

**PRECINCT: 8.01  
BENDIGO COMMERCIAL & CIVIC**



**3-31**  
*Pall Mall*

**LGA: BENDIGO CITY MAP: 7.07**

**Contributory Streets**

Bath, Edwardian, brick, stucco  
Bull, Victorian, brick  
Hargreaves, Victorian, Edwardian, brick, stucco  
High, Victorian, Edwardian, brick, stucco  
Howard, Victorian, stucco  
Mitchell, Victorian, Edwardian, brick, stucco  
McCrae, Victorian, Edwardian, stucco  
Pall Mall, Victorian, Edwardian, stucco  
View, Victorian, Edwardian, stucco

Typical characteristics are attached siting (zero setbacks), two-storey scale, parapeted rectilinear roof lines and symmetrical arrangement of wall openings. Post-supported street verandahs were once common for the Edwardian and Victorian era commercial buildings.

**History/Description**

Bendigo's centre transformed from an alluvial gold quagmire to commercial freeholds after the 1854 sales. Like White Hills, the town's centre was laid out with curving symmetrically-arranged terraces intersecting a standard



3-32  
View Point

government grid, with a generous town square (Pall Mall) and market reserve (Hargreaves Street). Town plans of the 1850s for Geelong North and South Melbourne also used this curving and diagonal geometry, reminiscent of Nash's Regent's Park at Bath, conceived in the late 18th Century. Facing it, on Camp Hill, was the 1851 government camp (in its first form), with a resident commissioner and police magistrate which, in time, became a more substantial government complex, both within the reserve and at its west perimeter.<sup>1</sup> Before the town centre, Crown Sections had been surveyed along the Bendigo Creek by 1852, stretching in a ribbon from Adelaide Gully on the west, through to View Street on the east. Despite the effects of gold seeking, the area could still be described as 'timbered, with iron bark,' in the Golden Gully area and, in addition, stringy bark near the White Hill.<sup>2</sup>

On the road linking the camp and new town centre with the Ironbark and Eaglehawk gold fields, the View Street commercial and civic centre arose with, at first, only government buildings on its east side and privately-owned commercial buildings on its west. From there the rectangular surveyors grid linked the various irregular tracks and avoided the numerous auriferous tracts.

Between the town and the government seat, the Bendigo Creek at first meandered and then straightened in its progress, east-west. Flooding, after its banks had been eroded by gold seeking, forced action to clear the creek's passage through the town. A remarkable series of contracts set out to achieve the 1856 aim to form a channel from Epsom to Golden Point.<sup>3</sup> Its transformation continued with the covering of large sections of the creek in 1862. Where it remained uncovered, it was bridged: an iron structure was sought in 1870.<sup>4</sup> The first iron-lattice footbridge was designed by A R Steane, city surveyor, in 1882.<sup>5</sup> By then, the progressive walling of the creek stretched from Wattle Street to Golden Square and from Harvey's Bridge to the gas works.<sup>6</sup> Two years later

1 Cusack, p.63; CPO GF91A, 1852  
2 CPO GF19  
3 Environmental History, Vol.2  
4 BCC, Box 3, #6  
5 BCC Dr.  
6 BCSCM, 8/11/82



**3-33**  
*View Street*

further walls were built along the creek at Golden Square and later post and rail fencing erected along its banks (two rails and angle-capping).<sup>1</sup>

Drawings exist of Bendigo Creek road bridges designed in 1899 (by surveyor George Minto?) for: Myrtle Street, White Hills Road, Oak Street, Thistle Street, and, over Back Creek, Abbott and Wade Streets.<sup>2</sup>

Overlooking the creek, at the end of Cemetery Street, was the first Sandhurst Cemetery, labelled the 'Old Cemetery' in Richard Larritt's 1854 plan.<sup>3</sup> Now partly built on (Bridge Street) and partly vacant, as the showgrounds south edge, the cemetery's contents were reputedly exhumed and placed in the White Hills Cemetery.<sup>4</sup>

A plan of 1857 shows Bendigo's extent, with its satellite hamlets of Golden Point, Ironbark, Long Gully, White Hills, Poverty Gully, New Chum Gully and others. Central land sales then extended to Barnard, Mackenzie and Rowan Streets on the north, High and McLaren Streets on the south, Chapel (Burall Street) on the east and Ophir Street on the west.

Pall Mall was as yet undeveloped and the market reserve was clear for sales. A reserve for the National School (now Anglican) in Myers Street and the Presbyterian Church reserve lay on the flat, while the Anglican and Wesley churches occupied the heights to the north.<sup>5</sup> Two Hospital Reserves were shown, one triangular one axial to Short Street (now represented by the tapered rear boundaries of Short Street, in CS3B) and the other 'Proposed' facing Lucan Street, on the perimeter of the purchased lots. Barnard Street then stopped short at 'Barkly Place East' or Waterloo Street, only connecting to Lucan in later years.

1 BCSCM, 14/1/84; 22/11/89  
2 *ibid.*; WD1899-1900  
3 CPO RP103  
4 Friends of the Cemetery Tour  
5 CPO RP77

The triangular reserve has a legacy of Grimes town survey of 1853 when two buildings were shown there.<sup>1</sup> The same survey showed the Wesleyan reserve opposite its present site in Forest Street, complete with a building, and other buildings lined High Street west of View Point.<sup>2</sup>

A large public recreation reserve faced Rowan Street in 1857, axial to Vine Street (and Paddys Gully), but has since been divided. The Benevolent Asylum reserve was another transient allocation which straddled Valentine Street and hence assumed a healthy height. There was also the 114-acre railway reserve.

Another plan, drawn one year before, shows more detail: three surveyed blocks east of Chapel Street had been withdrawn from sale because gold workings were still afoot.<sup>3</sup> It shows the old cemetery now partly sold off as Section 25. The Sandhurst Fire Brigade had been granted a site just outside of Pall Mall, to the north, on axis with Bull Street.

The first post office and weighbridge were sited at View Point (Charing Cross), then a bend in the still meandering Bendigo Creek, located just west of the 'subscription bridge' which gained travellers entry to Bendigo town. Where Gravel High School lies, was a six-acre Gravel Reserve.<sup>4</sup>

Although sites were built and rebuilt on these township allotments throughout the Victorian and Edwardian eras, the result was not a discordant one. The Italian Renaissance revival was adopted from the early 1860s as the commercial style and, with zero setbacks and parapeted two-storey forms (residence upstairs) predominating, the commercial rows unfolded through from Pall Mall to Hargreaves Street and Chapel to Edward, as represented in the late 1880s panoramas.

Buildings like the Metropolitan Hotel show some of the changing fashions of the 1890s and later, but retain the early c1860 Renaissance revival form. The next boom-era style took the French Renaissance as its model, inspiring designs like the Sandhurst Town Hall (1885), the public office group in Pall Mall (c1883- 1896) and the Shamrock Hotel (1897) at Williamson Street. William Webb's gigantic flour mill (1882) exemplifies another building type outside of the Renaissance styles, where face-brick was the economic choice. This type and others such as churches are in the minority, but often are the foci of views.

At the same time, the widespread street tree and park-planting of the 1870s were maturing and the acclimatized township had almost been achieved. Larritt's axial plan and wide Pall Mall boulevard offered opportunities taken up in the forum of the Bull Street vista to the town hall or the gracious public offices and their relationship with the adjoining ornamental park land and private buildings such as the Shamrock. The Williamson Street was

terminated on a rotunda, conspicuous in the c1885 'View of Sandhurst.' Mundy Street was on axis with one of Vahland's fountains and the Bendigo Gaol beyond (made more apparent by smaller trees) and St. Andrew Street (then Bull Street) terminated on St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (since rebuilt) Pall Mall aligned with the City Family Hotel (1872) at its west end.

Symmetrically arranged about the town hall, central on its reserve, were the Meat Market (west end) and the Hay Market (east). Ancillary to these were the town weighbridge, lock-up and Fire Brigade, a quaint towered structure facing Williamson Street.<sup>5</sup>

Caire's 1875 photographs of central Sandhurst highlight the details, such as the numerous timber post-supported verandahs or the absence of street lights, service poles or overhead wires. There are also the trees (elms, gums?) at close centres, many set in rustic split-slab three-sided tree guards in almost every street, just outside of the open stone-pitcher kerbs and gutters which collected water from adjacent roofs and paved areas.

There is also the greater incidence of single-storey residential (verandahed cottages with picket fences) among the commercial sites (also more likely to be one-storey) at increasing distance from Pall Mall, in streets like Myers Street. Commercial uses still commanded the strategic sites, at street and lane corners.<sup>6</sup> Fencing of large unlandscaped areas or reserves (i.e., Railway Reserve, Mitchell Street) was done with post (four) rail fencing. Fencing of public building sites, such as in View Street, used timber pickets, almost universally, and paling side fences,<sup>7</sup> while fencing of the Camp Reserve was also achieved with paling, but with a hit-and-miss profile.<sup>8</sup>

Today, with the exception of the town hall reserve and its notable elm and a Canary Island palm, trees have almost disappeared from Bendigo's centre. Some rows exist in Bull and St. Andrews Street and the State Government Offices has a row of contemporary forecourt trees. The adjacent Rosalind Park and Pall Mall have also accumulated more structures, most replacing trees while, of those trees that survive from the 19th and early 20th Century planting, some may be threatened by old age or root compaction because of the increased intensity of use and the spread of car parks.

Predictably most, if not all, open stone street channels have been replaced with concrete kerbs and culverts and roads have been asphalt paved in place of the gravel or crushed stone of the 19th Century, making tree survival more difficult. Architecturally, the visual continuity which had developed up until World War One, began to fragment with new developments around the business fringe. This accelerated after World War Two, leaving today,

1 CPO FP606, 609  
2 ibid.  
3 CPO FP635, 636  
4 ibid.  
5 Annotated Parish Plan  
6 Caire, View 38  
7 Caire, View 3  
8 Caire, View 9

valuable mainly Victorian-era commercial streetscapes in Pall Mall, High Street, View Street, Bridge Street, Howard Place, Bull Street and Hargreaves Street east. Some areas, such as Howard Place and Bridge Street, have a special character which links ethnic occupation with early commercial building stock.

The Chinese have long occupied sites in Bridge Street and Howard Place, south of Chapel Street; i.e., Hop Yick & Co's store on the east side and a large group of restaurants, cookshops, stoves and drapery stores on the west. The Chinese Museum covers some of these historic sites, but the Chinese Association is perhaps the oldest.<sup>1</sup> Another historically-linked site is Mulqueen & Sons, undertakers, who occupy a site once used as Bendigo's first cemetery.

Key 19th Century public buildings, such as the post office, law courts, the View Street group, town hall, mechanics institute and the School of Mines survive, with 20th Century functional and stylistic equivalents (Classicism) such as the State Government Offices (1930), Hargreaves Street, and Memorial Hall, Pall Mall (1921). However, with the accumulation of new buildings, for example around the School of Mines, these public monuments are in danger of losing their detached 'town-square' setting. Similarly, new styles and materials (such as use of face-brick at the ring cross) add to visual chaos.

View Street was the vehicle for the city's commercial expansion this century and today offers a catalogue of diverse building styles and materials which, because classicism was the expected commercial style through the 19th and early 20th Century, still has visual coherence. Differences in scale are most evident here (Temperance & General, 1925, or the A.M.P. offices of 1912), but the hillside setting, where older two-storey sites are still elevated over those at View Point, absorbs these height differences and supports an highly cohesive commercial streetscape, where financial institutions play a large role because of their historical grouping around the first government offices there. Because of the dominance of banks and offices, View Point is, in contrast with the rest of 19th and early 20th Century Bendigo, verandahless. There were no retain show windows in need of shading. Hence this factor, plus the scale and stylistic distinctions, gives View Point a unique place in the city's urban character.

#### Key Sites

- Clement's (c1859) now Metropolitan Brazerie, 50 Bull Street 1860-
- Commercial Hotel, 71 Bull Street 1868
- Bendigo Municipality's Alexandra Fountain, Charing Cross 1881
- James Lamsey's Store, 69 Farmer Lane 1885
- James Brierly's Specimen Cottage, 178-180 Hargreaves Street 1856- 61
- Royal Mail Hotel, 264 Hargreaves Street 1895
- Thomas Connelly's 'James Connelly Store', 2 High Street 1877
- Jean Loridan's City Family Hotel, 41 High Street 1872
- Young Mens Christian Assoc. (Y.M.C.A.) Building 121 High Street 1908
- Bendigo Municipality's City Hall, Lyttleton Terrace 1859-86
- Joseph Abbott's Edinburgh Tannery, 265 Lyttleton Terrace 1881-
- Sandhurst Mechanics Institute & School of Mines & Industry, McCrae Street 1864,1873
- Niagara Hotel, 116-130 McCrae Street 1864
- Black Swan Hotel 117 McCrae Street 1873
- Heffernan's Albert Hotel 129-131 McCrae Street 1873
- Backhaus Estate Trustees Plaza Theatre, 12 Mitchell Street 1934
- Backhaus Estate Trustees Backhaus Building, 14-22 Mitchell Street 1931C
- Johnson Morley & Co Department Store, 23 Mitchell Street 1910
- Denton's Store, 24 Mitchell Street 1887
- Wootton Lansell'S Buildings, 31-33 Mitchell Street 1905
- M.u.i.o.o.f Hall, 47 Mundy Street 1865-
- Soldiers Memorial Institute and Honour Roll, Pall Mall 1921
- Victorian Colonial Government's Bendigo Post Office, Pall Mall 188-7

<sup>1</sup> D1915

Victorian Colonial Government's Bendigo Law Courts, Public Offices, Pall Mall 1890-96

Bendigo Council Conservatory, Pall Mall 1898

The Beehive Store, 18 Pall Mall 1872

National Bank of Australasia, 28 Pall Mall, 1887

Colonial Bank, 32 Pall Mall 1887

Bendigo Council's Conservatory Pall Mall 1898

The Beehive Store 18 Pall Mall 1872

Alfred & Sloman Joseph's Shamrock Hotel, 48 Pall Mall 1897

Alex Bayne's Exchange Hotel, 56 Pall Mall 1874

Benjamin Batchelder's Photographic Studio, 70 Pall Mall 1865

Shop & Residence, 84 Pall Mall 1876c

Alexander Bayne's 'Corner House' 88-90 Pall Mall 1875

Joseph & Aaron Woolf's Freemasons Hotel, 112-114 Pall Mall 1858

William Webb's Golden Eagle Flour Mill & Granary, 2 Queen Street 1878

Robert Bugg's Photographic Studio, 16 Williamson Street 1886

'Bendigo Independent' Office, 38-40 Williamson Street 1875

Cumberland Hotel 56 Williamson Street 1870c-

### **Significance**

This precinct contains some of the most historically and architecturally important sites in the study area. It comprises an innovative town plan design, overlaid by early transport routes, both road and rail, and augmented by strategically placed buildings which provide the foci for views and town squares. Its architecture is largely classically derived and shares attributes of scale, siting and finish, within the commercial building type, which offers a high visual cohesion in streetscapes which contain sites created 50 years apart. It also contains the built civic beginnings of the town, in the form of both Colonial and municipal government buildings and has always been the regional focus as a cultural and recreational centre.

The central place of the Government Camp and the relative height of this area made for a settlement over a long period of many of the wealthiest and most influential figures in Bendigo's history. The scale of individual buildings, the street layout and the later plantings distinguish this area from the old mining areas. This is a distinctive area in registering the lifestyle of the wealthiest mining investors and leading professional and commercial figures in Bendigo. The area has many individually significant civic and private buildings and forms a precinct with few parallels amongst zones of elite residence throughout Victoria. The wealth of Bendigo in its heyday and the aspirations to become a great city are best displayed in this precinct.