

Federation Square

... a place in history...



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Historical summary written for Federation Square Management Pty Ltd

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1. Prologue

After flowing on in silence and solitude for some thousand years, the Yarra has suddenly seen a populous city, 'rise like an exhalation,' on its banks. Fourteen years have not yet elapsed since Melbourne was founded; yet has it already passed through three stages of progress. First, there was the primeval period of wattle-and-dab; then came the era of weather-boarding and broad paling. From this we are now rapidly emerging to the solid substantiality of brick and mortar. Whatever, therefore, is done NOW must give it impress to the FUTURE. This then is the golden opportunity for improvement, which, if neglected, will never return. Every year that the work is postponed the sacrifice demanded will augment, while its fruits will become less and less. Let us not then in our practice realize the fable of the Sybylline leaves. We know not who may be the first Governor of Victoria: but whoever he may be, we hope that if he cannot achieve the boast of Augustus, – "Urbem Marmoream se relinquere quam lateritiam accepisset," his vice-royalty may yet be distinguished by such a complete re-modelling of the city, that, when he leaves us, we may inscribe to his memory, in the future Great Square of the City, the proud epitaph of Wren under the cupola of St. Paul's, "IF YOU ASK FOR HIS MONUMENT—LOOK AROUND YOU."

[Anonymous, Melbourne as it is, and as it ought to be; with remarks on street architecture generally, Reprinted from the first number of The Australasian, Revised, Melbourne: J.Pullar; Geelong: J. Harrison, 1850].

Surveyor Robert Hoddle's grid has, for over a century and a half, fashioned Melbourne's growth and development. It has also symbolised the city itself: open, ordered, civilised, approachable. But, as the anonymous writer of 1850 pointed out in criticising the lack of an open square – 'one of the first requirements of a town' – this city on the River Yarra has long needed a grand open space. Throughout Melbourne's history architects and visionaries have teased citizens with the prospect. Federation Square could be the realisation of this dream, the practical culmination of a century and a half of vision and revision. This new Square promises to be a space for activity as well as architectural significance. It is sited in the logical place, at Melbourne's southern gateway, an area alive with history. Ever since it was set aside for public purposes by Melbourne's early surveyors, this stretch of land bounded by Swanston Street and Princes Bridge to the west, Flinders Street to the north, and the river to the south, has been an intersection of the city's comings and goings. This confluence of road, rail and river, rubbing shoulders with market, morgue, church and hotel, has borne constant witness to the life and death of the city and the daily affairs of its visitors and inhabitants. Writing at the time of Victoria's separation from New South Wales in 1851, the

anonymous critic recorded with uncanny prescience the difficulties facing any attempt at major alterations to this area of the city over the next hundred and fifty years. Finally the realisation of the Federation Square project promises to overcome those problems and become a long-awaited monument to Melbourne's public urban life.

2. Early Days: 1835-1854

Aboriginal peoples

At the time of first European settlement in the Melbourne region, the Kulin confederacy of Aboriginal peoples comprised five language groups living in the broad Port Phillip region. The territory occupied by three of the groups, the Wathaurung, the Bunurong, and the Woiworung, bordered bordered Port Phillip Bay. The Woiworung comprised a number of clans including the Wurundjeri, who laid claim to the area drained by the Yarra River and its tributaries. In the first years after European settlement Aboriginal clans still camped at their traditional locations on both sides of the Yarra, near the future Melbourne Cricket Ground and Government House. As late as January 1870 Aborigines camped on the reserve later occupied by the railway yards south of Russell Street.

Land sales

Land subdivided north of Flinders Street and west of Swanston Street was sold at the first government land sale on 1 June 1837, and land to the east of Swanston Street was sold at the third sale on 13 September 1838. The same year the land to the south of Flinders Street, from its eastern corner with Swanston Street to the Police Magistrate's Paddock level with Gisborne Street, was reserved for public use. This land was enclosed by post-and-rail fences, and was a low-lying, swampy paddock sloping down to the Yarra River and its overflow lagoon.

Pound and Punt

In March 1839 William Lonsdale appointed George Scarborough to be Keeper of the Pound on part of the Reserve 'situate midway between the western boundary

of the Police Magistrate's Paddock and the punt of the Yarra River.' Historian W.H. Newnham records a well-known personality at the pound, a magpie nicknamed 'Professor' who was partial to hard liquor, was known to put in a bid at auctions, and drowned in the Yarra 'under the influence'.

An early settler, Arundel Wrighte, erected a weatherboard house in what became part of the Government Paddock at the eastern end of the town, and though instructed to remove the house in 1837, he remained there until 1839. The previous year Thomas Watt operated a punt, 'The Melbourne', across the river above the Falls, halfway between Swanston and Russell Streets. An 1870s painting by W.F.E. Liardet shows a house on the north bank of the Yarra, which is possibly Alexander Thomson's, as shown on Robert Russell's 1837 plan of Melbourne.

3. Coroner's Office, Registration Office, Morgue: 1854-1883

Morgue and Coroner's Office

The idea of a central morgue to store bodies for identification and inquest was new to the nineteenth-century British Empire. Inquests took place in public houses, and bodies awaiting inquest were stored in outbuildings. By the end of the 1850s the first of Melbourne's nineteenth-century morgues had been built, though it was not until 1888 that the morgue found a more permanent home, just outside the city on Yarra Bank Road (Batman Avenue), where it stayed until the 1950s.

The discovery of gold led to a vast influx of immigrants, and Melbourne's 1851 population of 23,000 tripled in just three years. Identification, decency and health demanded the presence of the Melbourne Morgue, but nobody was sure where to put it. A site near Princes Bridge was important for its central location.

By May 1854 the Coroner's Office and Morgue were being erected as two separate structures, the morgue to 'be situated in the bank of the bridge approach, and thus form a kind of catacomb, which will be masked with shrubs, &c.' Lieutenant Governor La Trobe regarded the siting of the Morgue as 'horrible' and

'needlessly offensive to the feelings of the citizens'. The Argus newspaper of June 1854, also disapproved of the 'indelicate' location of the Morgue at Princes Bridge, impinging as it did onto the 'busy street-life of a bustling city'.

That a building of this sort is necessary, and that it should be no part of a publican's business to provide accommodation for dead bodies, we willingly concede. But while we think that a dead-house should not only be accessible, but in a site generally known, we scarcely see the necessity of placing an object suggestive of rather disagreeable impressions so very near a busy thoroughfare as that at the foot of the Prince's Bridge. We do not wish unnecessarily to prejudice the minds of our readers upon the subject, but we would warn passengers that way that the remains of unfortunate persons are frequently discovered in a very advanced state of decomposition, and that some delay may occasionally occur in their identification, and in the ultimate disposal of their bodies. As our rich citizens drive across the bridge then, exhausted by the labors of the day; and, with empty stomachs, begin to turn their thoughts to the fragrant hashes and savory cutlets which will greet them on their arrival at St. Kilda or South Yarra, they must not feel surprised if they find themselves suddenly assailed with a whiff of something not particularly appetising. They must console themselves with the reflection, that it is nothing worse than the smell from the decaying bodies of a few of their fellow creatures.

In June 1856 access to the Office was obstructed by drays and carts as they crossed the footway to a watering place on the Yarra, as well as by piles of rotting animal and vegetable matter. At the end of 1854, dead bodies were still being conveyed to public houses. An inquest into the death of Alexander McQueen, a boy who drowned after falling into a water race on Flinders Street, was held at the Duke of Wellington Hotel on 30 November 1854. The Argus again noted the necessity for a proper morgue after 'the friends of the unfortunate lad complained of the body having been deposited in a fowl-house, exposed to the heat of the atmosphere, which induced decomposition so rapidly, as to be painful to them even in the short time elapsing between the death and the inquest'.

Temporary morgues were located at the Australian Wharf and elsewhere, but by February 1871 the Princes Bridge site was favoured by the Argus over other, more noticeable sites.

The Prince's Bridge morgue, completed in 1871, was attached to the original 1854 office building. The dead-house, a building with no windows, was separated from the court building by a yard, with space for a laboratory. The court room could be entered from either the yard or the Flinders Street side of the building.

Registrar's Office

The building was used by the Coroner and the Registrar, and is listed variously as office for the registration of births, deaths, marriages, vaccination and electoral purposes. From the 1850s the law required children to be registered within sixty days of their birth. Parents, or occupiers of premises where a birth or death occurred, had to notify the registrar. Deaths were to be registered before the funeral took place. By the 1850s parents were also required to have their children vaccinated and inspected eight days afterwards. The Registrar of Births and Deaths and Electoral registrar for the District and City of Melbourne in 1859 was the Hon. J.D. Tierney, M.D., and the caretakers of the Registration Office (and from 1871, the Morgue) from the late 1860s to the early 1880s were Ellen Tierney and Ellen Prendergast. In 1875 Mrs Prendergast was horrified to find the door of the Morgue left ajar, and a corpse 'on the slab in the centre of the Morgue ... so that any person having occasion to enter the yard would have a full view'.

City gateway

Even after a central morgue was established in the city, bodies were still taken to local hotels for inquest. By 1878 its dilapidated condition prompted Coroner Candler to suggest 'that the place should be made far more presentable than it is - more creditable to the City of Melbourne - and more fitted for its purpose.'

A new Princes Bridge was opened in 1888, and the following year citizens sought improvements to the intersection 'to make a truly noble approach.' By 1900 the site was firmly identified as the city's gateway from St Kilda Road, and improvements after 1901 were motivated by the opening of Federal Parliament in Melbourne, the Royal Visit, and the visit of the American Fleet in 1908. By that year the Melbourne City Council and the Government had invested hundreds of thousands of pounds on the new station and on statues, lawns, and flower beds at the city's southern entrance in an effort, as the Argus would have it in 1908, 'to make this spot - the city's front door - a credit to Melbourne.' The Prince's Bridge morgue was finally abandoned by the coroners in 1883.

The intersection of Swanston and Flinders streets, and its opposing landmarks of St Paul's Cathedral and Young and Jackson's Hotel, marked it as both sacred and secular ground, reinforcing its special place in the hearts and minds of Melburnians. Where once morgue and fish-market had tainted its dignity, by 1908 a new and grand central railway station was nearing completion.

4. Princes Bridge

Princes Bridge is one of the most important nineteenth century bridges in Australia, and one of Melbourne's best known landmarks, crossing the Yarra River to form a grand southern gateway linking St Kilda Road with Swanston Street. The current bridge is the third on the site, constructed as the result of an architectural design competition and opened in 1888.

Before the construction of a bridge punts ferried people and animals from bank to bank. The location of Prince's Bridge was established as the major crossing point at the beginning of white settlement. Since then it has been the major access point into the city for the south-eastern suburbs, and their numerous tram lines. It also forms part of the civic axis of Swanston Street, and is the major access point from the city grid to city parks and the Southbank arts and retail precinct.

Early bridges

An 1845 timber bridge, only seventeen feet wide, was leased to Robert Balbirnie, who charged people tolls to cross. On 20 March 1846 Governor La Trobe laid the foundation stone of the new bridge, named after Queen Victoria's young son Edward, Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. La Trobe finally opened the bridge on 15 November, 1850 as part of the Separation celebrations. Thirty feet wide and with a single arch spanning 150 feet, it was only two feet shorter than London Bridge, and one of the longest of its kind in the world. It was demolished in 1884, when a temporary bridge conducted Melburnians across the river, until the opening of the present structure on 4 October, 1888.

New bridge: 1888

The foundation stone of the new bridge was laid on 7 September 1886 by Mrs Stewart, wife of the then Mayor of Melbourne. The City of Melbourne donated one-third of the cost, with South Melbourne, Prahran, St Kilda, Malvern, Brighton, Caulfield and Moorabbin making varying contributions. The design, by architects Grainger and Jenkins, was chosen by competition in 1879, and the bridge was built by David Munro & Co. Construction doubled the width of the river for flood relief purposes, and it was opened on

4 October 1888. It was a major civic embellishment and is arguably the most grandly conceived and one of the most ornate 19th century bridges in a major city in Australia. Resembling Blackfriars Bridge in London, Prince's Bridge is 99 feet wide and 400 feet long, with three spans of 100 feet each, and a land span of 24 feet at the southern end. The abutments, piers and wing walls are built of bluestone, with concrete foundations resting on solid rock. One thousand tons of wrought iron, and 2000 tons of cast iron, were used in its construction, and cast iron lamps were added in the 1920s.

Ritual space & meeting place

A grand procession featured in the celebrations for the laying of the foundation stone of Prince's Bridge on 20 March 1846. The 1867 visit of the Duke of Edinburgh saw the bridge decorated with flags and a celebratory arch, which were featured again during the 1901 Commonwealth Celebrations and the 1984 Victorian sesquicentenary. Together with the steps of Flinders Street Station and the Town Hall corner, the bridge has been a favourite meeting place for generations of Melburnians. Diving, swimming and life saving displays were popular from the 1920s, and from the 1950s Moomba events featured the bridge as stage and stand. The landing below was the starting point for popular inter-war river cruises and excursions to the Hawthorn Tea Gardens, Dight's Falls, Williamstown and the Maribyrnong. Earlier the poor lighting of the area was a common source of complaint about prostitutes and drunken sailors, and gas lamps were finally erected in the 1850s. Princes Bridge Hotel, now Young and Jackson's, was opened at the corner of Swanston and Flinders streets in 1861.

Setting the scene

Prince's Bridge has featured regularly in paintings, photographs and postcard views of Melbourne landmarks. Ludwig Becker's 'Old Prince's Bridge and St Paul's by Moonlight' (1857) featured the newly-installed gas lamps. Four years later Henry Burn painted a daytime view of Swanston Street from Prince's Bridge, populating the bridge's approaches with fashionable townsfolk. Nineteenth century illustrated journals regularly featured the bridge as a backdrop to the events of the day: Easter Monday river carnivals, rowing regattas, citizens returning home over the bridge at day's end, festival celebrations, or the Yarra River in flood. As a visual link to the Shrine of Remembrance from Swanston Street to St Kilda Road, and

adjacent to late twentieth century developments at Southbank and Federation Square, Prince's Bridge continues to dominate Melbourne's southern entrance.

5. The River Yarra

Whether celebrated as the 'mother stream of the village of Melbourne' or denigrated as a 'two-faced river', Melbourne's location was undoubtedly fixed by the existence of the Yarra. The availability of fresh water above rocky falls at a site on the river ten kilometres from its mouth persuaded John Batman in 1835 that 'this will be the place for a village'. Any commercial settlement in the early nineteenth century needed fresh water to drink, and salt water for its trading ships. So from the beginning European eyes looked to the Yarra and surrounds for these advantages, and Robert Hoddle's city aligned itself with the course of the river.

While John Batman's map called it 'Batman's River', its final naming is credited to J. H. Wedge, surveyor for Batman's Port Phillip Association. Wedge's notebook recorded the name 'Yarrow Yarrow', a rendering of 'Yarra Yarra', though he later conceded that he had confused the aboriginal term for rapids or waterfalls with the name of the river itself. The aboriginal peoples of the Melbourne region had their own name for the river -- Birrarung.

Ferries and then bridges allowed the free movement of people and commerce as Melbourne spread rapidly. Upstream of the growing city water using industries - fellmongers, wool washers, tanneries and other noxious trades - clustered along the banks. It was not only a source of water for processing, but also a convenient place to dispose of waste. So an accumulating cargo of rotting animal parts, household rubbish and other pollutants flowed with the stream towards Hobsons Bay. People living in Melbourne drew their drinking water from pumps that carried the ever present threat of water borne diseases, until the Yan Yean scheme rescued them in 1857. People bathed in the river, fished in it and rowed on it for recreation, contributing to its further pollution. Legislation introduced to combat this was not effectively enforced, and during the 1890s a Scottish traveller claimed it was 'the filthiest piece of water I ever had the misfortune to be afloat on'. By the

end of the century, however, the worst of the abuse was over, with most of the noxious industries migrating to Footscray and Flemington on the Maribyrnong. Melbourne had belatedly constructed an underground sewerage system in the 1890s, transferring wastes to the sewerage farm at Werribee for treatment, instead of filtering them into the Yarra and its tributaries. Much industrial waste, too, went into the sewers.

The river served not only the commercial interests of the town, but was a vital source of portable water. In the 1840s pumps were installed on the north bank between Queen and Russell streets, and on the north bank in the Police Paddocks between Wellington Parade and the river. In 1854 the inadequacy of the pumps east of Princes bridge led to long lines of waiting carts. In the early years water-cart operators hawked the dubious supply at exorbitant rates. Water from the Plenty River, via the Yan Yean system, was first available in 1857, although the water-carts continued to meet local demand into the 1860s.

The Yarra did not always submit passively to abuse. Every few decades it burst its banks, taking furious retribution on those who had built on its floodplain. In 1803, Flemming noted flood marks on trees 20 feet off the ground. European settlers experienced their first major flood on Christmas Day 1839, and from then on this became a continuing anxiety for nineteenth century Melbourne. A great flood in December 1863 stretched from the Customs House to present-day Toorak Road.

English engineer Sir John Coode's 1879 report to the Melbourne Harbour Trust was a catalyst for major flood mitigation schemes and harbour extensions. He recommended the cutting of a channel to by-pass the river at Fishermen's Bend from its junction with the Maribyrnong. Digging of this channel started in 1880 as unemployed relief work. Other measures included dredging and the removal of reefs. Water from the Yarra was let into the new Fishermen's Bend Cut in 1886, and the canal was officially named Coode Canal in 1899. The island created by the bypass became Coode Island. Sir John Coode also recommended the construction of Victoria Dock, completed in 1892 as the first stage in the migration of the docks downstream towards Hobsons Bay, a process continuing to the present day.

Improvement of the Yarra's northern bank from the 1880s was undertaken by the City Council by sloping and stone-pitching the area from Princes Bridge to the Old Friendly Society's gardens. By then Yarra Bank Road (renamed Batman Avenue in 1913) had been formed. An abutment wing was erected which included a range of shops built under arches supporting the footway of the road.

After a major flood in 1891 a Yarra Floods Board recommended the river be widened and deepened along its lower reaches. The 1896 Yarra Improvement Act enabled the Board of Land and Works to undertake major realignments between Princes Bridge and Church Street. Between 1897 and 1901, the Botanic Gardens Cut straightened the Yarra by removing a series of billabongs which had banked up flood waters. This route diverted the river beneath the newly built Morrell Bridge (1899) designed by Sir John Monash as one of the first reinforced concrete bridges in Australia.

From 1854 the Upper Yarra Steam Gondola Company regularly ferried pleasure seekers to entertainments at Cremorne Gardens at Richmond. The Upper Yarra Steamboat Pier occupied the north bank of the river east of Princes Bridge until the mid 1860s, and Brander's ferry operated from around 1868-1878.

Rowing regattas were popular from the 1860s, and boathouses at Studley Park (1863) and Fairfield (1908) are still popular today. In Melbourne's early years watermen operated without a licence from the Customs House, and by 1868 a dozen or so of these Upper Yarra Watermen plied their trade for a decade or more. They included Jesse Barrow, George Bruce, Edward and John Bryant, John Ferris, Horatio Nelson, Henry Robinson and Thomas Spooner.

In May 1863 Horatio Nelson wrote to the Melbourne City Council offering the services of the Upper Yarra Watermen for the celebrations for the Royal marriage:

It is the custom in England on Lord Mayor's Day, and in the majority of State processions, to have the shipping interest represented by a gaily dressed boat drawn by four or six horses. On the stem and stern are union jacks with four men dressed man-of-war fashion. The boat is easily fixed, and will hold either a band of music or eight or ten passengers.

From 1904, Henley on Yarra became a major carnival in Melbourne's social calendar, with its houseboats, fashion events and rowing. The Moomba Festival took over from the mid '50s. The completion of the Yarra Boulevard in the early 1930s caused predictions of a decline in recreational boating, but the delights of the Yarra have survived. Today these attractions include boating, tourist ferries and canoeing, bike paths, recreation reserves, golf courses and parks. The river's upper reaches, unknown to many Melburnians, remain a favourite haunt for nature lovers.

6. Environs

Young and Jackson's Hotel

One of Australia's most famous hotels stands at the north-west corner of Swanston and Flinders streets, on part of the block originally purchased by John Batman in 1837 for £100. Part of the allotment was purchased by Henry Jennings in 1852, and a year later a three-storey bluestone building had been constructed on the site, occupied on the ground floor by butcher James Graham. On 1 July 1861 John P. Toohey opened the Prince's Bridge Hotel. The license was later transferred to James Hogan (1862) and Joshua Roberts Mooney (1866), and in 1875 taken over by Henry Figsby Young (1845-1925) and Thomas Joshua Jackson (1834-1901). The Dublin-born pair had previously held the license of the Sparrow's Hotel in St Kilda. In 1914 Young sold his interests in the hotel to Stephen Morell, and in 1979 Marcel Gilbert purchased the hotel for \$1,680,000, undertaking extensive renovations. In 1986 it was purchased by the brewery division of the Bond Corporation.

The building itself has been regularly altered and extended over the years, and remains one of Melbourne's principal landmarks. The controversial painting of Chloe was installed in the saloon bar in 1908, and the building has long been known for the electric sky-signs above its facade.

Fish Market

Melbourne's fishmarket once operated from the south-east corner of Flinders and Swanston Streets. A new market building was built in 1865, and was moved to new premises at the south-east corner of Spencer and Flinders Streets in 1892.. The old building was demolished in 1900 to make way for the new Flinders Street Station.

St Paul's Cathedral

In 1841 the north-east corner site at the intersection of Swanston and Flinders Streets was leased as a hay and corn market, operating until the 1847 opening of the Eastern Market in Bourke Street. Bishop Charles Perry took the opportunity of the vacant block to secure a better location for the Church of England in a central part of town. The foundation stone of the Charles Webb designed bluestone St Paul's Church was laid in 1850, and the 2000 capacity St Paul's Cathedral was consecrated in 1891. The Cathedral was designed by English Gothic Revival architect William Butterfield.

7. Railway precinct

The growth of railway infrastructure in the mid to late nineteenth century fed Melbourne's rapid suburban expansion. From 1859 Princes Bridge Station, on the east side of Swanston Street, was the terminus of the Melbourne and Suburban Company's Windsor and Brighton lines, extending to Richmond from 1857, then to Windsor (1860) and Hawthorn (1861). In addition the St Kilda and Brighton Railway Company ran a private line between 1857 and 1865. From 1864 a consolidated company, the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay United Railway Company, controlled southern and eastern traffic. This was taken over by the State run Victorian Railways Department in 1878. Princes Bridge Station was closed in 1866 so its lines could be connected to those running to Flinders Street. Culverts were excavated beneath Swanston Street to connect Flinders Street Station with Princes Bridge Station, where lines reopened in 1879 and operated as the Victorian Gippsland Railway Station.

Successive developments at Princes Bridge Station including the parcels office (from 1885), Electric Telegraph Office (from 1894), refreshment rooms/confectionary shop (Thomas Gillam from 1897, Arthur M. Gillam 1908-1913), bookshop (Mrs W. Baird 1887, L.Hume 1891-4, Frank Pyke & Co. 1895-1910; Gordon & Gotch 1913-1918), florist (Moritz Wetheimer 1894), Railway Central Booking & Enquiry Office (1903-1906), Telephone Bureau, Cloak Room and Lost Property Office (from 1908), bootmaker (Harold Sweeney 1927-32, Melbourne Shoe Repairs Pty Ltd 1937-45, City Shoe Repairs Pty Ltd 1946-, Foot Services 1955-62 at 191 Flinders Street), chemist (Whitaker & Cole 1932-37, Dickson's Pharmacy 1938-62, from 1955 at 189 Flinders Street), Victorian Railway Sweet Stall (1942-62), fruiterer (from 1955 at 187 Flinders Street). From 1937 other services were located on the railway concourse including dry cleaners (Brown's Dry Cleaning 1937-62; Brown Gouge Ltd 1955-), florists (A.S. Wilson 1937-62) and pastrycooks (Scone Cottage 1937-62), Victorian Railways Fruit Stall (1946-62).

Construction of Flinders Street as the city's central railway station was completed in 1910, but an ever-increasing growth in suburban railway traffic required the continued use of Princes Bridge Station.

8. Princes Gate

From 1967 the twin towers of the Princes Gate development severed the link between Flinders Street and the river. The east tower housed the Victorian Employees Federation, the west tower the Gas and Fuel Corporation. Princes Gate Arcade's 14 tenants included a supermarket, clothes shops and a bank. West of Princes Bridge Station and the Kingstrip carpark a public terrace capped off the Swanston Street corner of the site. In 1963 Victorian Premier Henry Bolte announced a £5 million project to roof part of the Princes Bridge Railway yards, and build a plaza and two 15-storey buildings on this structure. The idea was to cover the entire yards with buildings and carparks. Architects were Leslie M. Perrot and Partners, and the developers were Princes Gate Pty Ltd., jointly owned by Oddenino's property and Investment Co. Ltd of London, and Lend Lease Corporation Ltd of Australia. The visually unpopular towers were demolished in 1996-7.

9. Plans and visions

Melbourne's search for a suitable city square site and a design for its important southern gateway have provoked a host of proposals, most never realised. These included the early-modernist schemes of the 1920s, when Town Planning was in its infancy; the late-modernist schemes of 1950s, and the post-modernism of the 1990s. The roofing of the rail yards had been mooted at least from the 1920s, and successive proposals offered design solutions ranging from car parks and terraces, to office blocks, and civic plazas.

1925: Cathedral Square proposal

The Royal Victorian Institute of Architects' design competition resulted in James Smith's winning 'Cathedral Square' proposal in 1925. This was a development set back from the street line, comprising paved civic plaza, fountain, arcaded walk, steps, railway offices, tourist bureau and concourses. This was seen as an opportunity to develop the Princes Bridge Station site to be: 'Worthy of Melbourne's present and future greatness', with: 'A clear and uninterrupted vista of the cathedral.' It would also enhance the beauty of the St Kilda Road approach to Melbourne. In 1928 the Minister for Railways invited designs for a new square and decking of the rail yards.

1929: Metropolitan Town Planning Commission

The Metropolitan Town Planning Commission was created in 1922, chaired by Melbourne City Councillor and architect Frank Stapley. The Commission in 1929 included in its plan for Melbourne's development an extensive proposal for covering the Jolimont railway yards, and reviewed various proposals for a city square at Prince's Bridge. The Victorian Railways Commissioners, supported by the City Council, wanted to build a Tourist Bureau over the Princes Bridge Railway Station. The initial scheme was to build between Flinders Street and Batman Avenue, with a western alignment 33 feet east of Prince's Bridge. Following public pressure for a larger amount of open space, a committee recommended in 1928 that the proposed location bounded by Swanston and Flinders Streets and Batman Avenue was unsuitable for a city square due to the cost and traffic congestion.

1954: MMBW Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme

From 1949 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works began a planning strategy for Melbourne, with engineer E.F. Borrie as Chief Planner. The 1954 Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme proposed to upgrade the city's southern gateway by redeveloping the river frontage, partially roofing the rail yards, constructing a bridge from Russell Street to Batman Avenue, and building underpasses below Princes Bridge and Batman Avenue.

1958: Kenneth McDonald plan

Kenneth MacDonald and Associates proposed a plan to the Melbourne City Council in 1958 to roof the rail yards between Swanston and Spring Streets in a development including apartment and hotel towers, a theatre and an office tower with shops, open squares, car parks and gardens.

1961 William Lempriere scheme

The City Development Association, a CBD pressure group of commercial, insurance and other interests, was formed in 1953 to lobby for central city promotion and urban improvement. Executive Director N. Lyncham proposed in 1961 that Princes Bridge was the ideal site for a city square. The same year wool-broker and ex Lord Mayor William Lempriere announced his scheme for Matthew Flinders Square. Prepared by architects Montgomery, King and Trengrove, the plan was a response to: "The desecration of the city's southern gateway by the rail yards," and the "'mid-Victorian monstrosity" of Flinders Street Station. Roofing the rail yards and relocating the railway station underground would have created a large open surface at the city end of Princes Bridge, allowing the construction of a new Town Hall, a six-acre civic square, concert auditoriums, a new railways administration building and other commercial buildings.

1973: Jolimont Pleasure Gardens

The City of Melbourne's 1973 Strategy Plan included a proposal for a 'Jolimont Pleasure Garden', which meant roofing the Jolimont Rail yard to reconnect Melbourne with the Yarra River and the sports and arts precincts beyond.

1979: Landmark Competition

In August 1979 Victorian Premier Mr Rupert Hamer announced a \$100,000 Landmark Competition to roof the Jolimont rail yards and bring international

attention to the city. The competition committee, chaired by Ron Walker, chose 48 finalists from around 2300 entries. The winning designs went on public display in January 1980. No single winner was chosen, the committee recommending a composite scheme featuring a large tower in a garden setting. Critics lampooned the competition as an ill-conceived waste of time and resources, and each of the 48 finalists received a little over \$2000 prize money. Judging panel member Professor Patrick McCaughey was appalled by the low standard of entries, describing the winners as demonstrations of 'a megalomania that makes the pyramids look like pimples'. Designs for the site included hanging gardens, an underwater gallery, a free-standing escalator, a series of 12 transparent arches, a solar-powered earth beam, a Freedom Bird Park, and a Time Tower.

1985: Denton Corker Marshall, Princes Plaza Proposal

Following an urban design study of the princes Bridge Station precinct, architects Denton Corker Marshall prepared a scheme for Princes Plaza entailing demolition of one of the Princes Gate towers and the building of a large street level plaza stretching across the rail yards. To the east a horizontal block building enclosed a formal garden.

Federation square

A preliminary Federation Square design brief in 1996 offered competition entrants the opportunity to redesign the site highlighting its importance as a place of civic celebration and public interaction. The site was conceived as a Federation 'Arc' embracing buildings and sites associated with Australian Federation: The Old Treasury, Treasury Gardens, Parliament House, and Exhibition Buildings. Five of the 177 entries received were shortlisted, and the winner was announced in July 1997. The seven-member judging panel, chaired by Professor Neville Quarry, praised the winning design of Lab Architecture Studio (London) and Bates Smart Architects (Australia): 'The winning scheme draws its inspiration from the unique urban characteristics of Melbourne's arcades and lanes, and transforms these elements into a new form of organisation, celebrating the city'.

The 3.2 hectare Federation Square development at the corner of Swanston and Flinders Street integrates civic spaces, transport hub, tourist and civic facilities.

Among buildings and open spaces included in a precinct stretching from Swanston Street to Melbourne Park are:

- a large irregularly shaped city square

- a plaza to be known as St Paul's Court, facing north and creating a piazza for al fresco dining, street theatre and music
- a building complex along the Flinders Street frontage, providing gallery and performance spaces and cafes
- a building complex over the Russell Street extension for the Cinemedia centre, multimedia facilities and offices
- a glass wintergarden atrium, complete with rainforest and desert greenhouses, slicing through the two major building complexes, a free-standing restaurant, and a free-standing viewing tower

Following the announcement of the winning Federation Square design in 1997 public controversy raged over the height and siting of shards on the north-west corner of the site. The National Trust and members of the Melbourne City Council defended the view of St Paul's cathedral from Princes Bridge, and in the final design of June, 1998 the shards were realigned and reduced in height by two metres. An independent review by architect and former Planning Minister Professor Evan Walker in early 2000 recommended the removal of the western shard near the corner of Swanston and Flinders Streets, to minimise obstruction to the view of St Paul's Cathedral from the south. Premier Steve Bracks announced on 17 February, 2000 that one of the glass shards would be scrapped. The project's architects argued that such intervention would compromise the integrity of their overall design package.

The Government's Project Director, Damien Bonnice, who was critical of the Government's handling of the project, resigned in March 2000. In June 2000 the Auditor-General reported to Parliament on the project's mismanagement, cost blowouts, the initial judging panel procedures and subsequent decision-making processes. In September 2000 a working party review, chaired by the Federation Square management company chief executive Peter Seamer, reported on project costs and timing, and recommended a restructured and simplified management system reporting directly to the Minister for Major Projects. A management company, Federation Square Management Pty Ltd, was established to oversee development and operate Federation Square in perpetuity. In October 2000 the State Government announced that the controversial western shard would be replaced by a lower structure, no higher than eight metres.

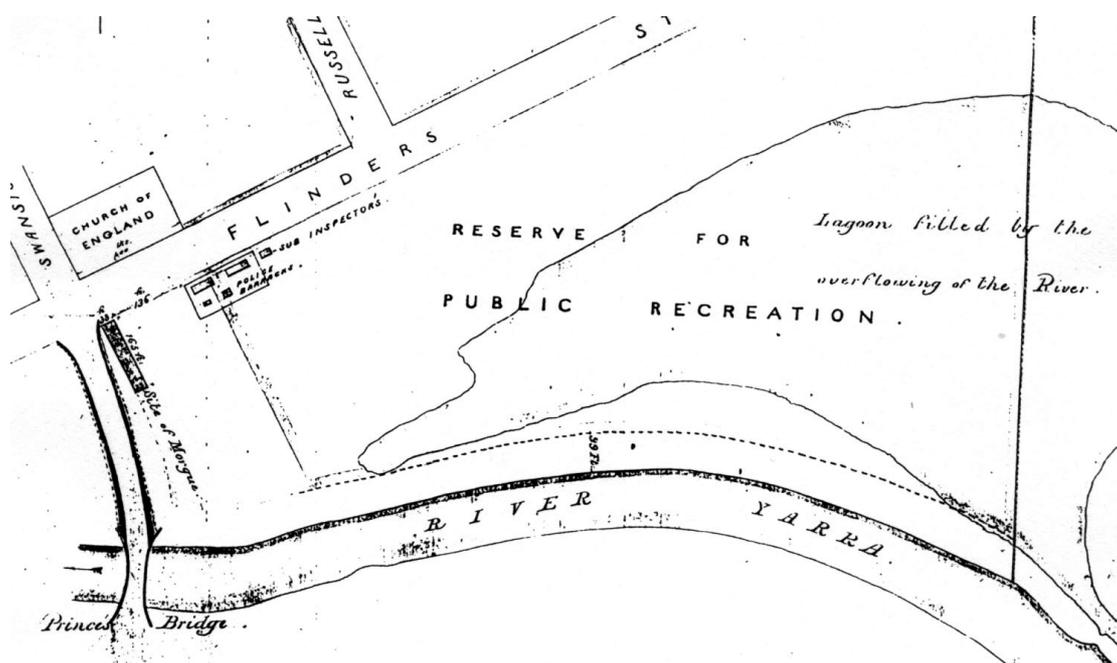
Peter Davidson and Donald Bates of Lab Architecture Studio articulated the tension between creating a 'new urban order' adapted to public activities and

social programs, and the continuation of links with the existing metropolis. With permeability, diversity, linkage, vitality and openness as essentials of their design, they championed the potential of the site – of which around two thirds is construction, and a third open space – to operate as productive civic space:

'The production of truly public space, not just territories and properties managed by government authorities, is a consequence of the political and the architectural. It requires a political will to ensure its possibilities, and relies upon an architectural form for its execution.'

Generations of locals and visitors have gone about their business at the south-east corner of Melbourne's Swanston and Flinders Streets, on their way to or from work, plying their trade, taking a breather, or meeting their friends at this great intersection. Occasionally throughout history this daily throng of human traffic throws up a face in the crowd. Catherine Payne or Richard Blake vending fruit at the corner in the early 1880s, Samuel Simpson selling newspapers or Henry Baker's sausage stand in the 1890s. From the days of the swampy low-lying wasteland, the Registrar's office and the morgue, to the twentieth century and its thousands of daily commuters, these individual traces and layers have created a priceless communal core for Melbourne. Its tradition will now be reflected and valued in the realisation of a new civic gateway.

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11. Place name suggestions

Occupations, Industries, Places

Registry, Registrar
Morgue, Dead-House, Corpse, Inquest, Juror, Jury
Waterworks, Pump
Lagoon, Swamp
Bridge
Waterman, Punt, Ferry, Gondola, Steamboat, Boatbuilder
Pound
Fishmarket
Police Barracks
Railway, Company, Locomotive, Parcels, Lost Property, Telegraph, Culvert, Platform

Groups and Individuals

Wurundjeri
Individual coroners: William Wilmot; Richard Youl; Cutis Candler
Mrs Tierney
Mrs Prendergast
Ferry/Punt keepers: Thomas Watt, John Welsh
Individual watermen: eg Horatio Nelson
Keeper of the Pound: George Scarborough
Balbirnie (early bridge)
Painters: Henry Burn; Ludwig Becker
Alexander Thompson (first house on site)
McCallum's (hut on 1838 map)

Events

Flood
Henley, Regatta
Royal (Visit)
Commonwealth

Other

'Professor' (Magpie)