

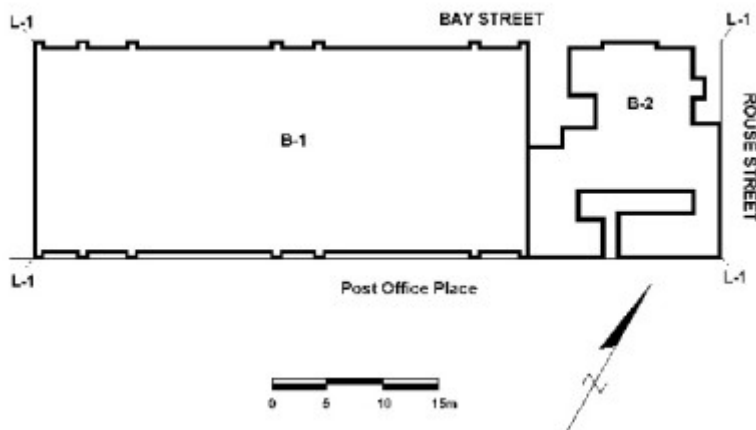
## Port Melbourne Naval Drill Hall



NAVAL DRILL HALL AND  
FORMER POST OFFICE  
SOHE 2008



1 naval drill hall side view  
oct1997



naval drill hall front port melbourne plan

### Location

40 BAY STREET PORT MELBOURNE, Port Phillip City

### Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

### Level of significance

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### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1378

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO39

## Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 12, 1999

The Port Melbourne Naval Drill Hall was built in 1912 to the design of Commonwealth Department of Works architect JS Murdoch, and is one of the first major buildings constructed for the newly formed Royal Australian Navy. The drill hall adjoins the former Sandridge Post Office which was built in 1862 to the design of Victorian Public Works Department architect JJ Clark by builders Griffiths and Co. The design, apart from being executed in brick rather than bluestone, is identical to the Kilmore Post Office (HR1190) usually attributed to Henry Williams but possibly also by Clark. The former post and telegraph office was transferred to the Commonwealth on Federation. The building was adapted for use as naval offices in 1911 on the completion of a new post office further along Bay Street. The former post office is a distinguished Italianate design in tri-chrome brickwork and has had several reasonably sympathetic additions and alterations to adapt it for office use. The naval drill hall is a fine example of Edwardian Free Classical architecture distinguished by an assured handling of massing and materials using rough stone plinths, shaped and plain red bricks, and dressed sandstone in the English Arts and Crafts tradition.

The building is unusual in the context of other militia drill halls of the period which were typically constructed of timber and corrugated iron. It is more like Murdoch's other naval buildings at HMAS Cerberus at Crib Point and the former Royal Australian Field Artillery Barracks at Maribyrnong (HR1098). The naval drill hall was used as a recruiting centre in both World Wars and since the demolition of the nearby HMAS Lonsdale and the Victualling Stores is the last remaining place in Port Melbourne with naval links.

The Naval Drill Hall and Former Post Office Port Melbourne are historically and architecturally important to the State of Victoria.

The Naval Drill Hall and Former Post Office are historically important for their long associations with naval training in Victoria. Port Melbourne, along with Williamstown, is historically important in the development of the Royal Australian Navy. Victoria had the most powerful and best organised of the colonial naval forces at Federation, and Port Melbourne was the home of naval militia training. After Federation the continuing naval importance of Port Melbourne was recognised by the construction of the drill hall. The significance of the drill hall is accentuated by the high quality of its design and materials which were unusual in the militia context of the period. The Naval Drill Hall and Former Post Office are historically important as the last remaining tangible link with naval history in Port Melbourne.

The Naval Drill Hall is architecturally significant as an important Victorian design of Commonwealth architect John Smith Murdoch whose nationally important works include Old Parliament House and Yarralumla Canberra, HMAS Cerberus Crib Point, RAAF Point Cook and the former High Court 450 Little Bourke Street and the former Mail Exchange Spencer Street Melbourne. Former Post Office is architecturally significant as a design of noted Victorian Public Works architect John James Clark whose most famous work in a long and distinguished career was the Old Treasury building.

Construction dates	1862,
Architect/Designer	Murdoch, John Smith,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 125288

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

Date Started 1862; Date Finished ; Storeys 2; Desc POST OFFICE; Arch/Design J J Clark; Public Works Department;

Date Started 1912; Date Finished ; Storeys 2; Desc DRILL HALL; Walls BRICK;

Arch/Design JOHN SMITH MURDOCH; Style EDWARDIAN FREESTYLE; Builder GRIFFITHS & CO;

## Usage/Former Usage

1862 ; post office ; 1912 ; HALL ;

## Physical Conditions

State of the Historic Environment survey report-Fair condition see events

## Veterans Description for Public

The Port Melbourne Naval Drill Hall, located on 40 Bay Street, was built in 1912 to the design of Commonwealth Department of Works architect JS Murdoch, and is one of the first major buildings constructed for the newly formed Royal Australian Navy. The drill hall adjoins the former Sandridge Post Office, which was built in 1862 to the design of Victorian Public Works Department architect JJ Clark by builders Griffiths and Co.

The Naval Drill Hall is a fine example of Edwardian Free Classical architecture distinguished by an assured handling of massing and materials using rough stone plinths, shaped and plain red bricks, and dressed sandstone in the English Arts and Crafts tradition. Sometime before 1928 a store room and shooting gallery were added to the south end of the building in a manner after the original style. The building is unusual in the context of other militia drill halls of the period which were typically constructed of timber and corrugated iron. It is more like Murdoch's other naval buildings at HMAS Cerberus at Crib Point and the former Royal Australian Field Artillery Barracks at Maribyrnong.

During the First World War naval recruiting was centred at Port Melbourne and Williamstown. Between the wars the Drill Hall was used as a training centre for the naval reserves and the RAN Volunteer Reserve. The naval reserves and volunteers moved to the newly built HMAS Lonsdale in 1942. The Drill hall is the last remaining place in Port Melbourne with naval links since the demolition of the nearby HMAS Lonsdale and the Victualling Stores.

John Smith Murdoch designed other nationally important works including Old Parliament House and Yarralumla Canberra, HMAS Cerberus Crib Point, RAAF Point Cook and the former High Court 450 Little Bourke Street and the former Mail Exchange Spencer Street Melbourne.

## Extent of Registration

1. All the buildings marked B1 (Naval Drill Hall) and B2 (former Post Office) on Diagram 607496 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 607496 held by the Executive Director, being all the land described in Certificates of Title Vol. 5833 Folio 505 and Vol. 3714 Folio 771.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*