

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:

KENSINGTON DRILL HALL



PhilBee (Taken on January 21, 2016)

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX036
Designation No:	D159
Designation Authority:	Minister of Defence
Address:	24 Bridgman Street, Dunedin
Other Names:	Kensington Army Hall
Located within a Heritage Precinct:	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description:	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record:	Defence purposes
Condition of Property:	Identified on the Earthquake Prone Building Register – No. 2396

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Meets criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Not assessed. Further research required.

RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope including parade ground excluding any ACM roof cladding.
	External/ancillary elements	
✓	Internal elements and/or rooms	Recommend for 'Parade Ground' to be protected. This assessment is a desktop assessment only, extent of significant interior fabric/spaces subject to further assessment.
✓	Excluded elements	Any ACM Roof cladding (TBC with property owner).

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kensington Army Hall has heritage significance to Dunedin and to Otago as a whole. The building has historical and social significance for its association with Dunedin's military history and as a venue for civic events. It has cultural significance in its demonstration of military training and lifestyle, particularly in its association with recruiting and training in both World Wars. It has architectural significance as a purpose-built drill hall designed by leading architectural practice Mason and Wales. The Drill Hall has retained a fair degree of its architectural integrity. Of the four main centres Dunedin's Kensington Drill Hall is the only extant example.

The Drill Hall is not comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin because it is unique in its history and function. Because of its rarity it has special heritage value.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Edwardian (1902-1914)/Interwar (1914-1939)
Style	Similar to English examples of Tudor Revival/Castellated Gothic ¹
Era/Date of Construction	1915
Architect/Designer/Builder	P.Y. Wales (architect) Armstrong and Moore (contractors)
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Army drill hall

¹ [Drill Halls \(historicengland.org.uk\)](https://historicengland.org.uk), accessed 26 June 2024.

Primary Construction Materials	Masonry, concrete, corrugated fibre cement roofing, steel, timber door and window joinery
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Form and scale, length of elevation to Bridgman Street, regular rhythm of fenestrations, castellated parapet, pilasters, moulding, covered parade ground.

Background to NZ Defence Force

Te Ara records that

'New Zealand has had its own armed forces since the early days of European colonisation. The first unofficial military organisation was the Kororareka Association (1838–40). Local volunteer forces were established in the early 1840s but were disbanded when the Militia Ordinance 1845, which authorised the raising of compulsory militias to supplement imperial (British) troops, was issued. Imperial troops were stationed in New Zealand from 1840 to 1870.

*Volunteer units were established during the New Zealand wars. The first permanent military force was the Colonial Defence Force, which was active from 1862. This was replaced by the Armed Constabulary, which performed both military and policing roles, in 1867. After being renamed the New Zealand Constabulary Force, it was divided into separate military and police forces in 1886. The military force was called the Permanent Militia and later renamed the Permanent Force.'*²

In 1909 the mid-nineteenth century volunteer forces were disbanded. The 1909 Defence Act created the Territorial Force, with the universal obligation to be trained in cadets (under 18 years of age), Territorials from 18-21 years (later extended to 25 years). Men were posted to the Reserve until they were 30. Territorials were liable to serve in New Zealand only but could volunteer to serve overseas.³

Major-General Alexander Godley implemented the British General Staff-devised new defence scheme in 1910, dividing the country into four military districts (Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago) each responsible for training its own mounted riflemen, infantrymen, artillerymen, and specialist and medical units. The aim was to create a defence force that would slot into the imperial army.

With the outbreak of World War One, Territorials applied to their commanding officers, while other men filled out a form at their nearest Defence Department office or Post Office. They were then called for a medical examination. Those who were declared fit to serve waited to be called up.

Each of the four main centres (Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland) had massive drill halls that served as recruiting offices and marshalling stations. Each recruiting sub-district (16 in 1914, 21 from late

² Jim Rolfe, 'Armed forces - Historical overview', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/armed-forces/page-1> (accessed 21 July 2023)

³ 'The Defence Act of 1909', from An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand
URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/compulsory-military-training/page-2> (accessed 22 Nov 2022)

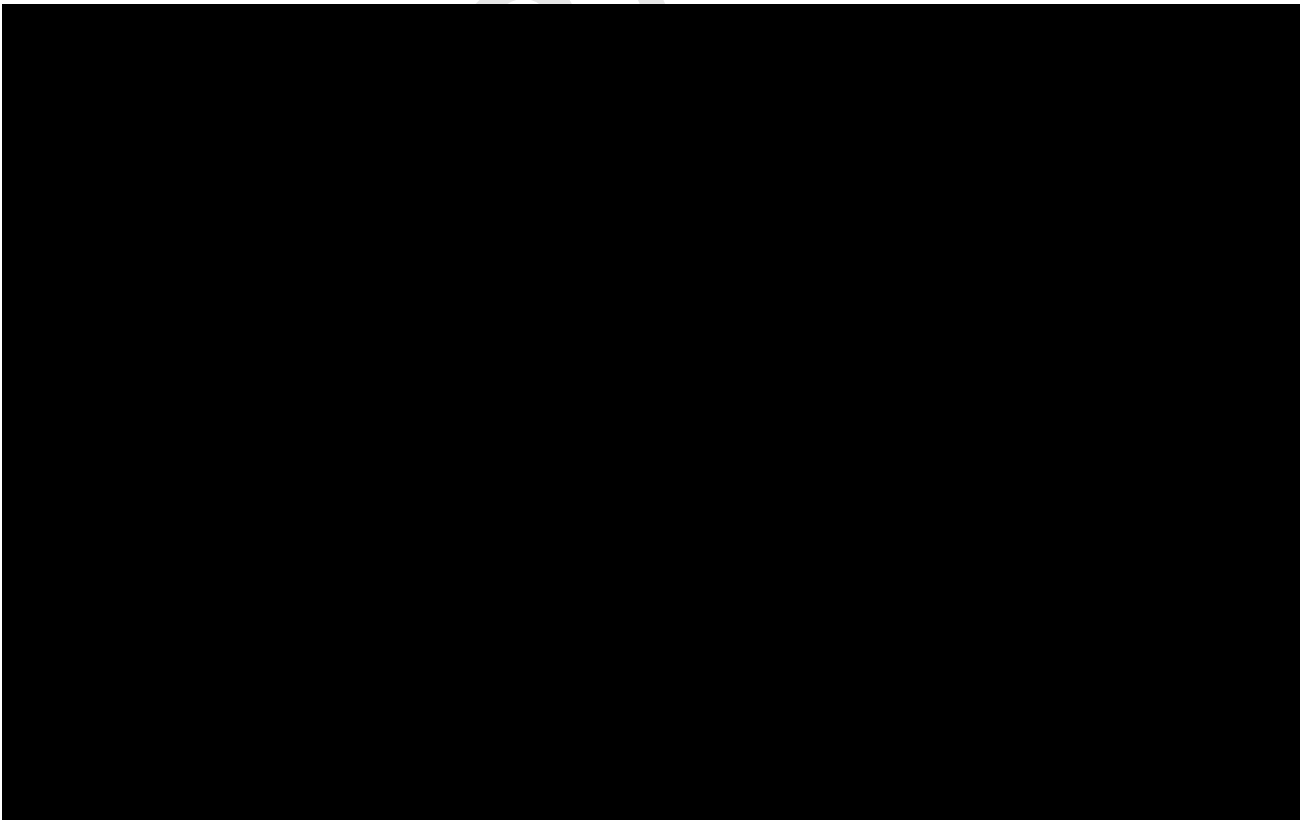
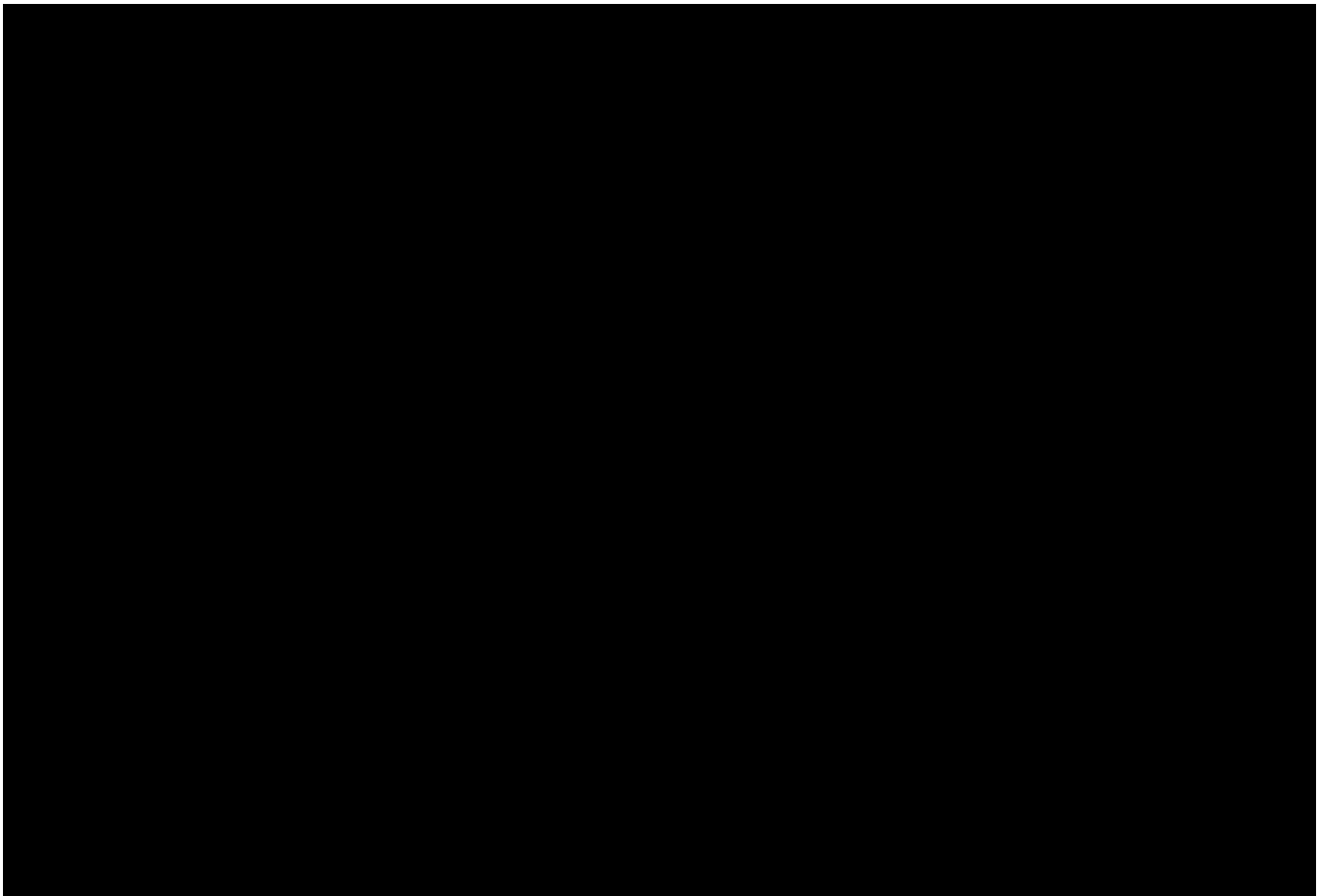
1916) had its own headquarters. At the headquarters enlistments were processed, travel arrangements were made for troops, and policed the conscription process. It is in the context of the pressure for recruits in the wake of the defeat at Gallipoli that the Otago Drill Hall was built. The 1916 Military Service Act introduced conscription. Dunedin's Kensington Drill Hall is the only one of the four main centre halls to survive.⁴

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁴ Bargas and Shoebridge, p. 21.



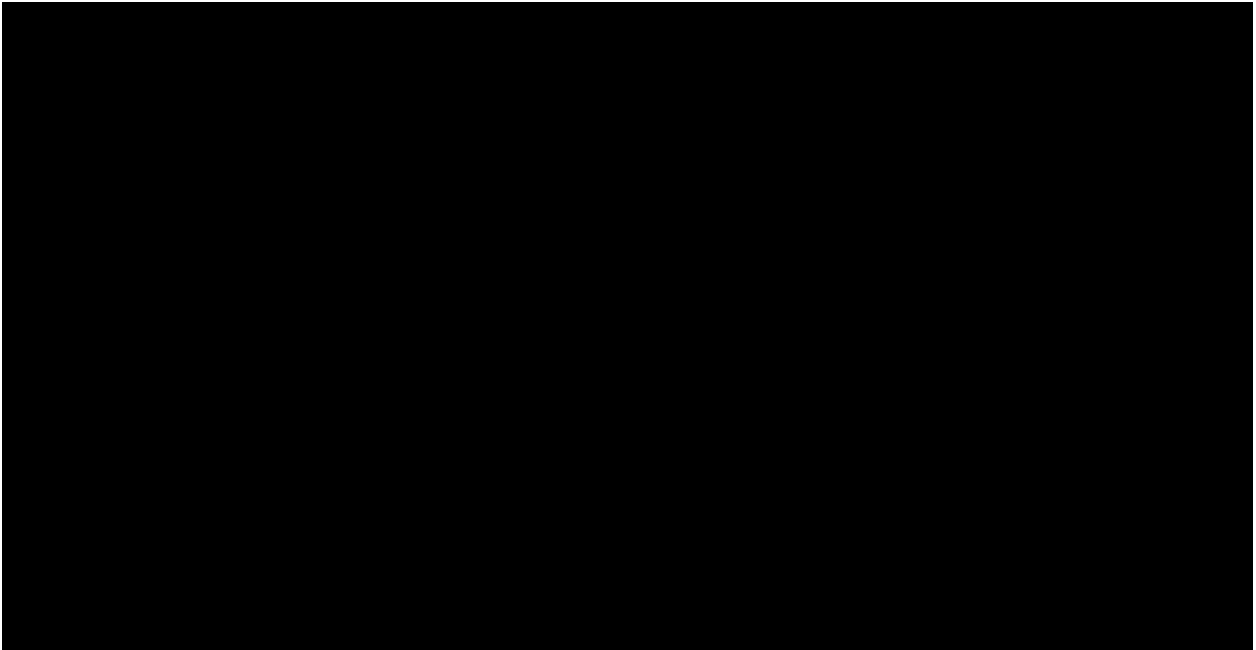
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Notable people/Themes

New Zealand Defence Force

The Kensington Drill Hall was purpose-built and has been in constant occupation by (the now) New Zealand Defence Force for close to one hundred and ten years. This is an area for further research and assessment.

World War One Recruitment

One of the most significant aspects of this building is the common experience of those men who entered the drill hall – whether as volunteers or as conscripts. This is the place where recruits were medically examined, where they drilled, where they assembled before they left Dunedin, and to where they returned. It is this general experience that gives the place particular meaning. It is a place of departure to which some men would never return.

Mason and Wales

Andrew Barrie and Julia Gatley's summary of Mason and Wales' architectural practice is reproduced below:

With its origins in the practice formed by William Mason (1810–1897) in Dunedin in 1862, Mason & Wales is New Zealand's oldest architectural practice. Mason had worked in England and Australia before moving to Auckland in 1840, where his outputs included the building now known as Old Government House (1855–1956), and then on to Dunedin in 1862, where the discovery of gold signalled potential. He set up partnership briefly with David Ross (1827–1908) and then, more significantly, with William Clayton (1823–1877). Tasmanian-born Clayton had designed numerous buildings there before immigrating to Dunedin in 1863, again attracted by the gold rush.

Mason & Clayton's key buildings included the Colonial Museum in Wellington (1864–1865), Dunedin's Post Office (1864–1868) and the Otago Provincial Council Buildings (1867). None of these survives.

Mason had been elected to parliament in 1861 and then served as mayor of Dunedin (1865–1867). In semi-retirement, he lived on a North Otago farm from 1867. Meanwhile, Clayton was appointed Colonial Architect in 1869 and moved to Wellington. Mason returned to Dunedin practice in 1871, with Nathaniel YA Wales (1832–1903) as his junior partner. Wales, also English, had immigrated to Dunedin via Melbourne and worked for Mason & Clayton from 1862 as a clerk of works and then as an architect. Mason retired fully in the mid-1870s, and Wales continued the practice.

... Across more than 150 years, the firm's oeuvre has encapsulated the story of New Zealand architecture, most particularly of Dunedin architecture – from colonial-era pluralism and gold rush exuberance to the gradual embrace of modernism, the adoption of regional inflections, a return to international themes and, now, the response to environmental imperatives.⁶

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Kensington Army Hall has historical significance for its association with Dunedin's territorial force, and more particularly for its key role as the venue for the recruitment, examination, and gathering place for Dunedin soldiers during both World Wars. Built in 1915, the hall represents the reorganization of local volunteer units to a territorial force under 1909 Defence Act. Of New Zealand's four main centres, it is the only large drill hall to survive, giving it additional historical significance.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. In its layout and use, the Kensington Army Hall illustrates the practices and traditions of the Defence Force.

DESIGN

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Kensington Army Hall has aesthetic and architectural significance as massive purpose-built drill hall designed by the important Dunedin architectural practice, Mason and Wales. With its 86-metre-long street elevation, the huge scale of the building makes a poignant statement about the number of men who passed through the doors in the service of their country. Architecturally, it is the sole surviving drill hall of this scale in New Zealand. Although some its architectural detailing has been removed or altered, it retains its considerable street presence, and its form reflects its function.

⁶ <https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/itinerary-dunedin/>

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

Not assessed under this value but may demonstrate technological significance for its truss system allowing the roof to span the width of the drill space.

REFERENCES

See appended information.

Date Assessment Completed	23 November 2022	Author	HB
Date Peer Reviewed	21 June 2024	Author	MM
Date Confirmed Complete	5 August 2024		
Minor Editing for Clarity	22 August 2024		

APPENDIX



THE MEN LEAVING **KENSINGTON DRILL HALL** AFTER BEING ADDRESSED BY COLONEL E. R. SMITH, V.D.

THE HEX LEAVING KENSINGTON DRILL HALL AFTER BEING ADDRESSED BY COLO'NEL E. R. SMITH, Y.D.

OTAGO WITNESS, ISSUE 3219, 24 NOVEMBER 1915,
PAGE 37 (SUPPLEMENT)

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PRESENTATION OF MILITARY MEDALS, ETC., BY SIR JAMES ALLEN, AT THE **KENSINGTON DRILL HALL**, DUNEDIN

-Guy, photo. PRESENTATION OF MILITARY MEDALS, Etc., BY SIR JAMES ALLEN, AT THE KENSINGTON DRILL HALL, DUNEDIN

OTAGO WITNESS, ISSUE 3333, 30 JANUARY 1918,
PAGE 27 (SUPPLEMENT)

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EX-DIGGERS MARCH AGAIN.—Men of the 4th B attalion, National Military Reserve, drilling at a night parade at the **Kensington Drill Hall**.

EX-DIGGERS MARCH AGAIN.— Men of the 4th B attalion, National Military Reserve, drilling at a night parade at the Kensington Drill Hall.

OTAGO DAILY TIMES, ISSUE 24388, 28 AUGUST 1940,
PAGE 9

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1115.

"The Army Hall"

A change of name for army premises has been ordered by army headquarters, and as a result, the use of the term "Drill Hall" will be discontinued and the term "Army Hall" substituted. The **Kensington Drill Hall** in Dunedin will now be known as the Kensington Army Hall.

rs > Otago Daily Times > 23 March 1950 > Page 6 >



THE WELCOME TO OUR WOUNDED AND INVALIDED HEROES AT **KENSINGTON DRILL HALL**, DUNEDIN: THE RETURNED SOLDIERS STANDING UP TO SING THE H. MORRIS, PHOTO. NATIONAL ANTHEM.

THE WELCOME TO OUR WOUNDED AND INVALIDED HEROES AT KENSINGTON DRILL HALL, DUNEDIN: THE RETURNED SOLDIERS STANDING UP TO SING THE H. MORRIS, PHOTO. NATIONAL ANTHEM.

OTAGO WITNESS, ISSUE 3216, 3 NOVEMBER 1915, PAGE 43 (SUPPLEMENT)



EXAMINING R.A.F. RECRUITS

A recruit being examined by members of the selection committee of the Royal New Zealand Air Force at the **Kensington Drill Hall** yesterday when enlistments of non-flying personnel were being received.

EXAMINING R.A.F. RECRUITS A recruit being: examined by members of the selection committee of the Royal New Zealand Air Force at the Kensington Drill Hall yesterday when enlistments of non-flying personnel were being received.

OTAGO DAILY TIMES, ISSUE 24221, 13 FEBRUARY 1940, PAGE 6

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THE DUNEDIN PEACE CELEBRATIONS CHOIR, WHICH TOOK PART IN THE MASS THANKSGIVING SERVICE. (Believed to be the largest number of voices gathered together in the Dominion.)

VICE IN THE KENSINGTON DRILL HALL, WITH MR W. PAGET GALE AS CONDUCTOR. 13 JULY 1919. (The picture was taken at the Kensington Drill Hall.)

THE DUNEDIN PEACE CELEBRATIONS CHOIR, WHICH TOOK PART IN THE MASS THANKSGIVING SERVICE
 Believed to be the largest number of voices: VICE IN THE KENSINGTON DRILL HALL, WITH MR W. PAGET GALE AS CONDUCTOR. 13 JULY 1919. £ of voices gathered together in the Dominion.

OTAGO WITNESS, ISSUE 3409, 16 JULY 1919, PAGE 34 (SUPPLEMENT)

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UNIVERSITY STUDENTS RESPOND TO CALL FOR RECRUITS
 The Otago Regiment received a splendid addition to its strength on Saturday when 125 students of Otago University enlisted. These pictures taken at the Kensington Drill Hall show—Left—Recruits being medically examined. Middle—One of the students receiving his rifle. Right—Leaving the drill with territorial kit.

OTAGO DAILY TIMES, ISSUE 23791, 24 APRIL 1939, PAGE 4



Drill Hall in 1915 (*Otago Witness*)

THE DEFENCE FORCES.

By S. S. S. S.

For the purpose of reviewing the work of the past year, gathering up its lessons, and providing for uniformity of effort for the new Territorial year just entered upon, a conference of Territorial officers is to be held in Wellington on June 25 and 26. All commanders of brigades and units are expected to attend.

After Many Vexatious Disputes.—"To be completed within 14 months from the date of the signing of the contract." Such, in effect, is a clause in the conditions of contract for the erection of the new drill hall for Dunedin. The tender of Messrs Armstrong and Moore—a shade under £14,000—has been accepted, authority for the signing of the contract has been authorized from Wellington, and probably before this paragraph is published the signing of the contract will be an accomplished fact, and certain "travellers" who have had time and occasion to grow gray during the negotiations will now be able to sleep o' nights. By comparison with the waiting period, 14 months will also be in a twinkling, and Territorial will be drilling in a space in which the swinging of a cat may be accomplished with a reasonable margin. In point of fact, the floor space available for drill in the new hall will be infinitely more than that now available on the main floor of the Garrison Hall. The present hall will be available until the new building is handed over.

THE DEFENCE FORCES.

OTAGO WITNESS, FRIDAY 11th JUNE 1914. PAGE 6

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EVENING STAR, ISSUE 15583, 28 AUGUST 1934, PAGE 8

Colonel R. B. Smith, V.D., having decided the stone to be well and truly laid, proceeded to give some interesting facts relative to the present Garrison Hall in Dowling street. The site of the proposed building comprised 1 acre 3 paces, and the building was 100 paces long, and the floor was 250ft 3in by 115ft, inside measurement, and was therefore nearly five times as big as the Dowling street Garrison Hall. In addition to the drill hall, provision was made for a miniature riding school, a school of instruction for officers and non-commissioned officers' club quarters, storage of transport and machine guns, caretaker's quarters, etc. Accommodation is also provided for office staff. The architects for the building are Messrs. Mason and Walter. The building was completed in 14 months from June 12, and the contract price was £15,984 7s 6d. This would not, however, complete the building, other interior work having to be done at the conclusion of the present contract. The management was a departmental matter, and consisted of Colonel A. B. B. C.M.G., Colonel E. R. Smith, V.D., Lieutenant-colonel L. O. Beal V.D.,

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Colonel Hatchop, C.M.G., in a neat speech, said it was significant that they were laying the foundation stone of what he hoped would be the military home of all the soldiers trained in **Dunedin**. It was also very striking and significant that there were so many old volunteer officers present, thus showing the link that existed between the old and new, and that these old officers still retained their active interest in military matters.

Chaplain-major Gray then offered up a short dedicatory prayer, after which Mr. P. Y. Wales (architect) presented Colonel Smith, with a small silver trowel and mallet as a memento of the occasion.

NEW DRILL HALL

COMMODIOUS STRUCTURE AT KENSINGTON.

TO BE FINISHED IN AUGUST.

For some years the Garrison Hall has been found unsuitable as a drill hall for Territorials. It is not very large, for one thing, and the fact that it is greatly in demand as a place for the holding of entertainments has also had a good deal to do with its failure to supply the needs of the district adequately. Some four years ago the idea of building a new hall was mooted, but no definite steps were taken until August last, when tenders were called for, the successful applicants being Messrs Armstrong and Moore, whose contract price was £14,000. The plans were drawn by Messrs Mason and Wales, and work was begun in September, the site being on Bridgman street, South **Dunedin**.

It was expected that the hall would be completed about May next. However, the war upset the calculations of the builders. Thirty-six large steel girders are required for the roof, and an order for them was placed in Scotland. The war delayed their manufacture, and they have not yet come to hand, the result being that work has not progressed nearly so quickly as it would otherwise have done. However, they are expected to arrive shortly, and the completion of the contract will not then be a lengthy matter.

The new building, when finished, will be an imposing structure, and will be one of the best drill halls in the dominion. It will not, it is true, have such a large floor space as the King Edward Barracks, in Christchurch, but it will be a much more solidly-finished structure than the latter, and will contain a very much larger number of rooms and offices. The ground plan is 300ft by 150ft, and covers an area of 1 acre 1rd, and the large central hall, inside, will be 250ft in length by 100ft in breadth. This large hall, which will be the principal drilling place, will not be floored in with any material, but will be left as it is, as a clay floor. It will be covered with a large gable roof, made of iron and supported by steel girders, and light will be supplied by means of 32 roof lights, each 9ft by 6ft 6in area. This central hall will be of one storey, and will thus be very commodious and lofty.

NEW DRILL HALL.

OTAGO WITNESS, ISSUE 3174, 13 JANUARY 1915,
PAGE 5.

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The whole length of the front of the building will have a space cut off from the main hall, and devoted to offices, orderly rooms, etc. On the front northern corner, facing Bridgman street, will be a number of offices devoted to permanent staff officials, and along the rest of the front ground floor will be various officers' rooms, transport and machine-gun rooms, modelling rooms, stores, etc. On the ground floor a space at the southern end, which will run in an oblong course for about 100ft, will be used as a miniature rifle range, and will be partitioned off from the main central hall for this purpose. With the exception of these partitions, the main hall will occupy the whole of the ground floor.

On the first floor, rooms for various purposes will run around three sides of the building, the back wall, away from Bridgman street, being excluded. There will be a room for cadets, band rooms, communication company's storerooms, non-commissioned officers' rooms, officers' clubrooms, several orderly rooms and stores, an officers' library and billiard-room, and a lecture room. A small third storey will be added on the northern front corner, where a six-roomed caretaker's house will be built. A feature of this will be that a small portion of the roof, 45ft by 25ft, will be left flat, to serve as a caretaker's yard. A gallery, 8ft in width, will run right around the hall inside, level with the first floor.

The outer walls of the hall will be of red brick, with cement facings. There will be one main entrance door, and several smaller ones, and over the main door the Royal coat-of-arms will be done in Oamaru stone. The upper storeys will be supported by pillars of reinforced concrete. These pillars are exceptionally strong, and the method of their formation is interesting. Eight 1in solid steel rods are tied together in the shape of a pillar, with large interstices between them. They are then encased in a hollow, box-work mould, and cement, of a syrup-like consistency, is poured into the mould, and thoroughly rammed in. When it has hardened the boxing is removed, and the firm, strong pillar remains. The building is supported by vertical and horizontal pillars constructed in this way, and the result is that it is of a strength which should be sufficient to withstand the strongest earthquake shock. From Bridgman street the building will, when finished, have a very

quake shock. From Bridgman street the building will, when finished, have a very substantial appearance. The massive brick body-work will be surmounted by the gabled roof, the main gable being formed by the roof of the central hall, parallel to Bridgman street, while two others will run, at right angles to the main one, along the two ends of the building.