

Victorian Heritage Database Report  
**Army Drill Hall, 31-35 Sloane Street, STAWELL**

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**Location:**

31-35 Sloane Street STAWELL, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

**Heritage Status / Level of Significance:**

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

**Statement of Significance:**

The Drill Hall at 31-35 Sloane Street, Stawell, has significance as a legacy of the Commonwealth Government's policy for compulsory military training and the establishment of standard drill hall buildings throughout the country between 1911 and 1918. This building has significance as an example of the rudimentary designs prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs (later the Department of Works and Railways) that was under the design control of Australia's First Commonwealth Architect, John Smith Murdoch. The building has further significance for its associations with the Paramount Picture Theatre

that operated in the building by the McCracken family between c.1922 and c.1938.

The Drill Hall at 31-35 Sloane Street, Stawell, is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates original design qualities typical for Commonwealth Government drill hall design between 1911 and 1918. These qualities include the rudimentary gable roof form, together with the side skillion wing. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the galvanised corrugated iron and strapped sheet wall cladding, galvanised corrugated iron roof cladding, timber framed clerestory and other windows, central vehicular opening and flanking windows, and the timber ventilator in the gable end.

The Drill Hall at 31-35 Sloane Street, Stawell, is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with the Commonwealth Government's policy of 1911 to expand the country's military forces through the introduction of compulsory military training and the subsequent construction of drill halls between 1911 and 1918 to accommodate this training. This building also has associations with the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs and Australia's First Commonwealth Government Architect, John Smith Murdoch, who was ultimately responsible for the designs of the drill halls, including the hall at Stawell, during that period. The building has further associations with the McCracken family (notably Bob and Hugh McCracken and the McCracken children: Keith, Lil, Colin, Mary and Bruce) and Harry Whitehead, Editor of the Stawell News newspaper, who established the Paramount Picture Theatre in the building between c.1922 and 1938.

The Drill Hall at 31-35 Sloane Street, Stawell, is socially significant at a LOCAL level. It is recognised by the Stawell community as the local of the Citizen Military Forces in the early and late 20th century, and for recreational purposes associated with the Paramount Theatre in the early 20th century.

Overall, the Drill Hall at 31-35 Sloane Street is of LOCAL significance.

## Description

The Drill Hall site at 31-35 Sloane Street, Stawell, is largely taken up by the drill hall building, together with an introduced gabled wing and other small outbuildings.

The single storey, galvanised corrugated iron and strapped sheet clad, rudimentary early 20th century drill hall is primary characterised by a long simple gabled roof form, together with a side skillion wing. These roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated iron. Introduced ventilation stacks along the ridge line appear to have replaced earlier ventilation measures.

Other early features of the design include the timber framed clerestorey windows and other windows, central vehicular opening and flanking window openings in the gable end, and the timber ventilator in the gable end.

## Comparative

Patrick Miller in a 'Thematic History of Defence in Victoria' states that the Drill Hall at Stawell is similar in design to the drill halls in: Collings Street, Ararat; Turner Street, Bacchus Marsh; Bridge Street, Benalla; Mollison Street, Bendigo; Landcox Street, Brighton; Swan Street, Burnley; Camberwell Grove, Camberwell; Park Street, Carlton North; Lonsdale Street, Dandenong; Queens Parade, Fitzroy North; Barkly Street, Footscray; Queen Street, Golden Square; Milton Street, Hamilton; Baillie Street, Horsham; Charles Street, Korumburra; Raglan Street, Preston; Mcwhae Avenue, Ripponlea; Raymond Street, Sale; Sabraon Street, Shepparton; Argyle Street, St. Kilda; Robinson Street, Surrey Hills; Rowan Street, Wangaratta; Princes Highway, Warragul; Pertobe Road, Warrnambool; and Somerville Road, Yarraville.

Heritage Study / Consultant	Northern Grampians - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, Wendy Jacobs, Vicki Johnson, David Rowe, Phil Taylor, 2004
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Construction Date Range	
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	113071
Property number	

*This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online*