

An Investigation of Sources relevant to Two Storey Military Barracks of the 1950s

For Lucas Stapleton Johnson & Partners Pty Ltd
Suite 303
155 King Street
Sydney
NSW 2000

Dr Terry Kass, B A (Hons), M A (Hons), PhD
Historian & Heritage Consultant
32 Jellicoe Street
Lidcombe
NSW 2141
(02) 9749 4128

June 2023

Introduction

Terry Kass was engaged by Lucas Stapleton Johnson in May 2023, to undertake a preliminary investigation of readily available sources regarding the construction of two storey barrack buildings by Australian military forces in the 1950s. This would provide a context to assess the significance of a group of two storey weatherboard barrack buildings constructed for the Australian Army at Middle Head.

Since almost all archive sources were still unavailable for public access and located in other capital cities, a preliminary investigation was commenced in order to inform the most appropriate strategy for further work on the significance of these buildings.

Online sources were investigated, particularly tender notices in the Commonwealth Government Gazette and relevant records identified by a search of National Archives of Australia's RecordSearch database. This was supplemented by an investigation of digitised newspapers and other sources available on the National Library of Australia's TROVE portal.

The following report lists the relevant findings followed by a preliminary assessment and summary of significant items identified.

Commonwealth Government Gazette notices

19 April 1956

Tender accepted

New South Wales

South Head Naval Barracks - Erection and completion of two storey barracks buildings, Nos 126 and 127, guard house building No 131 and administration building No 132.

Successful tenderer, R W & A M Stubbs Pty Ltd, 60 Hunter Street, Sydney. Fee £143,696. Accepted 10 April 1956; proposed date of completion, 4 June 1957.¹

14 February 1957

Tender accepted

Western Australia

Karrakatta – Erection of two storey brick barracks block, Job 3478

Successful tenderer, Sloan Construction, 148 Adelaide Terrace, Perth. Fee £38,571.

Accepted 31 January 1957; proposed date of completion, 3 January 1958.²

14 February 1957

Tender invited

Victoria

Puckapunyal – Erection of 13 permanent buildings, including services, at Eastern area, Major Australian Regular Army Barracks (Quantities £30)

¹ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 19 April 1956, p 1080

² *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 14 Feb 1957, p 468

Due 12 March 1957; Plans available from Department of Works, 225 Bourke Street, Melbourne. (no details regarding form or size of buildings) ³

15 May 1958

Tender invited

Victoria

Avalon – Erection of brick veneer barracks building at Test Field (re-advertised).

Due 20 May 1958; 225 Bourke Street, Melbourne. (no details regarding form or size of buildings) ⁴

National Archives of Australia – file references to military accommodation and barrack construction 1950s

1941-1959

ST3462/1, Item FA185/B4/NA6300

Standard – Detail of fireplace – two storey barracks
(Repository Sydney – not yet examined)

1941-1959

ST3462/1, Item FA186/T17/NA6966

Standard –two storey barracks – details – windows and doors to lounge and lobby
(Repository Sydney – not yet examined)

1947-1955

MP927/1, Item A259/18/156

Albert Park Barracks – Additional accommodation for CARO
(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1948-1954

MP927/1, Item A259/2/15

Enoggera – accommodation expanded Regular Army
(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1949-1955

MT1131/1, Item A259/10/35

Casula – Accommodation all ranks
(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1949-1956

MP927/1, Item A82/2/68

North Head (NSW) Georges Heights ARA accommodation
(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1950-1952

MP927/1, Item A259/1/15

Accommodation for the services

³ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 14 Feb 1957, p 469

⁴ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 15 May 1958, p 1566

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1950-1953

A259/1, Item A259/18/3

Puckapunyal (Vic) RAASC School – ARA accommodation

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1950-1953

MP927/1, Item A259/18/43

Seymour Vic – site 17 CMF accommodation (includes six outsized plans)

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1950-1955

MP927/1, Item A259/18/99

Puckapunyal A & B Blocks N S [National Service] accommodation – Plan completion A & B Blocks PuckapunyalVA4230

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1950-1955

MP927/1, Item A259/18/99

Puckapunyal A & B Blocks N S [National Service] accommodation (Puckapunyal Block A & B, plan for ARA conversion for national training, 6858, 317, 13)

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1950-1956

MP259/1, Item A259/18/96

Balcombe – accommodation School of Signals

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1951

MP927/1, Item A259/1/270

Regular Army – accommodation requirements

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1951-1952

MP927/1, Item A259/18/69

Accommodation 1st Infantry Brigade Group, Southern Command

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1951-1952

MP927/1, Item A259/18/11

Watsonia – Accommodation expanded Regular Army 2 Brigade (Watsonia & Casula – includes seven plans)

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1951-1952

MP927/1, Item A259/18/49

Second Infantry Brigade group, Southern Command, accommodation Watsonia [& Holsworthy – five plans]

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1951-1952

MP927/1, Item A259/10/63

Kapooka NSW – accommodation for National Servicemen

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1951-1952

MP927/1, Item A259/10/42

Holsworthy – Extension of accommodation for Regular Army members

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1951-1960

MT1131/1, Item A259/10/64

Kapooka accommodation works file

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1952-1954

MP927/1, Item A259/2/72

Cabarlah – improvement to ARA accommodation

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1952-1955

MP927/1, Item A259/33/16

Accommodation requirements within Western Command to cope with expansion of the CMF

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1952-8

B123, Item 1957/2408 Parts 1-2

Hobart - Anglesea barracks – proposed erection of barrack block

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1955

A4940, Item C1175

HMAS Watson – Permanent Barracks at South Head, Sydney

(Repository Canberra – not yet examined)

1956

PT365/3, Item 160

Karrakatta – ITC [Irwin Training Centre] – new barracks accommodation

(Repository Perth – not yet examined)

K1201, Item WE11961

Irwin Training Centre, barracks block, electrical installation

Plan online at NAA – shows ground floor and first floor

K1201, Item WM11969

Karrakatta Irwin Training Centre, hot water to new barracks building

Plan online at NAA – shows ground floor and first floor

1957

B123, Item 1957/251 Parts 1-7

Puckapunyal – Erection of 13 permanent buildings, inclusive of services [this appears to relate to the tender of 14 February 1957 above]

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

1957-60

PP280/1, Item M1958/59/851/1, Part 2

Department of Army – Swanborne – Erection of new barracks for ARA accommodation

(Repository Perth – Open for access)

1958

K1215, Item W259/1/22

Property and Works – ARA accommodation – Karrakatta – Stage II

(Repository Perth – not yet examined)

1958

K1215, Item W259/1/25

Property and Works – Irwin Training Centre – Karrakatta – SAL Block – 50 WRAAC Battalions

(Repository Perth – not yet examined)

1958-1959

MT1131/1, Item A259/10/668

Middle Head – repair and maintenance to accommodation and administrative buildings (8 plans)

(Repository Melbourne – Open for access)

1959

K1215, Item W259/1/31

Property and Works – NW Programme 1955/56 - ARA accommodation – Karrakatta

(Repository Perth – not yet examined)

1959-1960

MP927/1, Item A259/18/641

Rockbank Vic – AHQ [Army Headquarters] Sig Regt ARA [Signals Regiment Australian Regular Army] accommodation

(Repository Melbourne – open for access)

1960-1962

MP927/1, Item A259/10/912

Kapooka – accommodation and works

(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)

Miscellaneous press reports

28 June 1950

Report that Army barracks to cost £1 million were planned to be built of brick in Enoggera.⁵ No further details of this work has been located. There only appears to be a single file held by National Archives regarding works at Enoggera.

12 December 1951

Tender 'Erect and complete three two-story barrack bldgs, at Middle Head. Bill of quantities.'⁶

Two storey barracks blocks erected for Australian Armed Services in the 1950s

Chowder Bay Barracks

1950

Two storey barracks with weatherboard external cladding were constructed at Chowder Bay cut into the hillside roofed with corrugated galvanised iron. These buildings are still extant.⁷

South Head Naval Barracks

19 April 1956

Tender accepted for two storey barracks buildings at South Head Naval Barracks, New South Wales. Described as 'Erection and completion of two storey barracks buildings, Nos 126 and 127, guard house building No 131 and administration building No 132'.

Successful tenderer was R W & A M Stubbs Pty Ltd, 60 Hunter Street, Sydney for a fee of £143,696. Accepted 10 April 1956; proposed date of completion, 4 June 1957.⁸

No details regarding the form of these buildings or the construction materials have been located.

There is a single file at National Archives relating to these barracks.⁹

Karrakatta, Western Australia

14 February 1957

Tender accepted for 'Erection of two storey brick barracks block', at Karrakatta in Western Australia. Successful tenderer, Sloan Construction, 148 Adelaide Terrace, Perth for fee of £38,571. Accepted 31 January 1957; proposed date of completion, 3 January 1958.¹⁰

Note that the material was brick.

⁵ *Construction*, 28 June 1950, p 2

⁶ *Construction*, 12 Dec 1951, p 13

⁷ Conservation Management Plan for the Former Army Maritime School Chowder Bay, by Brian McDonald and Associates, for Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, September 2003, pp 18, 25-26

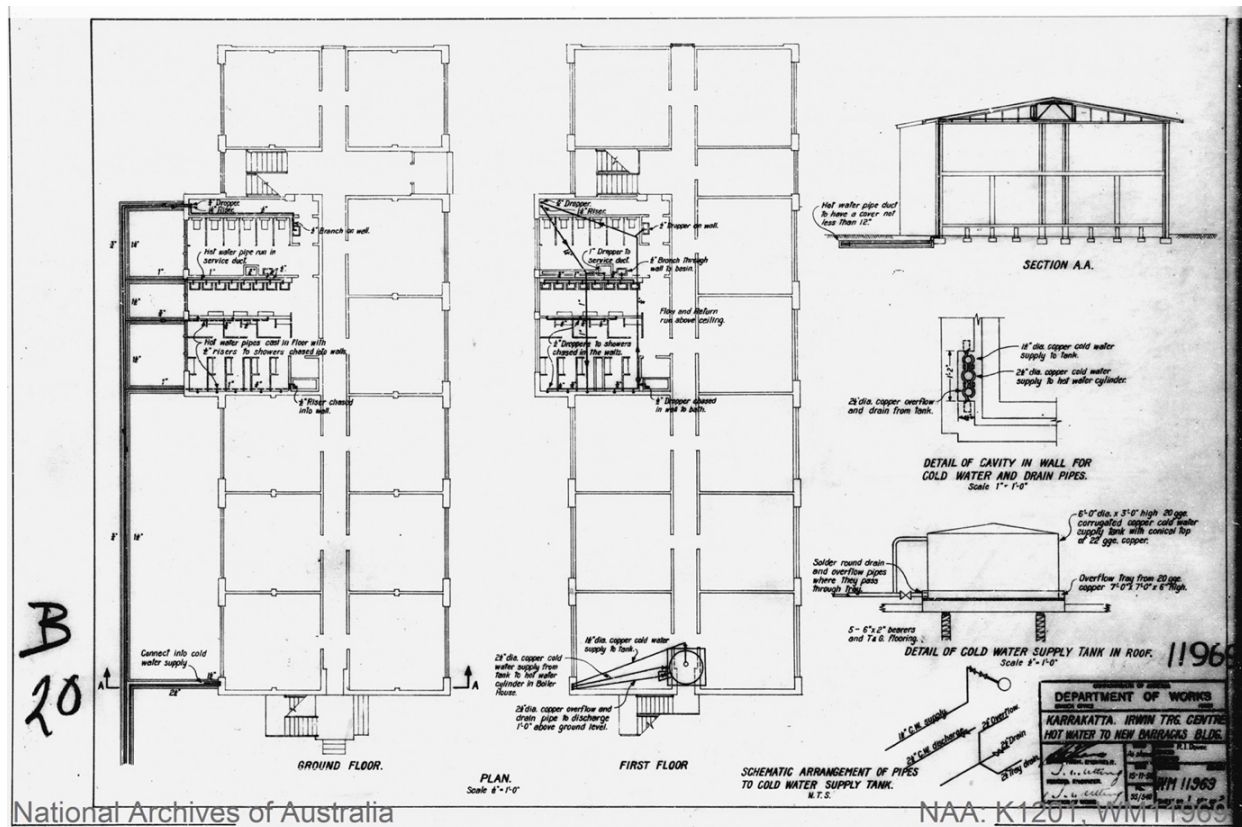
⁸ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 19 April 1956, p 1080

⁹ NAA, CRS A4940, Item C1175

¹⁰ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 14 Feb 1957, p 468

[illegible]

¹¹ NAA, CRS K1201, Items WE11961; WM11969



Puckapunyal, Queensland

A press report of 7 July 1955 noted that a master plan costing £1 million for new permanent army barracks at Puckapunyal had been announced on 3 July 1955. The article noted, 'The proposed work included six two-storey sleeping blocks with showers and toilets, each to accommodate 142 rank and file', as well as associated buildings.¹²

Tenders were invited for the 'Erection of 13 permanent buildings, including services, at Eastern area, Major Australian Regular Army Barracks (Quantities £30)' at Puckapunyal. Due 12 March 1957; Plans were available from Department of Works, 225 Bourke Street, Melbourne. No details regarding the form or size of buildings were included in the tender notice.¹³ There is a substantial series of files regarding the erection of these buildings held at the Melbourne repository of National Archives.

¹² *Central Queensland Herald*, 7 July 1955, p 11

¹³ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 14 Feb 1957, p 469

Other Barracks Buildings of the 1950s

Additionally, a number of references were located to the construction of barracks during the 1950s, which did not specify if they were single storey, two storey or otherwise. These were:

1. A press report of 28 June 1950 noted that Army barracks to cost £1 million were planned to be built of brick in Enoggera.¹⁴ No further details of this work has been located. There only appears to be a single file held by National Archives regarding works at Enoggera.
2. National Archives file with date range 1952-8: B123, Item 1957/2408 Parts 1-2
Hobart - Anglesea barracks – proposed erection of barrack block
(Repository Melbourne – not yet examined)
(No details were given of the form or size of the buildings)
3. National Archives file with date range 1957-60
PP280/1, Item M1958/59/851/1, Part 2
Department of Army – Swanborne – Erection of new barracks for ARA accommodation
(Repository Perth – Open for access)
(No details were given of the form or size of the buildings)
4. Tender invited on 15 May 1958, for ‘Erection of brick veneer barracks building at Test Field (re-advertised)’ at Avalon, Victoria. Due 20 May 1958; 225 Bourke Street, Melbourne. (No details were given of the form or size of the buildings)¹⁵

Overview

This preliminary research has located five potential groups of two storey military barracks, constructed in the 1950s. These are:

1. Two storey weatherboard barracks constructed at Chowder Bay for the army maritime school in 1950.
2. Tenders were called in December 1951 to construct three two-storey barrack buildings at Middle Head. This is potentially the group of three two-storey buildings on the 10 Terminal Regiment site.¹⁶
3. Naval barracks constructed at ‘South Head’ commencing 1956. No information has been located regarding the cladding materials used for this complex.
4. Army barracks constructed at Karrakatta from 1957 onwards. Documentation states that these barracks were constructed of brick.

¹⁴ *Construction*, 28 June 1950, p 2

¹⁵ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 15 May 1958, p 1566

¹⁶ Middle Head Mosman: Former Ten Terminal Regiment Barracks Buildings & Laundry Heritage Impact Assessment, Updated February 2022, Lucas, Stapleton, Johnson and Partners Pty Ltd, for Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

5. Army barracks constructed at Puckapunyal from 1957 onwards. No information has been located regarding the building materials of this complex.

Bibliography

National Archives of Australia

No archival research was undertaken. Detailed investigations were made on RecordSearch, the online catalogue of records held by National Archives. That provided an extensive listing of numerous files regarding military building and planning in the 1950s. Nearly all these records have not been released for public access. Any investigation of these records would require access applications to be submitted before the records would be available. Due to the limitations on staff access during the Covid crisis, there is a large backlog in assessing applications for access. Almost all of the relevant records are held in the Melbourne and Perth repositories.

Primary Sources – Newspapers and Gazettes

Commonwealth Government Gazette, 1950-62

The National Library of Australia's TROVE portal, allowing access into numerous digitised newspapers was investigated for the period 1950 to 1962. It should be noted that most newspapers are only available until 1955, so it is likely that later articles that may have proved useful were not available. The only articles found to be directly relevant were:

Central Queensland Herald, 7 July 1955, p 11

Construction, 28 June 1950, p 2

Construction, 12 Dec 1951, p 13

Unpublished Reports

Conservation Management Plan for the Former Army Maritime School Chowder Bay, by Brian McDonald and Associates, for Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, September 2003

Middle Head Mosman: Former Ten Terminal Regiment Barracks Buildings & Laundry Heritage Impact Assessment, Updated February 2022, Lucas, Stapleton, Johnson and Partners Pty Ltd, for Sydney Harbour Federation Trust