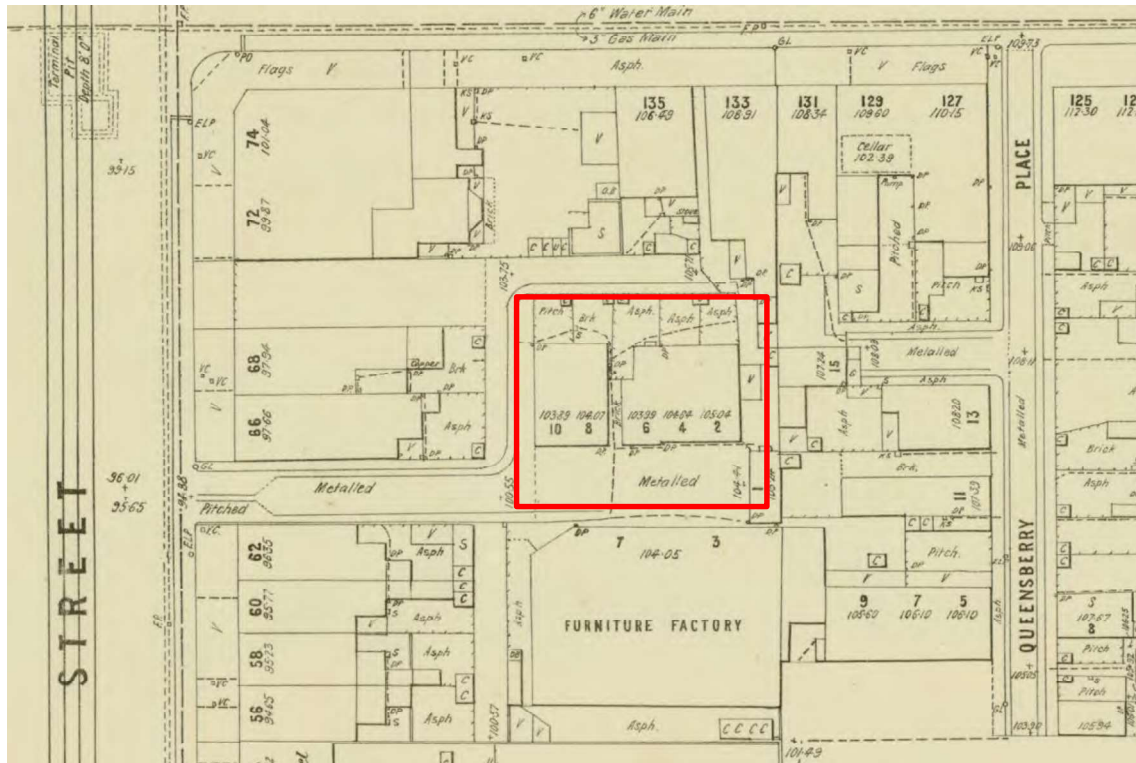


Figure 11 MMBW detail plan no. 1179, 1896, with Cornell's leased dwellings indicated. Other small cottages can be seen in this plan  
Source: State Library of Victoria

There was genuine concern for the 'plight' of those living in these so-called slum areas, and this concern gave impetus to the creation of the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) and the State Savings Bank's loan scheme. These initiatives were intended to remove the power that unscrupulous landlords could hold over vulnerable people with little choice for housing.<sup>103</sup> 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. The group met to discuss housing reform, evolving to become the slum abolition movement. He 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.<sup>104</sup>

In 1934, a year before the one-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of Melbourne, Barnett described action on the slums of Melbourne as 'a centenary duty' and an 'investment for the state'.<sup>105</sup> Barnett surveyed the inner suburbs of Melbourne, documenting the laneways, housing and lives of many of Carlton residents (Figure 12-Figure 15Figure 13). His photographs represent a comprehensive record of the poorer sections of Carlton in the interwar period, and formed much of the illustrative material contained in the first progress report of the Slum Abolition Board of 1937, along with maps showing the areas of concern in the suburb (Figure 16). The Board observed of Carlton:

The main streets generally are wide and well planned. There are, however, many narrow back and side streets, rights-of-way, 'places' and lanes which have encouraged the development of typical slum-pockets. The cul-de-sac type of pocket is much more in evidence in Carlton than elsewhere. The urgent need of this area is the demolition of the slum pockets ...<sup>106</sup>

From the 1950s and into the 1960s, the expansive and 'hyperactive' slum clearance work developed into a programme of urban renewal by the HCV, which began to impact on the urban fabric of Carlton.<sup>107</sup> In 1960, the results of the Shaw-Davey investigation of slum reclamation areas were released, informed, reportedly, by a survey from the vantage of a car.<sup>108</sup> It identified 74.2 acres of 'decadent areas' in

Carlton as requiring 'immediate attention', that is, almost the whole area bound by Nicholson, Princes, Elgin and Lygon streets. The area already comprised four areas of slum reclamation.<sup>109</sup> In 1960-61, the first of the low-rise walk up blocks of flats was under construction on the reclamation area bound by Canning, Palmerston, Nicholson and Elgin streets.<sup>110</sup> Planning also commenced for similar blocks on the larger Reeves Street estate, to accommodate 310 flats.<sup>111</sup> After first being proposed in 1958, high rise towers of twenty storeys were constructed at the Reeves Street and High Street estates from 1964, with construction on the second tower conducted at such a pace that one floor comprising nine flats was built per week.<sup>112</sup> The Carlton Estate became the most densely populated of the HCV estates, at 247 people per acre.<sup>113</sup> The slum clearance programme, as its name suggests, cleared away earlier housing that was deemed below the acceptable standards for human habitation. The Reeves and High Street estates replaced numerous houses, shops and businesses, and hotels. A section of Drummond Street and both Reeves and High streets were subsumed into the new development, and laneways including Somerset, Tobias and Airedale places and a number of unnamed rights-of-ways were removed (Figure 17).

However, the social and economic conditions of Melbourne and Carlton in the 1960s had 'dramatically changed' from those of the 1930s, when initial investigations of the Slum Clearance movement were undertaken.<sup>114</sup> Despite some of the assertions of the Housing Commission, by the mid-1950s, Carlton was 'rapidly becoming [a suburb] where most houses are owner-occupied', whereas 'previously they were districts where most properties were owned by investors.'<sup>115</sup> As the *Argus* observed:

Many houses in [Carlton] are old – some very old – but where they are structurally sound, they are being transformed by their new owners ... Most of the new owners fortunately are not disturbing the character of their purchase by altering the front unduly. With the careful use of paint, they are bringing out the architectural features of the old buildings so that they present pleasing and attractive appearance.<sup>116</sup>

Many post-war migrants had purchased homes that had been the subject of Oswald Barnett's investigations in the 1930s, and many took on the improvement of these buildings. Even the Minister for Housing remarked after a visit to Carlton that most of the houses he had seen that were slated for reclamation were in fact 'little palaces', after improvement by their 'New Australian' owners.<sup>117</sup> Concerns were raised that despite the improvements being made, it was these new owners that were most heavily impacted by the work of the HCV, with the threat of reclamation still present. Furthermore, from an Aboriginal perspective, one Bunurong Elder alluded to how 'welfare moved in' to areas regarded as 'slums'. Yet she also challenged this characterisation of 'slum', observing that Aboriginal families had nevertheless remained living together in such circumstances. This observation alluded to how the involvement of 'welfare', in this context, a pejorative euphemism for paternalistic and often racist government programmes, had at times resulted in family fragmentation.<sup>118</sup>

While some housing legitimately still required urgent upgrading, the HCV appeared to remain ignorant to the fact that improvements were being made by owners of properties in the slum reclamation areas. As architectural historian George Tibbits observed, the HCV:

[P]ersistently refused to acknowledge ... the emerging regeneration of old Carlton, brought about by rising incomes, individual design imagination, and, most importantly, a veritable revolution in the availability and cost of new materials ... for house improvement.<sup>119</sup>

Community opposition to the work of the HCV increased during this period, with the Carlton Business and Property Owners' Association one of the 'best organised, vocal and effective' of the groups.<sup>120</sup> In the early 1980s, following a major reshuffle of the operation of the HCV, and in a context of gentrification of the suburb, a new approach was taken in the provision of social housing in Carlton. Within what was known as the ex-slum reclamation area in Kay Street, three architecture firms were commissioned to design small-scale housing which would fit within the Carlton streetscapes.<sup>121</sup>

Edmond & Corrigan, Greg Burgess and Peter Crone designed buildings of one and two storeys in Kay, Station and Canning streets. The HCV estates continue to be occupied by a diverse range of people, accommodating both long term residents of Carlton and new arrivals. The HCV also undertook a programme of 'rehabilitation' of houses it had acquired, bringing them up to a standard it considered appropriate. By the late twentieth century, many of the nineteenth century houses identified in the 1930s had been done up and were now sought-after properties.

*Places related to this theme*

- Nineteenth century houses, David Street and Palmerston Place (HO1)
- Infill housing, Kay and Station streets (HO1)



Figure 12 Women and eight children gathered around table at meal-time, c. 1935  
Source: F Oswald Barnett Collection, Heritage Collection, Melbourne Library Service



Figure 13 'Family in Carlton slum area', c. 1930s  
Source: F Oswald Barnett Collection, Heritage Collection, Melbourne Library Service



Figure 14 Houses in David Street, 1935. The five houses on the right are extant  
Source: F Oswald Barnett collection, H2001.291/11, State Library of Victoria



Figure 15 Residences fronting an unidentified laneway, 1934. Note access to water at right of lane and laundry drying at end of laneway  
Source: F Oswald Barnett collection, H2001.291/7, State Library of Victoria



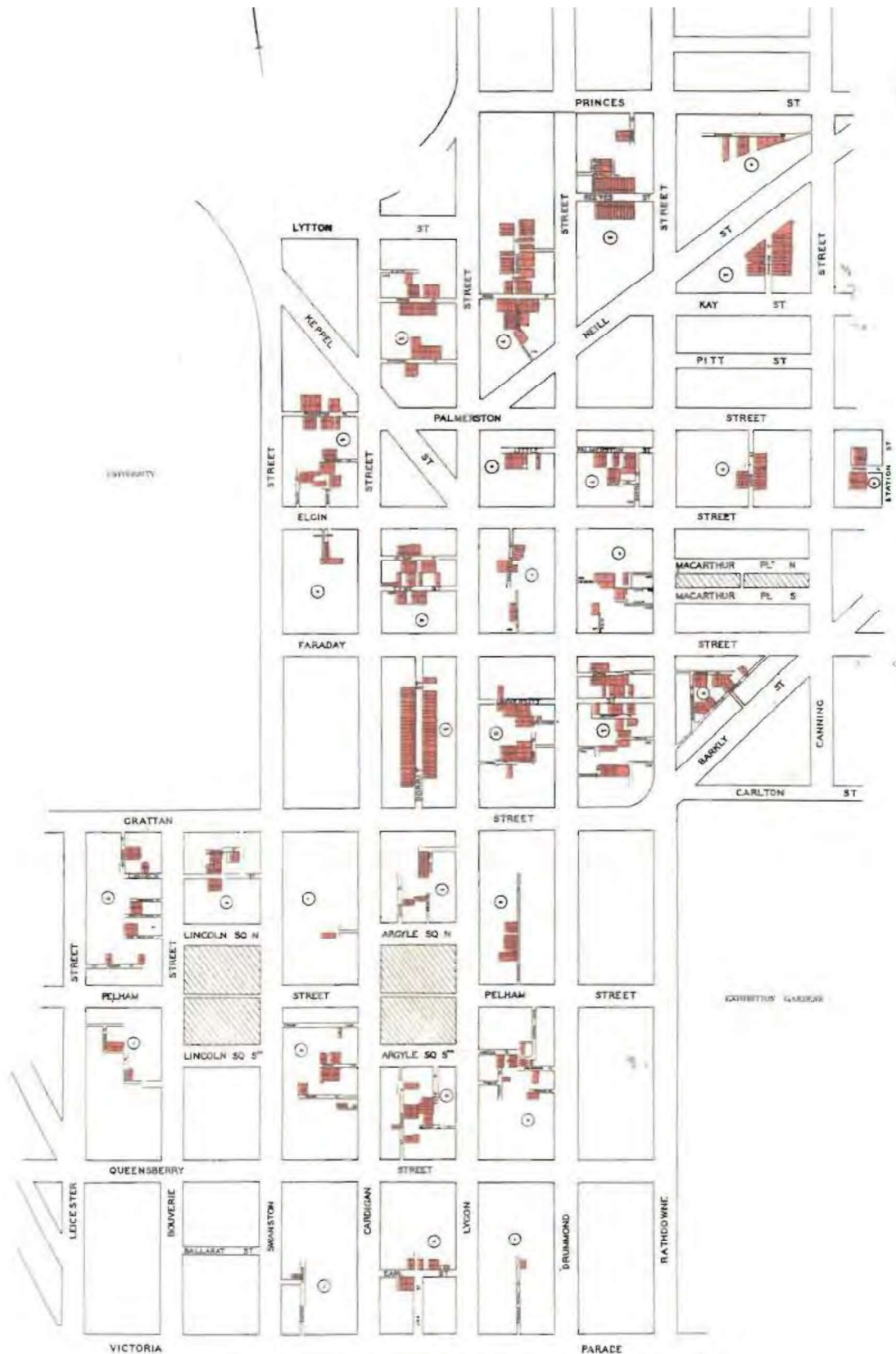


Figure 16 Detail of plan showing 'slum pockets' in red, Carlton, 1937  
Source: 'First (Progress) Report, Slum Reclamation: Housing for the Lower-Paid Worker',  
October 1937, Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board



Figure 17 Aerial photograph of the Carlton HCV estates, 1951 (left) and 1969 (right), showing earlier buildings replaced with low-rise walk up blocks and high-rise tower blocks  
Source: Land Victoria Historic Aerial Photography Collection

#### *Gentrification: students and 'trendies'*

The 1960s also signalled the beginning of Carlton's gentrification, a process that continues to this day. Instigated by students, academics and 'trendies' attracted by the suburb's 'cosmopolitan' character and seeking an antidote to the perceived mono-cultural outer and middle suburbs, the demographics of Carlton yet again underwent a transformation.

Students had long been part of the Carlton landscape, with young men and, from 1881, young women attending the University of Melbourne. Prior to the mid-twentieth century, the majority of these students came from already privileged backgrounds, being the children of 'merchants, judges, government officials, graziers, businessmen and the clergy.'<sup>122</sup> As enrolments steadily increased, so too did the provision of accommodation at colleges at the northern end of the university reserve. The university in many ways was a self-contained entity, fenced off and with often limited interaction with the broader suburb of Carlton.

The post-war increase in access to education, following the Murray Committee report of 1957 to the Australian government, saw a resultant rise in the number of students and academics living in Carlton. In the mid-1950s, there were 74 students and two professors listed on electoral rolls as living in Carlton, including on University grounds. Twenty years later, this number had increased to 1056 students and 300 academics, although now also accounted for 18-20 year olds, by then granted the right to vote.<sup>123</sup> Many of these students lived in the terrace houses (so called 'share houses') around Carlton, a shift beyond the university enclosure. The houses were 'squalid', and thus affordable for students, with Carlton a culturally diverse place in which to live.<sup>124</sup> Many young people who moved to Carlton from the outer suburbs were impressed by the cosmopolitan neighbourhood:

The intensely mixed social fabric of Carlton ... [gave] us for the first time the feel of cities where the dreamers of ideas feed their dreams.<sup>125</sup>

The 1960s and 1970s were an intensely political time, with a number of social issues becoming the focus of student activism, including women's liberation and the Vietnam War. As was the case with universities around the country, large protests were held in and around the University of Melbourne (Figure 18). The HCV's 'slum clearance' work also had an impact on political movements in Carlton, as people fought the demolition of large areas of the suburb. Many of the students remained in the suburb following the conclusion of their studies, and joined the artists, creative types, and professionals, known as 'trendies', who bucked the trend of the 'white picket fence ideal' and opted to live in Carlton.<sup>126</sup>

The arrival of the so-called 'trendies' also saw a re-evaluation and new appreciation of Carlton, turning what had previously been seen as a slum suburb into one with 'historic' neighbourhoods.<sup>127</sup> This new view of Carlton gave rise to attempts to save its streetscapes, led by 'the biggest, noisiest, most tenacious and professional of the new bands of urban activists.'<sup>128</sup> This period gave rise to active community groups in the suburb, including the Carlton Association, and later the Carlton Residents Association and the Carlton Community History Group. The community work and political activities of these groups paved the way for the retention of many of Carlton's historic streetscapes and important heritage buildings. Likewise, other Carlton buildings were re-occupied by the 'trendies' for creative endeavours, such as the La Mama and Pram Factory theatres, discussed below in Chapter 7. Historian Seamus O'Hanlon summarises the somewhat idealistic contemporary view of Carlton's 'glory days' as an alternative centre in the 1970s:

... a diverse range of individuals and groups co-existed in relative harmony: Italians, Greeks, Lebanese, and the local-born, workers and students, the old and the young, as well as the rich and poor, lived side-by-side in cramped cottages and grand terraces that had seen better days.<sup>129</sup>

However, he notes that despite the desire to compare the suburb to New York's Greenwich Village, Carlton was instead often:

an uncomfortable mix of often uncomprehending old Australia, post-war Italian immigrants, students, and what were then called 'trendies ... who were rapidly gentrifying the suburb.'<sup>130</sup>

Carlton's prominent role in alternative Melbourne was ending by the early 1980s, as further gentrification took hold and land values rose. However, Carlton continues to be occupied by a range of professionals, creatives and students.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Carlton Heritage Precinct HO1
- Intact terrace rows preserved and given statutory heritage protection as a result of community pressure



Figure 18 Protestors in Carlton during the visit of United States President Lyndon B Johnson, c. 1966, Colin Sach, photographer  
Source: 1985.0025.00072, University of Melbourne Archives



#### Chapter 4: Building Carlton's industries and workforce

- Developing a manufacturing capacity
- Marketing and retailing
- Exhibiting Victoria's innovation and products
- Entertaining and socialising
- Working

##### *Developing a manufacturing capacity*

In Carlton, larger-scale industry and manufacturing has more typically been located towards the west of the suburb, outside the study area. For example, the residential areas to the west of Barry and Berkeley streets were redeveloped in the interwar period with larger commercial and warehouse buildings.<sup>131</sup>

Within the predominantly residential sections of Carlton, however, large-scale industrial development in the nineteenth century was relatively rare. Carlton's rapid expansion as a dormitory suburb in the 1860s and 1870s, the number of reserves for public institutions and gardens, its early fine grain development and adherence to the Melbourne Building Act from the early 1870s appear to have discouraged the development of such complexes to the east of Swanston Street. In many parts of the suburb there was simply insufficient vacant land or available properties on which to establish or develop substantial industrial sites. While other inner suburbs, such as Fitzroy and Collingwood, became the location of large factory complexes which dominated certain neighbourhoods by the end of the nineteenth century, the factories in Carlton were generally much smaller, and spread more sparsely through the suburb. Where manufacturing did occur, such enterprises included (in 1880):

... three [flour] mills, one brewery, three ginger-beer manufactories, three foundries and several monumental stone masons.<sup>132</sup>

The MMBW detail plans of the mid-1890s help illustrate the types of small-scale industry in the suburb. Small workshops can be seen located to the rear of residential terrace rows, and accessed from rights of way. This was much in the way that small residences were constructed behind other residences fronting the streets; such was the density of development in Carlton that 'excess' land to the rear of houses was made available for a variety of purposes.

Cordial factories were another relatively common occurrence in Carlton by the end of the nineteenth century. With the rise in the temperance movement and aided by the warm Australian climate, cordial and 'soft' drinks became increasingly popular.<sup>133</sup>

Such manufacturers typically distributed in their local area, and as such there were numerous factories in Carlton, as shown on the MMBW plans. These include locations in Cardigan Street, opposite Argyle Square, Grattan Street on the site of the St Joseph's Receiving Home, and behind houses fronting Rathdowne Street.<sup>134</sup> Also servicing their immediate surrounds were small bakehouses, which were also dotted throughout the suburb (Figure 20). The MMBW plans additionally show a concentration of iron foundries, sawmill, timber yard and furniture factories in the block bound by Victoria, Madeline (Swanston), Cardigan and Queensberry streets.<sup>135</sup>

As noted above, the larger factory complexes tended to be located in the western parts of the suburb. One larger manufacturing site was the three-storey brick clothing factory of Banks and Co in Pelham Street, constructed in 1884 to a design by architect Charles Webb.<sup>136</sup> The site in Carlton, 'in proximity to the University gardens and other grounds' gave 'it an advantage as a workroom over factories situated in the centre of the city'.<sup>137</sup> This factory was built in accordance of the recently passed Factory Act, and it was claimed that its workers were the first to benefit from the fairer wage terms which had been the outcome of the Tailloresses' Strike of the early 1880s.<sup>138</sup>

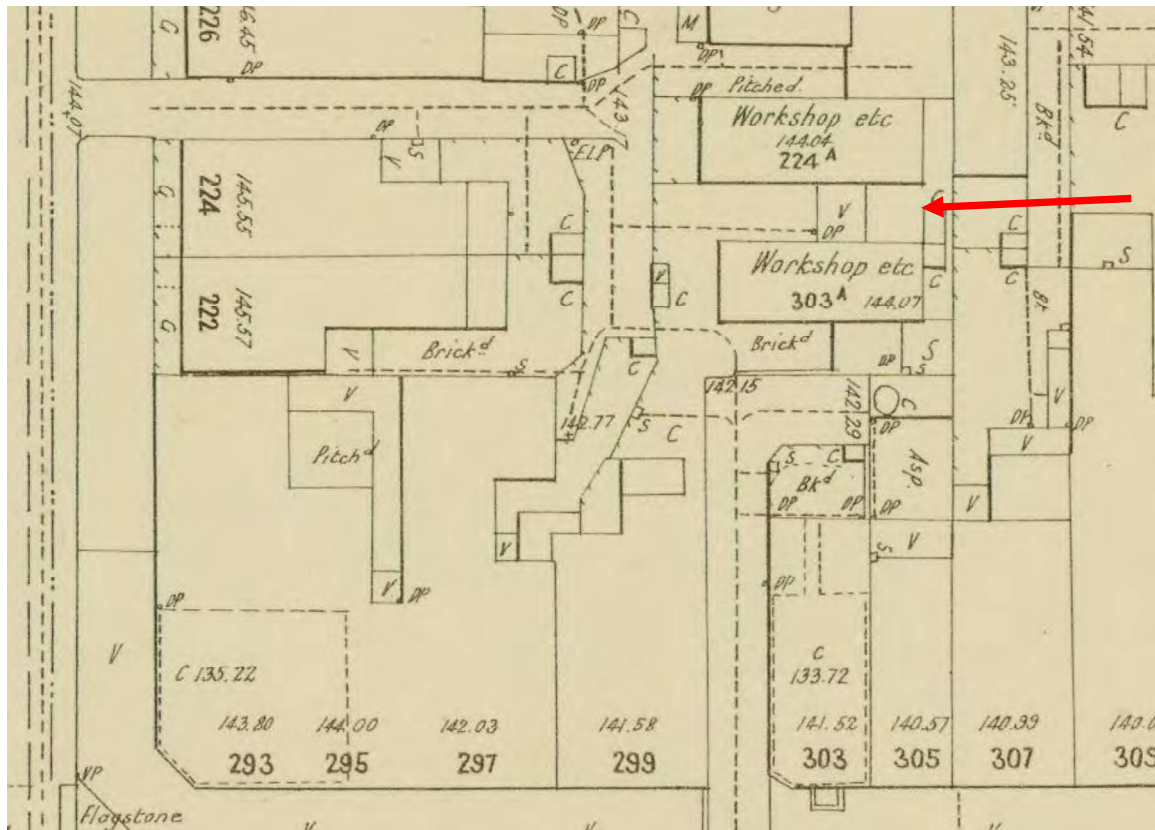


Figure 19 MMBW detail plan no. 1171, 1897, showing the intersection of Station and Elgin streets, with two workshops set back from the street (indicated)  
Source: State Library of Victoria

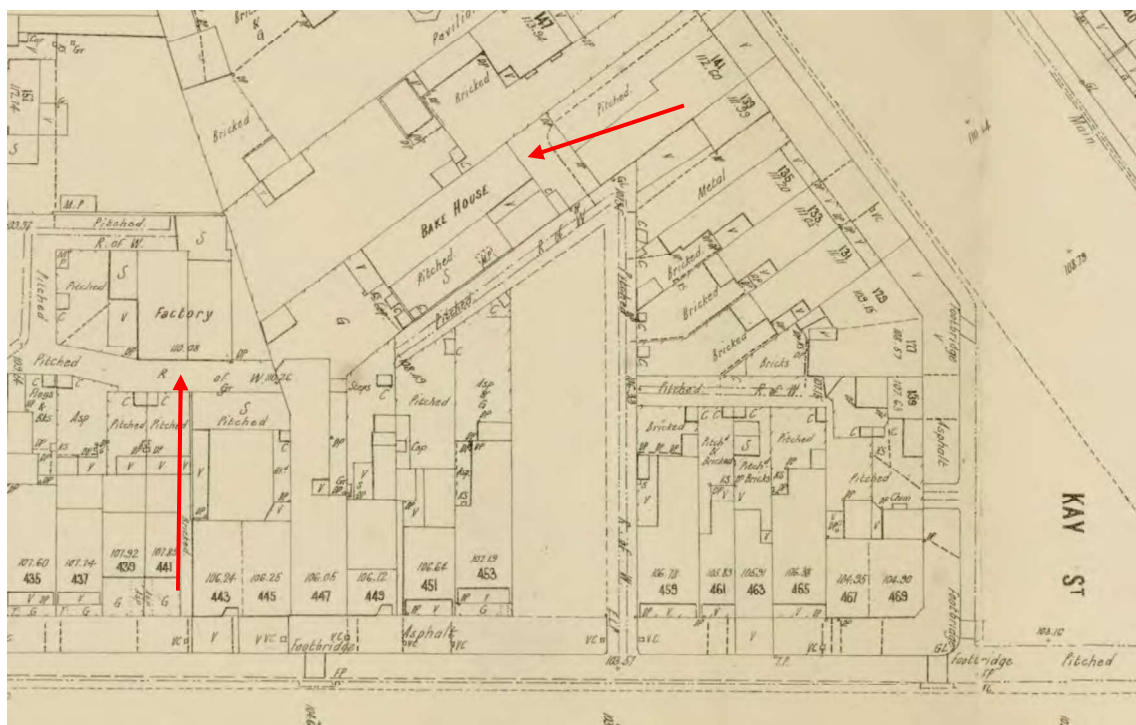


Figure 20 MMBW detail plan no. 1188, 1896, showing bake house and factory (indicated) located behind residences in Kay and Rathdowne streets  
Source: State Library of Victoria

The scale of the large Carlton Brewery complex (Figure 21), in the block bound by Swanston, Victoria, Bouverie and Queensberry streets, is unusual in the context of the suburb. The site was used as a brewery as early as 1858 when Rosenberg and Co. established the North Melbourne Brewery on the site. This brewery closed within a year but reopened in 1864 with a new owner, John Bellman, who used Rosenberg's buildings and plant, but renamed the operation the Carlton Brewery. Bellman also expanded the complex, but his company failed, and the brewery was sold in 1865.<sup>139</sup> New owners Edward Latham and G M Milne had more success with the business, and over the next twenty years both plant and buildings on the site were expanded as the company's output increased.<sup>140</sup> The complex of bluestone buildings, which comprised stables, cellaring and warehousing, with a prominent brick brew tower, became a landmark at the south-west of Carlton. The brewery ceased operation at the Carlton site in the 1980s, and the site has since been redeveloped for a range of educational, residential and commercial uses.

In the twentieth century, there were some instances of larger complexes in the southern part of the suburb, including the development by textile manufacturers Davies Coop between Cardigan and Lygon streets at the southern end of the suburb (Figure 22). Wholesale tailors and woollen merchants Davies Doery also established a Carlton factory in the 1930s, having purchased a site at 538-544 Swanston Street in 1935.<sup>141</sup> The *Sands & McDougall directory* of 1940 notes a number of motor body and motor parts/accessories manufacturers in Cardigan Street.<sup>142</sup> Other larger manufacturing sites included the Paramount Baby Carrier Factory in Drummond Street and the Ball & Welch site near the corner of Drummond and Faraday streets.

Aboriginal people were also employed in Carlton manufacturing industry. Nora Murray recalled that during the Second World War, when she was about 13:

I was working afternoon shift at Australian Cans in Nicholson Street, Carlton. We made the cans for the food that was provided to army personnel. I worked night shift.<sup>143</sup>

Demonstrative of a late twentieth century shift of industry away from the inner suburbs, and the increasing occupation of Carlton by educational institutions, the Davies Coop complex was substantially redeveloped by RMIT as part of its expansion north of its city campus. Likewise, the Paramount factory became the well-known Pram Factory theatre in the 1970s.

However, although the western part of Carlton developed a more industrial character in the interwar period, and other pockets of the suburb also underwent similar development, the majority of Carlton remained residential.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Former Carlton and United Brewery (VHR H0024)
- Former Banks and Co. factory, 96 Pelham Street (H082)
- Former Davies and Coop building (now RMIT building), 42 Cardigan Street



Figure 21 Oblique aerial view of the Carlton Brewery site, looking from Queensberry Street towards the Melbourne City Baths (centre top of image), 1938  
Source: Airspy collection, H91.160/513, State Library of Victoria



Figure 22 View north across Carlton Brewery complex with twentieth century manufacturing buildings of Davies Coop in the background, c. 1921-30  
Source: Walter Vears collection, H99.149/60, State Library of Victoria

### *Marketing and retailing*

While retailing in Carlton is now concentrated around the high street shopping centre of Lygon Street and its cross roads, including Elgin Street, in the nineteenth century, a number of small retail centres developed around the suburb. This was typical of nineteenth century suburban development, with small collections of shops and local businesses servicing the immediate surrounding area.

The *Sands & McDougall* directories show several groupings of service retailers had been established across the suburb by the early 1860s. The commercial thoroughfares appear to be well established along the north-south and east-west streets by this time, with Cardigan, Madeline (Swanston) and Leicester streets populated by numerous shops. This is possibly due to these streets' proximity to the markets and Elizabeth Street, which was the start of main route north from Melbourne and an established commercial street. Cardigan Street had a mixture of businesses including at least seven grocers, hairdressers, watchmaker, chemist, butcher, tailor and a hay and corn dealer. Many of these retailers lived on the premises in attached residences. As a main east-west thoroughfare, Queensberry Street likewise had a diverse range of small retailers, including chemist, green grocers, photographer, butcher, baker and bootmaker.<sup>144</sup> The shorter or secondary streets more typically had food related shops, catering to the surrounding residences. Grocers proliferated, and are listed on both the main thoroughfares and on smaller streets. By the 1870s, Barkly Street was established as a small service centre, with a number of timber shops housing grocers and butchers; while the more extensive Lygon Street retail centre was increasingly diverse, accommodating hairdressers, tailors and stationers.<sup>145</sup> The rare surviving two-storey timber shop at 68 Barkly Street, first listed in 1863 as premises of a paperhanger and painter, housed varied businesses over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>146</sup>

Carlton's proximity to the markets, particularly the Queen Victoria Market, also enabled more *ad hoc* trade to take place on the suburb's streets, particularly late at night. Oyster hawkers, fish hawkers and fruit hawkers would have likely purchased their goods at the markets, before taking them into Carlton to sell in the suburban streets.<sup>147</sup>

Commercial precincts developed in Barkly and Lygon streets. By the end of the nineteenth century, the three-way intersection of Barkly, Canning and Faraday streets had a number of businesses servicing residents in the immediate locality, including hotels. A run of grocers, baker and butcher at 62-76 Barkly Street provided locals with the basic supplies. Lygon Street, meanwhile, was the established retail centre, differing from the small groupings such as the Barkly/Faraday street intersection by providing a broader range of shops, and catering for the whole of the suburb. More specialised businesses in the 1890s included fancy repositories, dentists and hairdressers. Businesses showing the emergence of Lygon Street's hospitality character - cafes, wine shops and oyster saloon - were also listed in the *Sands & McDougall* directory in the late nineteenth century.<sup>148</sup> Retailing was also commonly a place of employment for women, with directories listing women as proprietors of businesses including dressmakers and tailoring, grocery stores, confectionaries, and other outfitting businesses.<sup>149</sup>

A promotion of businesses in the 'flourishing suburb' formed a special supplement to the 29 August 1896 edition of the *Weekly Times* (Figure 24). The edition profiled a number of Carlton's well-known retailers including Ball & Welch, King & Godfree, and the Carlton Bakery, along with bicycle manufacturers Hourigan and Barrett and the Paradise Trading Company.<sup>150</sup> Caitlin Mahar suggests that the 'drapery mart' of Ball & Welch may have been the best illustration of Carlton's brush with major retailing at the end of the nineteenth century. This store was very different to the smaller and more intimate shops to which Carlton residents had previously been accustomed. Through the nineteenth century, Melbourne draperies developed from small businesses to larger dealers, and, for some, into department stores. The largest of these was the Ball & Welch complex, on an L-shaped site near the corner of Drummond and Faraday streets, and by the 1890s some 320 hands in twenty-five departments were employed at the site. The company expanded, and in 1899, opened the large department store in centrally located Flinders Street, taking advantage of its proximity to the city's busiest railway station.<sup>151</sup> Otherwise, the suburb's proximity to the shopping centres of the city appears to have curtailed any



efforts for Lygon Street to develop into a 'great shopping street' such as those found in other suburbs including Prahran, Footscray, Richmond and Collingwood.<sup>152</sup>



Figure 23 Looking east along Faraday Street, c. 1870s, with Lygon Street crossing in the foreground. King & Godfree's premises is at left, then a tea merchants' shop  
Source: American & Australasian Photographic Company, FL1250690, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

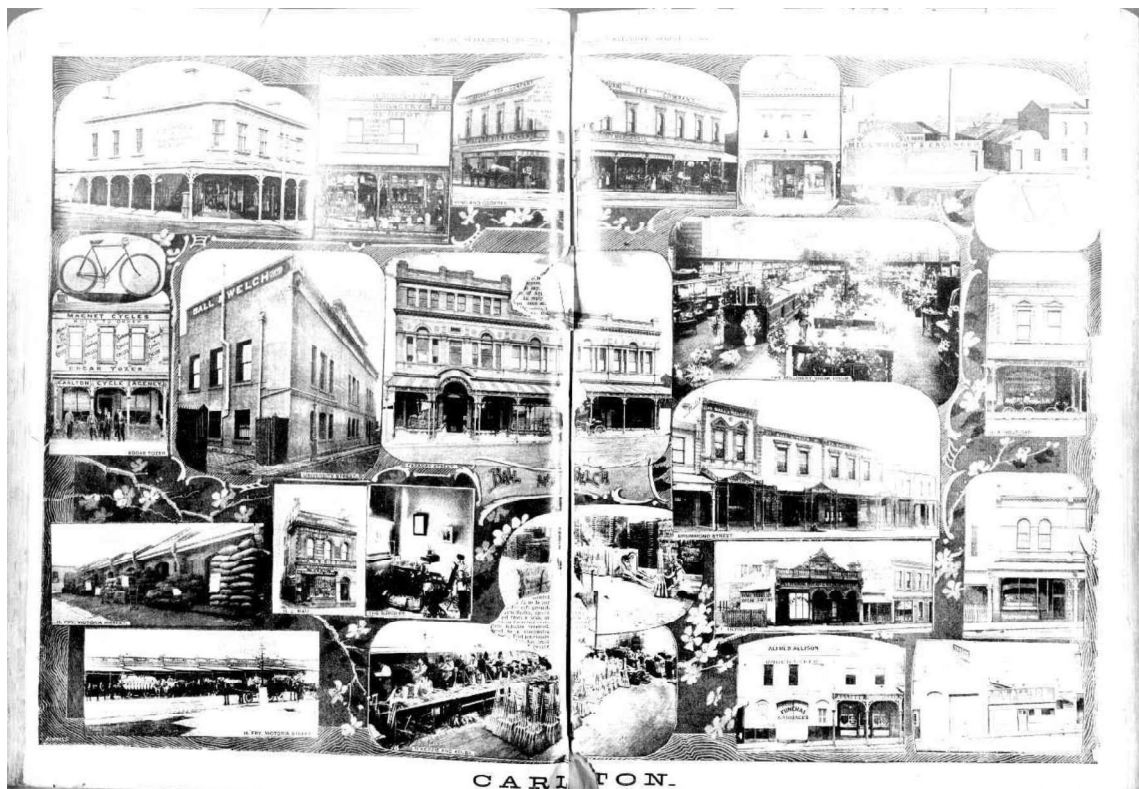


Figure 24 City of Carlton, Special Supplement to the Weekly Times, 29 August 1896, pg. 12  
Source: National Library of Australia, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page23407498>



Figure 25 Batagol Bros Butcher, Lygon Street, 1940 (left) and Markov's Chemist (right)  
 Source: (left) Lyle Fowler, photographer, Harold Paynting Collection, H92.20/1045, State Library of Victoria; (right) Jewish Museum of Australia, reproduced in Yule (ed), *Carlton: A History*, p. 60.

The arrival of migrants through the twentieth century affected retailing in Carlton, particularly the establishment of Jewish and Italian focused businesses. These shops became important in maintaining a connection to culture and community, as well as providing supplies which adhered to religious and cultural requirements. The most visible of this shift was the arrival of kosher butcheries in Carlton. In 1904, the *Jewish Herald* in reporting on J Ogden's new kosher establishment at the corner of Canning and Palmerston streets, noted that 'for years and years the Kosher meat supply has been a vexed question'.<sup>153</sup> Brothers Norman, Moses and Abram Smorgon, newly arrived after escaping the Russian Civil War, established a kosher butcher's shop in Carlton in 1927, which successfully expanded into wholesaling and exporting, with the Smorgons rising to become one of Melbourne's noted entrepreneurial families.<sup>154</sup> The Batagol Bros Butcher (Figure 25) operated in Lygon Street from c. 1937 until the early 1950s.<sup>155</sup> Not all Jewish businesses were so specifically culturally aligned, and numerous other businesses, including grocers and bakeries, were established by members of Carlton's growing Jewish community. Markov's Chemist, operated by Zal Markov, is remembered in the naming of the laneway (Markov Place) adjacent to the building from which the pharmacy operated at 169 Elgin Street. The number of Jewish-owned and operated businesses in the interwar period and through the mid-twentieth century is reflective of the character of Carlton in this period.

Likewise, the arrival of post-war Italian migrants affected the types and ownership of businesses in Carlton through the second half of the twentieth century. As noted by demographer F Lancaster Jones in the mid-1960s:

In 1945 only 14 shops in Lygon Street between Queensberry and Elgin Streets had Italian proprietors, and most of these were the traditional Italian shopkeepers, the Italian fruiterer, the Italian grocer, the Italian tailor, and the Italian cobbler. The 1960 Melbourne directory lists 47 Italian shops in the same area, including nine espresso bars, three hairdressers, three butchers, two electrical goods retailers, two photographers, two estate agents, a chemist, a florist, a motor mechanic, a large emporium, and even an Italian hotel proprietor.<sup>156</sup>

Perhaps the most fundamental shift in Lygon Street was the increase in businesses geared towards socialising and gathering, be they clubs, cafes, wine bars or restaurants. Of particular note were the coffee houses, which in 1965 included the All Europa Café, Quo Vadis Café, University Café, Defino's Coffee Lounge and the Grindos Coffee House.<sup>157</sup> As Celestina Sagazio notes:

For the large number of single Italian men espresso bars were important meeting places ... In the 1950s and 1960s, the café was the meeting place of many Italian migrants and was the centre for sportsmen ...<sup>158</sup>

Pizzerias, Italian cake shops and gelati stores also grew in popularity. The impact of these new Italian business by the mid-1950s was such that:

[The] advent of the migrant into these suburbs had its effect on the shopping streets. Lygon St, south of Elgin St., Carlton ... has taken a new lease of life.<sup>159</sup>

By the latter part of the twentieth century, Lygon Street was well established with Italian restaurants, again signalling the change from a street that serviced the local residents, to one that drew patronage from a broader area. While most inner suburban high streets had one eating establishment for every ten businesses, Lygon Street had one for every four.<sup>160</sup> The preparation of the Lygon Street Action Plan of 1983 was requested by the Minister for Planning to reconcile the 'interests of residents, traders, property owners, visitors and tourists', indicating the diversity of people who had a stake in the retail strip, and the complexities of catering for all.<sup>161</sup> As the final report noted, Lygon Street had become 'one of the best known eating areas in Melbourne', and the dominance of restaurants had diminished 'the ability of local residents to meet their daily and weekly needs'.<sup>162</sup> The report recommended placing stricter controls on the establishment of new restaurants, and to protect the surrounding residential areas.<sup>163</sup>

More recently, there has been media attention focussed on the 'death of Lygon Street', with changes to trading and closure of long-term retailers apparently spelling the 'end' for the once iconic street. As an indication how some in Lygon Street and Carlton had come to value its late-twentieth century dominance in Melbourne's restaurant scene, one long-term trader, Marco Donnini, noted that:

Lygon Street used to have this fantastic reputation of being a place where people could just fall into a restaurant and get a traditional Italian cuisine, but those times have changed ... The dynamics of Lygon Street have changed quite a lot over the last decade and it's no longer a true destination place. The advent of so many other quality places, specifically in the CBD, has caused the street to suffer a bit as a result.<sup>164</sup>

However, others believe that 'Lygon Street still has the buzz ... it's not dying'.<sup>165</sup> Businesses including Brunetti's and King and Godfree, both stalwarts of Lygon Street, have undergone substantial expansions of their premises. Lygon Street of today remains a mix of long-established traders, including Tiamo, Jimmy Watson's, Brunetti's and Readings bookstore, a concentration of Italian restaurants, and more recent arrivals of bars and restaurants.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- 1860s shops (former), 68 Barkly Street and 227 Nicholson Street (HO1)
- Lygon Street, between Queensberry and Elgin streets
- King and Godfree, 291 Lygon Street (HO1)

#### *Hotels and bars*

As Carlton developed during the 1860s and 1870s, the suburb's hotels increasingly became important gathering places. Many houses in Carlton, particularly in the north of the suburb, were small two or three room cottages, which often did not offer spaces such as parlours or other areas for family members to gather and relax. The local hotel, or pub, often provided such a space, whereby men



especially could socialise away from the home. Many of these hotels were not aiming to draw patrons from any distance; rather their clientele was generally the residents of the streets immediately adjacent to the hotel. Small hotels proliferated in the suburb, often constructed on corners with two street frontages and a chamfered entrance. These hotels, like the residences surrounding them, were small, often comprising as few as six rooms with bar and cellar, possibly a parlour, all of which included accommodation for the proprietor. The larger hotels, generally in the south of the suburb or on main thoroughfares, also provided accommodation. By 1880, there were at least 85 hotels in the suburb, with names including the Manners, Globe, Clare Castle, Victoria, Family, Bay View and Lemon Tree.<sup>166</sup>

While many surviving hotels and former hotels in the suburb are constructed of brick, some early hotels were built of timber, including the Palmerston Hotel in Palmerston Street (now demolished). The 1880 municipal rate books described this building as a wood hotel of eight rooms with cellar and sheds. The nearby Sir John Young Hotel was of brick and eight rooms but occupied a much smaller site.<sup>167</sup> The proximity of hotels to one another can be seen in an MMBW detail plan of 1897, with four hotels – the Belle Vue, Rose of Carlton, Palmerston and Meteor – within a block of less than 130 metres (Figure 26). Aside from being places to eat, drink and socialise, given the space they afforded, numerous clubs and societies held meetings in the suburb's hotels. During the 1870s, such gathering included the Carlton Cricket Club annual general meeting at the Clyde Hotel, a meeting of residents to discuss the proposed relocation of the police station, and the North Melbourne Protection League at the Carlton United Club Hotel.<sup>168</sup> The hotels in Carlton served an important function, enabling socialising and the forming of community groups in an area that had a high concentration of small dwellings. This was particularly evident for the local Aboriginal community, for whom hotels represented important places for meeting and entertainment. One Bunurong Elder recalled Uncle Clive Beeton, who sang in pubs in the Carlton area. Beeton appears to have had a long musical career through the twentieth century. During such performances 'chairs were bolted to the floor' and 'the place was full of blackfellers'.<sup>169</sup> John Curtin Hotel was also associated with performances of the 'Stray Blacks', a band comprising Aboriginal members who were otherwise barred from playing in a number of other hotels. They have been described as 'an institution' at Aboriginal cabarets and at the John Curtin Hotel.<sup>170</sup>

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 closures in Carlton were in areas with the highest concentration of hotels, namely the south-west and the north-east of the suburb. In July 1908, the Board closed 12 Carlton hotels, and by 1915 a total of 31 had been closed, leaving 27 licenced houses for the suburb. This number was still considered too high, and the chairman of the Board noted that 'the [Carlton] district ... was, for its size, the most heavily overstocked in the city area [with hotels]'.<sup>171</sup>

Changes in the demographics and drinking habits of the residents of Carlton have also changed the nature of hotels. Through the twentieth century, licensed cafes and wine bars, also known as wine saloons, became more prevalent, particularly in the vicinity of Lygon Street and Elgin Street, the suburb's heart of eating and drinking. These included the eponymous Jimmy Watson's, established in 1935 in an existing wine bar at 331-335 Lygon Street. By the 1950s, Watson himself was described as 'Carlton's high priest of Bacchus', the Greek god of wine and wine making:

Jim is landlord of Melbourne's most unique wine house ... His café is visited by diplomats, Mayors, scientists, service chiefs, executives, and a small circle of pals of graceful drinking.<sup>172</sup>

In 1960, Watson engaged architect Robin Boyd to redesign the wine bar, to 'better incorporate the three shops' which comprised the site.<sup>173</sup> The external and internal redesign received much praise, both from the architectural community and from patrons, with the venue becoming 'all the rage' (Figure 27).<sup>174</sup> Jimmy Watson's became a symbol of the progressive, cosmopolitan nature of Carlton of the latter post-war period, and 'emblematic of the student experience' of the suburb.<sup>175</sup>

*Places related to this theme*

- Former Sir John Young Hotel, 22-24 Palmerston Street (HO71)
- Hotel Lincoln, 130 Queensberry Street (HO97)
- Jimmy Watson's, 331-335 Lygon Street (HO1)

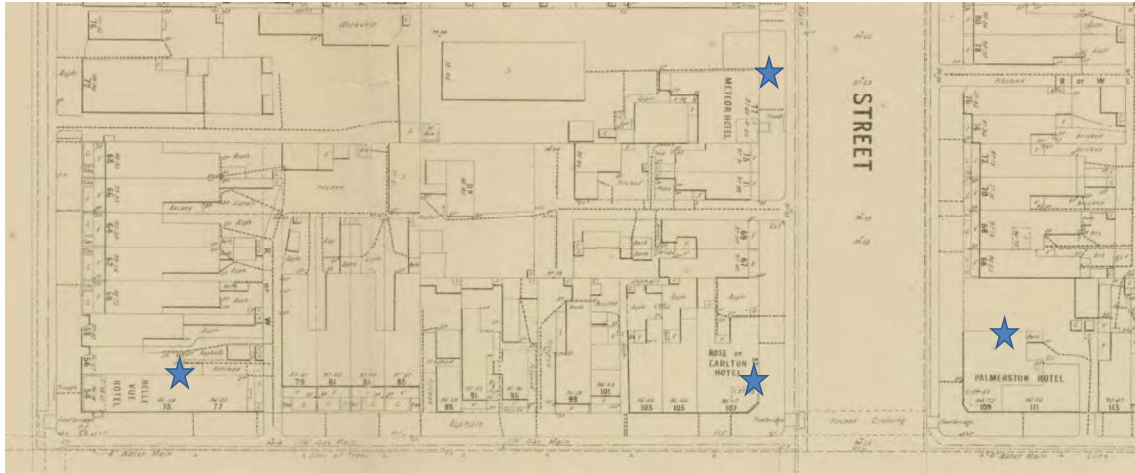


Figure 26 MMBW detail plan no. 1189, 1897 showing block between Elgin Street (left), Canning Street (bottom of image) and Palmerston Street (centre right), with four hotels identified  
Source: State Library of Victoria



Figure 27 The redesigned interior of Jimmy Watson's, 1960  
Source: Mark Strizic, photographer, H2011.55/1927, State Library of Victoria

### *Halls and cinemas*

While hotels served as proxy community centres in the early decades of Carlton's development, as the population consolidated, more substantial buildings were constructed to cater for more elaborate functions and events.

The hall located at the north-west corner of Kay and Canning streets was one such place that was a focus for socialising for a number of different community groups following its construction in 1885-86. The hall's owner, John Curtis, established dance classes as well as dance nights every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.<sup>176</sup> A description of a ball held in 1886 revealed the popularity of the events: dancing continued into the following morning, with the band playing the last dance just after 4.30 in the morning.<sup>177</sup>

In early 1926, the hall was purchased on behalf of the Judean League, which took over its occupation. Groups associated with the Jewish community regularly met or held events at Monash House, including the Carlton Hebrew Ladies' Guild, the Victorian Zionist Organisation, and the Judaeon Boys and Girls gymnastics clubs.<sup>178</sup> Reflecting Carlton's post-war demographics, the hall was sold in 1957 and reopened as the Italian social club, La Cumparsita Hall in 1958. The Mokambo Orchestra, formed by Italian-born Carlton residents, performed so regularly at the La Cumparsita Hall that it was sometimes known as the Mokambo Hall.<sup>179</sup>



Figure 28 Mokambo Orchestra at La Cumparsita Hall, c. 1965  
Source: Reproduced with permission of Co.As.It – Italian Historical Society

From the second decade of the twentieth century, cinema became another popular form of entertainment in Carlton. While the silent picture theatre, the Jubilee (later the Adelphi), had operated in Nicholson Street, North Carlton from 1912, the first cinema south of Princess Street was the Carlton Theatre, which opened in Faraday Street in 1924. Originally built as the Carlton Trades Club in 1908,<sup>180</sup> the theatre comprised seating for 472 in the stalls, and 182 in the dress circle. William McClelland operated the theatre for a number of years, and the cinema became affectionately known as 'Mac's Theatre'. McClelland became known for his handling of local 'larrikin' gangs or 'pushes' which targeted

the venue.<sup>181</sup> The cinema also earned a less positive nickname in the 'Bughouse', a reference to an infestation of fleas. McClelland's son Gordon continued the family's operation of the cinema, and in the 1950s, began to screen films that appealed the suburb's post-war migrants, with a 'Continental week' held in mid-1955.<sup>182</sup> As noted by Naomi Simon in 2004:

For those who found it difficult to speak English, Italian and Greek film seasons provided an escape from the harsh reality of migrant life.<sup>183</sup>

Once again reflecting the changing demographics of the suburb, from the 1960s and 1970s, arthouse films were shown at the cinema to appeal to students and academics. The theatre became the Carlton Moviehouse from 1979, but its lower standard of amenity compared with the newer Nova Cinema (opened 1992) saw attendances drop and it closed in 1999.<sup>184</sup>

#### *Places related to this theme*

- San Marco in Lamis Social club (former Fernshawe House and Monash House), 149-151 Canning Street (HO1)
- Former Carlton Theatre, 237 Faraday Street (HO1)

#### *Carlton's workers and the trade unions*

While parts of Carlton were occupied by professionals and the independently wealthy, much of Carlton's population earned their living through skilled and unskilled trades. Nineteenth century Carlton has been described as being populated by 'artisans and clerks.'<sup>185</sup> As noted by historian Katie Holmes:

[B]uilding was the most important single industry in Carlton in the nineteenth century. It comprised many different artisanal skills: masonry, carpentry, builders, bricklayers ... and was closely associated with other areas of employment such as contractors, engineers and founders.<sup>186</sup>

Although the statistics fluctuated across the nineteenth century, the percentage of Carlton residents in the building industry reached a peak in 1875 at 67%.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, Carlton has had a long association with trade unionism, related both to the many skilled tradespeople and workers residing in the suburb, and the establishment of Trades Hall at the corner of Lygon and Victoria streets (see below). This increasingly substantial building was located on a prominent corner, and its importance to the union movement is further emphasised in the number of other union and trade related places which developed nearby.

A significant early protest also took place in Carlton, with 700 workers downing tools in response to contractors refusing to accept the newly won eight-hour working day.<sup>188</sup> An economic depression in the early 1890s followed the building boom of the 1880s, effecting many of Carlton's residents who were part of Melbourne's building workforce. The impact of the lack of work in the city was such that the male population of Carlton dropped as men departed to find work elsewhere.<sup>189</sup> The later economic depression of the 1930s likewise impacted the residents of Carlton, many of whom struggled to find work, and turned to labouring on sustenance projects.

Aside from building, Carlton residents were engaged in numerous other trades and professions. Artisans were also a major presence, such as tailors and stonemasons, as well as bootmakers who numbered 217 in the suburb in 1885.<sup>190</sup> The concentration of monumental masons and grave decorators in Lytton Street and the northern end of Madeline (Swanston) Street by the end of the nineteenth century clearly reflects the suburb's connection with the nearby Melbourne General Cemetery.<sup>191</sup> Factory work was another major employer, although not all of it within the suburb. As noted by the Carlton Forest Group:

Unlike Fitzroy and Collingwood, work in Carlton during the nineteenth century was not concentrated in large manufacturing industries but in small scale workshops.<sup>192</sup>

Regardless of the location, much of the work undertaken by Carlton's residents in the nineteenth century was characterised by long hours and tough conditions. The most important institution relating to workers' rights in Victoria is Trades Hall, which had its origins in the eight-hour movement of the 1850s, when labour shortages and the prosperity of the gold rush gave workers the opportunity to agitate for better conditions and shorter working hours. Victorian unionists recognised the value of a centralised space for the labour movement. The Trades Hall and Literary Institute was subsequently formed, and a site secured on Lygon Street in April 1858.<sup>193</sup> The first, temporary, Trades Hall opened in 1859. With the growth of the union movement, and fundraising efforts of the eight-hour movement, the first stage of the permanent Trades Hall was constructed in 1874, designed by noted architects Joseph Reed and Frederick Barnes (Reed and Barnes). Further stages were constructed in 1882 and 1888, establishing the imposing Classical style facade to Lygon Street, and council chambers added in 1890, with the additions reflecting the need for increased office and meeting facilities. Use of the hall was also high, with 59 societies renting rooms in Trades Hall by December 1885, giving revenue of £519.<sup>194</sup>

By the 1890s, the Trades Hall library was one of the most heavily patronised in the city.<sup>195</sup> The building's location placed it in the centre of the working-class suburbs of Melbourne, with Carlton neighboured by Fitzroy and North Melbourne, with West Melbourne, Collingwood and Richmond nearby. It also directly addressed the northern edge of the city, and a number of institutional buildings were developed in this part of Melbourne.<sup>196</sup> Trades Hall was the starting point for the annual Eight Hour Day anniversary processions, and the site of meetings for political campaigns relating to anti-conscription, factory reform, and equal pay for women, amongst others. The co-location of numerous small and large unions within the building encouraged the development of a strong working class and political culture. Changes in the demographics of Carlton, and more broadly in Melbourne, also saw new workers groups formed out of Trades Hall, and the monthly newspaper, *Il Progresso Italo-Australiano*, was published out of Trades Hall.<sup>197</sup>

The site also has strong connections with female workers. In the early 1880s, the conditions of female textile workers and factory reform became the focus of the political agitation of the predominately male Trades Hall members.<sup>198</sup> In February 1883, the Trades Hall committee became involved with the wide-scale Tailoresses' Strike. This strike by female workers was considered 'extraordinary'; as reported by the *Argus*, it was 'not often we hear of women and girls turning out on strike.'<sup>199</sup> In April 1883, it was proposed to construct a meeting room for the female operatives on the north-east portion of the Trades Hall site.<sup>200</sup> In April 1887, the Female Operatives Hall was opened, a 'neat little edifice' which was 'commodious and quite sufficient for the purposes for which it is intended.'<sup>201</sup> The domestic scaled, Gothic style building (Figure 29) remained on the site until it was demolished in the 1960s.

Through the twentieth century, unions and other political groups began to move from Trades Hall into the broader suburb. The Political Labor Council Hall was constructed at 119-121 Palmerston Street in 1915, providing library, billiard room, club and meeting rooms. The hall was taken over by Italian anti-fascists in 1935, and after the group had been 'supplanted' by communists, the hall as a political venue was closed by authorities.<sup>202</sup>

From the mid-twentieth century, a number of new buildings were constructed for unions that had outgrown their accommodation at Trades Hall. While the unions moved out of their original 'home', they did not stray far, constructing new premises in close proximity to Trades Hall. A new office building for the Australian Council of Trade Union (ACTU) was constructed at 17-25 Lygon Street in 1953, to a design by architects Leslie M Perrott and partners and built by E A Watts. The ACTU had previously occupied 'three small rooms' in Trades Hall, and aimed to establish an independent research bureau.<sup>203</sup> At its opening, ACTU president, Percy Clarey, noted that the building was 'a symbol of an ideal', with internal timber panelling donated by all the state trades and Labor councils.<sup>204</sup> In 1958, the Australian Builders Laborers' Federation (BLF) also constructed offices directly opposite Trades Hall, at 11 Lygon Street.<sup>205</sup> The BLF played a role in the campaign to curb the redevelopment of Carlton in the 1960s, and to stop the wholesale demolitions; BLF House was also the focus of efforts to deregister the union in the

1980s.<sup>206</sup> The Plumbers and Gasfitters Union likewise outgrew Trades Hall in this period, with the noted brutalist building designed by architect Graeme Gunn and constructed in 1969-1971 adjacent to the institution on Victoria Street.<sup>207</sup>

Consultation with the Bunurong Elders also suggests that Trades Hall has been referred to as the site of some of the pivotal early meetings which led to the establishment of pioneering Aboriginal welfare organisations dealing in health, education and legal services between 1973 and 1976. This might be linked to the emergence of an Aboriginal rights framework in the wake of the Wave Hill Walkoff in 1966 and 1967 referendum, and evident in the gains made by the land rights movement with the passing of the first piece of Aboriginal land rights legislation, the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.<sup>208</sup>

*Places related to this theme*

- Trades Hall, 2-40 Lygon Street (VHR H0663)
- John Curtin Hotel, 27 Lygon Street (HO64)
- Political Labor Council Hall, 119-121 Palmerston Street (HO1)



Figure 29 Female Operatives Hall at Trades Hall site, photographed in 1889, since demolished  
Source: In 'Presentation folder to Lord and Lady Loch from the Trades Hall Council, Melbourne', H40677/D, State Library of Victoria



## Chapter 5: Governing Carlton

- Struggling for political rights
- Maintaining law and order
- Defence in Carlton
- Protecting Carlton's heritage

### *Crime in Carlton*

From the 1870s, and into the mid-twentieth century, numerous reports in newspapers were made on the public disturbances, petty crime, and sometimes incredibly violent actions of groups of young men in Carlton. These youths were known as 'larrikins', the term then having none of the affectionate sense of mischief it does today. Larrikins were understood as 'riotous boys' and 'young men who drink too much' who offended 'the public sense of decency'.<sup>209</sup> Some larrikins gathered in large groups, which became known as 'pushes'. While youth crime was not solely the concern of Carlton, shifts in demographics from the 1870s, saw the suburb gaining a reputation for its 'rowdy youths'.<sup>210</sup> A report in the *Herald* in November 1879 noted:

The conduct of the Carlton larrikins has been very offensive for some time past, and they have especially made themselves objectionable by assembling at the corner of Macarthur Place and Canning street. Their proceedings in that locality have become such a nuisance ... that complaints have been made.<sup>211</sup>

Although the complaints of the above article related to uncouth behaviour, by the late nineteenth century Carlton had 'one of the highest crime rates in Melbourne':

It reached a high point in 1890-92 when there was an average one arrest for every 5.6 residents<sup>212</sup>

This statistic dates from the beginning of the economic depression which hit Melbourne following the 1880s. Aside from petty crimes against property or drunken misdemeanours, reports of more violent incidents, including mob attacks on policemen and assaults of residents were not uncommon. The larrikin pushes were localised, with one report in 1895 describing an organised fight of 600 larrikins between the Fitzroy push and the Freeman Street push, occurring at apparently neutral ground in Station Street, Carlton.<sup>213</sup> Such was the reputation of the inner-city pushes, that a lecture was given in genteel Mentone on the subject, presumably aiming to shock its audience. The lecturer described the various gangs of Carlton, the apparent 'centre of rowdyism':

The 'Bouveroos' ... are comprised principally of criminals ... The 'Pitt Street Push' is noted for the number of assaults made on women. The 'Nicholson Street Push' have no thieves among them, but they delight in punishing 'obnoxious policemen'.<sup>214</sup>

Such crime continued into the twentieth century, with sticks, broken palings and stones making way for guns. The most notorious criminal operating in Carlton in the early twentieth century was Joseph Leslie Taylor, more commonly known as Squizzy Taylor. Taylor was a 'key figure' in organised crime in Melbourne, and was linked with violent crimes, including a number of murders. The murder of Constable David McGrath during a robbery at Trades Hall is one notorious crime with which Taylor is associated, although he was not present at the event. He died in 1927, when he was shot during an attack on Snowy Cutmore, at his mother's boarding house in Barkly Street.<sup>215</sup>

Concerns continued about attacks on property through the twentieth century, with a discussion in the *Herald* in 1939 reflecting global concerns:

Although Jewish people have been insulted and attacked and Jewish property damaged, few Carlton residents believe that the increased hooliganism of recent weeks is due to organised anti-semitism or fascist movements.<sup>216</sup>

Opinion within Carlton's Jewish community, however, was divided on this matter, according to the report.

In some instances, Aboriginal people were treated harshly by the police and courts in Carlton, with evidence of disproportionate sentences for minor infringements. For example, in 1902 an Aboriginal man was arrested for public intoxication on Madeline (now Swanston) Street and sent directly to Coranderrk mission.<sup>217</sup> In 1950 an elderly Aboriginal man was sentenced at the Carlton Court House to three months in jail for busking with a gum leaf.<sup>218</sup> Traditional Owners reflected on instances of police brutality, sometimes breaking up meetings in parks and pubs. A Bunurong Elder revealed how some hoteliers provided support and protection to their Aboriginal patrons.<sup>219</sup>

More recently, changes in demographics and improvements in the economic, education and employment prospects of Carlton residents have seen crime rates become less of a concern to many in the suburb.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Carlton Court House, 345-349 Drummond Street (VHR H1467)

#### *Government and civil institutions*

Although Carlton was never a municipality in its own right in the way of North Melbourne/Hotham during the nineteenth century, a number of civic and municipal institutions were developed to serve the community. Calls had been made for a proper police presence in the suburb from as early as the mid-1860s – and possibly earlier – on account of the rate of theft. 'Not a night passes now but some place is broken into', complained 'Thomas' in the *Age* in 1866.<sup>220</sup> Police had occupied a house in Carlton Gardens from at least 1855 and a separate police station was established in Drummond Street, north of Faraday Street in c. 1872.<sup>221</sup> In 1878, a new brick police station was constructed, also on Drummond Street, to a design by Public Works Department architects William Steel and George Watson.<sup>222</sup>

A small civil precinct developed around the intersection of Drummond and Elgin streets: the Police Court House was constructed on the west side of Drummond Street in 1887 and the Carlton Post Office constructed at 146 Elgin Street in 1883. With the development of Lygon Street as the suburb's main commercial precinct, the Carlton South Post Office was constructed in the 1960s. From the 1870s, calls were made for the establishment of a local fire brigade, with both the Carlton District and Carlton Brewery brigades established in this decade. With the professionalisation of fire services in the metropolitan area, fire stations were constructed in Bouverie (1893) and Swanston (1928) streets.<sup>223</sup>

Volunteer corps were also established in Carlton, part of a Victoria-wide movement born of concern about the ability of the fledgling colony to protect its coastlines and gold wealth at the time of the Crimean War of the 1850s. The Carlton Rifle Corps was formed in 1854, with a site granted on Grattan Street (Figure 31). In 1866, seven members of Carlton's volunteer rifle company purchased the Grattan Street site on behalf of the company for £320 for the group's use as a drill hall, with an additional purchase of land in 1871.<sup>224</sup> The Melbourne University Rifles was raised in 1910 to provide training for the University, as well as public schools in both Melbourne and Geelong.<sup>225</sup> By the early 1960s, the University of Melbourne acquired the site and in 1964, constructed a new, three-storey building with a car park located in the south-western corner.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Carlton Police Station, 334-344 Drummond Street (VHR H1543)
- Carlton Post Office, 146-154 Elgin Street (HO1)
- Melbourne University Regiment Drill Hall, 65 Grattan Street (HO1)





Figure 30 Carlton Post Office, Elgin Street, in c. 1917  
Source: H89.105/42, State Library of Victoria



Figure 31 Carlton Volunteer Rifles, 1861  
Source: Batchelor and O'Neill, photographers, H183, State Library of Victoria

### *Protecting Carlton's heritage*

The educated and activist demographic of Carlton in the latter post-war period and the intensity of development by the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) saw a strong and active community develop, intent on saving and promoting Carlton's heritage. While the work of the HCV had raised little in the way of public protest early on, by the 1960s concerted opposition to the HCV's development of both Carlton and Carlton North had begun to take shape. This was more so than many other inner suburbs of the period, reflecting the way Carlton had begun to shift from its lower income character towards gentrification. The Carlton Association was established in 1969, with a number of action groups or sub-committees formed to focus on specific issues.<sup>226</sup> One such group was the Kay Street action group, formed in 1971 as a response to the proposal by the HCV to compulsorily acquire properties in Kay Street. An effigy of the HCV was burnt at a protest of 300 people in Kay Street; however, the acquisition of 56 houses went ahead.<sup>227</sup> It was not only the work of the HCV which was perceived as a threat to Carlton. The development of freeways in Melbourne included a plan to extend the Eastern Freeway along Alexander Parade and Princes Street. The work of the association, including the research undertaken to produce the 'Freeway Crisis Report' of 1972, saw the revision of this plan.<sup>228</sup>

George Tibbits described the Carlton Association as the 'voice of "working-class families, post-war refugees, south European migrants, old people, young people, professionals and students"', that is the voice of Carlton in the late 1960s'.<sup>229</sup> Many in the association were professionally engaged in areas such as town planning, architecture, engineering and history (social and architectural), and many of whom have become well-known and respected in these fields. The association produced studies and surveys of the suburb, arguing for retention of existing housing for residents and the suburb's historic streetscapes. The use of media, including the mainstream press, as well as posters to engage the Carlton community, were also successful methods employed by the association.<sup>230</sup>

The campaign against the HCV's 'urban renewal' plan of the early 1970s saw membership of the Carlton Association peak at 2,000.<sup>231</sup> There is also an argument to be made that the residents group was a significant part of the gentrification of Carlton; the owner-occupiers replaced many renters; and the association's 'awareness raising' about the amenity and value of the inner suburb raised property values.<sup>232</sup> However, the campaigns of the association, along with the work of the National Trust, 'contributed greatly' to the change in approach of the government to housing clearance and heritage protection of in inner suburbs.<sup>233</sup> The Builders Labourers' Federation (BLF), a Trades Hall affiliated union with a long association with Carlton, was also involved in the fight to protect Carlton's heritage. The BLF had constructed new offices directly opposite Trades Hall in 1958, and used its growing influence to curb development in Carlton in the 1960s.<sup>234</sup> This was through the use of 'green bans', strike action to protect the environment or built heritage at development sites. One of the most high profile actions by the BLF was in protecting a site in North Carlton, which resulted in BLF secretary Norm Gallagher serving time in jail.<sup>235</sup> However, the BLF was also involved in other action in the study area, including protecting terrace housing in Drummond and Canning streets. As former Lord Mayor, Trevor Huggard recalled, 'many people saw Carlton as fodder for the bulldozer'<sup>236</sup>, with many of its streets saved by the efforts of the unions and local resident groups.

Community action and participation has continued in Carlton, following the foundation established by the association. The Carlton Residents Association (CRA) was formed in 1995 as a response to a proposal by the University of Melbourne to develop terrace houses in Faraday and Cardigan streets.<sup>237</sup> The work of the CRA has focused on both heritage and amenity in the suburb. Likewise, the establishment of the Carlton Community History Group in 2007, demonstrates the continuing interest Carlton residents have in their suburb.

### *Places related to this theme*

- Drummond Street, south of Grattan Street (HO1)
- Former Australian Builders Laborers' Federation office, 11 Lygon Street (HO64)

## Chapter 6: Building Carlton's community

- Maintaining spiritual life
- Educating people
- Providing health and welfare services
- Forming community organisations
- Preserving traditions and commemorating
- Marking phases of life

### *Aboriginal community*

With the crowded housing conditions, Melbourne's parks and hotels became important meeting places for the Aboriginal community. Such places were a setting for establishing and maintaining familial, social and spiritual connections, and the transmission of traditional knowledge.

Within the study area, Carlton's squares (such as Macarthur Square) have been mentioned by a Bunurong Elder as such meeting places, with the former Albion Hotel (on the corner of Lygon and Faraday streets) as another.<sup>238</sup> A notable Aboriginal meeting place in Carlton was under the two Moreton Bay fig trees which still stand in the Carlton Gardens near the intersection of Nicholson and Gertrude streets.

During both the interwar and post-war periods, Aboriginal people would meet in the Gardens, as Alick Jackomos recounted:

That's where the Aboriginal community ... would come and meet. As I said before, there were no organisations and there was no Advancement League. You couldn't fit into anyone's house because every family only had a little room in the house. ... So on Saturday and Sunday, and during the week but mostly weekends, everybody would come here and sit around these Moreton Bay Fig Trees. That was our meeting place in the late 30s and 40s and maybe early 50s.<sup>239</sup>

### *Places related to this theme*

- Macarthur Square (HO1)

### *Religion*

Churches and other religious buildings were important community institutions in early Carlton, and enabled many migrant groups, such as the Scots in the nineteenth century, the twentieth century Jewish community and post-war Italian migrants, to maintain religious aspects of their culture in their new home. The important role of religious buildings and religious expression continued as congregations and the population of Carlton consolidated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Carlton's church buildings and remaining Jewish religious buildings are notable for the diversity of denominations, and their close proximity.<sup>240</sup>

As part of the subdivision of Crown land in Carlton, numerous - and generous - grants of land were made to the various religious denominations of nineteenth century Melbourne. By the late 1860s, 11 sites had been reserved for churches in the three blocks bound by Victoria, Lygon, Grattan and Rathdowne streets (Figure 32).<sup>241</sup> The 1866 Cox Plan shows four church buildings had been constructed in the suburb (to Elgin Street): including the Primitive Methodist Church, at the corner of Lygon and Queensberry streets, on which a bluestone church was constructed in 1864; and St Andrews Presbyterian Church, often known as the Gaelic Church, which was constructed in 1854-55 at the north-west corner of Queensberry and Rathdowne streets, on a prominent site opposite the Carlton Gardens (Figure 33). Neither of these churches are extant. It is also the case that not all reserves were taken up; the Baptists and Congregationalists 'refused to compromise' on the separation of church and state.<sup>242</sup>

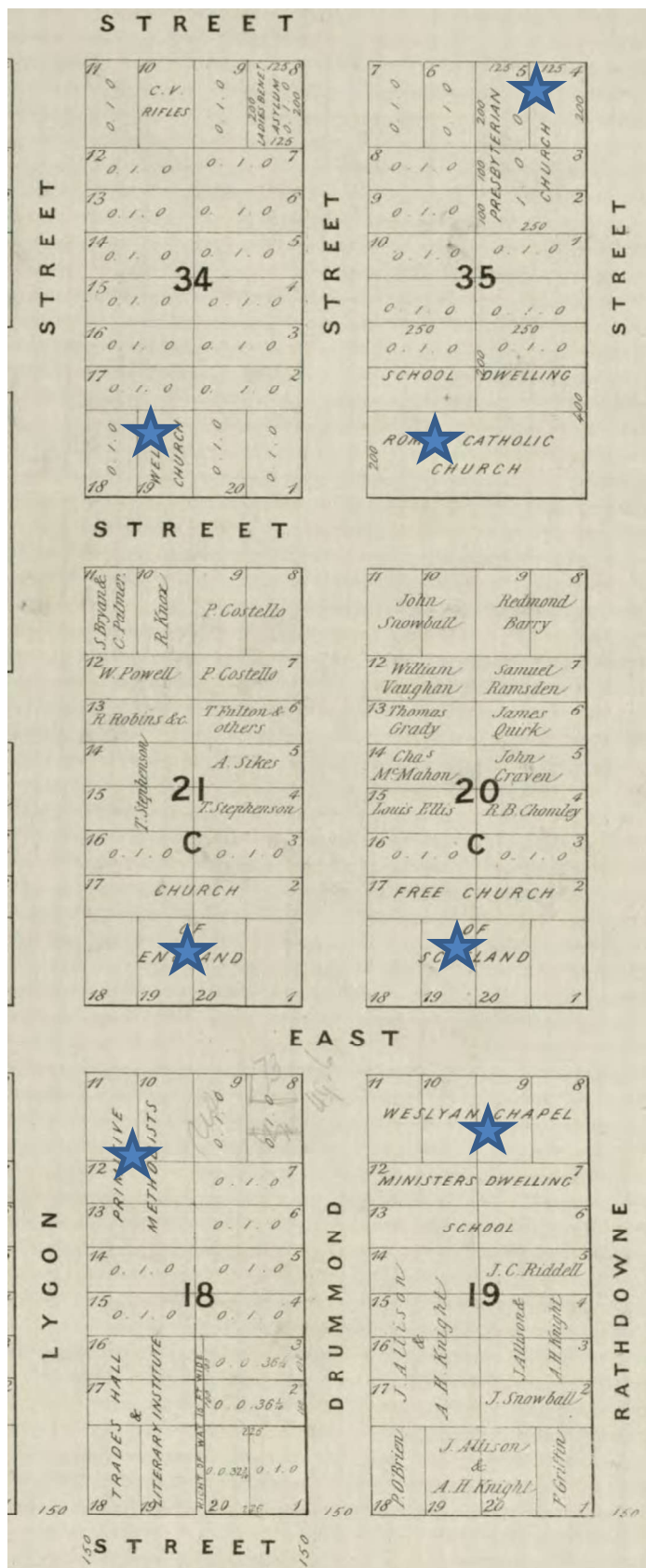


Figure 32 Plan of Crown allotments in Carlton, 1864, with reserves for religious denominations indicated  
Source: Department of Crown Lands & Survey, State Library of Victoria



Figure 33 Elevated view of St Andrews Presbyterian Church, 1880, taken from the newly completed Royal Exhibition Building  
Source: Unknown photographer, H4570, State Library of Victoria

As noted in *Carlton: A History*, while some congregations were predominantly based in the suburb, other churches drew attendance from a much wider area. The Gaelic services conducted at the Scottish St Andrews Church were popular, drawing attendees from a wide area, with stabling provided for those who had travelled far.<sup>243</sup> The church closed in 1938, with the congregation admitting that ‘the character of the district had been changing’ and the use of the church for services was no longer necessary, as it had been in ‘the early days.’<sup>244</sup>

A number of early churches still remain in the suburb. The bluestone Catholic St George’s Church was constructed in 1855 and survives within the Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Corpus Christi school complex. The larger brick church at the corner of Pelham and Rathdowne streets, constructed in 1897, also remains and is demonstrative of the growth of the congregation through the nineteenth century.<sup>245</sup> A newer denomination, the Catholic Apostolic Church, constructed its bluestone church in 1867 adjacent to the Primitive Methodists in Elgin Street. The church building was designed by the prolific architect Leonard Terry, and is extant.<sup>246</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, development on the early reserves had been joined by the construction of churches in the north of the suburb, where the new subdivisions were taken up by different congregations. These included the Wesleyan Church in Palmerston Street; and St Jude’s Anglican Church in Lygon Street. The foundation stone for St Jude’s was laid in October 1866 (Figure 34).<sup>247</sup>

While by the turn of the century ‘Carlton’s phase of church building was over’, with the major denominations well established, smaller denominations, or branches of larger denominations, began establishing themselves in the suburb.<sup>248</sup> The Chinese Mission Church in Queensberry Street is an



example of this trend, having been constructed in 1905 by the Church of Christ, itself a much older denomination in Melbourne with its first chapel erected in Lygon Street in 1865. When, in the early twentieth century, the Church of Christ turned its attention to the conversion of Chinese people to Christianity,<sup>249</sup> the site for the small church on Queensberry Street was chosen. Although many Chinese people resided in southern Carlton in this period, particularly in and around Queensberry Street, with Chinese children attending Rathdowne Street Primary School, the new church was also close to Little Bourke Street's Chinatown.<sup>250</sup>

The importance of the Jewish community through the first half of the twentieth century was also reflected in the number of buildings constructed for Judaism in Carlton, although few remain. A synagogue for the orthodox Woolf Davis Chevra was constructed in Pitt Street in c. 1919; noted in the City of Melbourne building index as a 'church'.<sup>251</sup> At its opening, the president 'emphasised the fact that this Chevra was not founded to do financial or other injury to any existing Synagogue', giving an indication of the diversity of the local Jewish community at this time.<sup>252</sup> The construction of the substantial synagogue on Palmerston Street in the mid-1920s also emphasises the scale of the Jewish population of Carlton, having outgrown the temporary synagogue building at the Political Labor Hall at 121 Palmerston Street. The new synagogue, situated next to the Methodist Church in Palmerston Street, was of 'Byzantine' style, designed by W H Merritt, and could seat 500 people.<sup>253</sup> During construction, the Building Trades Federation standard working week was amended to adhere to the Jewish Sabbath requirements, and to accommodate a full week's work without working on Saturdays. Interestingly, although many in the local Jewish community moved to the bayside suburbs in the post-war period, the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha, being the Jewish burial society, was located in Canning Street from c. 1960 to at least 1974.<sup>254</sup> Of these buildings, only the Pitt Street synagogue is extant.

Migration patterns through the mid-twentieth century also affected the use of religious buildings in Carlton. For a number of churches, congregations declined; St Jude's for example reportedly only had a total of twenty attending its two Sunday morning services.<sup>255</sup> The Methodist Church on Palmerston Street, which likewise faced decreasing attendance, became dedicated to serving the smaller migrant groups arriving in Carlton in the post-war period. Reflecting this, the church's name was changed to the Church of All Nations. The Catholic Apostolic Church was converted to a Romanian Orthodox Church in 1972.

Other buildings were also taken up by groups offering support to new arrivals. A three-storey terrace in Drummond Street (no. 197) was purchased by the Society of St Paul in the 1950s as the Mission House for Maltese New Australians, which along with being a monastery for priests, included club rooms for young Maltese men and accommodation for 'a few migrants'. The building's location was considered 'an ideal spot, as most of the Maltese [were] living [in] North and West Melbourne, Carlton, Fitzroy and Collingwood'.<sup>256</sup>

The importance of churches and religious buildings to life in Carlton is not what it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, such places continue to play an important role in the suburb, particularly with youth and welfare outreach programs.

#### *Places related to this theme*

- St Jude's Anglican Church, 349-371 Lygon Street (VHR H0014)
- Former Catholic Apostolic Church, 59 Queensberry Street (HO90)
- Chinese Mission Church, 148-150 Queensberry Street



Figure 34 View south down Lygon Street, c. 1875, with St Jude's Church dominating the streetscape at right  
Source: American & Australasian Photographic Company, IE1236964, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

#### *Melbourne General Cemetery*

The first official cemetery in Melbourne had opened in 1837, on a ten acre site now occupied by the car park of Queen Victoria Market.<sup>257</sup> With the growth of Melbourne by the late 1840s the cemetery site was seen to be 'in dangerous proximity to the inhabited portion of the city'.<sup>258</sup> This was recognised as a problem by the Melbourne Town Councillors, who moved that another portion of land be set aside for a 'future cemetery of the city'.<sup>259</sup> New South Wales law, which governed the Port Phillip District, required that the cemetery be set at least one mile away from the city's boundary. A plan by surveyor Robert Hoddle of June 1849 and a letter of July 1849 from Superintendent La Trobe referring to a site 'due North one mile from the North Town Boundary' indicates that the current site had been chosen by this date.<sup>260</sup> In January 1851, 27 acres (approximately 11 hectares) was reserved for a general cemetery, at the designated distance from the town boundary. However, further growth of Melbourne with the gold rush saw the cemetery soon form the northern boundary of the suburb of Carlton.

The cemetery was to be divided amongst the denominations, with ten acres (4 hectares) set aside for the Church of England, eight acres for the Catholic Church, four acres for the Presbyterian Church, two acres for the Wesleyan Church and one acre each for Jewish burials, Society of Friends (Quakers) and other denominations.<sup>261</sup> The provision of areas for Baptists and Independents increased the size of the cemetery to more than 32 acres (approximately 13 hectares). A design for the cemetery was completed by engineer and surveyor Albert Purchas in early 1852, with serpentine pathways linking the areas set aside for each denomination. Purchas was subsequently appointed to the position of engineer-secretary and was the cemetery's first paid employee.<sup>262</sup> The first burial at the cemetery, that of John Alexander Burnett of St Kilda, took place on 28 May 1853. The first female burial was Jane Bell on 10 June 1853.<sup>263</sup> By 1860, approximately 18,000 burials had taken place at the new cemetery, of which 7,146 were infants, the latter an indication of the poor rate of infant mortality.<sup>264</sup> The burials of several prominent Victorians were also held at the cemetery soon after its opening.

By the late 1870s residential development had surrounded the cemetery, and closure of the cemetery was raised. By the 1890s vacant burial plots were becoming scarce.<sup>265</sup> The trustees responded by using any available space for new graves, including gardens and open spaces, which gave rise to further concerns about health issues and the competence of the trustees.<sup>266</sup> By the 1920s, the site comprised over 100,000 graves holding almost 254,000 bodies, and was visited by 250,000 people each year.<sup>267</sup> As

noted by historian Don Chambers, the severe unemployment of the early 1930s enabled the trustees to gain concessions for the use of the cemetery land which would have been impossible in the preceding decades, ensuring its continued operation.<sup>268</sup> Combined with the alterations to previously restricted land along Lygon Street, land for over 4,500 new graves was opened up in 1937.<sup>269</sup> The cemetery faced decline during the 1950s, as the income from burials could not cover the increased cost of operating the site.<sup>270</sup> Further burial land was opened up in the 1950s, with the reclamation of former 'pauper' ground near Lygon Street.<sup>271</sup>

While the place has wider importance to metropolitan Melbourne, the cemetery had immediacy in the daily life of Carlton residents. As noted in the *Melbourne Punch* in 1869, children of Madeline (Swanston) Street would 'eschew games, and follow humbly the cemetery-going carriage' (Figure 35).<sup>272</sup> The cemetery also provided employment for Carlton residents, with monumental masons living in the north of the suburb and making their living from manufacturing gravestones for burials. One long-running undertakers' operation was located at 380 Lygon Street, in the buildings known as the Holdsworth Buildings. Built for John Daley in 1871, a local undertaker, from 1908 until 1972, the prominent Holdsworth undertaking business operate from the site.<sup>273</sup>

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Melbourne General Cemetery, (VHR H1788)
- Holdsworth Buildings, 380 Lygon Street (VHR H0074)



Figure 35. Funeral procession, unidentified street, Carlton, c. 1905  
Source: MM 8523, Museum Victoria



## Education

Education at a variety of levels has long had an impact on the community and built form of Carlton, and includes primary and tertiary institutions.

### *University of Melbourne*

Although the idea of a university had been raised through the early decades of Melbourne's history, it was not until after Victoria's separation from New South Wales that proposals gained traction. A petition was presented to the Legislative Council in late 1852 by a 'numerous and respectable body of the inhabitants', £10,000 was set aside by the Auditor-General, and in January 1853 the proposed university constitution received royal assent.<sup>274</sup> The university's council, first announced in April 1853, comprised some of Melbourne's most respected men, including Justice Redmond Barry, the Auditor-General Hugh Childers, former police magistrate Sir William Lonsdale, and notable religious leaders including the Bishop of Melbourne.<sup>275</sup> They were drawn from medical, legal and civil service backgrounds, with the majority members of the Melbourne Club. Only four members of the council could be from religious backgrounds, with the secularity of the university being an important aspect of its foundation.<sup>276</sup> While a site in East Melbourne was proposed in June 1853, in September that year, Justice Barry proposed a 100-acre site to the north of the recently surveyed allotments in Carlton. The government approved a reservation of 40 acres, with a generous allowance reserved for a future extension.<sup>277</sup> The scale of this reservation in comparison to the eventual size of the suburb of Carlton, taking up nearly one-fifth of the suburb, can be seen in the 1855 plan compiled by James Kearney (Figure 1). The inaugural ceremony at the newly reserved university grounds, as described in *The Shop*, a history of the university's early development, was held:

On this ugly site, set on rising ground between Melbourne's cattle yards and its New Cemetery and despoiled by the search of Europeans for wealth, shelter and comfort, [Governor Lieutenant Charles Hotham] was to lay the foundation stone for one of Europe's cultural triumphs, a university.<sup>278</sup>

The newspapers gave praise to the founding of the university, acknowledging the important marker in Melbourne's development that was the establishment of such an institution.

The first buildings were constructed on the university site in 1854-1857, and included the (Old) Quadrangle and residential accommodation for four professors.<sup>279</sup> Residential colleges were established along the university's curved northern perimeter after the proposed extension eventuated. The first Wilson Hall was built in the late 1870s as a purpose-built examination hall, and by the end of the nineteenth century much of the site had been built upon incorporating a Medical School, Biological School, Natural Philosophy School and the National Museum.<sup>280</sup> The latter was established in 1854 and was originally known as the Museum of Natural History, with approval granted in October 1855 for the university to take over management of the collection, and to construct a north wing of the quadrangle to house it.<sup>281</sup> In 1862, approval was given for the construction of a separate building to house the collection, to be funded by the Government. Now known as the National Museum, the new building was designed by architects Reed and Barnes, and construction work began in 1863. The building faced the ornamental lake, and featured the use of cream brick, Gothic windows and a central tower.<sup>282</sup> The National Museum was visited by more people than any other part of the university over the next thirty years.<sup>283</sup> The museum's collection was eventually relocated from the university in 1899 to the Industrial and Technological Museum at the Public Library (now the State Library of Victoria).<sup>284</sup> The vacant building at the university formed the nucleus of what was to become the student union building.

The university campus developed through the twentieth century, with both educational facilities and residential colleges increasing. A map of the campus from 1920 shows the extent of buildings across the site, with early buildings such as the National Museum, Wilson Hall and the professorial residences remaining. The map, however, has been marked up to show the location of proposed buildings, including Newman College, designed by American architect Walter Burley Griffin, the designer of

Canberra, along with local architect A A Fritsch. The post-war expansion of tertiary education put further pressure on the existing campus. From the 1960s, the university began expanding beyond its traditional site into the streets of Carlton and Parkville as increased enrolments and new courses called for new buildings. To control and mediate this process, a masterplan was produced in 1970 by Sydney architectural firm Ancher Mortlock Murray and Woolley.<sup>285</sup> This included the construction of the Earth Sciences building at the corner of Elgin and Swanston streets, to the east of the campus, and the redevelopment of sites to the south of Grattan Street and in University Square. The retention of the terrace houses as part of the development of University Square was a result of pressure applied by Carlton's resident groups, many of whom had existing or prior associations with the university itself.<sup>286</sup> The expansion of the university's student population in the latter part of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century also saw the construction of purpose built student accommodation beyond the original campus boundaries.

The University of Melbourne also has a number of important associations with Aboriginal people. The first Aboriginal person to matriculate into an Australian university, Margaret Williams-Weir, studied there after transferring from the University of Queensland in 1957. Prominent Aboriginal academics at the University of Melbourne have also included Marcia Langton and Gary Foley.<sup>287</sup>



Figure 36 View of the University of Melbourne grounds, 1885, with Old Quadrangle and Museum buildings visible  
Source: Charles Nettleton, photographer, State Library of Victoria

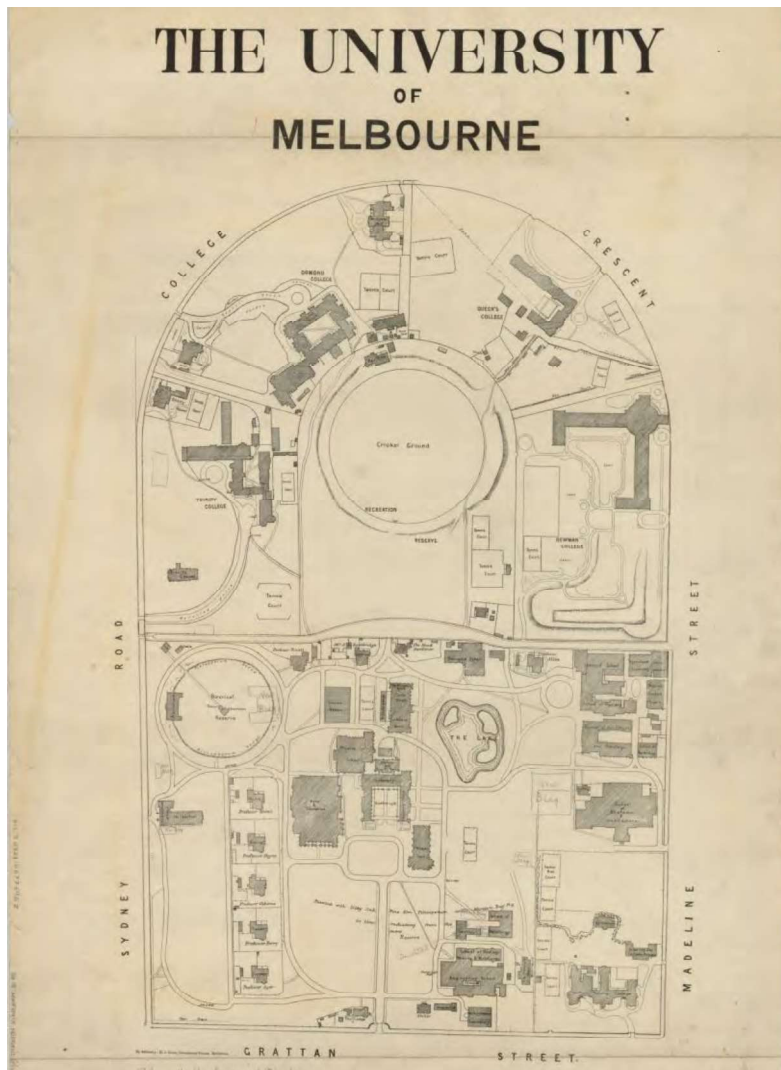


Figure 37 Plan of the University of Melbourne, 1920  
Source: H J Green, State Library of Victoria

### *RMIT*

Although the first campus is not located in Carlton, RMIT University, formerly the Working Men's College and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, has long had associations with Carlton, in particular with Trades Hall. Founded in 1887 by philanthropist and grazier Francis Ormond, the Working Men's College was supported by the unions, with members of Trades Hall included in the college's governing body.<sup>288</sup> The institution eventually evolved to offer courses in trades, technology and other skills for both men and women.<sup>289</sup> By the mid-1960s, with its student population and course offers also increasing, RMIT began to expand beyond its city location into Carlton. In 1970, the institution embarked on a six-year building plan after the Victorian government agreed to set aside properties at the southern end of Carlton for the institution. The block, situated immediately to the north of the city campus, was in close proximity to Trades Hall, and partially occupied by the Builders Labourers Federation headquarters and two hotels with close ties to the trade union movement. The shift into Carlton was initiated after a decision was made to provide students with two different streams of education: an advanced college offering degrees and diplomas and a technical college for those seeking apprenticeship courses. The former was overseen by the Federal Government while the latter by the Victorian Education Department. The new Carlton campus was earmarked as a technical college.<sup>290</sup>

From the 1970s, technical colleges were renamed TAFE (Technical and Further Education) institutions.<sup>291</sup> Dominic Kelly and Lloyd Orton, from the architect practice Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton, designed a master plan for the Carlton site, with a strategy to 'to build across the site, within the height limit, maximising the footprint and money available, closing off lanes where necessary and accommodating departments as they decanted from the city site'.<sup>292</sup> Although the plan (Figure 38) was never fully realised, RMIT University acquired, adapted and constructed a number of buildings within the block that fronted Lygon, Queensberry, Cardigan and Victoria streets; and is a prominent occupant of this Carlton block.



Figure 38 The Demaine plan of the RMIT block fronting Lygon, Victoria, Cardigan and Queensberry streets, looking south towards the CBD.

Source: Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008

### Schools

While the University of Melbourne has dominated consideration of education in Carlton, the suburb has had a number of schools, offering both public and private instruction. These included early National and Common schools, and religious schools and, following the passing of the Education Act in the 1870s which set standards for the accommodation of pupils, State schools.

Two sites were reserved for common schools in the 1860s: in Drummond Street, south of Grattan Street and on the triangular island site north of Lytton Street.<sup>293</sup> Carlton (Drummond Street), school no. 177 had initially been established in East Melbourne, and operated until 1884.<sup>294</sup> Following its closure, it was replaced by the three-storey terrace row at 201-205 Drummond Street. The Carlton Common School in Lygon Street opened in 1870, with an average attendance in 1871 of 73 students.<sup>295</sup> A school was erected in the 1870s, and by the 1890s, the site was substantially occupied by buildings (Figure 39).

There were also a number of short-lived schools in Carlton, often established by religious bodies. These included the Independent Church school in Grattan Street (1860-1868); Denominational School no. 175

which operated in a number of locations from 1859-1870; St Georges (1858-1877); the Carlton Baptist School in Drummond Street which had relocated from Albert Street, operating until 1884; the Church of England school St Matthew's (1855-1884); and Common School (Wesleyan) in Palmerston Street (1871-1872). A National School operated in Madeline (Swanston) Street for seven years between 1856 and 1863.<sup>296</sup> The number of schools in this early period point to both the rapid occupation of Carlton and the less rigorous rules relating to the establishment of educational facilities.

Some school sites demonstrate the change in standards of buildings which came with the enactment of the Education Act. For example, the Faraday Street State School grew from the Faraday Street National School which had been established in June 1855. In 1858 a timber school room was built on the site at 251 Faraday Street, located close to the university, claimed to be the first school in Carlton.<sup>297</sup> The extant building was constructed on the same site in 1876-77 to a design by architects Reed and Barnes, which responded to the new requirements of the Education Act of 1873.<sup>298</sup> Likewise, the former Primary School (no. 2365), Queensberry Street, opened in 1881, and its building, designed by Henry Bastow, Chief Architect of the Education Department Architecture Branch, is extant.<sup>299</sup>

The Yooralla Society established a number of educational facilities around Carlton in the twentieth century to cater for physically disabled children, including the Yooralla Kindergarten at 313 Drummond Street in 1918 and the Yooralla School at a new site in Pelham Street in the early 1920s.<sup>300</sup> The lack of options for care and education of disabled children particularly impacted poorer families. However, expansions were made to the Pelham Street facility in 1939, doubling capacity; and as noted in the *Herald* at the time of the extension's opening, the larger facilities allowed the grades to be arranged 'more suitably', with:

more room for the numerous activities which are carried out during school hours – such as Guide, Scout and Cub meetings, as well as sewing and craft work classes.<sup>301</sup>

The Yooralla School at Carlton closed in the late 1950s, consolidating to its existing Balwyn premises, and the Carlton building was demolished in the 1980s.<sup>302</sup>



Figure 39 View of Carlton School no. 1073, at the northern end of Lygon Street, 1890s  
Source: Gwyn James collection, H93.466/11, State Library of Victoria





Figure 40 Children playing in the playground at the Yooralla School, Pelham Street, c. 1930s  
Source: Yooralla

*Places related to this theme*

- University of Melbourne (various VHR and HO listings)
- RMIT technical college buildings(HO35, HO36)
- Former Queensberry Street State School (VHR H0970)

*Health*

Carlton has been the location of two of Melbourne's major hospitals, both which developed in the mid-nineteenth century. As with many of the suburb's welfare services, these institutions were focused on women and children, in the Women's Lying-in Hospital (Royal Women's Hospital) in Grattan Street and the Children's Hospital in Rathdowne Street.

In 1857, ten allotments on the north side of Grattan Street, between Madeline (Swanston) and Cardigan streets were reserved for the Lying-In hospital.<sup>303</sup> It had opened initially in a terrace house in East Melbourne in 1856, with its full name the Melbourne Lying-In Hospital and Infirmary for the Diseases Peculiar to Women and Children. The founding group included Frances Perry, the wife of the Anglican Bishop, and two young doctors who had studied in Europe, and brought the 'latest in clinical medicine' to Victoria.<sup>304</sup>

The hospital opened in 1858, with the main building fronting Madeline Street (Figure 41) comprising wards for both women and children and 'apartments for the house-surgeon and matron'. Two rows of buildings to the rear incorporated 13 separate wards, along with offices.<sup>305</sup> As noted by hospital historian Janet McCalman, the shift of patient care for women, including the delivery of babies, from the home to the hospital gave doctors authority and power over the birth scene, and made it easier to ensure sanitary standards.<sup>306</sup> The hospital was renamed the Royal Women's Hospital in 1956, and it was in this period that many of the buildings were modernised or rebuilt.<sup>307</sup> In 2008, the hospital was relocated to a new site on Flemington Road, Parkville. The Grattan Street site is being redeveloped by the University of Melbourne.

The former Children's Hospital (Figure 43) was established on a prominent site at the corner of Rathdowne and Pelham streets, facing the Carlton Gardens, in 1876. The site had originally been Sir Redmond Barry's house in Pelham Street, and was purchased for use as a hospital. Originally founded by doctors John Singleton and William Smith in 1870, it was reportedly the first paediatric hospital in the southern hemisphere. Despite fears about the risk to residents of contagion that such a hospital might bring, Barry's house was occupied and altered for the first children's hospital.<sup>308</sup>

In the early 1890s, the economic depression and its consequences for living standards generated increased demand on the hospital facilities. This resulted in an expansion programme, and recognition that the original Barry building was no longer fit for purpose. A number of neighbouring properties were purchased and, along with provision for four new accommodation pavilions and removal of the former Barry residence, a 'central administration block' was also considered necessary. An architectural competition was held in 1896 for the design of the new hospital layout.<sup>309</sup> The three-storied Princess May Pavilion was constructed on the corner of Pelham and Drummond streets in 1900-1901 and provided an additional 40 beds. A Nurses Home (John Roberston Nursing Home) was opened on Rathdowne Street in 1907; and an Administration Block or Administration Building was constructed on Pelham Street in 1912.<sup>310</sup> Elizabeth Testar, president of the hospital committee between 1885 and 1899, was a prime mover of the large-scale building programme.

By the early 1940s, it was becoming clear again that the Carlton site was inadequate, and an entirely new children's hospital was planned for Royal Park, Parkville.<sup>311</sup> Work began on the new hospital in 1951, and from this time, limited maintenance was undertaken on the Carlton buildings.<sup>312</sup> The Royal Children's Hospital, under the presidency of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, moved to its new premises in 1963. However, by late 1964, St Nicholas Hospital, a hospital for children with intellectual disabilities, had been established at the Carlton site. The buildings underwent alterations to convert them to the new hospital use, which provided accommodation for 300 children, and was a training institution for nurses, teachers and post-graduate students.<sup>313</sup> It operated until 1985.<sup>314</sup>

As established through consultation with Traditional Owners, the former Royal Women's Hospital and Children's Hospital have mixed associations for Aboriginal people. This is due to the hospital's positive connotations of, being associated with birth and care, whilst also being a place of continued forced child removals.<sup>315</sup>

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Former Children's Hospital (HO81)
- Former Women's Hospital site





Figure 41 Lying-in Hospital, 1868  
Source: Charles Nettleton, photographer, H869, State Library of Victoria



Figure 42 c.1920s-40s Rose Postcard photograph of Children's Hospital, at intersection of Rathdowne and Pelham streets; the building in the foreground was demolished in the 1990s; the Administration Building and Princess May Pavilion are at right.  
Source: State Library of Victoria.

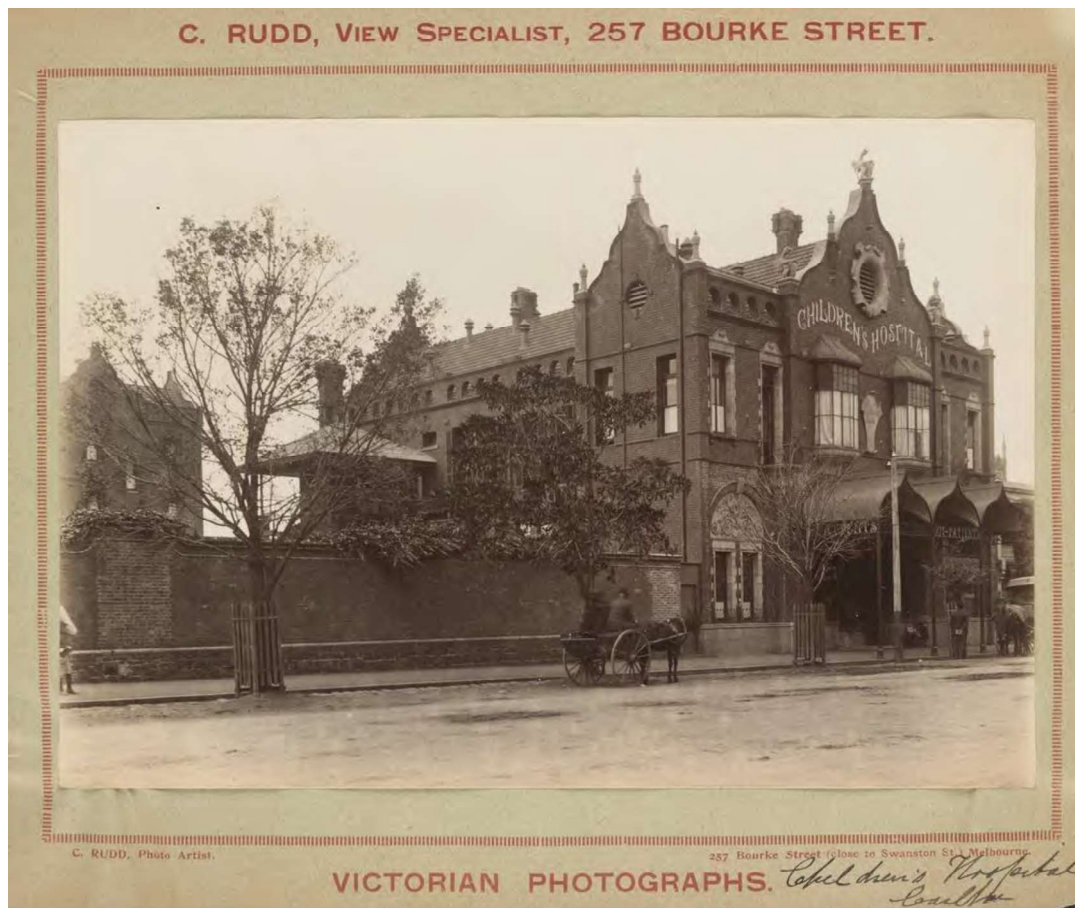


Figure 43 Outpatients Building at Children's Hospital, c. 1900  
Source: Charles Rudd, photographer, H39357/103, State Library of Victoria

### Welfare

The provision of welfare, particularly for vulnerable women has been a strong theme through Carlton's history.

In 1860, a site was reserved on the north-east side of Keppel Street for a female refuge, encompassing the whole block bound by Keppel, Cardigan, Madeline (Swanston) and Lytton streets.<sup>316</sup> The site was permanently reserved in 1863.<sup>317</sup> Although its original aim was as a reformatory for young women engaged in prostitution, its services shifted to caring for neglected children and unmarried mothers and their babies, and training in mothercraft and infant welfare nursing.<sup>318</sup> Provided with accommodation for twelve months, the young women at the female refuge worked in the laundry, the earnings from which sustained the institution's financially.<sup>319</sup> Located in Ballarat Street, which is now part of the redeveloped Carlton Brewery site, the Temporary Home for Fallen Women was also established in 1879 with similar aims.<sup>320</sup>

Continuing this tradition in Carlton, the St Joseph's Receiving Home was established in a house in Barkly Street in 1902. It moved to larger premises at 101 Grattan Street in 1906, a two-storey terrace house. The receiving home provided accommodation and care for unmarried pregnant women, and 'foundling' babies considered to be at-risk.<sup>321</sup> In 1915, the home tripled in size, with the addition of another terrace house, designed by architect A A Fritsch to replicate the nineteenth century house, and what appears to have been a chapel and dormitory wing (Figure 44). The institution also assisted men in need, with photographs of the 1960s showing homeless men queuing for meals along its Grattan Place elevation (Figure 45).

These institutions operated through the twentieth century, demonstrating the continuing need for welfare services in Carlton. The Female Refuge, which had been renamed the Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre, relocated from its Carlton premises in 1997 to Noble Park.<sup>322</sup> St Joseph's Receiving Home operated until 1985.

The Salvation Army's early work in Melbourne was located in Carlton, with the establishment of a Prison Gate Brigade Home in 1883, which was initially located in Lygon Street, and then at a terrace house in Argyle Place South (no. 37).<sup>323</sup> The service was established to provide support to newly discharged prisoners from the nearby Melbourne Gaol, who were 'fed and lodged without charge until they can obtain employment'.<sup>324</sup> Within three weeks of opening Higham House in late 1883, the Salvation Army officers had provided 500 meals, with 43 ex-prisoners having 'professed conversion, and are endeavouring to earn an honest living'.<sup>325</sup> The Prison Brigade Home was relocated to Abbotsford by 1900.<sup>326</sup> A facility for women was established in Barkly Street in 1884.<sup>327</sup> The Salvation Army opened a citadel in 1921 on Drummond Street, and in 1927 opened Hope Hall, at 68 Drummond Street, which provided support for women in need, including those who were homeless or had 'fallen into a life of crime'.<sup>328</sup>

The Salvation Army was not the only institution to utilise the large terrace houses of Carlton for charitable purposes in the first decades of the twentieth century. The *Sands & McDougall directory* of 1930 also lists a Church of England young women's hostel at 93-95 Drummond Street, and the Sutherland Home for Destitute Children at 28 Drummond Street.<sup>329</sup> A new two-storey brick house was constructed for the Sutherland Homes in 1911-1912, designed by J F Gibbins & Son.<sup>330</sup>

The young women's hostel had closed by the mid-twentieth century, with both the Sutherland Home and the Salvation Army hostel taken over by trade unions by the 1970s.<sup>331</sup>

The opening of the Carlton Crèche in Neill Street in 1919 signalled a shift in the provision of support for working mothers in Victoria. Although it initially catered for widowed mothers, following World War I, as well as deserted wives and women with 'useless husbands', the crèche provided support for many working women in Carlton.<sup>332</sup>

#### *Places related to this theme*

- Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child Health Centre, Keppel Street (VHR H1813)
- Former St Joseph's Receiving Home, 101-107 Grattan Street (HO1)
- Former Carlton Creche, 101-111 Neill Street (VHR H1864)

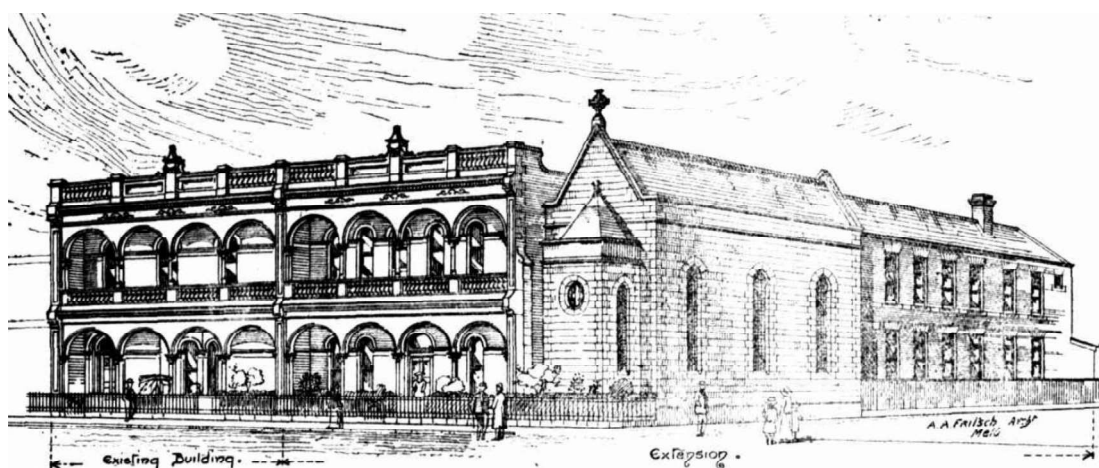


Figure 44 Perspective of St Joseph's Receiving Home, showing extensions in 1915  
Source: *Advocate*, 27 February 1915, p. 27

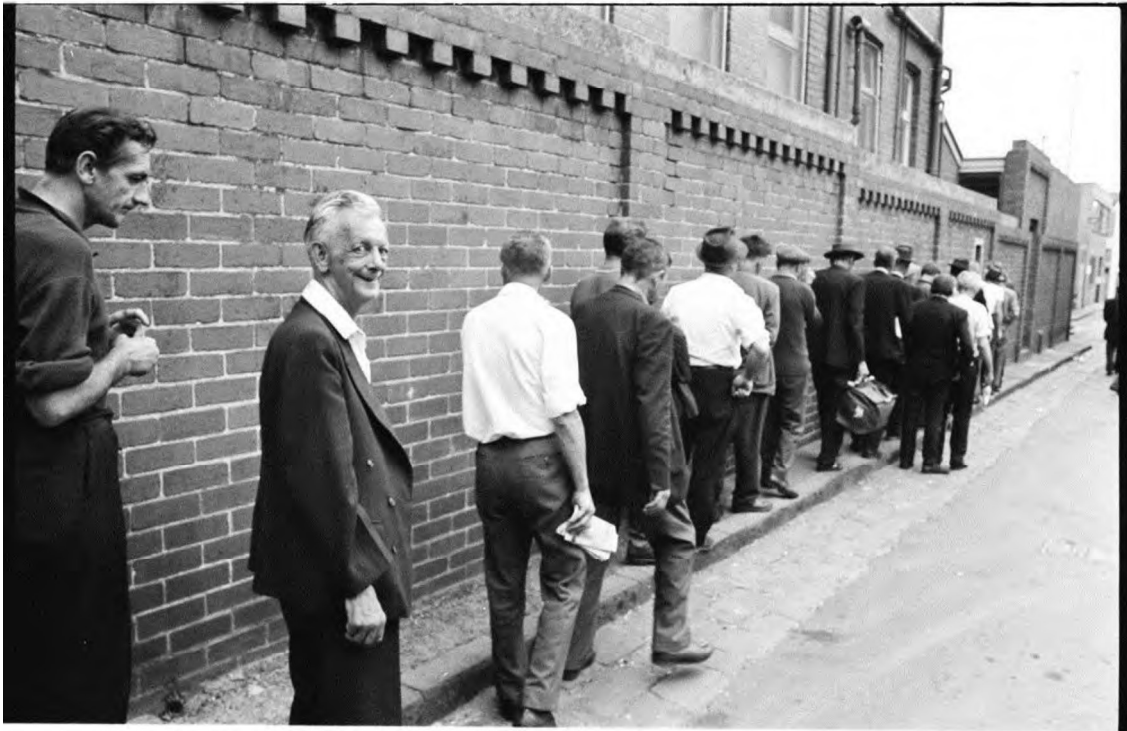


Figure 45 Men queueing for food handouts at St Joseph's, Grattan Place, Carlton, c. 1960s  
Source: Alan K Jordan collection, H2010.105/101d, State Library of Victoria

#### *Sport and recreation*

At various times through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sporting and recreation clubs have formed in Carlton.

In the latter nineteenth century, the use of Princes Park by Carlton sporting clubs was contentious. However, various clubs were ultimately granted permissive occupancy, most notably the Carlton Football Club (Figure 46).<sup>333</sup> The 'Blues' had formed in 1864, being one of the earliest Australian Rules Football clubs. They formally occupied part of Princes Park from the late 1870s, having been granted 11 acres in 1878 on which to establish their home ground. Princes Oval, Carlton Football Club's home ground and headquarters, is located in the centre of the park, with sporting fields to the south and passive recreation areas to the north. The Carlton Football Club is the most prominent of Carlton's sporting clubs, indeed the word 'Carlton' is often used as shorthand for the club rather than the suburb.

Soon after its formation, Carlton became incredibly popular in the fledgling Australian Rules football competitions. The club reportedly had double the number of members of other clubs by the mid-1870s, and its character as a club for 'working people', was established early.<sup>334</sup> The Blues were one of the foundation clubs of the breakaway Victorian Football League (VFL) in the 1890s, despite its relatively dire financial situation at the time. With migration patterns in Carlton through the twentieth century, Carlton's players and membership broadened to include Jewish and Italian names; with many post-war Italian personalities remaining strongly associated with the football club.<sup>335</sup> Carlton is also the most successful football club in the VFL/AFL competition, tied with Essendon, in terms of the number of premierships it has won (sixteen). While its membership is now drawn from a much broader area than its nineteenth century origins, it continues to be firmly based in Carlton, with the club's training ground at Princes Park. The Princes Park football oval has diversified beyond the male dominated sport, more recently becoming an important venue for the first seasons of the women's football league, AFLW.

Aside from the dominant Carlton Football Club, numerous smaller sporting clubs have formed through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, utilising the suburb's open spaces in its parks, reserves and gardens. Other clubs have been associated with the University of Melbourne. The Carlton Cricket Club

dates from 1864, and was based in the land between the university and Princes Park, now occupied by University College, before moving to Princes Park in the mid-1890s.<sup>336</sup> Bowling was another popular sport, from as early as the late-1860s, with the formation of a club in Argyle Square, with others based in Barry (University) Square and in Princes Park. Tennis clubs and croquet clubs also followed after the provision of bowling greens.<sup>337</sup>

After first being proposed in the 1890s, the Carlton Baths were opened in February 1916 on the present site, then accessed via Victoria Place to the north, a laneway parallel to Princes Street. The facilities were substantially improved in 1930.<sup>338</sup> The original entrance to the baths is a single-storey rendered structure with arched window openings, a prominent transverse gable roof form and central projecting bay with moulded ornamentation surrounding the entrance. The site was redeveloped in the 1980s and again in the 2010s, and continues to be an important recreation and fitness venue in the suburb. The 1980s redevelopment, designed by architect Peter Elliot, was awarded an Outstanding Architecture Merit Award by the Royal Australian Institutes of Architects in 1991.<sup>339</sup>

*Places related to this theme*

- Princes Park, Carlton North (HO1)
- Carlton Baths, 216-248 Rathdowne Street (HO1)



Figure 46 Carlton seconds team, c. 1935  
Source: Charles Boyles collection, H2008.122/158, State Library of Victoria



## Chapter 7: Shaping Carlton's cultural and creative life

- Nurturing a vibrant arts scene
- Creating popular culture
- Advancing knowledge

### *Creative Carlton*

The twentieth century demographics of Carlton – its 'bohemian character and ethnic diversity' – contributed to a flourishing arts, theatre and literary scene in the suburb from the 1950s.<sup>340</sup> Such pursuits were supported by affordable rent and the availability of properties in Carlton. Numerous literary and dramatic works have been set or produced in Carlton, including the writings of Pinchas Goldhar in the interwar period, Ray Lawler's seminal play, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and parts of Helen Garner's novel, *Monkey Grip*. In the late 1950s, playwright Gordon Kirby, whose *Theresa* was located in the suburb noted:

[Carlton is] a place of contrasts and surprises – pleasant and not so pleasant – a really interesting place in which to live ... the place lends itself to drama.<sup>341</sup>

The political engagement of Carlton's residents, and the suburb's students and academics also contributed to the cultivation of a theatre scene that garnered a reputation for being boundary pushing, with productions railing against censorship, social mores and political conservatism. The La Mama Theatre and the Pram Factory (Figure 47, now demolished) are synonymous with the late twentieth century development of Melbourne's independent theatre scene. The La Mama Theatre was established in a former printing works in Faraday Street, by Betty Burstall in 1967. It was envisaged as 'place where writers, actors and directors could experiment, and would become 'the most important small theatre in Australia'.<sup>342</sup> The Pram Factory likewise became well-regarded and influential, devoted to 'the exploration of new forms, theatre techniques and materials.'<sup>343</sup> The Australian Performing Group (APG) productions attracted 'Carlton residents, students, women's liberation groups, workers and middle-class theatre-goers'.<sup>344</sup>



Figure 47 The Pram Factory, Drummond Street, 1982  
Source: J T Collins Collection, H94.200/7, State Library of Victoria

Recalling Carlton in the 1970s, actor and writer Jane Clifton remembered:

The Pram Factory was like a mini arts centre on Drummond Street that spread out into music and painting. There was a whole network of collective houses that bubbled around it. It was a weird inner city utopia; full of people who embraced that lifestyle ... It was a wild sort of passing population of people who lived there and worked at the theatre, and also visitors and crims. There was a lot of rough trade. It was hardcore. We had an open door policy. The Pram Factory was very political as well as artistic. Our social structures were very bound up with what we believed.<sup>345</sup>

Australia's first all-Aboriginal acting company, Nindethana (or 'Ours') was founded by Jack Charles, Joyce Johnson and Bob Maza at the Pram Factory in 1971, and also has associations with La Mama.<sup>346</sup> Charles himself performed multiple times at both the Pram Factory and La Mama Theatre, and continued on to have a wide-reaching and successful career.

Noel Tovey, Australia's first male Aboriginal ballet dancer was born in Carlton, and spent most of his youth and early adulthood within the study area.<sup>347</sup>

The 1970s also fostered a strong rock music scene in Carlton, along with other inner suburbs of Melbourne, one that was characterised by 'powerful sense of identity and feistiness':

In Carlton, the underground and mainstream existed as one, voraciously feeding into and off each other's often theatre-inspired (or drug-induced) creativity.<sup>348</sup>

The Skyhooks' track 'Carlton (Lygon Street Limbo)' evoked a strong sense of place, with lyrics referring to 'all those pizza places and spaced out places', 'all those grey haired writers and drunken fighters' and 'all those night time junkies and long haired monkeys.' A popular venue at the time was Martini's in the Imperial Hotel, at the intersection of Rathdowne and Neill streets, which hosted gigs for bands including Cold Chisel, INXS, Mondo Rock, and Jo Jo Zep and the Falcons in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>349</sup> Martini's band booker, Adrian Barker remembers the 'Carlton scene', calling it 'art rock ... A lot of poetry and all that.'<sup>350</sup>

A band, the 'Stray Blacks', was described as 'an institution at Aboriginal cabarets and at the John Curtin Hotel in Lygon Street, Carlton'. One of its members, Alf Bamblett, recalled:

We started a band, the Stray Blacks ...see we were getting barred from all the pubs...someone will go and play up and you come along after and you can't get in... so I went to this pub...and said we want to put on a night of our own and so we'll look after it, then we started to think about music and so we scratched up and went and borrowed an amp here and a guitar there and a drum kit here... and we used to have those nights every fortnight, pension night or whatever it was and somewhere for people to go to...We did that for a few years, had this night, a meeting place...mobs of people over the years...and so it was somewhere for people to go and meet...The publican owned that pub and the John Curtin in Carlton and then they sold the Eastern Hill and so we ended up at JCs and we went there for years, doing the same thing and that was really good and people from all across the nation would be there...and that went for quite some time.<sup>351</sup>

Ross Wilson, front man of Mondo Rock and Daddy Cool, recalls why the suburb became such an important part of the Melbourne music scene at the time.

Carlton had that mix of music, arts, theatre, politics and everything else that seemed to draw it all together ... the main thing about the Carlton scene is that most of the musicians were total misfits, they just didn't fit into any pop star mould.<sup>352</sup>



Although the Melbourne music scene has diversified since the 1970s, a number of venues operate within Carlton, including the band room at John Curtin Hotel, which hosts numerous local gigs.

*Places related to this theme*

- La Mama Theatre, 205-207 Faraday Street (VHR H1991)
- Former Imperial Hotel, 184 Rathdowne Street (HO1)
- John Curtin Hotel, 27-31 Lygon Street (HO64)

## Conclusion

This Thematic Environmental History of Carlton shows that the presence of the study area's Traditional Owners has made a strong, positive and identifiable impact on the local area. This presence precedes the founding of Melbourne and continues into a significant contemporary narrative of resilience and contribution to the Carlton community across the many facets for which it has become renowned.

The urban fabric of Carlton was well established by the late nineteenth century, after the subdivision and sale of land in the 1850s and 1860s. The grand terrace rows in the south contrasted with the smaller workers' cottages at its north, and remain demonstrative of the suburb's diverse residential population. This diversity remains an important part of Carlton's character.

Carlton is a suburb that has been at the forefront of social change and cultural movements. It has been shaped by nineteenth century planning and built form, twentieth century European migration, 'slum' clearance, labour politics, students and academics, 'trendies', and a vibrant arts and restaurant scene. It was also an early Melbourne suburb to be gentrified, and a focus of the nascent heritage movement.

Carlton has long been valued both by its community, and more broadly by Melburnians living outside the suburb. Much of what drew people to the suburb in previous decades continues to be appreciated by residents and visitors alike today. People value its parks and gardens, the suburb's Italian and migrant heritage, the diverse offerings on Lygon Street and its intact heritage streetscapes. And in keeping with its history, the character of Carlton continues to evolve within the nineteenth century suburb.<sup>353</sup>

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Delta Lucille Freedman, Water Unit, Project Manager & Project Anthropologist, Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

Associate Professor Helen Gardner, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University

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