

A Delightful Recreation

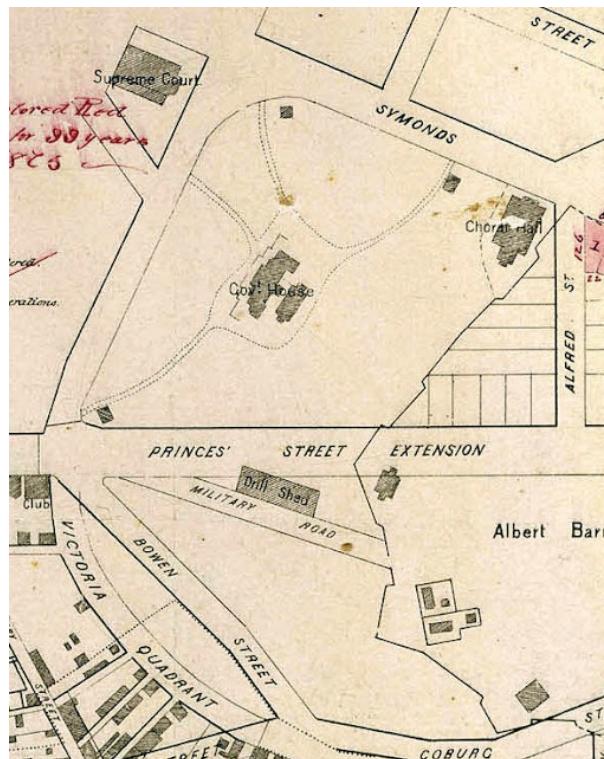
Indoor Archery at the Albert Barracks Drill-shed, 1871

According to the New Zealand Herald and the Daily Southern Cross of 1871, indoor archery was conducted during the winter of that year. On the 3rd of August, the Auckland Archery Club placed an advertisement in both newspapers which went as follows.

We are requested to state that the usual weekly practice of the members of the Auckland Archery Club will take place at the Drill-shed on Friday afternoon (to-morrow) at three o'clock.

The Drill-shed was originally constructed in 1864 for use as a supply depot during the war with Maori tribes, which was under way at the time. When the last Imperial troops left the barracks in 1867, the building was made available for use by the wider public. Mostly it was utilised by local defence force volunteers but on occasions other clubs and societies made use of it as well.

Below is a diagram of the Drill-shed location.



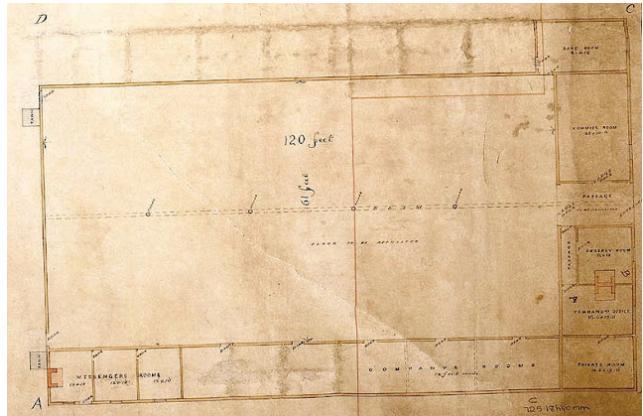
Layout of the Albert Barracks area, 1873. Detail from NZ map 4475-22, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries

Note the very close proximity to the Government House Grounds. The Auckland Archery Club regularly shot on the ground between Government House and Waterloo Quadrant (not marked) which was situated between Victoria Quadrant and Symonds Street. During this period, Lady Bowen was a prominent member of the club and it would not have been too difficult for arrangements to be made for the club to use the hall.

Below is a diagram of the interior of the building. 120 feet by 61 feet would be enough space for comfortable shooting.

On the 22nd of August 1871, the NZ Herald printed the following.

We have been requested to state that the practice days of the Archery Club will for the future, be on Wednesdays and Saturdays, instead of Fridays. The next meeting will be on Wednesday next, at the Drill-shed, at three o'clock.



NZ map 4474 Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

The NZ Herald reported on the 24th of August:

Drill-shed Princes Street

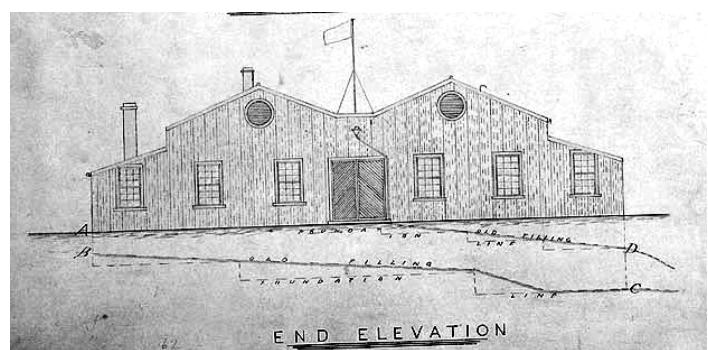
Pretty good attendance of ladies and gentlemen who mustered in about the same proportion. The delightful recreation of archery was entered into with great spirit, the ladies being matched against the gentlemen, and when our reporter left the ladies were getting the best of it. The targets, fixed at both ends of the shed, were well backed up with mattresses; and notwithstanding that this is by no means the season for the pleasant sport, it appeared to be highly enjoyed.

This is the only description that we have of the nature of this indoor shooting and it is a great shame that we don't have more information. The only other mention of Drill-shed archery was a report in the NZ Herald on the 6th of September which simply stated that archery had occurred there on the 23rd of August and so was a repeat of the earlier report and gives no new information.

There is no way to tell if shooting was conducted at any other time besides briefly during the winter of 1871, but currently there is no evidence that it was.

In December of 1871 the Albert Barracks Reserves Act established a board of commission which was made up of politicians and prominent members of the community. It was decided to dismantle the shed and shift it a short distance to make way for an extension of Princes' Street and this was completed in 1875.

This drawing is also from NZ Map 4474



Murray Cramp
Pictures courtesy of Auckland Libraries Archives