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HC Research Guide

Research your home or land

How do I start?

Kim barne thaliyu / Geelong Heritage Centre is a valuable resource to find out more about an area of land, your home, and the people who may have lived there before you.

Some common questions include:

- Who are the Traditional Owners?
- Who has lived in my house?
- What was the land used for?
- How old is my house?
- Who was the architect?
- Are there any plans or photographs available?

There are many ways to go about finding answers, and our friendly staff are available to help. You can email heritagecentre@grlc.vic.gov.au, phone (03) 4201 0630 or [book an appointment](#). Here are some tips to get you started.

Whose Country am I on?

First Nations peoples have been caring for Country for tens of thousands of years. To learn about the Traditional Owners in your area, check your local council website and visit [AIATSIS](#) for other resources.

Victorian Heritage Database

Do you know if your house is heritage listed? Check the [Victorian Heritage Database](#) for your address - you might find some historical information already compiled.

Reference collection at Kim barne thaliyu

Check our [Library catalogue](#) to see if someone has already researched the area of land, your house or property. Restrict the search to Geelong Heritage Centre in the catalogue dropdown. You might find a few passing references or an entire report with images and plans.

Postal Directories

Look up your address in our directories or phone books. We hold select volumes of Sands & McDougall's Victorian Directories and various earlier directories for the Geelong region which can be used to assist you in tracing people and properties back to the 1850s.

Sands & McDougall Directories are now available online via State Library Victoria:

<https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sands-mcdougall-directories>.

Rate Books

We hold rate and valuation books for the former councils of Bannockburn, Barrabool, Bellarine, Colac, Corio, Geelong, Geelong West, Leigh, Meredith, Newtown, Otway, South Barwon, and Winchelsea. The rate books usually list the names of owners/occupiers, indicate the locations of properties, and give a brief description of any structures.

Geelong Advertiser Newspapers

Newspapers are particularly useful for looking up 19th century families, homes, and businesses. The Geelong Advertiser is a vital part of our resources.

You can research people who may have lived in your house, along with tender notices or auctions, business partnerships and advertising, birth notices, marriage announcements and obituaries.

The Geelong Advertiser is currently available to search on [Trove](#) up to 1929.

Issues from 1930 to present can be accessed in our research room along with various select indexes to assist in locating references.

Maps, Plans and Sale Notices

We hold an extensive collection of maps, subdivision plans and sale notices. We also hold the archives of one of Geelong's biggest architectural firms Buchan, Laird & Buchan with drawings, specifications and contracts dated 1897 to 1973. Many are listed on our catalogue Euphemia: <https://archives.grlc.vic.gov.au/>

You can use maps to locate your property and see how the property has changed over time. [State Library Victoria](#) holds a collection of maps, many of which are online.

Many [parish maps](#) are available online on the Public Record Office Victoria website. Map Warper is a handy tool which allows you to overlay historic and current maps: <https://mapwarper PROV.vic.gov.au/>

Photographs

Finding an historic image of the land or home you are researching can be difficult, but there are some helpful hints to help uncover likely sources:

- Search our **photo catalogues and indexes** for specific addresses and house names - this will be easier if the property is heritage listed or otherwise considered important.
- Search our **family collections**. If you know the surnames of the families that lived in your home, see if we have a collection under their name. Many families were photographed out the front of their homes.
- Try looking for general **streetscapes**. Your individual property might not be listed in the index, but a streetscape under the street's name, might just show it. Several of Geelong's former councils conducted photographic surveys of their municipalities, it's worth checking our indexes to see if one was completed in your area.
- Are there any **landmarks** nearby, such as a school or hotel? Searching for a more prominent property nearby might yield views which incidentally show your house.
- Finally, **elevated or aerial views** might show the land or home you are researching. Many of Geelong's tallest buildings have attracted photographers throughout the years, and some beautiful 360° views have been taken in the city and suburbs. Various individuals, councils and government agencies conducted aerial surveys of Geelong throughout the years.

Contact Us

Wadawurrung Country, Level 3 of Geelong Library & Heritage Centre, 51 Little Malop Street, Geelong VIC 3220
Drop ins are welcome, we're open 10am – 4pm, Tuesday to Friday. You can also [book an appointment](#) online.

Website: <https://www.grlc.vic.gov.au/glhc/heritage-centre>

Email: heritagecentre@grlc.vic.gov.au

Phone: (03) 4201 0630

