

# HISTORY ON HIGH

Separation Street  
to Dundas Street



History on High is a self-guided tour along High Street — Darebin's 'spine'. Each section of the tour provides a snapshot of Darebin's rich and diverse history, from its early white settlement to the thriving creative municipality it is today.

You can choose to visit all the sites in this guide in order, or do a few at a time, starting from any point on High Street.

This project has been produced for FUSE Darebin in collaboration with Darebin Libraries.

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*Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land now known as the City of Darebin, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.*





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## Carter's Arms Hotel

*3 Separation Street Northcote*

A liquor licence was granted in 1867 for the Carter's Arms Hotel. The hotel had many publicans during its time of operation, as well as many turbulent events including a brutal police bashing and a fire. Some of the hotel's publicans also fell afoul with the law many times for selling drinks that contained a weaker strength.

In 1988, the Northcote Action Group Residents Concerned for the Built and Natural Environment opposed plans to demolish the Carter's Arms Hotel as part of the Northcote Central shopping complex construction. The developer argued that as he had already sold part of the land to the Northcote Council for planned road widening, it was impossible to save the hotel. Even its advocates had to acknowledge that the hotel was run down. Despite the Action Group's efforts, the hotel was demolished in 1989.



One of the hotel's original stain-glassed windows was installed in Toto's Restaurant, which was later built on the site, however the window disappeared when the restaurant closed. The site is currently known as the Northcote Central.

In the second photograph the original Carter's Arms can be just seen in the background to the left of Shade's Ironmongery. It was a two-storey building with a shingle roof and seems to be placed either facing High Street or slightly angled to face southwest. It was demolished around the 1890s.

For a more extensive history of the Carter's Arms Hotel have a look at Darebin Libraries' Darebin Heritage Guide.

**Walk down Separation Street past the plaza and past All Nations Park to the German Cemetery. Separation Street was previously known as German Lane.**



2

### 372 High Street *looking south* 1911

Heavy flooding in 1911 saw High Street under water north of Separation Street. You can see to the left the Carter's Arms Hotel and on the right opposite is Ongarello's wine bar. Note the old houses to the right of the two storey wine bar. Even into the 1920s High Street was dotted with homes as well as shops and hotels. In the middle of the photo you can see the chimney of the Fellowes Universal Carriage Works in High Street.



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### **372 High Street looking south 1930s**

The same view in the 1930s shows the houses have now been replaced by shops. The Carter's Arms and wine bar are still there but now the State Bank of Victoria stands on the opposite corner of High Street and Separation Street and Neelands hardware store is opposite Ongarello's on the corner of Arthurton Road. Both the hotel and wine bar have since been demolished.



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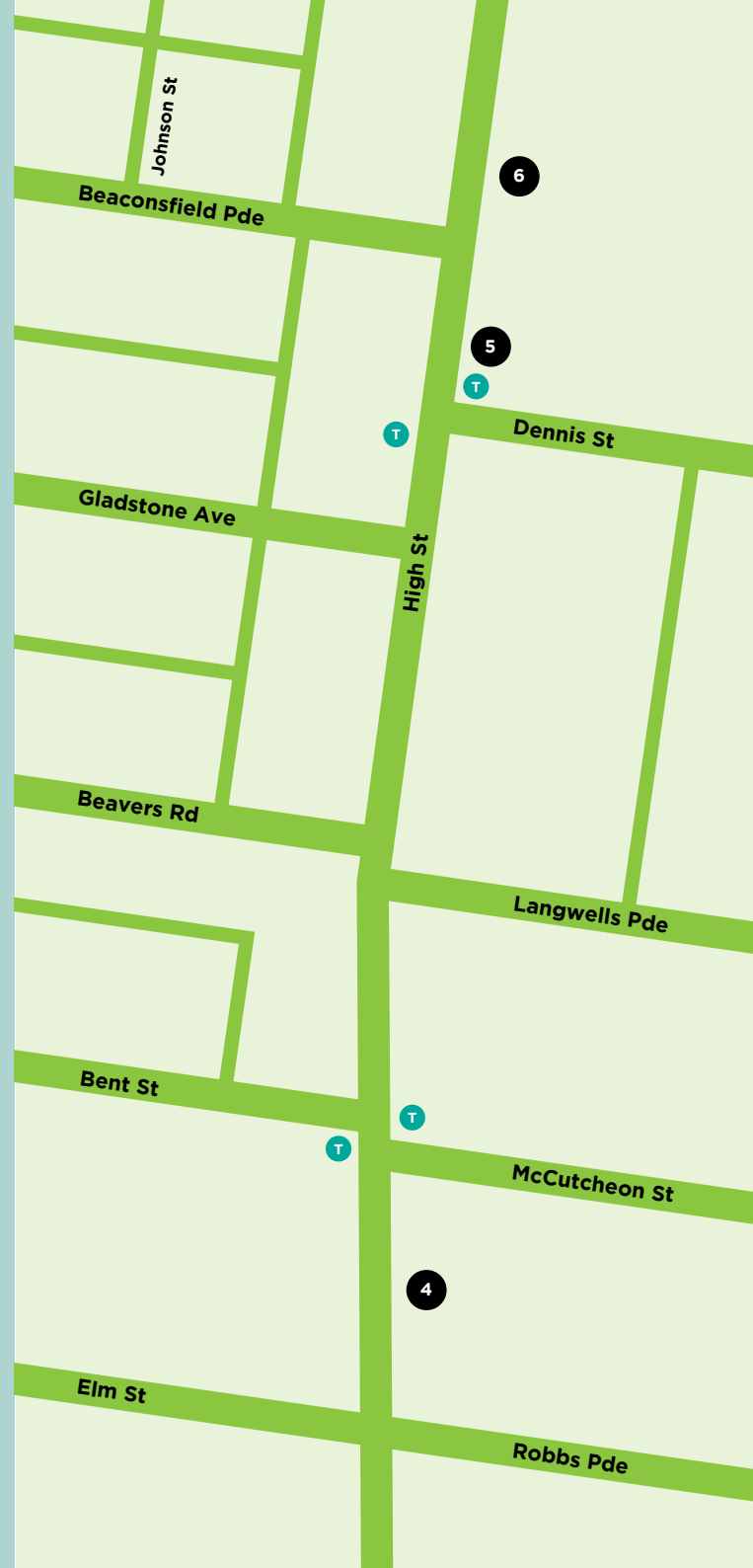
## Northcote Plaza Theatre

*403 High Street Northcote*

Built in 1934, the Northcote Plaza Theatre was a lovely art deco theatre built on the site of the old Northcote Market.

Not only could the theatre seat 1,100 people but it could also put on cabaret and vaudeville shows. The venue owners could never decide whether it was a theatre or a live show venue and it struggled to find its place, frequently closing down and reopening. In 1986 the theatre became the Elysee Reception Theatre and for a number of years hosted bingo nights as well.

It has now been demolished and replaced with units although the Plaza sign has been retained.





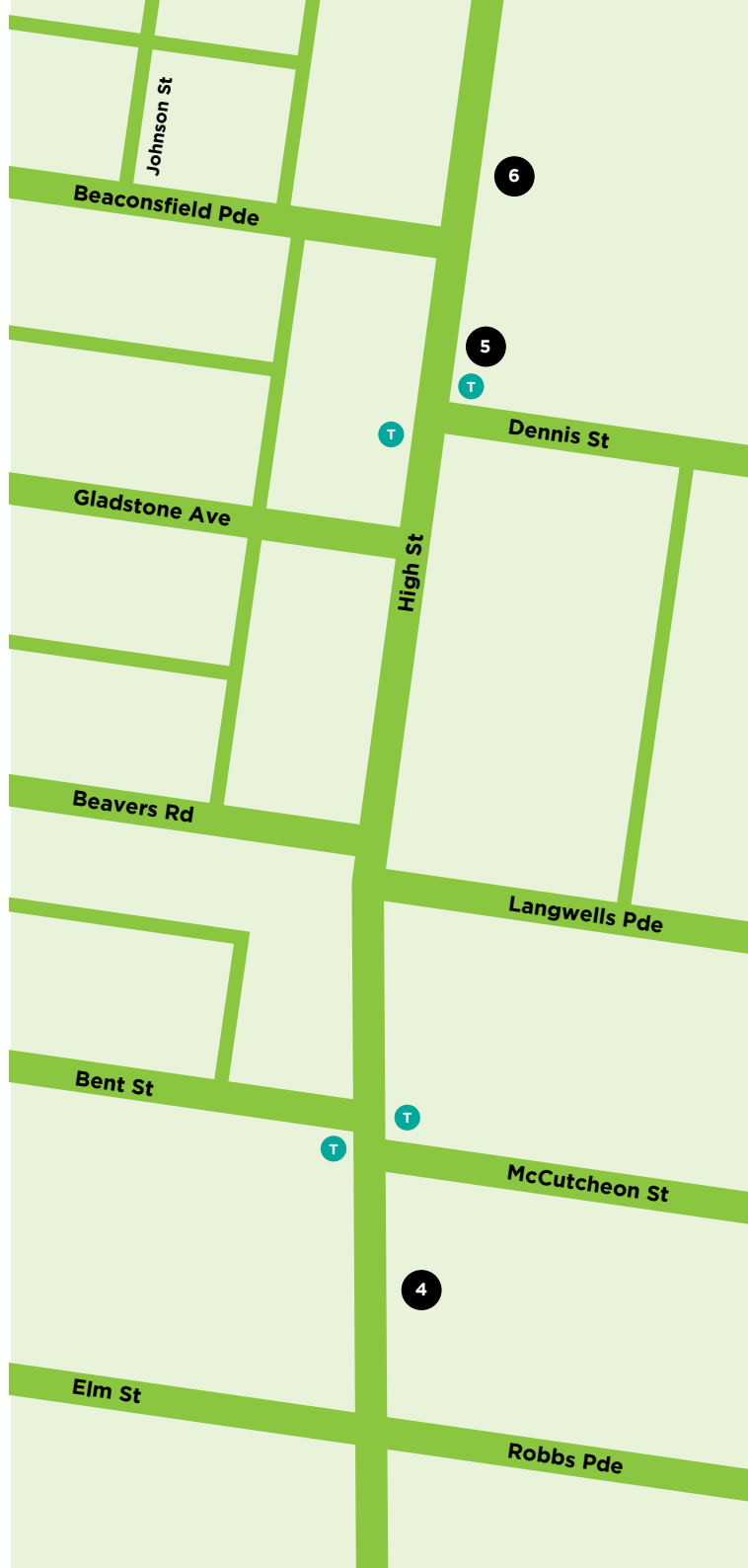
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## McLean's Tannery

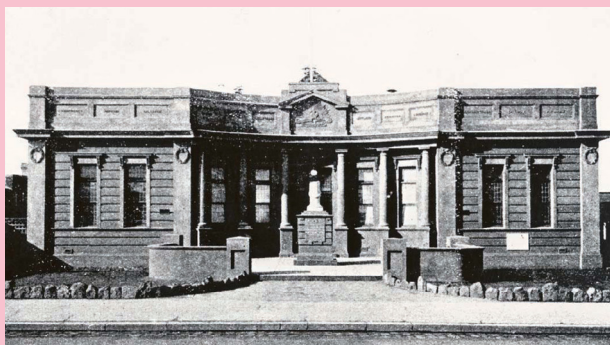
486 – 494 High Street Northcote

This photo depicts burnt-out ruins of Mr McLean's tannery in High Street Northcote. The view is looking towards High Street, with Dennis Street in the middle ground. Redmond's store can be seen in the background.

Redmond's was an ironmongery, selling pots, pans, and assorted tools, nails, etc. This shop is still in existence and is 468 High Street.







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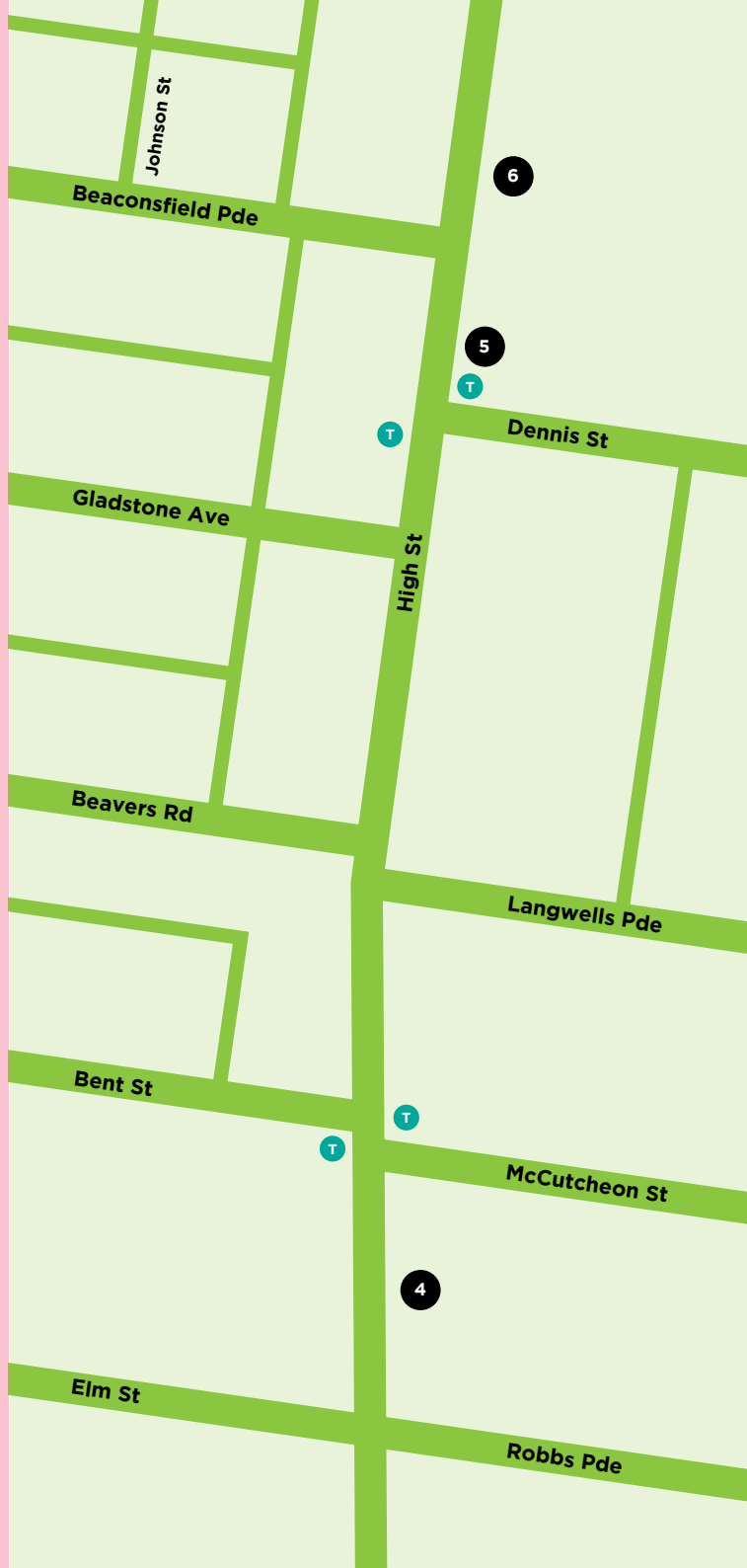
## Northcote Returned Services League Hall

*496 High Street Northcote*

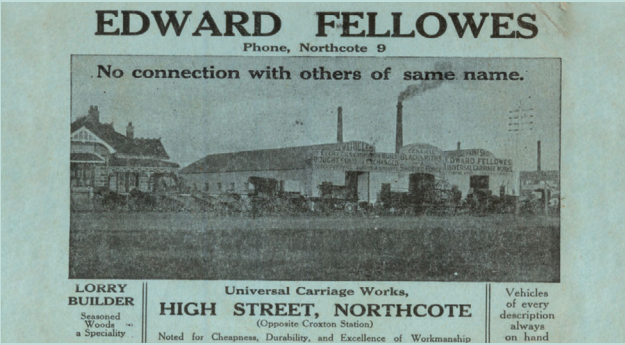
The Northcote Soldiers and Sailor's Memorial Hall was built in 1922 at a cost of £6,000 of which the Northcote Council contributed £2,500. During the First World War nearly 2,000 of Northcote's young men volunteered.

For a number of years after World War Two an anti-aircraft gun was on display outside the hall, the home of the Northcote Returned Services League. In early 2000 the hall became the home of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association.

The Northcote RSL merged with the Preston RSL to form the Darebin RSL, now located at 402 Bell Street Preston.





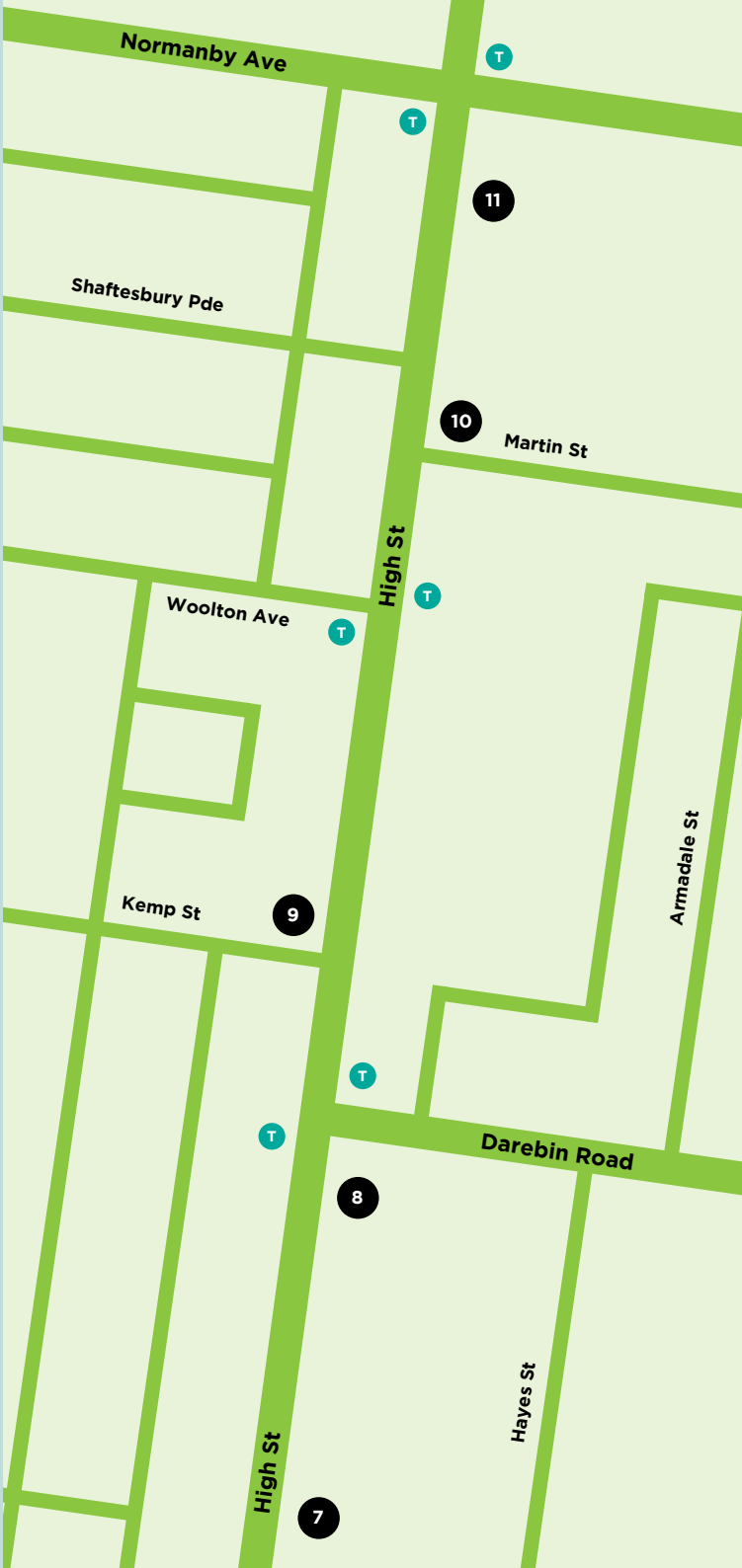


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Universal Carriage Works

516-522 High Street Thornbury

Run by Edward Fellowes, Universal Carriage Works was a substantial business, which at one point supplied the ambulance carriages for the Australian army. In fact, business was so good it was relocated to a larger site that is now the Welcome to Thornbury venue.



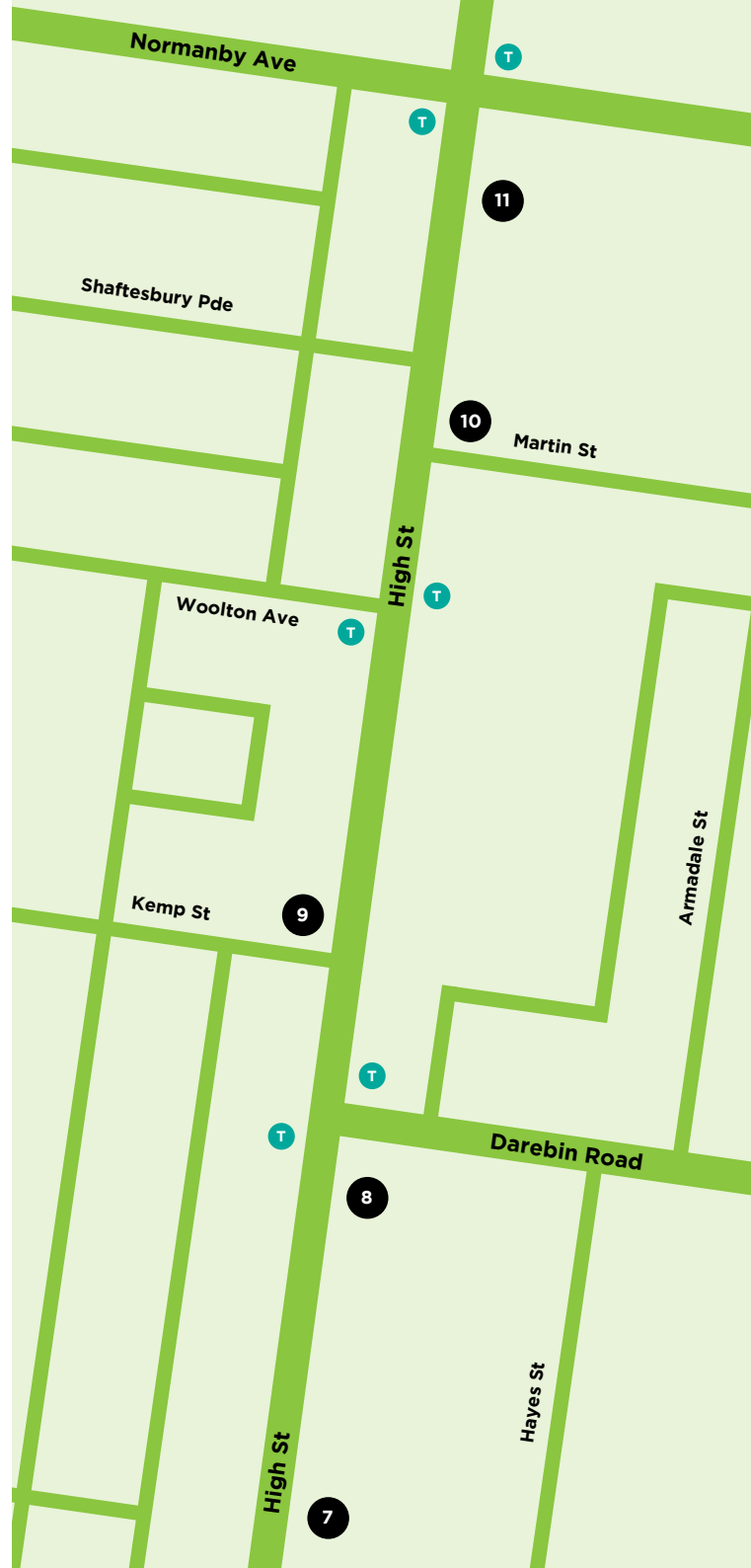


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## Northcote Baptist Church

*542 High Street Thornbury*

The Northcote Baptist Church opened in 1908 and looks pretty much like the same building today, although the picket fence is long gone.





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## Croxton Hotel

607 High Street Thornbury

In 1844 Robert Duff built a hotel in the middle of nowhere on a bush track heading north. It was one of the very first buildings in what was to later become Darebin. Originally known as the Pilgrim Inn it became a famous sporting venue with its own sports ground built behind the hotel which hosted running races, horse racing, deer hunting, football and cricket to name a few sports.

The hotel burnt down in 1867 and was rebuilt to look as close as possible to the original building. It is this reproduction we can see to the left in this photograph. By the early 1870s it became known as the Croxton Park Hotel, a name it has kept ever since.

The hotel was rebuilt again in 1896 and all signs of the original hotel disappeared at this time.

For many years the hotel was run by the Randall family with at least four members of the family holding the license at one time or another.





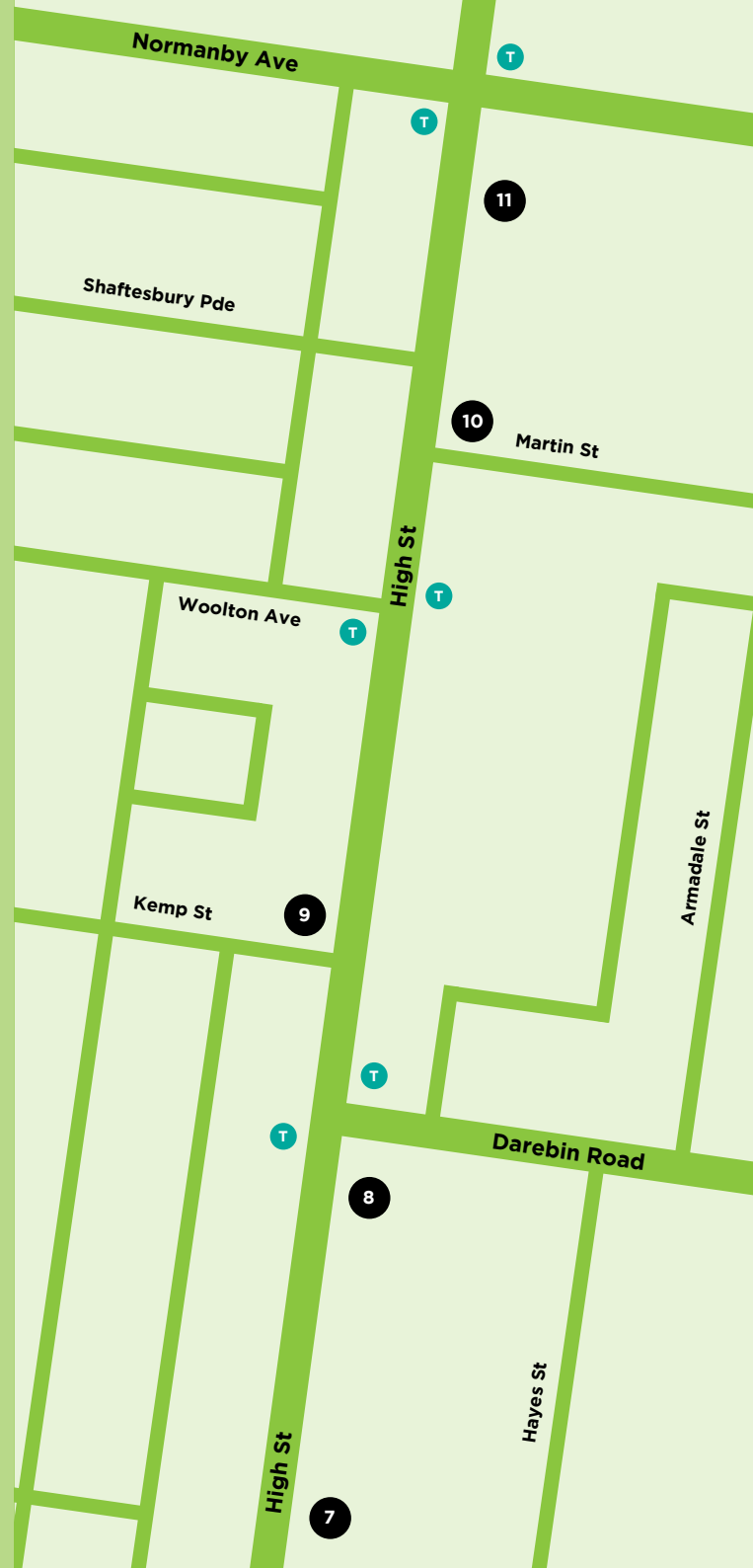
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## Former Northcote Cable Tram House

*626 High Street Thornbury*

The cable tram engine house was constructed in 1889 at a cost of just under £5000. At this time the tramway was owned and operated by a private company and ran from Clifton Hill to Northcote. The service failed and was later purchased by the Northcote Council. In 1920 the tram service became part of the Metropolitan Tramways Board.

The building is now used as a car repair shop.



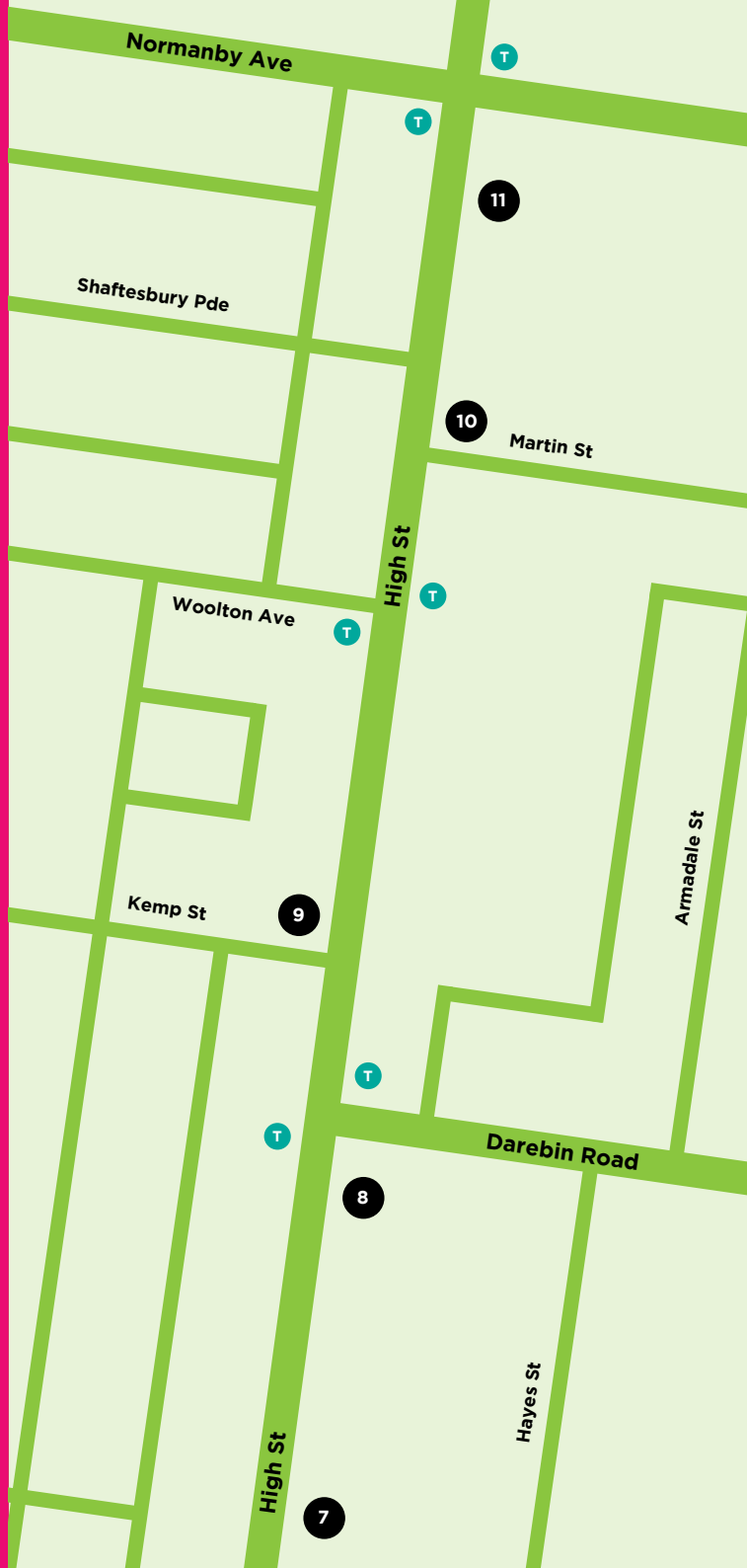


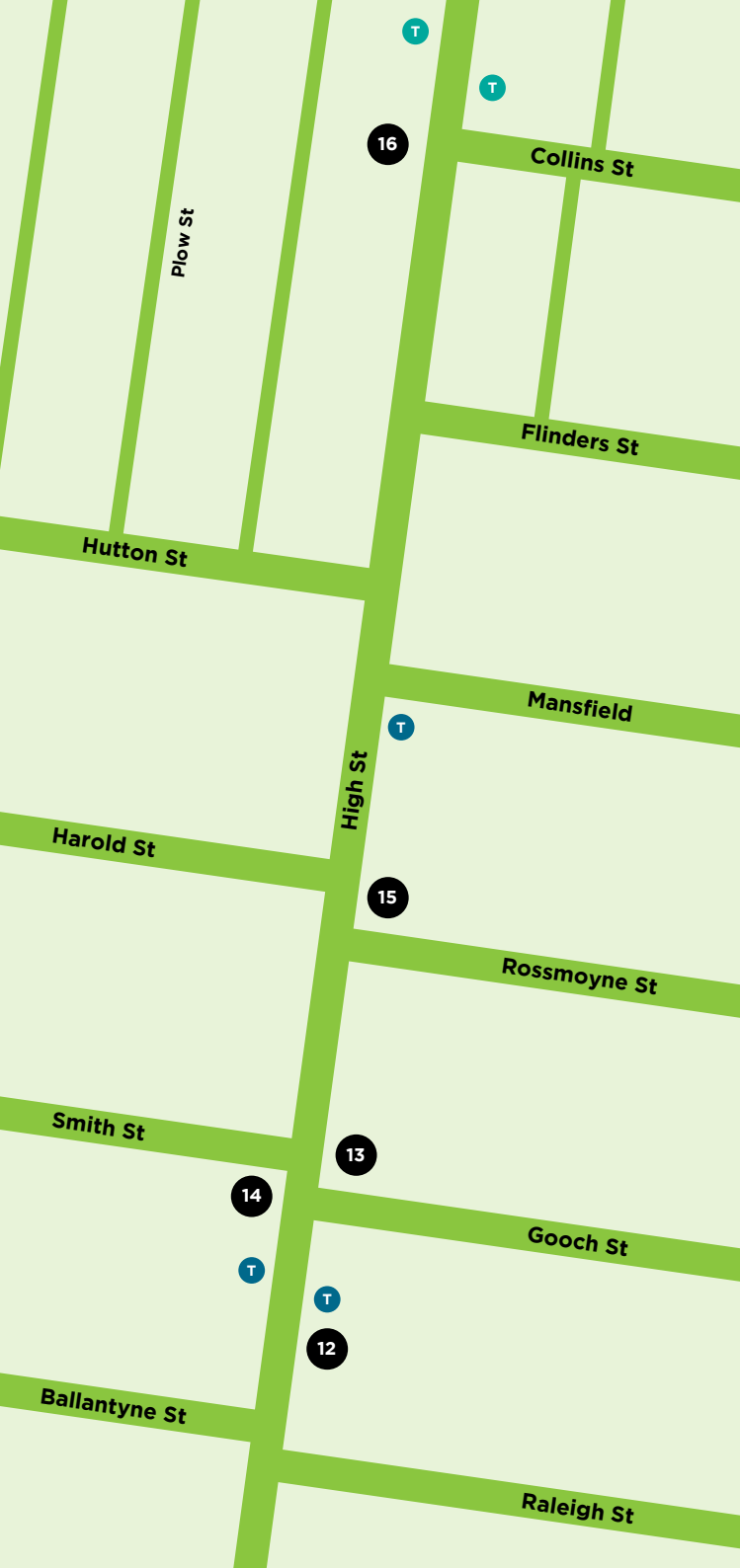
11

## Intersection of High Street and Normanby Avenue

*646 High Street Thornbury looking northwards*

The newsagency on the left in this picture was built in 1906 as a grocery store with John Howie operating his business from there. By 1920 it became a newsagency and was to continue as a newsagency right up until around 2015.





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## Former Commercial Bank

*686 High Street Thornbury*

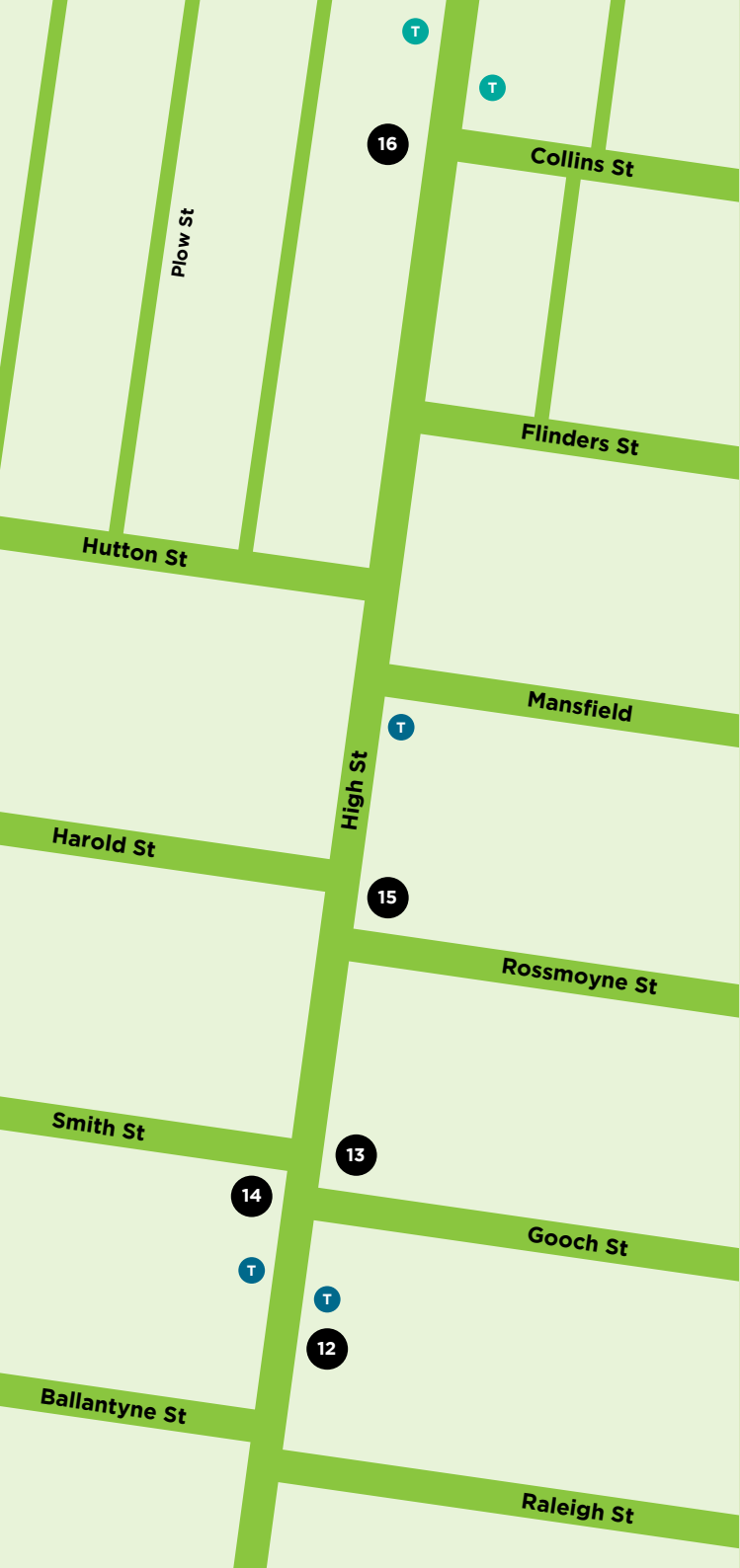
This undistinguished looking building was in 1921 the Commercial Bank of Australia, a small one teller operation.

In February 1921 the teller, Mr Turner had just stepped out of the bank for a second when he saw two men running away, carrying a bag he had just placed in the bank containing £271 he had brought up from the Northcote branch.

Turner gave chase but backed off when one of the men threatened to shoot him. The suspects then escaped in a car which had been parked in Rossmoyne Street.

Based on the description given the police arrested Mr Leslie Taylor, aka the notorious “Squizzy” Taylor. During the trial it appears that all the witnesses had forgotten what the two culprits looked like and the case was dismissed.



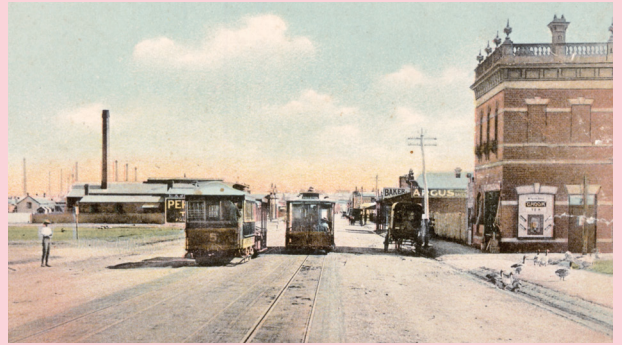
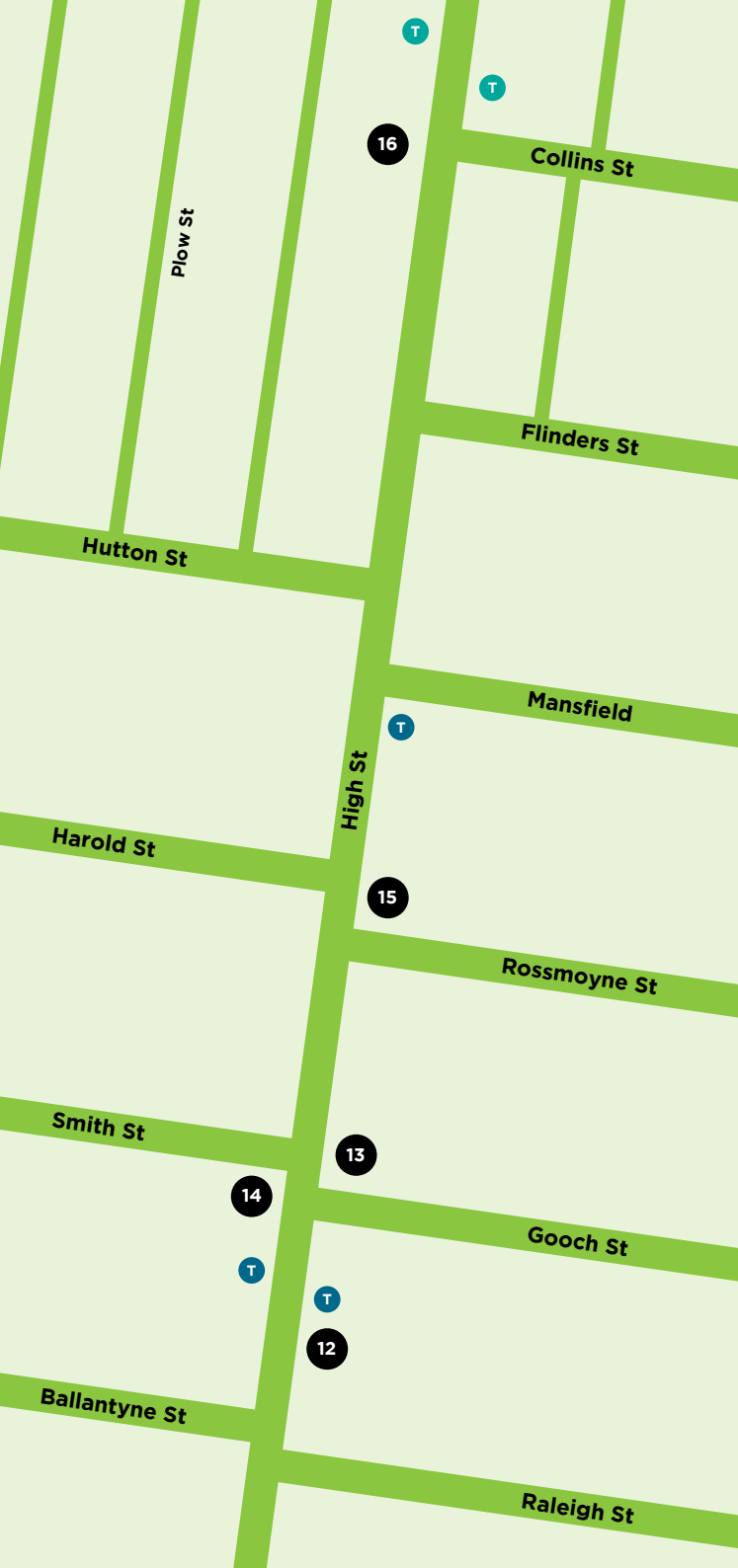


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## Salvation Army Hall

704-710 High Street Thornbury

The Salvation Army Hall was built in 1914 with a second hall added later. A modern extension hides part of the old hall.



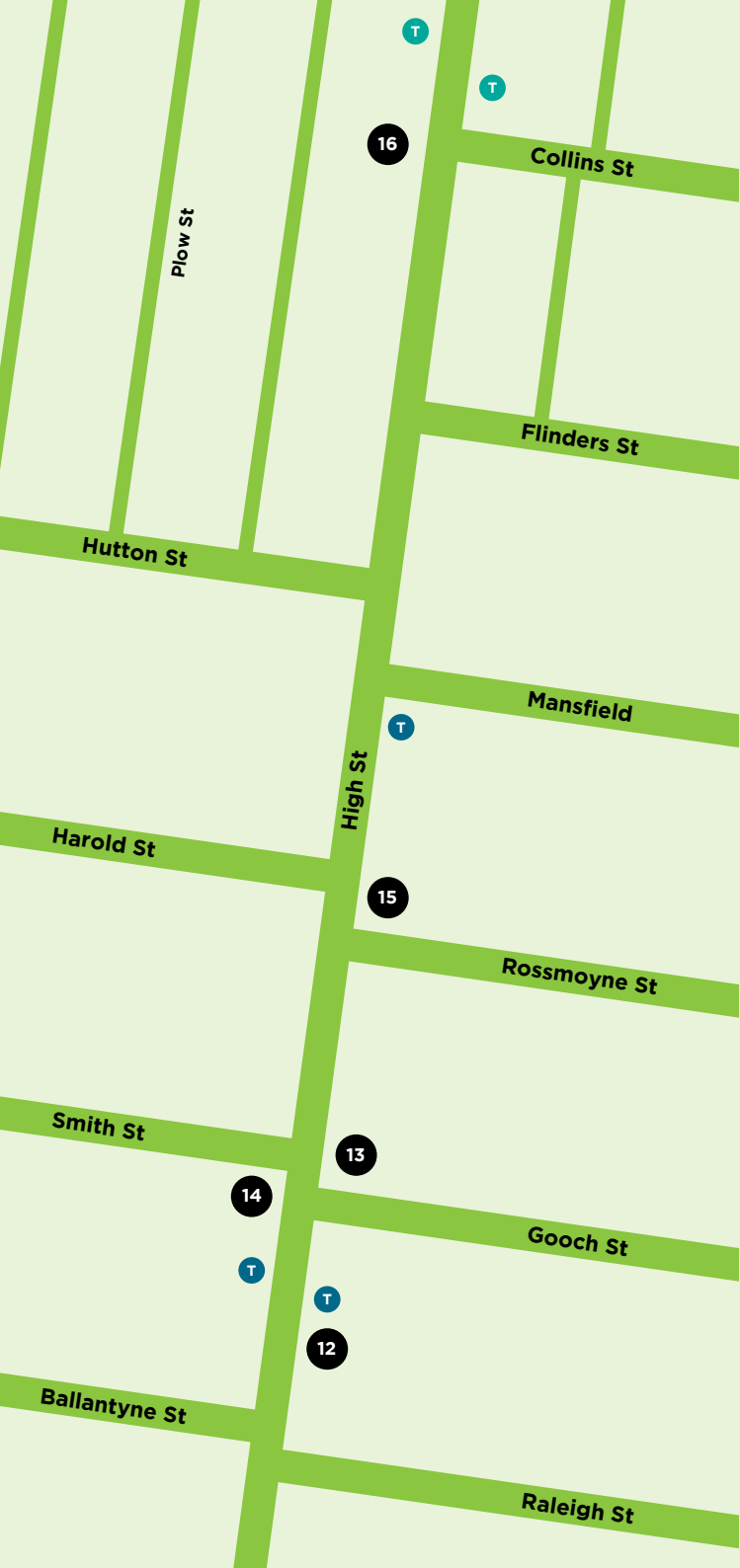
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## Grain store

*731 High Street Thornbury*

Built in 1888 as a shop and house by William Clapham, a Councillor for Northcote. Over the years it has been a butcher, boot maker, and grocery shop before becoming a pet food supplier.

In recent years it has been resurrected as Short Round Café. Note the ducks crossing the road to the right. It is hard to imagine a flock of ducks safely crossing High Street today.



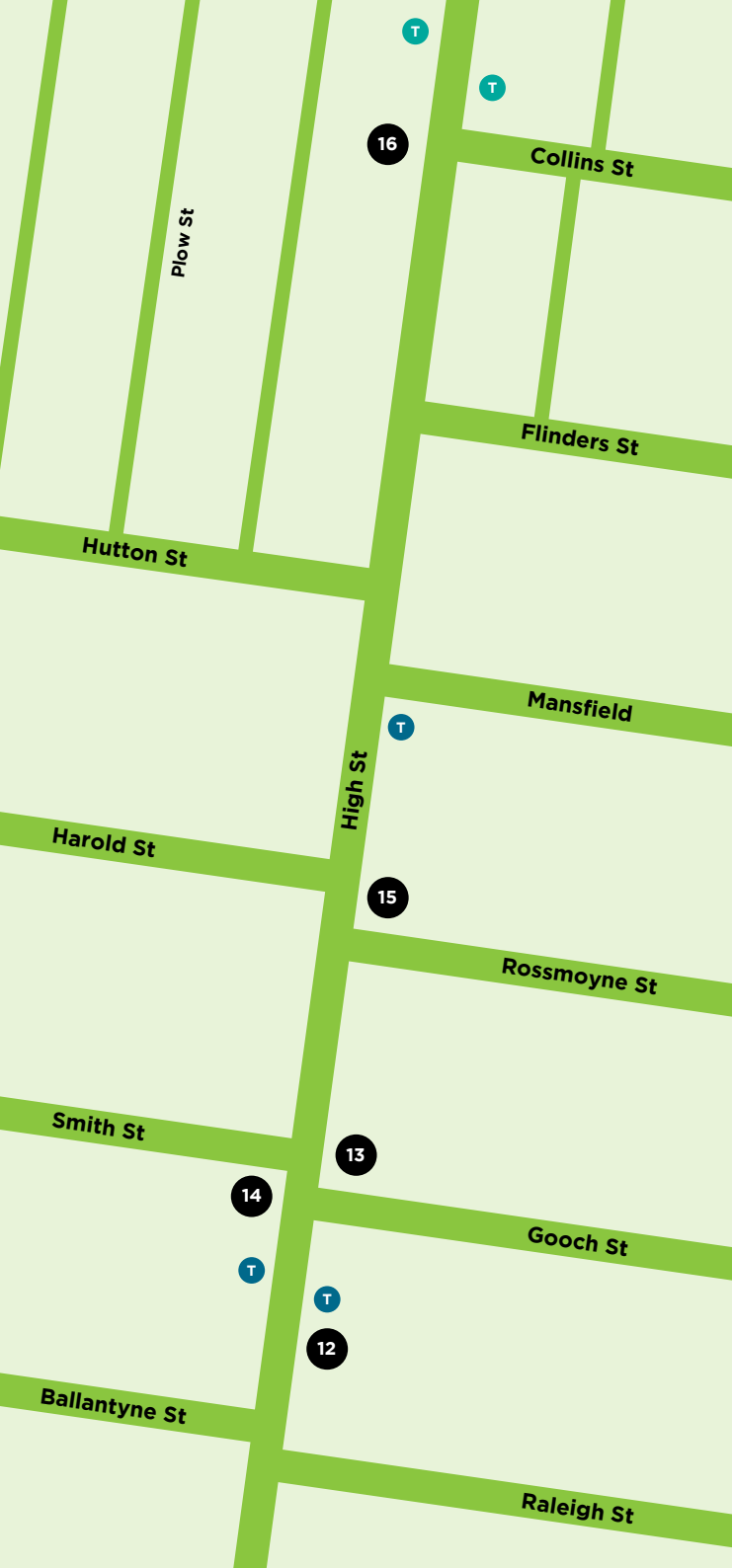
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### **St Mary's Catholic Church**

*Cnr of High Street and  
Rossmoyne Street Thornbury*

St Mary's Church was opened in February 1916 by Melbourne Archbishop Thomas Joseph Carr. The adjacent primary school was built in 1925, and consisted of a wooden building that had previously served as a school in Northcote and was relocated.

By 1931 the school already had over 500 pupils enrolled.



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## Thornbury Theatre

*859 High Street Thornbury*

This theatre first opened as the New Regent Theatre on 1 August 1926. The films selected for its grand opening were “Argentine Love” and “Hurricane Kid”. These silent movies were supported by the Regent Grand Symphony Orchestra.

It was independently operated and this continued until 1931 when it was taken over by Hoyts. It underwent a remodel and became one of their chain of Regent Theatres in 1932. With the introduction of television to Australia in 1956, cinema attendances plummeted and the theatre commenced part time operation, only opening on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. It closed in June 1967 and became a ballroom, renamed the Cantina Ballroom.

In the early 2000s it was converted into a reception hall for weddings and events, renamed the Midas Reception Hall.

In 2010 it changed ownership again and is now known as the Thornbury Theatre. It hosts an array of events including wrestling matches, live music concerts and receptions.

Information has been sourced from Darebin Heritage, visit Darebin Libraries for an extensive range of heritage articles.  
Telephone: **1300 655 355**  
**[heritage.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au](http://heritage.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au)**

If you come across any broken, raised or damaged footpaths, please contact Darebin Customer Service on 8470 8888 or use **[www.snapsendsolve.com](http://www.snapsendsolve.com)** to report.

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## More information

**Public Transport:** Route 86 Tram runs High Street to Plenty Road. [www.ptv.vic.gov.au](http://www.ptv.vic.gov.au)

**Public Toilets:** [www.toiletmap.gov.au](http://www.toiletmap.gov.au)

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## You may also be interested in other Walking discoveries in your neighbourhood



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