

City of Bayside Heritage Review: Brighton Town Hall Precinct [2013]

Identifier: Brighton Town Hall Precinct

Location: Area bounded by Boxshall Street, Carpenter Street, Wilson Street, and Presbyterian Church Reserve (inclusive), plus select properties on opposite sides of Wilson and Boxshall streets.

The following individual properties are included within the precinct:

9	Boxshall Street	former Lindsay Residence
10-12	Boxshall Street	former Metropolitan Fire Brigade station (now flats)
11-13	Boxshall Street	maisonettes
15	Boxshall Street	former City of Brighton Municipal offices (now library) (HO83)
73	Carpenter Street	former City of Brighton Court House (now youth centre) (HO447)
10	Wilson Street	Presbyterian Church manse
11	Wilson Street	St Cuthbert's Memorial Hall (now kindergarten)
12	Wilson Street	St Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church (HO395)
21-25	Wilson Street (part)	former Khyat's Hotel (now apartments)
27	Wilson Street	former Police Station (HO396)
29	Wilson Street (front)	Primitive Methodist Church memorial plaque and wall (HO635)
30	Wilson Street	former City of Brighton Town Hall (HO397)



History

As shown on H B Foot's 1842 plan of the First Special Survey of the Brighton Estate, the original Town Reserve was defined by present-day Carpenter, Church, Halifax and William Streets, while the block bounded by Boxshall, Carpenter, Wilson and St Andrew's Street was one of several, nominally subdivided for residential use, along its northwestern boundary. The first buildings in the vicinity of this block, designated as Section XI, were two churches on the opposite side of Wilson Street: a Primitive Methodist Chapel (1851) on the eastern corner of Carpenter Street, and a Presbyterian Church (1857) at what is now No 11. In 1858, a small shop was erected on the south corner of Wilson and Carpenter streets, which, the following year, became the venue for the first council meetings of the new Borough of Brighton. At that time, Section XI was still farmland, owned by the eponymous William Wilson. In 1860, the state government purchased half an acre of his property, at the west corner of Wilson and Carpenter streets, and erected a court house, which doubled as council offices. The extent of development by that time can be seen on John Millar's 1862 map of Brighton, which not only shows these public buildings, but also some scant residential development along the northern side of Wilson Street. Apart from the new courthouse, however, Section XI remained undeveloped.

In 1864, the allotment at the north corner of Carpenter and Wilson Streets was acquired by John Hardham, who built a large brick hotel there – initially known as the Council Hotel – the following year. A survey map, prepared a decade later by Charles Maxwell, shows that, apart from Hardham's new hotel, there had been little more development in the vicinity by that time, with Section XI still vacant save for the court house at its eastern edge (Figure 1). Residential development was still limited to the north side of Wilson Street, where the residents included the Reverend D H Ballantyne, who lived in a manse purchased by the Presbyterian church in 1873. The next significant development was a new police station, which had been built on the corner of Carpenter and Wilson streets, alongside Hardham's hotel, by the early 1880s.

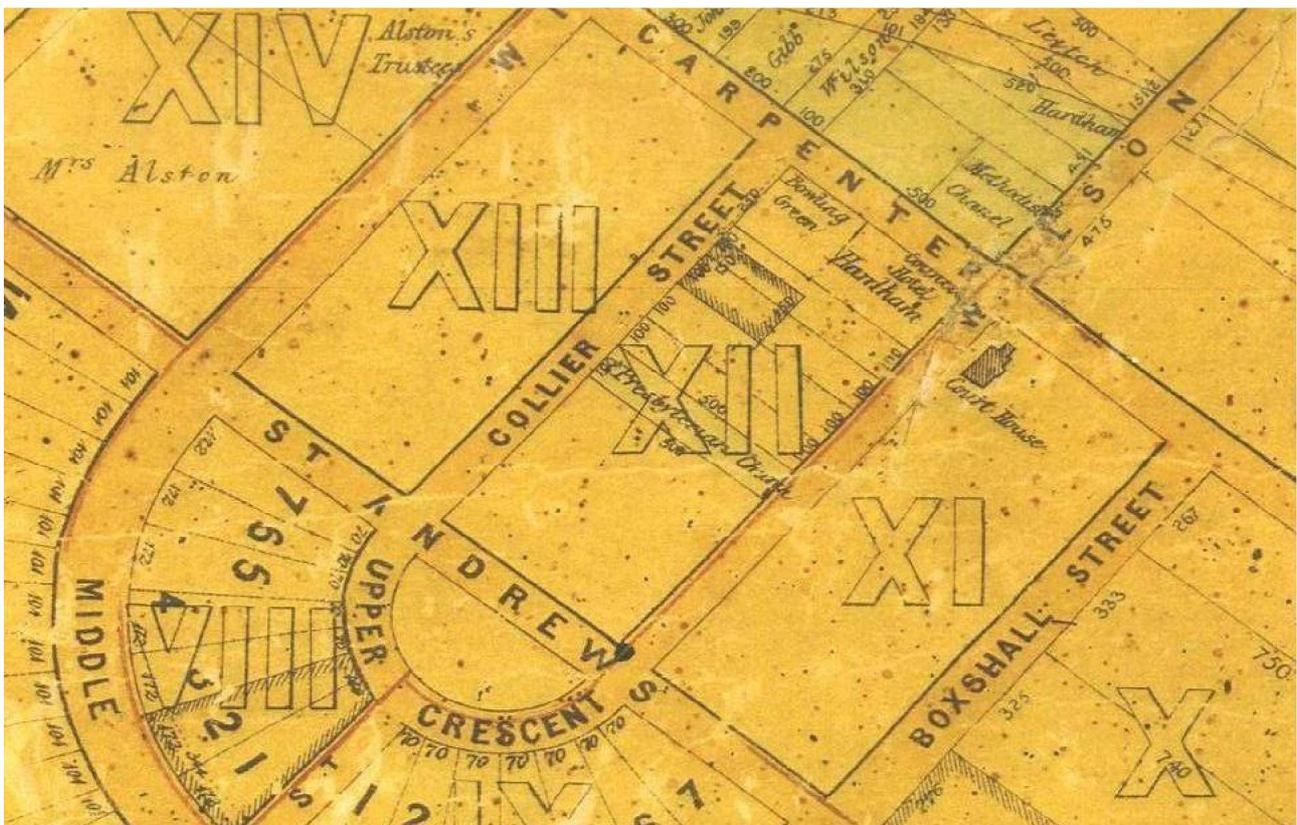


Figure 1: Detail of Charles Maxwell's survey map of Brighton (1876), showing extent of development by that time. Note court house on corner of Section XI, with Hardham's Council Hotel and the Methodist Church opposite. (source: Brighton Historical Society)

However, it was not until the latter half of that decade that the precinct, and more specifically the formerly unsettled Section XI, began to undergo more intense development. The western half of the block was carved up to form three large residential properties fronting Boxshall Street: *Ellesmere* (now 44 St Andrews Street), *Bogong* (later 9 Boxshall Street) and *Wolsingham* (later 15 Boxshall Street). The last of these was occupied by Oswald R Snowball (1859-1928), a prominent local solicitor and Tommy Bent's successor as MLA for Brighton. The neighbouring property, *Bogong*, was purchased by the Presbyterian church in 1884 with a view to expanding their facilities. The house became the new manse for Reverend Ballantyne, and the remainder of the site, fronting Wilson Street, slated as the site for a new church. A foundation stone for the new building, designed by architect Evander McIver, was laid in October 1889 and the first service held in the completed building some six months later. The congregation's original but outgrown church, on the opposite side of Wilson Street, was retained as a Sunday School hall.

The other significant addition during the 1880s was the construction of a new Town Hall in the eastern corner of Section XI – a site that had been permanently reserved for council use in 1871. Tenders for a grand new “public building comprising Town Hall, post office, savings bank and court house” were called by architect John Beswicke in November 1884, and the finished building opened the following year. A number of smaller but related buildings were erected alongside the new Town Hall, including two cottages, evidently intended for council staff, on the block's respective frontages to Wilson and Carpenter Streets (Figure 2). The latter frontage was also provided with a small timber public hall, known as the Forester's Hall, and a modest fire station erected by the Brighton Juvenile Fire Brigade. In 1890, the fire brigade relocated to new premises on the other side of the Town Hall, fronting Wilson Street, which, a year later, was taken over by the newly-formed Metropolitan Fire Brigade. They, in turn, relocated to a new purpose-built fire station in 1894, erected nearby on the south side of Boxshall Street. The old fire station in Wilson Street was then adapted for use as council engine sheds.

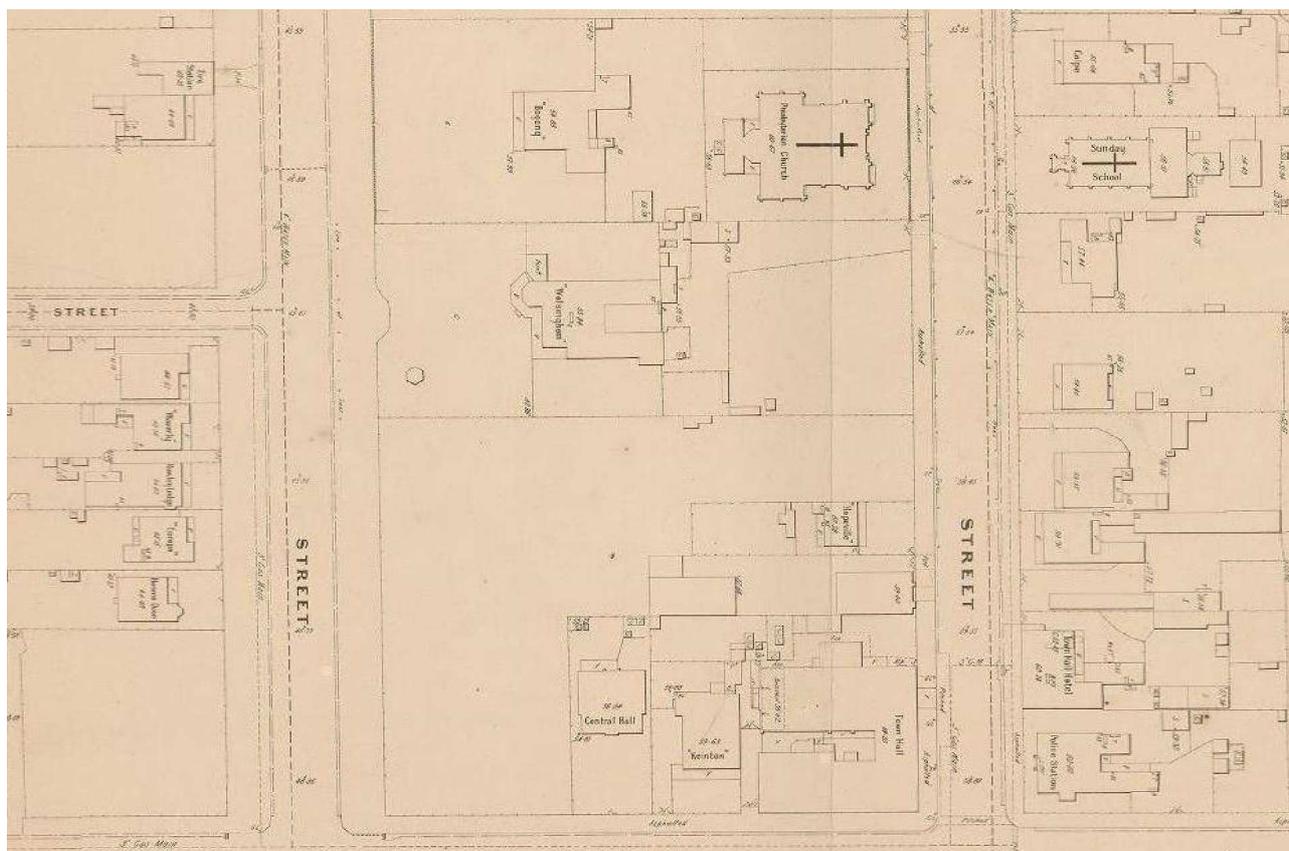


Figure 2: Excerpt of MMBW Detail Plan (1906), showing the extent of development by that time. Note Central Hall on Carpenter Street, two caretaker's cottages flanking Town Hall, and former fire station on Wilson Street. (source: Map Collection, State Library of Victoria)

By 1890, the Primitive Methodist congregation had also outgrown their chapel on the opposite corner of Wilson and Carpenter streets; after moving to new premises in Male Street, the old chapel was briefly occupied by the local Zionists before being pressed into service, around 1910, as Brighton's first automatic telephone exchange. During this period, the Forester's Hall in Carpenter Street was renamed Central Hall, and the council engine sheds on Wilson Street (former fire station) were razed. Community facilities also expanded. A house at 17 Wilson Street became a temporary Red Cross Depot during the First World War, and, afterwards, the Central Hall remodelled as clubrooms for the Returned Soldiers & Sailors Club. The old Primitive Methodist chapel, which had lain vacant since the telephone exchange relocated in 1914, was used by the local Seventh Day Adventists and then, from around 1925, as an ANA Hall.

More fundamental changes took place from the 1930s. A scheme to upgrade the Town Hall prompted the demolition of the two caretaker's residences, and the old Central Hall on Carpenter Street. The Town Hall works, carried out in 1933 by architects Oakley & Parkes, included the removal of the Wilson Street entrance and the erection of a *porte-cochere* to the west side. The vacant land on that side of the building had been acquired by the council and, as the local press reported in March 1934, "is now being laid out in lawns and gardens to form a suitable setting for the building". This would include a formal garden with circular beds, a grand staircase and a rectangular pool (Figure 3). During the Town Hall renovations, the courtrooms was converted into a supper area, which necessitated the erection of a new freestanding court house on Carpenter Street. This, which had been mooted as far back as 1929, was designed by PWD architect (and long-time Brighton resident) Percy Everett, and opened in 1936. Two years later, the old MFB fire station in Boxshall Street was also razed for the erection of a sleek modern counterpart, designed by the noted architectural firm of Seabrook & Fildes – both partners of which, like Percy Everett, happened to be local residents.

By this time, the original Presbyterian church on Wilson Street, and its manse on Boxshall Street, were also in need of upgrading. The latter was demolished in 1941, and a new manse built at 10 Wilson Street, beside the newer church. This was designed by K Murray Forster – not only yet another local resident, but also the son of the church's minister, Reverend Karl Forster. The old manse site in Boxshall Street was sold off for private development, and two new dwellings erected: a Moderne- style duplex at No 11-13 and a striking Georgian Revival house, designed by architects Yuncken Freeman, Griffiths & Simpson, at No 9. Further residential development took place along the south side of Wilson Street, where three houses were built at Nos 16, 18 and 20, between the Presbyterian Church and the Town Hall.

The precinct underwent even more significant changes from the 1950s. The original Presbyterian Church at 11 Wilson Street was demolished in 1950, and a new hall – designed again by K Murray Forster – built in its place. Soon afterwards, the nearby Council Hotel (by then renamed Khyat's Hotel, after its new owners) underwent additions and extensive refurbishment. The old Primitive Methodist Chapel, vacated by the ANA in the mid-1950s and thence occupied for a few years by the Postmaster General's Department, was finally demolished around 1960, and a service station built on the site – a rare incursion of commercial activity in what had essentially developed as a civic and community precinct. The chapel's foundation stone was salvaged and, four years later, was built into a memorial on the street frontage.

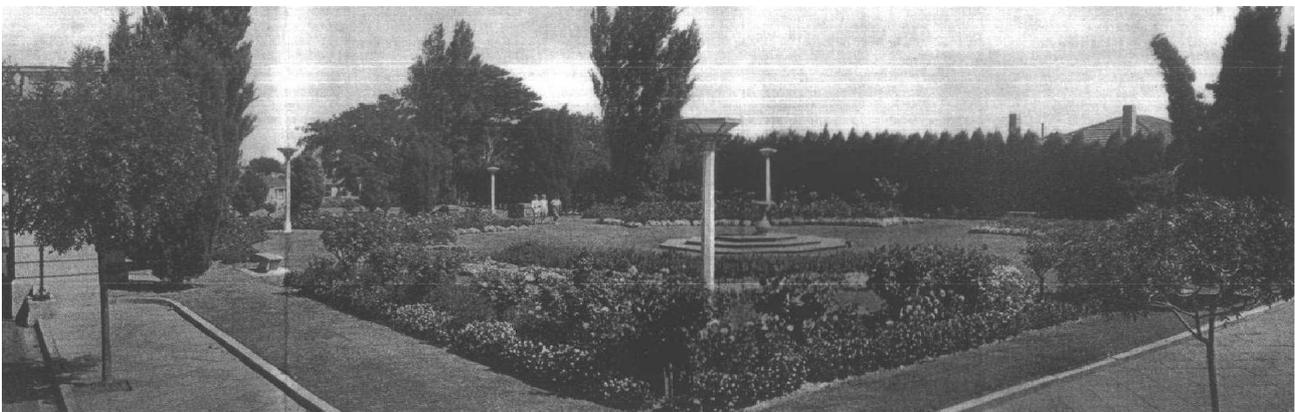


Figure 3: View of Town Hall Gardens from Wilson Street in 1956 , showing original layout of the formal gardens, with central sundial. Note also concrete lampposts and, in the distance to the right, one of the houses erected in 1942. (source: City of Brighton: Know Your City, August 1956, p 3



Figure 4: The Garden Party, held in the Town Hall Gardens to mark the council centenary in 1959. Note the model of the new municipal offices in the centre of the formal pond (source: City of Bayside Library)

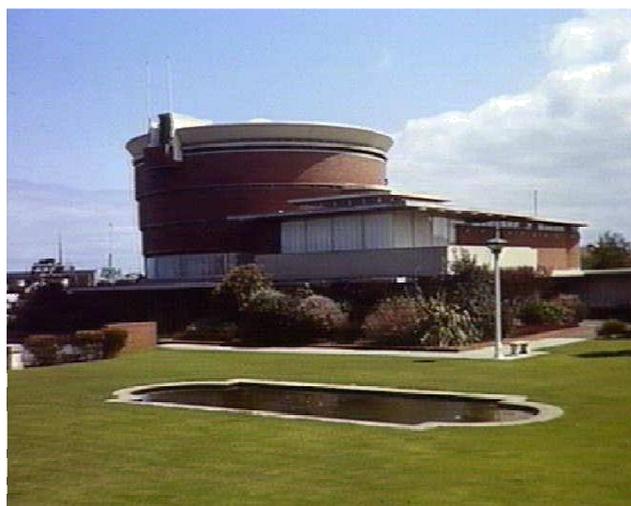


Figure 5: The new municipal offices as they appeared soon after completion in 1961. Note new retaining walls, pathways, plantings, and the old concrete lampposts (source: Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria)

However, by far the most significant change during this period was the construction of the new municipal offices for the City of Brighton. The grand Victorian house at 15 Boxshall Street, occupied by the Snowball family for more than sixty years, was acquired and razed. The firm of Oakley & Parks, which had maintained an association with the council since the 1930s, was engaged to prepare plans. Inspired by the late work of Frank Lloyd Wright, the firm's senior partner Kevin Knight came up with a striking scheme based around a cylindrical council chamber, which, as the local newspaper noted, "will be symbolic of its function as the hub of the city". The foundation stone was laid in February 1959 as part of the festivities held to celebrate the centenary of the Brighton Council, which included a garden party in the Town Hall Gardens attended by more than 200 guests (Figure 4). The completed building, opened in July 1961, included hard landscaping elements that extended into the gardens: concrete steps and pathways, brick retaining walls, and a circular pond that echoed the barrel-like form of the main building (Figure 5). The gardens were further altered when the Brighton Horticultural Society celebrated its own centenary in 1962. A number of "commemorative trees" were planted, and the formal garden on Wilson Street was re-designed as a rose garden, with a new concrete pond and fountain replacing the original circular pavement and sundial at its centre.

Since the late 1970s, the most fundamental changes to the precinct have been in terms of function rather than physical fabric. In 1977, part of the Town hall was refurbished to accommodate the municipal library, and a new carpark laid out alongside. The adjacent court house closed in 1985, following a statewide review by the Attorney-General's Department, and the building lay vacant until it was purchased by council four years later and adapted for community uses such as Meals on Wheels and the Police Citizens' Youth Band. Around the same time, the fire station in Boxshall Street was also rendered defunct; it was subsequently sold by the MFB and refurbished as residential flats. However, the most significant change of this nature took place six years later, when the Cities of Brighton and Sandringham merged to create the new City of Bayside. Council administration was consolidated at the municipal offices in Sandringham, and its counterpart in Boxshall Street was surplus to requirements. During 1997, the ground floor of the heritage-listed building was refurbished as the new municipal library (with a new carpark on Wilson Street, on land formerly occupied by the three early 1940s dwellings) while the distinctive Council Chambers and meeting room upstairs were retained for use by the City of Bayside. To commemorate the creation of the new municipality, Council held a sculpture competition, which was won by the Melbourne-based Yugoslavian-born artist Slavoljub (Slavko) Tumbas (1957-2007). His three-piece symbolic sculpture, entitled *Genesis*, was unveiled in the Town Hall Gardens in February 1999.

Other additions to the Town Hall Gardens since the 1970s have included a bronze replica of *The Cloud*, one of the best known works of local sculptor C Douglas Richardson (1865- 1932), who bequeathed many of his artworks to the City of Brighton after his death. One of the artist's favourite works, this female figure was exhibited by him at least three times in the early 1900s. To mark the Bicentenary of European Settlement in Australia in 1988, a life-size bronze cast was made from the original plaster model, and installed on a pedestal in the Town Hall Gardens' formal pond. A number of memorial plaques have also been installed in the gardens in recent decades, including one erected by the local Rotary Club to mark the centenary of the birth of Henry Dendy in 1981, and another to commemorate poet and local resident Adam Lindsay Gordon. Most of these plaques have been relocated to a paved area behind the new library.

Notwithstanding the relocation of its civic functions, the precinct remains an important centre for community activities. The former Town Hall is used by groups including the Brighton Historical Society, the Brighton Theatre Company and the Brighton Artists Society, while the former court house has, since 1998, served as a local youth centre. St Cuthbert's Memorial Hall, at 11 Wilson Street, is now used as a kindergarten. The former municipal office remains in use as a library, while the Council Chambers and meetings rooms above retain their original civic uses. The trend of public buildings changing their uses (see page 5) has continued in recent years with the closure of Khyat's Hotel in 2010 (and its subsequent re-development as a residential apartment complex), and the relocation of police presence in 2011 from its original building to a new purpose-built complex in Sandringham. Today, the only pre-Second World War public buildings in the precinct that retain their original functions are the Presbyterian church on Wilson Street and its adjacent manse. The Town Hall Gardens continue to be a popular venue for passive recreation, weddings and other events.

Description

The Brighton Town Hall Precinct is centred on a large rectangular open space bounded on three sides by public roadways: Boxshall Street (to the south-west) Carpenter Street (to the south-east) and Wilson Street (to the north-east). Its north-western boundary is marked by what was originally the Presbyterian Church Reserve, extending between Wilson and Boxshall Streets. Although its latter frontage was subdivided for housing in the early 1940s, the church itself – a fine red brick Gothic Revival structure with tower and steeple – remains a prominent element on the Wilson Street side. As the tallest element in the precinct, it forms an appropriate marker at its northern extremity. Along with the similarly towered (if stylistically contrasting) Town Hall at the other end of the block, it acts as an important visual bookend to the Wilson Street frontage of the Town Hall Gardens.

The Town Hall, a large two-storey Classical Revival building at the corner of Wilson and Carpenter streets, is the historical and visual focus of the entire precinct. Built right to the footpath, it is balanced on the opposite (north) corner of the intersection by the former Police Station and former Khyat's Hotel. Together, this group of imposing double-storey rendered masonry buildings, flanking Wilson Street and built close to or on the footpath, form both a cohesive Victorian streetscape and an appropriate gateway to the precinct (Figure 7). Although the Primitive Methodist Church no longer stands on the south corner of this important junction, its existence is significantly acknowledged by an interpretative display with the building's original foundation stone and a metal plaque, set into a dwarf wall on the footpath.

The Town Hall Gardens represent a fine interpolation of formal and informal planting, hard landscaping, sculpture and other built elements dating from the 1930s to the 1990s (Figure 8). Aside from the nineteenth century Town Hall, the reserve contains two twentieth century civic buildings of particularly distinctive form, both of which can be interpreted almost as freestanding sculptures in the landscaped setting. The former Court House, on the Carpenter Street frontage alongside the Town Hall, is a small rectilinear Moderne building of rendered brick, expressed as a series of interlocking volumes (Figure 9). The larger and more prominent municipal offices, fronting Boxshall Street, are in contrasting red brick, having a cylindrical form with flat concrete slab roofs and perforated eaves recalling the late work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The building has been carefully integrated into the gardens by the use of rough concrete paving and steps, matching red brick retaining walls (some of which form planter boxes) and a circular garden bed (originally a pond) that echoes the cylindrical form of the main council chamber (Figure 11). The grounds are further delineated by a narrow asphalt paved roadway with simple concrete kerbing, which extends from Wilson Street behind the Town Hall, through its *porte-cochere*, to a T-junction behind the former court house, and thence to Carpenter Street. A curving pedestrian path, which extends from the edge of this roadway to the corner of Carpenter and Boxshall streets, passes by the Slavko Tumbas sculpture, which is expressed as three discrete elements on masonry plinths. When viewed sequentially, these depict the gradual emergence of a female figure (not entirely unlike Richardson's *The Cloud*) from a pod-like chrysalis.



Figure 6: Wilson Street showing fine Victorian streetscape formed by former Town Hall, hotel and police station



Figure 7: Vista through Town Hall Gardens to former Town Hall and former Khyat's Hotel. Note pond and statue.



Figure 8: Vista through Town Hall Gardens to the east, showing former court house and cypress tree in the distance. Note recent (1990s) landscaping in foreground.



Figure 9: Vista through Town Hall Gardens to the north; note modern sculptures by Slavko Tumbas, the Cork Oak tree and the spire of Presbyterian Church in the distance

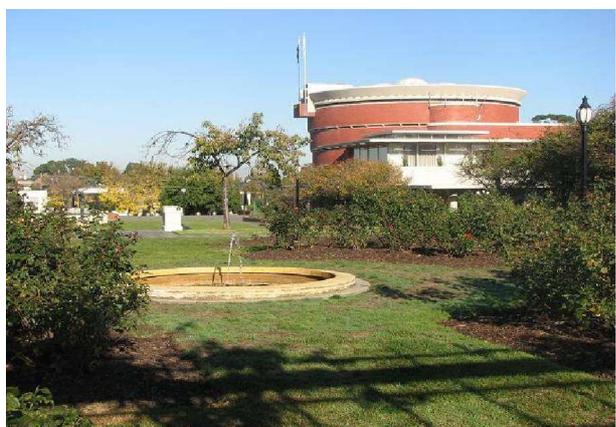


Figure 10: Vista through Town Hall Gardens to the south, showing former municipal offices through the the rose garden, with its central circular pond and fountain.



Figure 11: Collection of Memorial Plaques from the 1980s and '90s, as relocated to the paved area behind the former municipal offices (now library)

The rectangular space of lawn between the former Town Hall and the former Municipal Offices is largely occupied by a formal garden, laid out in a linear axis from Wilson Street to Boxshall Street. The rose garden, at the Wilson Street end, has a central circular concrete-edged pond, with a simple fountain, around which is arranged successive rows of segmental-shaped garden beds, planted with various rose species. At the south-west end of the rose garden, a grand staircase leads down to a sunken lawn. This staircase, of concrete construction, has wide moulded banister with squat balustrades, and panelled plinths bearing the municipal crest. In the centre of the lawn is a rectangular pond with curved ends, in the centre of which, mounted on a pedestal, is the bronze replica of C Douglas Richardson's statue, *The Cloud*. Between the pond and the staircase is a modern sundial, with a metal gnomon set into a smooth bluestone plinth with chamfered corners and a metal plaque identifying it as a war memorial. An elongated pergola along the Wilson Street side, with rusticated pillars and timber beams, is a relatively recent but sympathetic addition. There are some mature trees, notably some cypresses and a prominent Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*), and other plantings.

Comparative Analysis

Within the City of Bayside, the most pertinent comparison to the Brighton Town Hall Precinct would be the equivalent civic centre in the former City of Sandringham. In contrast to the City of Brighton, which traces its origins back to a borough formed in 1859, the City of Sandringham, has a far more recent history as a discrete municipality. The district formed part of the larger Shire of Moorabbin (with a Town Hall on South Road) until 1917, when, after years of local agitation, the Borough of Sandringham was formed. Its new headquarters were established in the Mechanics Institute and Free Library at 31 Abbott Road, built in 1908. Directory listings indicate that a police station had been established alongside (or possibly within) that building around 1915, followed a year later by a police court. By 1930, the premises between Nos 21 and 33 Abbott Road was listed simply as "Town Hall and Police Court". The precinct further expanded by the erection of a Masonic Temple at No 23 (1931) and a modern purpose-built courthouse at No 27 (1944). The latter was very similar to its counterpart at Brighton, designed by Chief PWD architect Percy Everett in a striking Moderne style. A baby health centre began to operate from the Town Hall around 1936, although a purpose-built centre was eventually built alongside (at what is now No 33) in the 1980s.

Although the civic precinct at Abbott Street is broadly comparable to its counterpart at Brighton, it must be noted that it developed along a single stretch of roadway, as opposed to the distinctive landscaped reserve, bounded by three roads, as seen at Brighton. Apart from the masonic temple, it also lacked other grand public buildings, such as the hotel and church evident at Brighton. There was also no fire station (which, in Sandringham's case, was originally built on Bay Road in 1901 and replaced by a new one on Bluff Road in 1924). Like the Brighton Town hall Precinct, the civic centre in Abbott Street saw a number of civic services transferred elsewhere in the post-war period. When new municipal offices were built in the 1960s, these were located on a different site, in Royal Avenue. The police station also moved to new premises in Hampton.

More significantly, the civic precinct at Sandringham has been decimated by demolition and redevelopment. The Town Hall (former Mechanics Institute) was razed in 1994, while the distinctive modern courthouse, which has lain vacant since the late 1980s, was demolished as recently as 2007. The vacant site has since been redeveloped with a new police headquarters, the Bayside Complex, which consolidated existing police presence in Brighton and Hampton. Today, all that remains of the original City of Sandringham Town Hall Precinct is the Masonic Temple at No 23 and the relatively recent baby health centre at No 33.

More broadly, the Brighton Town Hall Precinct can be compared to others in the metropolitan area. The civic centre of the former City of Camberwell, in Inglisby Street, includes Town Hall Gardens, a nineteenth century Town Hall, and a post-war (c.1970) municipal office. The former Kew City Hall also overlooks a landscaped setting, the Alexandra Gardens, although other civic facilities (such as police station and court house) are not nearby. The civic precinct at South Melbourne comprises a fine Town Hall (1880) on an island site, opening on to a town square with civic buildings including a post office (1912), police station (1928) and modern infant welfare centre (1967) designed by Roy Grounds. However, it lacks the landscaped setting seen at Brighton. One must look even further afield, to regional Victoria, to find a civic precinct truly comparable to that at Brighton. Perhaps the most pertinent comparator is at Beechworth, where a nineteenth century Town Hall and the adjacent Bourke Museum overlook Town Hall Gardens, which also contains a modern (1950s) baby health centre. On the opposite side of the street is a row of fine nineteenth century public buildings, including a telegraph office, police station (with lock-up and stables) and court house.

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The Brighton Town Hall Precinct is centred on a large rectangular block bounded by Boxshall Street, Carpenter Street, Wilson Street, which has been associated with government presence since 1861, when the first court house/council office was erected. Following successive phases of demolition and rebuilding during the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the bulk of this site is now occupied by the Town Hall Gardens and its three prominent civic buildings: the former Town Hall (Wilson & Beswicke, 1885), former Court House (Percy Everett, 1936) and former Municipal Offices (K F Knight for Oakley & Parkes, 1959-61). The precinct also includes the Presbyterian Church Reserve along the west boundary of the civic centre, with its red brick church (Evander McIver, 1890), manse (K Murray Forster, 1941) and two private residential developments fronting Boxshall Street. Other public buildings that developed on the opposite sides of the perimeter streets are also included, namely the former Khyat's Hotel (1865), the former Police Station (c.1870s) and the former church hall (K Murray Forster, 1951) on Wilson Street, and the former fire station on Boxshall Street (Seabrook & Fildes, 1938). Also included is the memorial to the Primitive Methodist Chapel (1851) that once stood on the east corner of Carpenter and Wilson Streets.

The Town Hall Gardens, landscaped in 1934 and later, includes a rose garden with central pond (1934; altered 1962), a grand concrete staircase (1933), and a formal rectangular pool (1933) with a bronze replica of C Douglas Richardson's statue, *The Cloud* (1987). Other notable elements include several mature trees, garden beds with flowering plants, reproduction cast iron lampposts (which replaced earlier concrete lampposts), hard landscaping elements (paved paths, steps, retaining walls and a circular garden bed) associated with the 1961 municipal office development, and a modern sculpture entitled *Genesis* (Slavko Tumbas, 1998) that commemorates the creation of the the City of Bayside.

How is it Significant?

The Brighton Town Hall Precinct is of historical, aesthetic, architectural and social significance to the City of Bayside.

Why is it Significant?

Historically and socially, the Brighton Town Hall Precinct is significant for associations with the emergence and subsequent development of local civic activity and identity (*HV Criterion A*). These associations date back to the 1850s, when local Presbyterian and Methodist congregations built their first churches in Wilson Street. Although both have since been razed, the latter's foundation stone has been preserved in a memorial on the corner of Wilson and Carpenter Streets. As the oldest surviving built fabric in the precinct, it remains a unique marker of its earliest phase of development (*HV Criterion B*). Government presence dates back to 1859, when the first council meetings were held in a corner shop (since demolished) on the opposite corner of that intersection, and developed thence with the first court house and council offices (1861), police station (c.1870s), Town Hall (1885), a succession of fire stations (1885, 1890, 1895 and 1937), a new court house (1936) and finally the new municipal offices (1959- 61). The expansion of other public facilities is demonstrated by Khyat's Hotel (1865; extended 1950s) – now the oldest extant building in the precinct – and by the new Presbyterian church (1890), manse (1941) and church hall (1951). Notably, all of the twentieth century public buildings – fire station, church hall, manse, court house and municipal office – stand on or near the site of their nineteenth century counterparts, which provide evidence of ongoing civic use that has existed for up to 150 years (*HV Criterion C*). More recent elements associated with the history of the municipality include the collection of memorial plaques behind the former municipal offices, and a three-piece symbolic sculpture by the late Slavko Tumbas that commemorates the creation of the new City of Bayside.

Socially, the precinct has been (and continues to be) an important focus for the local community, both in terms of special events and everyday activities (*HV Criterion G*). During the twentieth century, the Town Hall Gardens have served as the venue for garden parties, exhibitions, centenary celebrations and other social events, and remain popular today for weddings and passive recreation. The two principal non-civic public building in the precinct, Khyat's Hotel and the Presbyterian Church, retained their original functions for well over a century and remained important social centres for their respective regulars. While the former has since closed, the community outcry that this engendered was testament to its social significance (as upheld by VCAT decision P1929/2008).

Although administrative facilities have largely been relocated elsewhere in recent years (most recently the transferral of the police station to Sandringham in 2010), the civic buildings in the precinct retain their significance to the community through adaptation as a library (former municipal offices), kindergarten (church hall), youth centre (court house) and as meeting places for clubs and societies (former Town Hall). At the same time, the ongoing use of the Council Chambers and meeting room in the former municipal offices significantly demonstrates a continuity of local government presence in the precinct. Memorial plaques in the gardens also testify to the interest of local groups such as the Rotary Club, the Brighton Historical Society and the Brighton Horticultural Society.

Aesthetically, the Brighton Town Hall Precinct is significant for its unusual integration of features. Although the component buildings are of individual aesthetic significance for their respective forms and styles, they combine to create a unique cultural landscape within and around the Town Hall Gardens (*HV Criterion F*). The Town Hall and Presbyterian church, with their comparable (if stylistically disparate) towers, mark the two edges of the precinct and form visual bookends along the Wilson Street frontage of the gardens. At the intersection of Carpenter and Wilson Streets, the Town Hall also combines with the police station and hotel on the opposite side of the road – three buildings comparable in their nineteenth century vintage, double-storey scale, narrow setbacks and rendered finish – to form an imposing gateway at the entrance to the precinct. The three civic buildings in the Town Hall Gardens – all of highly distinctive appearance in their own right – are only enhanced by their placement in an open landscape, which allows them to be viewed and appreciated from many angles and created striking vistas through the precinct. The gardens themselves are of aesthetic note for their striking integration of formal landscaping (eg rose garden, concrete steps and formal pond) with more naturalistic planting and feature trees, straight and curved pedestrian pathways, cast iron lampposts and sculptures. The former Lindsay House at 9 Boxshall Street, one of the few private residential buildings in the precinct, is of aesthetic significance in its own right as a notable example of the inter-war Georgian Revival style (*HV Criterion E*).

Architecturally, the Brighton Town Hall Precinct is significant as a notable collection of public buildings that demonstrate a range of discrete yet functionally comparable building types (*HV Criterion D*). These include local government buildings such as the Town Hall and municipal offices, state government buildings such as the court house and police station, ecclesiastical buildings such as the church, manse and memorial hall, and a single publicly-oriented commercial building in Khyat's Hotel. In this regard, the precinct is unique in the City of Bayside, and appears to be an unusual survivor in the broader metropolitan area. The precinct also derives architectural significance from its associations with a number of prominent architects and firms of the late nineteenth and early-to-mid twentieth century, who were responsible for the individual buildings. The fact that all of twentieth century designers represented in the precinct were long-time local residents (ie Percy Everett, K Murray Forster, Norman Seabrook, Alan Fildes, Percy Oakley and Stanley Parkes) imparts an additional layer of local significance to the entire precinct, which can thus be interpreted as a unique local show-place for their work (*HV Criterion H*).

Significant Elements

The following elements are considered to be crucial to the overall aesthetic, architectural, historical and social significance of the precinct:

- Primitive Methodist Chapel memorial (1851; 1964)
- Former Khyat's Hotel (1865);
- Former Police Station (1870s);
- Former Town Hall (1885) including the cast iron verandah along Wilson Street;
- St Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church (1890);
- Former Court House (1936);
- Former Fire Station (1938);
- Former Municipal Offices (1959-61) including its hard landscaping elements;
- Remnants of the formal garden (1934) including rose garden, grand staircase and rectangular pond;

The following elements are considered to make a contribution to the overall aesthetic, architectural, architectural, historical and social significance of the precinct:

- St Cuthbert's Presbyterian Manse (1941);
- Former Lindsay Residence at 9 Boxshall Street (1942);
- St Cuthbert's Memorial Hall (1951);
- Bronze replica of C D Richardson's *The Cloud* (1987);
- Slavko Tumbas' *Genesis* sculptures (1999);
- Memorial plaques in the paved forecourt to the former Municipal Offices (and elsewhere in gardens);
- Mature trees in the Town Hall Gardens, notably the cypress trees and the prominent Cork Oak;

The following elements are considered to make little or no contribution to the overall aesthetic, architectural, architectural, historical and social significance of the precinct:

- The 1940s maisonettes at 11-13 Boxshall Street
- The reproduction cast iron lampposts in the Town Hall Gardens
- The modern pergola along the Wilson Street frontage to the Town Hall Gardens
- The library carpark

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