



Local History Factsheet:

A brief history of the suburb Hindmarsh



From left: Port Road, Hindmarsh c1940s, Globe Hotel c1955, Hindmarsh fire brigade and station. Courtesy Hindmarsh Historical Society

The village of Hindmarsh was laid out in 1838, when it was purchased and sub-divided by Governor John Hindmarsh. The original village was triangle shaped, bounded by the northern bank of the Torrens and present-day Port and South Roads.

Lindsay Circus (now soccer stadium) was the central focus of the village. Port Road soon became the public and commercial focus. The land closer to the river attracted tanneries, wool washes, mills and breweries.

The Land of Promise Hotel on Port Road is one of the oldest buildings in Hindmarsh, having been built in 1840. Early Council meetings were held in the hotel. The Governor Hindmarsh Hotel was built 1848.

The Hindmarsh Cemetery was established in 1846, and the first burial occurred in April of that year. The monument for this grave still stands in the cemetery which is now a State Heritage listed site.

The Hindmarsh District Council was formed in 1853. Until 1874, it covered much the same area that the City of Charles Sturt does today, stretching from the Park Lands to the coast.

The large former-Methodist Church on Port Road opened in 1876. In the early days, services would be attended by 1000 people and the Sunday school accommodated 400 children. However, in 1946 the church closed due to dwindling numbers. In the late 1880s, the Sisters of St Joseph built a convent on the corner of Port Road and Chief St. A catholic school was held in a building at the rear.

The Port Road Reserve Bandstand was erected in 1921. A children's playground was also opened as part of a scheme to beautify the reserve. The Mothers and Babies cottage was built in 1927 and in 1930s became the home to the Hindmarsh Town Mission. The Hindmarsh Town Mission, a benevolent, non-denominational society, was established by George Fife Angus in 1865. It operated until 1966 and became the model under which other Missions in South Australia were established.

The Hindmarsh Town Hall began as a small building in 1860. Following additions in 1880 and 1886, in 1916 the Hall was remodelled as a silent picture theatre by the Star Picture Theatre chain. A dress circle was added and the ground floor enlarged. Seating capacity doubled from 500 to 1000. The street frontage was upgraded to its current ornate art deco style in 1936 and internal remodelling at the same time increased the capacity to 2000 patrons. Designed by architect Chris Smith, the theatre featured a tiered gallery, a curved ceiling and a beautiful backlit filigree arched proscenium. In 1979, the hall was gutted to accommodate a small movie theatre on the first floor, a roller dome and a library. In the 1990s, the Hall was sold to the Education Department following the amalgamation of Hindmarsh and Woodville Councils.

Lindsay's Circus became Hindmarsh Oval in 1905 and was the home of West Torrens Cricket and Football Clubs. In 1960, Hindmarsh Council approached the South Australian Soccer Federation with the view to establishing a major soccer stadium on site. The Soccer Federation agreed to jointly develop the site and a soccer pitch was prepared, lighting for night games installed, and a grandstand erected. Visiting soccer teams at the time claimed that the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium was the best pitch in Australia for night games. In the late 1990s, the stadium was redeveloped in order to host group games and a quarter final during the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Since World War 2, and particularly during the 1960s, the cultural make up of Hindmarsh began to change significantly with large numbers of Greek, Italian, Ukrainians, Serbians, and other cultural groups settling in the area. A number of churches, social clubs and support services for many of these communities continue to be based in Hindmarsh.

The Port Road streetscape was transformed in 1991 with the demolition of historic shopfronts to enable the construction of the Adelaide Entertainment Centre. Recent upgrade work to the Centre has brought colour and life back to what was once a bustling shopping strip and the precinct is starting to emerge as a popular entertainment and dining precinct.

Want more information?

Hindmarsh Historical Society was formed in 1969 and opened a museum in 1971 in the historic Hindmarsh Fire Brigade building. The museum is a great place to visit to gain a better understanding of the history of the Hindmarsh district. The museum features a large collection of items and photographs relevant to the area and the museum building itself.

The public is welcome to visit the museum during opening hours and are invited to make a donation on entry to enable the Society to continue excellent its work collecting and preserving the history of Hindmarsh

Hours: every Wednesday from 9am to midday, and on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month from 2pm to 4pm. It is located in the

Address: Old Fire Station, Hindmarsh Place, Hindmarsh (enter of Manton St).

Contact: the secretary on 8296 1265 or email tjporter.hhs@outlook.com.au

Sources

'Hindmarsh Town' by Ronald Parsons, Corporation of the Town of Hindmarsh, 1974.

'Hindmarsh Cemetery Heritage Survey for the Corporation of the Town of Hindmarsh' prepared by Robert Nicol, 1986.

'Hindmarsh Heritage Survey – Part 2' Prepared for the Corporation of the Town of Hindmarsh by Heritage Investigations, 1985.