History

The seaside town of Victor Harbor is located on South Australia’s Fleurieu Peninsula, about 80 kilometres south of the Adelaide CBD. It is the largest population centre on the peninsula, and a favoured summer holiday destination. Traditionally, home of the Ramindjeri and Ngarrindjeri people, Encounter Bay, on which Victor Harbor sits, was discovered by British explorer Matthew Flinders in 1802. It was in these waters that the historic encounter occurred, a meeting of Flinders and French explorer Nicolas Baudin, resulting in the bay being named Encounter Bay.

In 1837, the HMS Victor anchored off Granite Island mid-journey and its captain named the sheltered waters in the lee of the island Victor Harbor after his ship. It was around this same period that two whaling stations were established in the area, one at Rosetta Head (commonly known as The Bluff) and the other near the point opposite Granite Island. The whaling station was managed for some time by Captain John Hart, who later became Premier of South Australia.

It was 1863 when the town of Port Victor was laid out on the shores of Victor Harbor, following the extension of the horse drawn tramway from Goolwa.

The town’s name was changed to Victor Harbor in 1912. Despite the fact that harbour is normally spelt with a ‘u’ in modern Australian English, the name of the city is spelt Victor Harbor. This spelling, found in a number of other geographical locations within South Australia, is said to be a result of spelling errors made by an early Surveyor General of South Australia.

Victor Harbor’s built history tells a story of how the town has evolved. These stories are shared through the City of Victor Harbor’s interpretive plaque project. These small blue plaques are placed on a number of buildings and structures around Victor Harbor, documenting the town’s heritage.

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Town Centre Heritage Trail

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Images used in this brochure are from State Library of SA, City of Victor Harbor and the National Trust.

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Since 2010, the City of Victor Harbor has identified many State and Local Heritage Listed Buildings and provided them with a blue plaque on our heritage trail and learning more about our town! Please enjoy your adventure in finding these plaques on our heritage trail and learning more about our town!

Harbourmaster and Deputy Collector of Customs’ House 2-3 Flinders Parade
In 1866 Robert Redman constructed this building as an office and residence for the Harbourmaster of Pt Victor.

Goods’ Shed 2 Railway Terrace
Built in 1864, this shed was used for the loading, unloading and storage of freight.

Railway Station Railway Terrace
The original station was a small weatherboard building between this station and the old Goods’ Shed.

Post and Telegraph Station 2 Coral Street
In 1902 the town’s first telephone service began operation from here.

Davies’ Boot and Shoe Store 9 Railway Terrace
With over 120 years of trading, this store was one of the longest owned family businesses in SA.

Shop and Residence 5 Railway Terrace
To cater for the growing town and surrounding farming district, several small businesses were built in Railway Terrace in the early 1900s.

Bakers’ Shop 7 Railway Terrace
This building was opened in 1905 by William Smith, a baker and confectioner.

Refreshment Rooms 6 Railway Terrace
In the early 1900s people would frequent the rooms to enjoy tea and cakes.

Shop and Residence 8 Railway Terrace
This building was constructed in the early 1900’s from local limestone.

Battye Store 8-10 Ocean Street
Battye’s Store was built in two stages, the lower storey dating from the 1890s using West Island Granite for quoins and the second storey was built in 1894.

Hairdresser’s Shop 24 Ocean Street
Dating from the late 1800s, this shop originally had a cast iron, enclosed balcony with a concave roofed verandah.

Commercial Bank of Australia 26 Ocean Street
Operations began in Victor Harbor in 1928 and by September 1930 the opening of this building was announced.

The Grosvenor Hotel 49-54 Ocean Street
Built for proprietors John and Hannah Hurnestone, it was completed in time for the 1897-98 summer holiday season.

Bank of South Australia 1 Coral Street
This building was constructed in 1865 and was part of the busy commercial hub of old Pt Victor.

Warringa 21 Flinders Parade
Built as a guest house in the early 1900s, now known as the Anchorage.

Tennis Clubhouse Bridge Terrace
In 1923 four tennis courts were built and a year later this tennis clubhouse opened.

Railway Cottage Cnr of Bridge and Eyre Terrace
This lopsided cottage was used for accommodation by railway crews.

Emohruo 20-22 McKinlay Street
Once called Emohruo, which is ‘Our Home’ spelt backwards, this building was constructed in the first decade of the 1900s.

Carrickalinga 7-9 Torrens Street
Erected in 1915 as a residence this building was named Carrickalinga after a farm near Normanhurst.

Carrickalinga 17-19 Torrens Street
Built as a guest house in the early 1900s, now known as the Anchorage.

Police Station and Courthouse 22 Torrens Street
This red brick building, designed in the Art Moderne style, was opened in November 1941.

Photographic Studio 69-73 Ocean Street
Completed around 1912, this building was erected as a photographic studio, shop and residence for Charles Blais.

Police Station 20-22 Torrens Street (building frontage to Ocean Street)
Constructed to replace the original station located on Warland Reserve.

English, Scottish and Australian Bank 57 Ocean Street
This building was completed in 1927 by local builder, Ray Milton.

Savings Bank of South Australia 45 Ocean Street
In 1928 this two storey building opened as the Savings Bank of South Australia.

Victor Harbor Times Office 13 Coral Street
The original site for the Times office was in Railway Tce but moved to this site after Peter Milnes purchased the business.

Victor Harbor Primary School 22 Torrens Street
It became compulsory for children aged from 7 to 13 to attend school in 1870.

St Augustine’s Anglican Church 14 Burke Street
The original section of this church was built in 1869.

Newland Memorial Uniting Church Hall 30 Victoria Street
This church was built by Robert Veitch and Ephraim Weymouth using local bluestone and slate for roofing.

Newland Memorial Uniting Church 20-28 Victoria Street
To cater for the increasing size of the congregation, this very distinctive church was built to seat 500 people.

Butchers’ Shop 23-25 Albert Place
This building was built by Hugh J Bird who carted in local stone for the construction.

Gertymore 16 Crouzer Road
Built in 1870, this building served as both a guest house and a boarding house for permanent lodgers.

Headmasters’ House 7 Stuart Street
In 1912 it was sold to the Education Department and was used as a residence.

Town Hall 8 Coral Street
Completed in 1905, the Town Hall has hosted community events for over 100 years.

The Institute 8 Coral Street
Established as a place for educational advancement for adults.

Bell’s Store 43 Ocean Street
This building was built in 1868 by Ephraim Weymouth for William Heggaton and John Dufty to sell general merchandise.

Ozone Theatre 37-41 Ocean Street
The Griffin family built the Ozone Theatre in 1923.

Coffee Palace 31-33 Ocean Street
Built during the economic boom that followed World War 1, this store is a good example of a 1920s shop front.

Shannons’ Store 23 Ocean Street
Built during the economic boom that followed World War 1, this store is a good example of a 1920s shop front.