

DRILL HALLS
4
THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The survey identified only three surviving buildings from the earliest period in Melbourne at Richmond (1861) and East Collingwood (1864) and another at Warrnambool (1868).



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The earliest surviving drill halls in Australia are all located in Melbourne. Left is Richmond, centre is Warrnambool and right is East Collingwood.

A further group of eleven later colonial buildings from Bendigo (c1890) in the north to Portland (1887) in the west, were located. The distinctive design of a number of these is attributed to the Public Works Department architect, Samuel Bindley. Another building from this period was located at Fort Queenscliff (1882).



Seven late colonial period buildings of identical design and detailing, with some variation in size were found in rural and regional Queensland, from Southport in the south east to Charters Towers (1886) in the north. Of a common design not found in other states the Ipswich (1891) example is unique within this collection, in its open sided plan. The earliest surviving drill hall found in Queensland was constructed c1883 on a site in Boundary Street, Brisbane and moved to Fortitude Valley, Brisbane in 1925.

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The collection of drill halls attributed to Samuel Brindley of the Public Works Department.

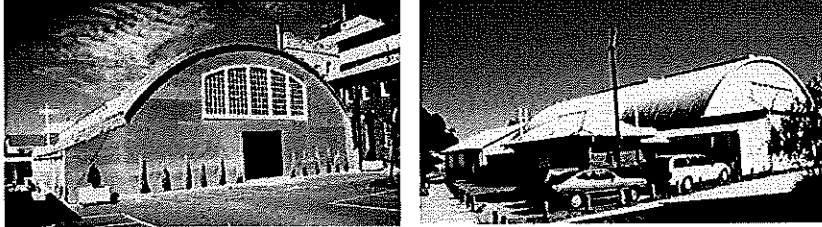


The survey found two late colonial drill halls in Western Australia at Perth (1896) and Fremantle (1895). Both of these have high arched roofs and sophisticated large span steel bow trusses. The example in Fremantle had a substantial two storey inter-war brick addition.

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The early drill halls in Queensland include from left Charters Towers, Ipswich and Fortitude Valley.

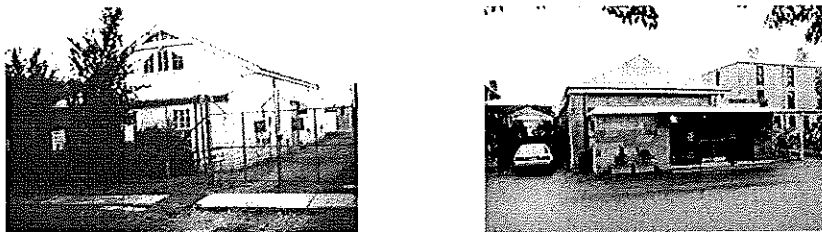
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The late colonial drill halls in Western Australia are located in Perth on the left and Fremantle on the right.

Three colonial period buildings were located in New South Wales, one at Cooma (1898) and two at Victoria Barracks, Paddington (c1880 and 1889). The Cooma building is a standard design that appears in a number of other drill halls built in the early Federation period in that State. A surviving naval drill hall was located constructed in 1890 at Fort Macquarie but was moved to Rushcutters Bay, Sydney, in 1900.



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The colonial drill halls in New South Wales include Cooma and the Victoria Barracks.

No surviving Colonial period drill halls were located in South Australia or Tasmania. At Wollongong (1857), New South Wales and at Hobart (1847) and Launceston (1827), Tasmania, the survey identified existing buildings that were used as drill halls during the period.

Buildings from this period are generally located in town and city centres. Usually found on larger plots of land with areas for outdoor parade some are located within barracks constructed during the British military occupation of Australia.

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The surviving colonial drill halls are located around the perimeter of Australia with a concentration in Victoria. Their location accords with the population distribution at the time.

The survey revealed that the majority of the surviving examples from the period are constructed in timber with the exception of several masonry buildings including those at the Victoria Barracks, Paddington in New South Wales. While there are variations in design in each state they are generally to a standard floor plan. That is a rectangular two to one proportioned hall, doors to the sides and ends, and attached offices.

The two earliest buildings in Victoria have a gable roof form in Georgian style with reserved decorative treatment. The example at Warrnambool, which is of masonry construction, is a classical mid 19th century design. The Queensland examples have a distinctive and unique curved roof form otherwise their design can be described as utilitarian. The late Colonial period examples in Victoria have a gable form, and are more highly decorative with bold gothic external detailing to windows, doors and gable ends. The large high arched drill halls in Western Australia were constructed using combinations of timber walls, steel trusses and corrugated iron cladding. The drill hall at Albany, Western Australia is a timber building with a gable roof and clad in corrugated iron.

Three of the Queensland buildings are still in Defence ownership and used by the Army Reserve. The other Queensland buildings are used for community purposes.

Of the eleven surviving Colonial period buildings in Victoria, Defence retains four. The two earliest buildings are in private ownership, one is unused and the other is in residential use. The other privately owned

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buildings are being used for a variety of community and light commercial purposes. The Queenscliff drill hall is located within Fort Queenscliff historic site.

Of the Western Australian buildings that at Albany is being used by the Air Training Corps and the two large curved roof examples are in private ownership, one as a nightclub, and the other as part of an educational facility.

In New South Wales the Cooma drill hall has recently been sold and is now being used by the town band. Those at Victoria Barracks, Paddington are still in Defence use.

THE FEDERATION PERIOD

The survey found two examples from this period in Queensland, one at Townsville (1905), and the other at Rockhampton (1907). In New South Wales drill halls were found at Goulburn (1907), Albury (1903), Gladesville (1900), Lancer Barracks, Parramatta (1905), Wagga Wagga (1910), Newcastle West (1906), Lismore (1905), Casino (1906), Victoria Barracks (1903 and 1908) and Armidale(1908).



Victoria revealed three surviving buildings at Geelong (1900), Kyneton (1903), Colac (1909). Two drill halls were found in Tasmania, one at Launceston (1906) at Paterson Barracks and one at Ross (1907), in the Tasmanian Midlands. A single corrugated iron clad drill hall was found in Albany (1904), Western Australia. No purpose built drill halls from this period are thought to survive in South Australia.

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The federation drill halls include North ward in Townsville, Goulburn and Wagga Wagga.



The location of drill halls from this period generally continued the colonial pattern of being in or very near the centres of towns and most were found to be on large sites, some up-to three acres and likely to have enabled the drill of mounted infantry.

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Further federation drill halls include Geelong, Ross and Albany.