

MONTPELIER RETREAT

A STORY OF A STREET



Montpelier Retreat has a rich and layered history — one that reflects both cultural vibrancy and a sense of loss. The street's layout is shaped by the original landform of the Cove, following the path of a former gully and creek that once flowed to the original shoreline. It was also the site of Cottage Green, one of the earliest permanent properties established by Reverend Knopwood shortly after European settlement in **1804**.



By 1831, the area began to evolve rapidly with the quarrying of dolomite stone for the construction of the new wharf. This industry, alongside a growing seafaring trade, drove significant development. Buildings associated with this period quickly emerged, with The Whaler (constructed in 1834) remaining as one of the last physical reminders of this era.

Montpelier Retreat soon became the heart of a thriving and diverse community — a place where working-class families and wealthy merchants lived side by side. Within a relatively short stretch of street, there were pubs, shops, bakeries, a school, engineering works, stables, and a mix of Georgian and Victorian terraces, modest cottages and grand homes. The streetscape was characterised by red brick and sandstone buildings, polished brass detailing, and finely crafted timber elements. As former resident and author Amanda Lohrey observed: “... *this was once one of the most historic and picturesque streets in Australia, not unlike Montmartre, though with a distinctive atmosphere of its own.*” — The Mercury, 15 February **1985**



However, this rich social and physical fabric was largely lost in the **1960s** when the area was designated for clearance. Most of the homes, shops and workshops were demolished, and the established community was displaced to new housing on the outskirts of the city.

Today, this period is widely recognised as a significant opportunity — not only for revitalising the local community, but for reimagining one of Hobart's most distinctive and culturally rich streetscapes.

