

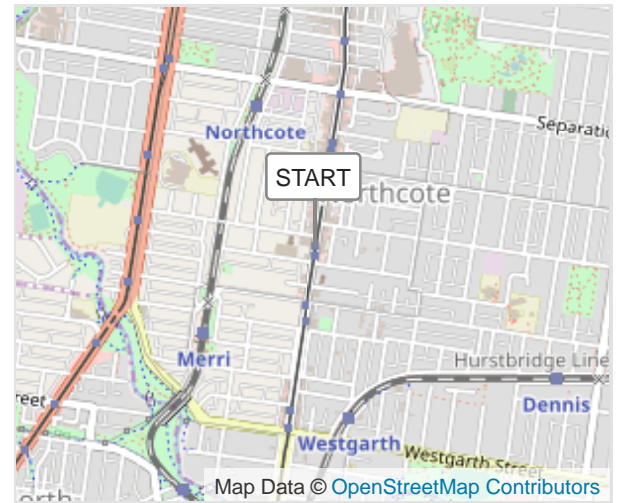


History Ramble 5: Northcote Town Hall Precinct

ROUTE INFORMATION



LENGTH 0.719 miles
 ASCENT 36 ft
 DESCENT 32 ft
 HILLS **↑** 33.3% | **↓** 33.3% | **→** 33.3%
 TERRAIN Road **A**
 START **LAT: -37.774920, LNG: 144.997820**



NOTES

Route: Town Hall, James St through to Westbourne Grove and back to Town Hall

Terrain: Paved footpath. Slightly hilly

Easy access: No. 86 tram - Northcote Town Hall stop.

A relatively short walk with lots of early Northcote History.

William Rucker, a German immigrant, established the first bank in Melbourne then moved on to land speculation by buying some substantial land holdings on Northcote Hill through to Brunswick. He sold some of the prime land west of High St, to George James in 1842. The block (now between James St and Westbourne Grove) became known as James' Paddock, initially a small farm with an orchard.

By 1843 Rucker was bankrupt and his land holdings were owned by his ex-Union Bank. They subdivided the land and named the current streets in 1853/4. In 1884 James' Paddock was put up for sale and became the site of the Town Hall. By then, grand houses were built on the western side of the Hill, the pristine scenic outlook attracting the well off for 'The Balcony of Melbourne' views. Many prominent Northcote identities have lived here.

History Ramble 5: Northcote Town Hall Precinct



START IN OPEN SPACE BETWEEN TOWN HALL & FORMER LIBRARY

High St: the old English for main road. Originally named Plenty Rd and was part of the 'Hoddle Line', an early straight line used as center line for mapping Melbourne and Victoria.

Former council administration building (1966 – 2000). Now open space between Free Library and Town Hall. It was a Modernist steel and glass council building. After 1994 Northcote and Preston merged into the new council – Darebin. The overcrowded and leaking building was demolished and a new council building was established at Preston.

Former Sunnyside Residence (1840s – 1925) then **Epiphany Church (1927)** is diagonally across the road this site. Sunnyside was erected on the highest point in the district. Local folklore has it that Rucker built the house in 1841, but this is questionable as he built his house, 'Stony Park', in Brunswick. A succession of influential owners including Thomas A'Beckett, Chief Justice of Victoria lived in this house. Then came wealthy merchants connected with the development of Northcote. John J Morris extended and named the house 'Sunnyside'. He resided here for 30 years. W.H. Clausen, a furniture retailer in Fitzroy, followed and encouraged the building of the Northcote cable tram. One of the last owners was E. A. Riches, renaming it 'the Alpines'. He lived there until 1918. In 1925 the now derelict Alpines was demolished. In 1927, The Church of the Epiphany was built on the site. Architect Louis R Williams designed this in a 'severe brutalist' style. Defying gravity by its height - 'Northcote (Brick) Gothic'. In the rear grounds the school Westleigh College operated until 1961.

Former (Carnegie) Free Library (1911). Built because of a 'dare'; Robert Whalley, then publisher of 'The Leader' contacted the Carnegie foundation and obtained a grant for a Free Library. One of the three municipal buildings on the hill that have a consistency of architectural style despite 40 years of construction.

183 High St (c1923), corner James & High Sts. This was the home of Albert Hartkopf, a physician and sportsman.

HEAD WEST - TURNING INTO JAMES ST

This was initially called Merri St. Note how High St is lower than both east and west sides of James St. The roadway surface was cut down in the nineteenth century to ease the steep incline up the hill.

43 James St, former Northcote Police Station (1891). Queen Anne Style.

The establishment of the police on the 'hill' cemented the 'Upper Northcote' domination over the original 'Lower Northcote' / Westgarth settlement.

40 - 42 James St, former Presbyterian Church (1894). The Presbyterians originally worshipped in a Church hall in Westgarth. The Progressive Rev Duncan Fraser led the Pushto to build this church. Early folklore has it that two Aborigines were buried in this area. The old church was moved here and used as Sunday school for about twenty years, then it was moved again. Now apartments.

36 James St - 'Wallingford' (1901). Arts and Craft

Mary Casey lived here in late 1920s. She may be related to Maie Casey who lived at Stony Park.

27 James St (c1880s), originally No. 29 on larger block. A much-modified building with stables at rear. The original design can be seen in the set back. Peter Slater lived here. His brother was a draper, on High St.

25 James St. Brick 1880s cottage with bay windows. John Cain Senior lived here from 1925 to at least 1950. (Father of John Cain Junior.) He previously at 83 High St and 37 James St and appears to have moved in here when he married to Dorothea Vera Grinrod of Westgarth.

21 James St (corner McIntosh St) Two story-Victorian Terrace (1880s). This is an unusually narrow building - perhaps there was plans for a 'twin' property that never eventuated.

23 James St, south-west corner McIntosh St. In 1900 John G Glanfield is listed as living here. His family ran a fruit business there as well as a poultry farm.

From this point James St starts going downhill. The railway cutting abutted the Turret House property of the Robinson family and overlooked the Merri Creek valley.

McIntosh St dates from c1900. Andrew McIntosh, an early settler, ran a bakery and grocery store here.

TURN RIGHT AND HEAD NORTH ALONG MCINTOSH ST - NOTE RESIDUAL LANEWAYS FOR NIGHT-SOIL MEN.
TURN LEFT AND HEAD WEST ALONG WESTBOURNE GROVE - STOP AT HERBERT ST.

Westbourne Grove was mostly settled in the 1880s with many old houses still standing.

91 Westbourne Grove (c1880s). This is the former home of Dr. Thomas George Beckett who was a prominent surgeon. He built Australia's first X-Ray machine. He is also known for his significant early photographer. He lost both hands to radiation poisoning during his life.

92 Westbourne Grove (1886). Brick Victorian. This was built for Alex C Munro, a Northcote timber merchant. He closed up during the 1890s depression but later re-established his business in Croxton. *Note side bay window.*

93 Westbourne Grove - former Presbytery (1887). This was built by Robert Burrows, who was a Northcote councillor, (many councillors lived on Northcote Hill). Around 1900 it was leased to Rev William Goyer, the Presbyterian minister and it served as a manse from 1900. In due course the church bought the property.

YOU CAN TAKE A DETOUR HERE

27 Herbert St (1880s). 'Tarbet', two storey Victorian terrace. This was known as 'Dirty Daffs' and was either a sly grog outlet or brothel; perhaps both! A ghost is said to live here, an unhappy middle-aged woman, possibly Mary Alison Dalgety.

95 Westbourne Grove (1889) 'Camberwell House'. This is a two story, brick, early Queen Anne style building. Catherine Oliver ran an extremely successfully butchering company here and lived in the house during the 1920s. She lived there until her death at 94 years. In 1900 she owned all the land between Herbert & Henry Sts, then known as Oliver's Paddock.

99 Westbourne Grove (c1880s) Art Deco building. This has a connection with the Siebel family, creators of Pura Milk (in Preston). Annie Louise Siebel, then Albert Henry Siebel lived here.

108 & 110 /112 Westbourne Grove (1880s). Two story Victorian Terrace. These were built as a speculative development. Even though bricks were easy to come, (Northcote Brick Co had a plentiful supply) two story terraces like these are not common in Northcote.

IF YOU TOOK THE DETOUR, NOW RETRACE YOUR STEPS TO MCINTOSH ST

Westbourne Grove was created in 1853 with the Union Bank subdivisions of Rucker's land. The name is from the English, 'Bourne' being archaic term for boundary – thus western boundary.

103 Westbourne Grove (1902) 'Baringo'. Ada Clark purchased this land and with husband, John, and built this house on a very large block. Ada died in 1941.

118 Westbourne Grove (1880s), south-east corner McIntosh St. Victorian Terrace. This was the former residence of Catholic author Nial Brennan who in 1930s was closely connected with Archbishop Daniel Mannix and John Wren.

CONTINUE EAST ALONG WESTBOURNE GROVE

135 Westbourne Grove (former residence 'Iona' (1852 -1982). A vacant block with a story. The land north of Westbourne Grove was used to adjust horses for Kirk's Horse Bazaar. It next became a residence 'Johnstone' (sic), later called 'Iona'. The Butler family lived here for 80 years: the house was sold soon after the death of Mrs. V, Butler (nee Johnson) in 1932, demolished in 1982. The Iona Tennis Club was next door.

St Joseph's Presbytery (1898) Two-storey Italianate with balcony. This was designed by T.A. Payne who designed many catholic manses in a popular palatial style. This predates the church by 30 years.

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church (1917). The original Catholic church was in Arthurton Rd. The architect was G H Vaheems, who was a popular Catholic church architect. 'Old' Daniel Coakley's pastorate lasted 25 years until his death in 1965. He was a cousin of Archbishop Daniel Mannix.

Former Rechabite Hall (1901) Arts & Crafts Style. The 'IOR Star of Northcote' was established in 1876 and by 1933 had some 660 members and was considered "the largest 'tent' in the Commonwealth". The congregation included noted leading community figures, such as Dennis, Johnson and Schwaebes. It was popular because of health benefits (before Medicare) and the Rechabite movement were anti-alcohol. The building was altered in 1927, possibly by architect Harry Norris. Giving the hall its 'art deco' look. By 1995 this tent had only two members and was dissolved.

Former Court House (1929). Much altered, originally built in a sympathetic style to the two other municipal structures. The last court sitting was the early 1990s. It is now houses part of the Aboriginal community's outreach program.

165 Westbourne Grove (north-east corner Eastment St). Much altered site. In 1914 Miss Ruby Bond, Dramatic Soprano who was a pupil of Late Frederick Beard, was advertising for students in singing and voice production.

Eastment St. In 1920s the baking headquarters for Melbourne were in this street. Significant Melbourne companies first established here including Melbourne Vinegar Co, S K Dixon and Johnson Pastry Cooks.

203 High St (1888), corner Westbourne Grove. Two storied Victorian. The original Mechanics Institute was built here. Later Edwin and Horace Bastings developed the land by building three two story terraces south of their General Store. The General Store was the 'social center' of Northcote. The business collapsed in 1968 and Bastings Store was demolished.

LOOK DIAGONALLY OPPOSITE

Peacock Hotel (1890). The first Peacock Hotel dates from 1854 but present building dates from 1890, with later alterations removing the Victorian look.

Northcote Picture Theatre (1912). The building at 216 High St is arguably the oldest surviving sound film cinema in Victoria. Now used as a Reception Centre, it has been extensively restored inside.

TURN RIGHT AND HEAD SOUTH ALONG HIGH ST

Northcote Town Hall (1889/1926)

Designed by the prolific George R Johnson, who also designed the Ballarat, Collingwood & Fitzroy Town Halls, as well as Her Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne. It was built by Knott & Verso, who were local builders. A clock tower was planned, but the idea was opposed by the residents. Construction was spread over stages. In 1912 the main hall was built, then in 1918 the Honor Portico for the fallen in WWI opened with its black-wood honor boards. The building underwent a major interior renovation around 1930 for its the Jubilee in 1933. Art Deco local architects, Harry Norris and city engineer Victor Bradley created the special art deco designs with Egyptian motifs for the interior.

Since the City of Darebin main offices were located to Preston, the Town Hall has been re-purposed as an arts center including dance and theatre.

P. Michell, 2019

ROUTE DIRECTIONS

No	Miles	Turn	Directions
1	0.000		Start near 185 High St, Northcote VIC 3070, Australia / Former Library Former Library
2	0.022	➔	Turn right onto James St
3	0.022		183 High St - Hartkopf house / former Sunnyside (app) & church
4	0.044		43 James St - Former Police Station Former Police station
5	0.064		40-42 James St - former Presbyterian Church / 36 James St - Wallingford
6	0.124		27 James St - Slater house / 25 James St - Cain house John Cain House
7	0.164	➔	Turn right onto McIntosh St
8	0.164		21 & 23 James St - Glanfield house
9	0.226	➤	Turn left onto Westbourne Grove
10	0.277	⬇	91 Westbourne Gve - Beckett house / No.92 - Munro house / No.93 - Goyer house
11	0.315	➤	Turn left onto Herbert St
12	0.315	⬇	27 Herbert St - Dirty Daffs Dirty Daffs
13	0.503	➤	Turn left onto Westbourne Grove
14	0.503		95 Westbourne Gve - Oliver house / #99 - Siebel house / #108 -112 / #103 - Baringo Sieble House
15	0.554		Former 135 Westbourne Gve - Johnson house
16	0.620		St Josephs Presbytery & Church St Josephs
17	0.629		Former Rechabite Hall / Former Court House / 165 Westbourne Gve - Bond house Rechabite Hall
18	0.659	➔	203 High St / Peacock Hotel / Northcote Picture Theatre
19	0.696	➔	Turn right onto High St/State Route 29
20	0.715		End at Northcote Town Hall