Northbridge today is known for its multiculturalism, arts, culture, creative industries and nightlife. But the alfresco dining and vibrant nightclub district only really began in the mid 1980s to the early 1990s.

Long before that time, this land was made up of a series of lakes that were important sources of food and water to the Noongar people, the traditional owners of the land. They were also places of initiation and ceremony.

In the first 100 years of settlement the lakes were drained to make way for industry. Rapid development of the area did not occur until the gold booms of the 1890s when increased population and expansion of rail transport saw the area flourish. Repeated waves of migration from all across the globe ensured that the area reflected diverse cultural and religious activity.

This trail offers a snapshot of the rich culture of Northbridge through historical images, public art and street art. Many of the buildings featured in this trail are State Registered as heritage buildings. For a more extensive audio tour please visit the Northbridge History Project at www.northbridgehistory.wa.gov.au


We start the trail in the Perth Cultural Centre in front of the State Library of WA.

Today, Perth Cultural Centre is the hub of Perth’s creative culture housing the Art Gallery of WA, the WA Museum, the State Library of WA, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) and The Blue Room.

Many of the buildings in the Perth Cultural Centre have been standing for over 100 years. In the early 20th century, James Street used to run right through where you’re standing, surrounded by two schools, a jail and a police station.

These Akio Makigawa sculptures form an artwork called Gate 2: Coalescence. They were commissioned in 1987 for the entrance to the Perth Cultural Centre. The work has a Japanese influence inspired by the artist’s heritage.

Walk down the steps towards the PICA building to continue the trail.
This image depicts the former Perth Boys’ School, constructed in 1897. From the 1950s to the 1980s it housed the Perth Technical College and since the late 1980s has housed PICA. The Blue Room Theatre to the right of this building also used to be a part of the Perth Boys’ School.

Walk towards William Street, stopping at Lock Lane.

**Perth Boys’ School** 1905

“...the artwork depicts slumbering figures immersed within a fragmented dream state” – Kyle Hughes-Odgers

*This Wall Talks* by Kyle Hughes-Odgers in Lock Lane was commissioned by the City of Perth’s Foodchain youth projects and the William Street Collective with support from the WA Police Strategic Crime Prevention Division in 2012.

**Mechanics’ Institute**

Down Lock Lane is a rooftop bar inspired by “Mechanics’ Institutes”, places of learning for adult men in the 19th century. It is housed in the Rosen Buildings, built in the 1920s.
Across from Lock Lane, still in the Perth Cultural Centre, is a gate. Two artworks can be viewed through this gate when it is open.

*Seeking Silence* 2010 by Tim McFarlane was a private donation to the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia.

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**INTERVAL**

*Arif Satar, Audrey Fernandes Satar & Sam Landels*

*Interval*, an installation by Arif Satar, Audrey Fernandes Satar and Sam Landels, *Interval* is an audio and visual artwork based on oral histories of the area and was commissioned under the State Government’s Percent for Art Scheme specifically for the State Theatre Centre. The work refers to the significance of this site as an educational facility, and previously as wetlands, which were important places for Aboriginal people.

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**SEEKING SILENCE**

*Tim McFarlane*

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**THE GREAT WESTERN HOTEL**

*1897*

The Brass Monkey was formerly the Great Western Hotel, a gold boom hotel constructed in 1890. Note the fine iron lacework on the balconies and the prominent tower surmounted by a pointed, onion-shaped dome.

In those days beer was brought by horse drawn cart in large barrels and rolled into the cellar below the bar.

Continue the trail down James Street, where the culturally diverse cafes and restaurants reflect waves of migration throughout Northbridge’s history.

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**GOTHAM STUDIOS**

The Cultural Centre is also the home of WA’s oldest artist-run initiative Gotham Studios, established in 1987. Look out for ever changing artwork in their Peek-a-Boo Gallery window.

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This mural by local artist Ryan Boserio was completed in 2011. There are a number of other street art works in this carpark which we will come back to later along the trail.

The building across the road is the home of the Chung Wah Association, still in operation today. The date of this image is unknown but is estimated around 1920. In Cantonese “Chung Wah” means Chinese people. The Association was founded in 1909 to represent the interests of Chinese people who had market gardens in this area.

Further along James Street is a grassed square called Northbridge Piazza. The Piazza was opened in 2009 by the City of Perth. In the 1830s Anne Pace bought this block of land for 10 pounds. She was the first woman to own land in Northbridge and it became her husband’s when they married.
UNTITLED ololo

This mural was completed in 2009 by ololo as part of the City of Perth’s Northbridge Piazza development.

You will also find an image representing modern Northbridge on the footpath at the Piazza.

ARCH Lorenna Grant

“Arch is a linear rhythm, a beat, a pulse—visual street music!” – Lorenna Grant

The sculpture Arch, by Lorenna Grant, was commissioned by the City of Perth to celebrate the opening of the Northbridge Piazza in 2009.

THE EUROPEAN CLUB

In the 1950s this building across from the Piazza was The European Club, a nightclub and pool hall popular with the Greek community. In later years it became Valentino’s (pictured above), an Italian restaurant, and is now Midori Japanese Restaurant.

Keep walking along James Street heading away from the Perth Cultural Centre.
**WRIGHT & FENDICK 1920s**

This image was taken in the 1920s. It depicts the Wright and Fendick store, once situated here. Wright and Fendick were listed in 1917 in the Post Office Directory as “General Woodturners, Mantelpiece Manufacturers, Cabin Makers & co”.

**JAMES STREET 1920**

This image was taken in 1920. It depicts market mornings in James Street where Perth’s fruit and vegetable supply was sold. You can see the Chung Wah hall on the left, Perth Boys’ School at middle rear and gambling dens (right- sloped roofs) opposite the Chung Wah hall. Opium dens once existed along this street.

**RUSSELL SQUARE 1914**

Russell Square, like many of the parks in Perth, is over 100 years old. This image of Russell Square is from 1914. This area was once the social and cultural hub of Perth’s Greek community. To the right of the square stands the Greek Orthodox church of Saints Constantine and Helene and next to that the Hellenic Community Centre of Western Australia.
This photo was taken around 1895 of the early hotel called The Victoria Hotel, now Rosie O'Gradys Irish Pub. The Victoria Hotel is the longest continually operating hotel in Northbridge.

Adrian Davies was the licensee from 1895-99. He is the young man leaning on the bicycle in the photograph. The small Aboriginal girl is ‘Topsy’ adopted by the Davies’ family in Queensland as a baby.

Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by the family.

The artworks in the pagoda at the centre of Russell Square were created by Drago Dadich and Greg James in 1995 as part of the upgrade of the park and are now part of the City of Perth Public Art Collection. You can see references in the artwork to European, Asian and Aboriginal impacts on the area, the natural environment, education and children.

To continue the trail walk down Milligan Street, passing Rosie O'Gradys Irish Pub.
“My work is heavily based on the human condition and the emotional state of mind that makes or breaks a happy existence.” – Jodee Knowles (Artist)

This mural was produced in 2009 by Artrage, an arts organisation that occupies the building and was sponsored by Western Power. Twenty Perth artists were involved in the overall design which took two weeks to complete.

In 1929, the Peter’s American Deli Company established their factory behind the Victoria Hotel. This image is from 1984. The icecream was sold in half gallon tins and was placed in a box surrounded by ice and sea salt where it would stay frozen for 24 hours. The factory also stored rabbits in its big fridges, a staple source of meat for families between the 1930s and 1950s.

From 1927 – 1954 Aboriginal Australians committed an offence if they came within the city and Northbridge precinct without a ‘Native Pass’. This map depicts the Prohibited Area.

This map has been redrawn from the original Map of the Prohibited Area of Perth from a Department of Indigenous Affairs File City of Perth Prohibited Area (1938/1927) in the State Records Office of WA.

The Coolbaroo Club, a popular social club for Aboriginal people, was located just outside this zone.

The trail continues along Roe Street to the Horseshoe Bridge.
ROE STREET BROTHELS 1958

Roe Street was once Northbridge’s street of ill repute. This image shows the Roe Street Brothels shortly before they were closed down in 1958. The Roe Street brothels operated from an unknown period (possibly the late 19th century) until their closure in the face of state, national and international pressure.

LITTLE ITALY 1940

This image was taken in 1940 near this area on the former Little Lake Street, when there was more residential living in Northbridge. The woman in the photo is Maria Grinceri, daughter of Nunzio and Nunziatta Pinzone, tenants of the house. This image reflects some of the cultural diversity in Northbridge, sometimes called ‘Little Italy’ due to the high Italian population.

MICHELIDES TOBACCO FACTORY 1936

On the corner of Roe Street and Lake Street was the former Michelides tobacco factory, built in 1936. In 1923 the Michelides brothers had started to manufacture tobacco in a shed they built behind their house. They grew this tobacco in plantations in the South West of the State in Manjimup and Pemberton. Noted for its employment of migrants, the company grew to become the largest provider of tobacco and related products in the southern hemisphere until its closure in 1959.

LAKE STREET

In the 1950s Lake Street was used as an access route to a safe gathering place for Aboriginal people that was outside of the Prohibited Area. Stephen Kinnane talks about this in his book Shadow Lines.
Perth’s Chinatown was started in 1980 by Chinese family investors. Chinatowns around the world mark Chinese migration. This area is filled with restaurants and comes alive in the early evening and late night.

Continue along Roe Street towards the Horseshoe Bridge.

This image is from the 1970s from a group called “A New Heart for Perth”. They were a lobby group that envisioned the sinking of the railway.

Works are currently underway to sink the railway by mid 2014. To find out more you can visit the Public Transport Authority website.

The railway was opened in 1881 and is built on the site of a former ochre pit.
This artwork, *Border Crossing 2012*, by Dr Audrey Fernandes-Satar, was commissioned by the City of Perth as part of the Wall Inc. arts program.

“Horses are used as emblematic figures to symbolise the act of border crossing. I have also used scripts traced from my grandmother’s handwritten recipe books. Here, authorship is grounded through this narration, a powerful reminder that even as we move across borders, there is a yearning to find ourselves a history.” – A.Fernandes-Satar

This image was taken from the Connections Nightclub carpark in the 1980s. Note the differences when compared to the skyline today.

You can find more privately commissioned urban art murals in this area such as those at Ezra Pound and Love Thy Neighbour café.
HORSESHOE BRIDGE 1966

This image of The Horseshoe Bridge is from 1966. The bridge was constructed in 1903 to reduce traffic congestion. The unusual shape was to allow trams of the day to use it without a very steep incline. Note the decorative swans on the lamp posts.

The black swan is the formal emblem of the state of Western Australia and a reference to the bird life that would have originally been found in Northbridge. Black swans can still be found in WA lakes and rivers. Cross the road towards the State Theatre Centre.

WILLIAM STREET 1897

This image was taken in 1897. You can see the Busy Bee Arcade off to the left and the dome of the Great Western Hotel.

The Busy Bee Arcade was established in 1894. Originally L-shaped, it was the first shopping arcade in Perth. If you look up at the façade you can see an image of a bee next to the date of the building.

Later, in the early 20th century, trams used to run down this street and along the Horseshoe Bridge.
Matthew Ngui’s 2011 interactive light-based artwork *Falling from Heaven to Earth: The Shooting Star* projected onto the ground at the State Theatre Centre entrance. It is inspired by the concept of fleeting stardom. It was commissioned in 2011 under the State Government’s Percent for Art Scheme for the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia.

As you continue along William Street back towards the Cultural Centre you will find a number of cafes and bars exhibiting local artwork and street art including Bivouac, The Bird and Ezra Pound.

If you look up, you will see heritage frontages stretching back to the early 20th century. Large sections of William Street are heritage listed as part of the State Registered *William Street Conservation Precinct*. You will find more Northbridge street art and heritage buildings along William Street beyond this trail.

For your chance to contribute to this trail or order an Art & Heritage Trail postcard visitperthcity.com

This trail is also available on History Pin. historypin
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