

First Exhibition Building, Adelaide

1860 – c. 1886

Details

The first Exhibition Building in Adelaide was situated on the Police Paddock below the Royal Adelaide Hospital and adjoining the Botanic Gardens. The building was completed in time for the South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Show which commenced on 29 February 1860. Previously, exhibitions and shows were held in temporary facilities in Botanic Park. The first Exhibition Building was briefly used by the government as temporary accommodation for children who had been removed from the nearby Destitute Asylum. The Exhibition Building was highly unsuitable for accommodating the children and in the few months they lived there, the children's health deteriorated. In 1867 the children were moved on from the Exhibition Building to the newly-purchased Grace Darling Hotel, which became the Brighton Industrial School. The first Exhibition Building was replaced with a new Jubilee Exhibition Building, the foundation stone of which was laid in on 21 June 1886.

Jude Elton writes about Adelaide's first Exhibition Building:

The large, simple structure was designed by Colonial Architect Edward Angus Hamilton and built by McMullen, Young & Scanlan. The exterior featured semi-circular headed windows and paired pilasters. Wide verandas catered for outdoor exhibits. The South Australian Register of 24 February noted its situation 'in the midst of the old forest trees which are now to be seen in no other part of the metropolis'.

The Exhibition Building became accommodation for children from the Destitute Asylum following the passage of the Destitute Persons Relief Act 1866. This act provided that children who were 16 years and younger and had been charged with being neglected had to be placed in an Industrial School for children only, and children convicted of committing offences were to be sent to a Reformatory. Unfortunately, in 1866, no permanent Industrial School yet existed.

As a result of the passing of the Act, the vast majority of the children in the overcrowded Destitute Asylum had to be moved out. In addition, the military barracks section of the Asylum where the children were housed needed to be vacated in order for the British Army to reoccupy the barracks. The arrival of the XIVth Regiment made the removal of the children from the Destitute Asylum urgent. Therefore, the government had to make temporary arrangements.

In November 1866, a large group of over 100 children were moved to the Exhibition Building. The building was highly unsuitable for accommodating the children. The 1867 Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Destitute Poor described the building as being 'seriously deficient in the most ordinary appliances of cleanliness and decency'. In the few months that the children were housed at the Exhibition Building the children's health deteriorated. The report stated the many of the children were 'squalid and emaciated in appearance.'

In February 1867 the Destitute Board took over the former Grace Darling Hotel at Brighton and the children were moved from the Exhibition Building.

More info

Related Entries

Related Events

- [Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Destitute Poor, South Australia \(1867\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Destitute Asylum \(1851 - c. 1917\)](#)
The Destitute Asylum was situated in the Exhibition Building from 1866 to 1867.
- [Brighton Industrial School \(1867 - 1869\)](#)
In 1867, children from the Destitute Asylum were relocated from the Exhibition Building to the Brighton Industrial School.

Related Legislation

- [Destitute Persons Relief Act 1866, South Australia \(1867 - 1872\)](#)

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