

H047  
(part)

*FORMER PRAHRAN CITY FIRE STATION*

*50 MACQUARIE STREET, PRAHRAN*

Carlotta Kellaway, May 1994

A Report prepared for the  
City of Prahran

## 1. Introduction

The former Prahran City Fire Station in Macquarie Street, a red brick building with a brick watchtower, is significant as part of the district's colourful early history. This station, completed in November 1889 from the designs of William Smith, City Surveyor, was built as part of the prestigious Town Hall complex. A contemporary writer reported that "the bosky heights of Studley Park", the distant You Yangs, and "the waters of the bay" could be viewed from its tower.<sup>1</sup> It replaced Prahran's first 1858 purpose-built bluestone fire station in Greville Street with its timber tower.<sup>2</sup> From the mid-1850s, Prahran's volunteer firemen (supported by the municipal council and assisted by local police) played a major role in the history of organised firefighting in the Prahran district and beyond. Although altered over the years to fit it for other Council uses, this late Victorian fire station (originally comprising station, workshop, watch tower with fire bell, firemen's quarters, library and meeting-room)<sup>3</sup> retains its original design form. It has considerable historical significance as arguably the earliest remaining pre-1890 municipal fire station with a watch tower in Victoria, and for its associations with the volunteer brigades of that era. The 1889 watch tower is a rare survivor. This Prahran building pre-dates the Eastern Hill Fire Station, built as a model station and the headquarters of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade established in 1891.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Firefighting in 19th Century Melbourne.

Fire was the feared enemy of Melbourne property owners from colonial times, especially as so many buildings were primitive structures of timber with thatch roofs. The first recorded Melbourne fire was on 28 April 1838 when a wattle and daub guard room off Collins Street housing Aboriginal prisoners was destroyed.<sup>5</sup> Early records tell of first attempts at organising firefighting activities. The earliest were by Melbourne's infant insurance companies concerned about protecting their clients, the small community of businessmen in the young settlement. In 1839 the Melbourne Fire and Insurance Company was formed.<sup>6</sup> Later, in 1845, after a disastrous fire at Alderman Condell's brewery on the corner of Swanston and Little Bourke Streets, Melbourne's citizens organised their first fire brigade. This body involved the police and consisted of an inspector, foreman and six men, and had the use of the Cornwall Fire Insurance Company's engine. Each man was paid ten pounds per year and had Chief Constable Sugden as their first Superintendent.<sup>7</sup>

---

1. *Prahran Telegraph*, 14 Dec. 1889. p.5.

2. *The Telegraph*, 5 March 1887 p. (Series of articles titled "Pleasant Reminiscences of Men and Things as Relating to the Prahran Fire Brigade" from 5 March to 2 April 1887).

3. *Prahran Telegraph*, 14 Dec. 1889.

4. Sally Wilde, *Life Under the Bells*. A History of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Melbourne 1891-1991, pp. 77-78.

5. Wilde, p.3.

6. Wilde, p.3.

7. Wilde, pp. 5-6.

The Victoria Fire and Marine Insurance Company's brigade owned an early metropolitan fire station in Collins Street East. The company ordered 5000 copper firemarks from England to mark insured buildings. The company's brigade could then give priority to these structures when fighting fires. This company brigade was Melbourne's only group of full-time professional firemen prior to 1891.<sup>8</sup>

Early metropolitan firefighters were volunteers. From the goldrush era volunteer brigades spread throughout Melbourne's suburbs, often taking the name of the locality. Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) was first, followed by the end of 1855 by North Melbourne, Collingwood, Richmond, Sandridge (Port Melbourne) and Williamstown. A volunteer brigade was formed at Prahran in 1856 and one at St. Kilda in 1857.<sup>9</sup> During this period the insurance companies helped with the provision of fire engines and payment for water, while municipal councils provided buildings, bells and other necessary equipment. Volunteers provided their own uniforms.<sup>10</sup>

Many believed that the advent of reticulated water from the Yan Yean reservoir in 1857 would solve the colony's firefighting problems. But there was only a limited supply of piped water. Many side streets in poorer metropolitan areas near the Yarra were without piped water until 1870. In some areas fire plugs inserted in the pipes were paid for by local councils. However, these plugs were a source of much trouble to firemen. When the plugs were removed from the pipe, a hose could be attached to a stand pipe forced into the hole. These plugs often became buried in mud or roadmaking materials, and the brigade had to carry picks and shovels to dig them out. This often hindered a rapid response to an emergency.<sup>11</sup> In addition water pressure was often insufficient for firefighting purposes.<sup>12</sup>

Early firefighting equipment was primitive and included hand held hoses (at first made from leather and later india rubber), ladders which needed to be extended by hand and hand-pulled fire engines. Gradual improvements in technology led to the development of extension ladders, steam fire engines, the training of horses to transport equipment, and the use of electrical equipment for fire alarm systems.<sup>13</sup> The introduction of Council building regulations requiring the inspection of buildings, as in Prahran and Richmond in 1886,<sup>14</sup> was of great assistance to local fire brigade.

Fire station buildings during the pre-1891 period were often "mere shanties", while many were built in out-of-the-way places. An 1887 article in the official fire brigade journal declared that,

---

8. Wilde, pp. 7-8, 11.

9. Wilde, pp. 11-13.

10. Wilde, p.13.

11. Wilde, p.14.

12. *Prahran Telegraph*, 14 Dec. 1889. p.5.

13. Wilde, pp.31-41.

14. *The Australasian Fireman*, 15 Oct. 1886, p.4.

Fire Brigade Stations should be accessible and conveniently built and situated as a Police Station, or other building of public benefit; yet in a great number of cases they are found in a back street, and only known to the immediate neighbours.<sup>15</sup>

Fire towers (ideally regarded as essential to a properly constructed fire station) were not available in all metropolitan areas, although many city fires were spotted this way. Volunteer brigades didn't have the manpower to keep a 24 hour watch at their suburban station. So, in many metropolitan areas anyone spotting a fire had to run to the nearest station or town hall and get somebody to ring the alarm.<sup>16</sup>

Volunteer brigades multiplied during the building boom of the late 1870s and 1880s. They included brigades associated with major breweries, such as the Carlton Brewery. There were also Temperance Brigades in Fitzroy and Clifton Hill. It was estimated that 68 metropolitan brigades attended fires between 1889 and 1891.<sup>17</sup> During the 1880s an association of metropolitan fire brigades became active and competed for control of firefighting activities with the old-established Insurance Companies Brigade.<sup>18</sup> The Prahran City Brigade briefly withdrew from the metropolitan association when Prahran Council was negotiating for an insurance company subsidy to help fund the new fire station.<sup>19</sup> However, Captain James Kelly, (1851-1891), leader of the Prahran City Brigade, had been active since the early 1850s in the campaign for an association of volunteer brigades, the passage of legislation to regulate firefighting in Victoria, the use of more modern equipment such as steam fire engines, the use of electric fire alarms as in San Francisco, and the appointment of paid firemen.<sup>20</sup>

The passage of the *Fire Brigades Act* in December 1890 resulted in significant changes. Two boards were set up, one for rural Victoria and the other for the metropolitan area. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board met for the first time on 6 March 1891 and represented an alliance between the two previously warring bodies. It had nine members, three each appointed by the Victorian Government and the insurance companies, and one each appointed by Melbourne City Council, North of Yarra Municipalities and South of Yarra Municipalities. The metropolitan fire stations were divided into seven districts.<sup>21</sup>

---

15. *The Australasian Fireman*, 21 Sept. 1887, p.8.

16. Wilde, p.27, 44.

17. Wilde, pp. 16-17. (There was also a Shamrock Breweries Fire Brigade).

18. *The Australasian Fireman*, 15 Aug. 1887, p.7; 31 May 1883, p.3; Wilde, p.21.

19. *The Australasian Fireman*, 1 Oct. 1888, p.5; 1 Nov. 1888, p.6; 1 Dec 1888, p.4 (Prahran City Brigade rejoins).

20. Cooper, p.158-159; Wilde, p.27.

21. Wilde, Introduction.

From this time, stations operating under the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) Board became homes as well as workplaces, firemen working under the system of continuous duty. This system was followed for many years.

After 1950, firefighters worked a system of 40-hour shifts and lived privately. However, officers continued to live in stations and work continuous duty for many years.<sup>22</sup>

Some fine architect-designed fire stations with up-to-date facilities were built in Melbourne's suburbs during the 1890s. The most splendid was the MFB headquarters at Eastern Hill designed in 1891 by the architects, Smith and Johnson. This two-storey structure with its watch tower became a model for other fire station buildings. The practice of employing notable Melbourne architects to design fire station buildings continued into the first decades of this century.<sup>23</sup>

As well as providing better fire station buildings, other post-1891 changes included the gradual phasing out of the volunteer system. Municipal bodies funded full time workers. Also, a better alarm system developed. In 1890 a Bright's Fire Alarm circuit with ten alarm points was installed in the central City area. In 1892, a fire alarm circuit was established in Hawthorn. Two years later, a new system covered a much wider area including Carlton, Collingwood, Richmond, North Melbourne, Prahran, Brighton, South Yarra, Essendon, and an extension from Hawthorn to Camberwell. Until well into the 20th century, the street alarm system was the principal means of calling local brigades to fires.<sup>24</sup>

### 3. Early History of Prahran's Volunteer Firefighters.

Soon after the beginning of municipal government in Prahran, in the mid-1850s, the Council planned to build a court house, municipal offices, and to make suitable provision for a fire engine and hose. On 22 November 1856 Prahran Council recognised "the paramount importance of some organised attempt being made to cope with outbreaks of fire".<sup>25</sup> The first Prahran fire brigade was formed in December 1856 and a manual fire engine obtained in February 1857. This was housed at first at the Prahran Inn on the corner of (now) Andrew and George Streets, Windsor.<sup>26</sup>

#### First Council Fire Station (1858-1888)

After the hotel was destroyed by fire later in 1857, (the fire engine surviving) Prahran Council constructed its first purpose built fire station in Greville

<sup>22</sup>. Wilde, Introduction.

<sup>23</sup>. Wilde, pp.77-78; *Australian Architectural Index*, Univ. of Melbourne, 1990. (Entries under *Fire Stations*. Architects included Smith & Johnson; Clegg, Kell and Miller, and Nahum Barnet in 1890s. Oakden and Ballantyne designed the Coburg Station in 1926, Seabrook and Fildes designed a fire station in Brighton Road, St. Kilda in 1927).

<sup>24</sup>. Wilde, pp. 43-45.

<sup>25</sup>. Cooper, p.156.

<sup>26</sup>. *Prahran Telegraph*, 14 April 1888, p.6.



Street. This early fire station was described in some detail in an April 1888 article in the local press. Titled, "The Prahran Fire Engine Station Soliliques" it was written as the memoirs of the building itself. The station was constructed of Richmond bluestone "some of it very honeycombed". Some of the walls were two feet thick, the roof of slate, and the doors opened onto the footpath. The floor was of stone, there were no windows and no skylight. The engine stood at the back and the reel at the front. A leather hose was used at first and later an india rubber one. In the yard at the back, near the Court House, was a timber lookout (20 x 25 feet high) with an alarm bell, which stood in the Court House yard. After this tower was pulled down it was not replaced.<sup>27</sup>

There was a vivid account of a typical fire emergency at this station. When the bell rang, 20 or 30 "strong stalwart men" raced to the doors, threw them open, dragged the manual engine into the road and harnessed two horses to it. "One jumped to the driver's seat, others hung on here, there everywhere, like cats, and off along the lumpy sandy Chapel Street, shouting and yelling for the rights of passage".<sup>28</sup>

This building may be the small single storey building with wide doors onto the street shown in an early sketch of the 1878 addition along Greville Street of the Post and Telegraph Office and Police Station.<sup>29</sup> The Greville Street location of the early fire station building was confirmed in Prahran rate records and Sands & McDougall Directories.<sup>30</sup>

In 1886, the Prahran brigade consisted of eight men, each paid 16 pounds a year, and the Captain 20 pounds a year, a total of 100 pounds provided by Prahran Council. There was an additional 30 shillings paid for each fire and 15 shillings for each false alarm to cover the cost of transport. Members had to live within a certain radius of the station and followed other occupations when not attending fires. New members were recruited from the other district brigades at Windsor or South Yarra.<sup>31</sup>

When the site of the Greville Street station was required in 1888 to make room for the remodelling and extension of the Town Hall, the old fire station was pulled down and sold. Writing as the old station, the April 1888 article complained that,

---

27. *Prahran Telegraph*, 14 April 1888, p.6.

28. *Prahran Telegraph*, 14 April 1888, p.6.

29. Reproduced in Andrew Begg, *A Short History of the Prahran Town Hall*, March 1984, p.5 (view of the 1850s timber tower, p.3?).

30. Prahran RB 1886-87 Vol. 2 No. 5964 ("Prahran Police Station Fire Brigade House Etc. B". Greville Street South Side. Not rated).

31. *The Australasian Fireman* 15 Sept. 1886 (Report of Annual Meeting of Prahran City Fire Brigade held in Reel Station on 20 Aug).

I who saw the Town Hall built, saw the flourishing Commercial Road little by little give way to Chapel Street as the leading thoroughfare, am sold for 20 pounds and pulled down.<sup>32</sup>

The last meeting of the brigade in Greville Street was on 23 March 1888 and the building was "dismantled the same night".<sup>33</sup> The brigade moved into temporary quarters, a property owned by E.J. Dixon, M.P., described by one local councillor as a "bug roost".<sup>34</sup>

#### 4. The Macquarie Street Fire Station

##### The Site

The acquisition of the site in Macquarie Street by Prahran Council was recorded in late 1880s Prahran rate records. Previously owned by Oscar Phillips, civil servant, the property was known as 2 Macquarie Street and was the location of a wood house of six room. Rate records listed the transfer of ownership to the City of Prahran in 1886-87.<sup>35</sup>

The choice of this site was criticized as unsuitable by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Association, by local firefighters, some Prahran Councillors and by Prahran residents. These views were reported in the local press, in *The Australasian Fireman* (monthly journal of "the Fire Brigade Service of the Colonies") and in reports of meetings of the Council's Fire Brigade Committee. A series of articles which ran in the *Prahran Telegraph* from 5 March to 2 April 1887 concerning the past history and future prospects of the Prahran fire brigade, was most critical, claiming that,

the natural position of a fire brigade station is in the centre near the town hall. Here, too, are the police, without whom the brigades would be almost powerless. At the town hall is the site for the fire brigade service of Prahran City.<sup>36</sup>

The article also urged the establishment of a fully-paid brigade, improvement in water pressure from Yan Yean "Sufficient for fire work", the provision of more hose reels, a steam engine and quarters for fire officers and men.<sup>37</sup> Another article said that it was a splendid opportunity to "secure the fire brigade quarters in the Town Hall block". The brigade should be able to "get

---

32. *Prahran Telegraph*. 14 April 1888, p.6. (one of series titled "The Prahran Fire Engine Station Soliloquies").

33. *Prahran Telegraph*. 21 April 1888, p.7.

34. *Prahran Telegraph*. 21 April 1888, p.7; 23 June 1888, p.6. (Report of June meeting of Prahran City Council).

35. Prahran RB 1886-87 Vol. 2 No. 6117 (Wood house of 6 rooms NAV 30 pounds transfer from Phillips Exors. to City of Prahran).

36. *Prahran Telegraph*, 19 March 1887, p.7 (one of series of articles titled, "Pleasant Reminiscences of Men & Things as Relating to the Prahran Fire Brigade").

37. *Prahran Telegraph*. 19 March 1887.

on the main street in the shortest possible time". The writer suggested a frontage to Chapel Street when remodelling the Town Hall, or at least to Greville Street. It was argued that Macquarie Street was too narrow, "a waggonette cannot turn in it, and a fire escape could get completely jammed".<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, at a Prahran Council meeting in June 1888, Cr. Turner (later Sir George Turner, Victorian Premier and MLA), Chairman of the Fire Station Committee, moved that the plans and specifications for the new building should be adopted and tenders called. Despite the suggestion that money allotted for the purpose had already been spent on the Town Hall building, it was decided that additional finance could be secured, as the station would probably only cost 1,000 pounds. The motion to proceed was carried.<sup>39</sup>

### Opening of the Second Fire Station

Contemporary reports show that the design of the new two storey Prahran fire station, completed by November 1889, was advanced for its time. It included many features not found in earlier metropolitan stations. Built at a cost of 1200 pounds by contractor, W. Bill of Armadale, the designing architect was William Smith, City Surveyor.<sup>40</sup> An article in the *Prahran Telegraph* titled "The New Look-Out Tower" gave a detailed description of the new building.

The brick tuck pointed building with its slate roof was two storied. On the ground floor the apparatus room (35 x 24 feet) had space for the brigade's two hose reels and also for the steam fire engine and hose carts the brigade was hoping to obtain. The floor was of wooden blocks. Gas and water were laid on. Two large doors opened onto the street.

A workshop (23 x 9 feet) stood in the passage between the station and the west wall of the new town hall. It held a work bench and tools. There was a bathroom and outhouse at one end of the passage, while it was thought that the other end could be used as a stable "by breaking through the wall into the apparatus room.

Upstairs there was a library (11 x 11 feet) with no books but a collection of newspapers cuttings on "the history of fire brigading in Victoria for the last decade". Next came "a splendid Meeting Room" (24 x 22 feet) with a large table and some chairs. Here it was thought that firemen from the Prahran district brigades could meet and have "lectures on fire extinguishing by captains and experts". The walls of this room were covered with "pictures of fire subjects", the brigade had been collecting for years. It was claimed that this was "the best collection of the kind outside Melbourne". Opening out of this room was the Secretary's office which was "to be utilised as a dormitory".

Three flights of stairs led to the Look-out Tower, 60 feet from the ground, with a total height of 72 feet to the finial. The writer enthused about the panoramic views from this tower, including "the close packing of its (Prahran's) industrial hives". The tower would enable "expert fire detecting". A piece of the top deck was to be enclosed with wood and glass "so that the look out will never be left

---

<sup>38</sup>. Prahran Telegraph. 26 March 1887, p.6.

<sup>39</sup>. Prahran Telegraph. 23 June 1888, p.6.

<sup>40</sup>. Prahran Telegraph. 14 Dec. 1889, p.2.



without someone on duty". A speaking tube lead to the first and ground floors, and there was gear for hanging up washed fire hoses to dry. The fire bell, imported by the Council from Vickers at a cost of 60 pounds, weighed 750 pounds and was of cast steel. It had a wheel and rope which dropped down through the various floors to the ground floor. It was hoped to attach the bell to electrical appliances connected to the Town Hall clock tower, so that the rope need only be used in an emergency.

The finished building was claimed at the time to be .. the best and most compact fire station in the suburbs, or perhaps in the colony, not excepting the splendid structures at Ballarat, Sandhurst, and Geelong. The new Fitzroy Station is a long way its inferior.<sup>41</sup>

It was argued that, as the central depot for the Prahran district, a steam engine should be provided, along with horse carts and horses, and "a small staff of three or four men permanently employed as firemen". The matter was urgent considering Prahran's "isolated position", the increasing number of houses (8,557) and population (nearly 10,000) in the municipality.<sup>42</sup>

## 5. Later History

Following the establishment of the MFB Board in 1891, Prahran district's fire stations became part of 'D' District, which covered Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs. Three new stations were opened at Prahran within this District in the 1890s. They were No. 27 Prahran in Albert Street (1892), No. 28 in Davis Street, South Yarra (1894), Aberdeen Street (1895). Other fire stations opened in 'D' District in the 1890s were at Caulfield, Elsternwick, Brighton and St. Kilda, all in 1895.<sup>43</sup> This district was distinguished by its number of small stations and the preponderance of grass and house fires, although No. 27 in Albert Street, Prahran and No. 37 at St. Kilda handled some spectacular fires in public buildings. This district has been compared to 'C' District, covering the old eastern suburbs of Melbourne, where new stations were opened in the 1890s at Kew (1893), Box Hill (1893), Surrey Hills (1894), Malvern (1893) and Oakleigh (1895). Towers were built at Hawthorn in 1893 and a wooden tower at Box Hill in 1895.<sup>44</sup> Most of the 1890s fire stations in 'C' and 'D' Districts were replaced by newer buildings in the post-1915 period.<sup>45</sup>

The Macquarie Street fire station buildings (perhaps because of its unsuitable location) was converted to other Prahran Council uses from the turn of the century.<sup>46</sup> A recent history of Melbourne's fire services suggests that in the first decades of this century the 1892 Albert Street station became the major fire station operating within the Prahran area.

---

<sup>41</sup>. *Prahran Telegraph*. 14 Dec, 1889.

<sup>42</sup>. *Prahran Telegraph*. 14 Dec. 1889.

<sup>43</sup>. Wilde, pp. 93-96, 110. (Summary of stations and dates).

<sup>44</sup>. Wilde, pp. 89-93, 109-110 (Summary).

<sup>45</sup>. Wilde, pp. 109-110.

<sup>46</sup>. Andrew Begg, p.6.

### M.M.B.W. Drainage Plans, 1896-1987.

Nevertheless in a series of MMBW Drainage and House Service Plans dating from 1896 to 1987, the old Macquarie Street building continued to be shown as "fire station". The earliest of these plans shows the station separated from the Court House and the Town Hall by asphalt passages. The pitched right-of-way running back beside the tower continued along the back of the Town Hall buildings with an exit into Chapel Street. The other route to Chapel Street (vital in a fire emergency) was along Macquarie Street and into Greville Street.<sup>47</sup>

Later plans confirmed internal changes to the fire station at the turn of the century. At this time, a new toilet/wash house building was constructed between the station and the court house, near the old workshop building. Toilets were removed from the first floor and new ones added to the ground floor in an area where the hoses and fire engine had previously been housed.<sup>48</sup> There is no indication in these plans of the glassing in of the circular entrance at the front of the building, through which the brigade once rushed out to a fire. This change now gives the former fire station an Edwardian appearance.

There were more internal changes in 1914-15,<sup>49</sup> at the time of the disastrous fire when the City hall had to be rebuilt from the designs of the architects, Sydney Smith and Ogg.<sup>50</sup> According to Cooper, the old watch tower was used by firemen during this spectacular Prahran fire disaster.<sup>51</sup>

More recently, in the 1980s, there was more internal work carried out at the former fire station. Additional toilets and sinks were added to the ground floor, and a bath and shower and provision for a washing machine were provided on the first floor.<sup>52</sup> Also, during this decade, the timber look-out platform was removed from the top of the historic watch tower.<sup>53</sup>

### 6. Summary of Historical Significance

The former 1889 Prahran City Fire Station has significance as part of the district's early history, and particularly of the Prahran Volunteers, and the development of an organised firefighting service in Melbourne Metropolitan area. It was the second purpose-built Prahran City Fire Station, replacing an earlier 1858 bluestone building with a timber tower at the rear (pulled down in 1888), which was located in Greville Street. The present building and its predecessor formed an important component of the Town Hall municipal complex from the mid-

<sup>47</sup>. MMBW Drainage Plan. Prahran No. 961, 1896.

<sup>48</sup>. MMBW Drainage Plan. Prahran No. 10327 (Plans dated 1898-1900, 1900, 1901, 1900-1902).

<sup>49</sup>. MMBW Drainage Plans. Prahran Nos. 10327/20100. (Plans dated 1914-15).

<sup>50</sup>. Begg, p.6; National Trust File No. 556.

<sup>51</sup>. Cooper, pp. 281-284. (Illustration "City Hall Fire, View of Ruins".)

<sup>52</sup>. MMBW Property Sewerage Plan. Prahran No. 20100, 24 Feb. 1987.

<sup>53</sup>. Pers. comment. City of Prahran spokesman.

1850s.

The Macquarie Street building has State historical significance as arguably the earliest remaining pre-1890 municipal fire station in the metropolitan area, associated with the volunteer brigades which operated during the last century. As the earliest known example of such stations, and still with its original brick watch tower, the Macquarie Street building must be regarded as having exceptional rarity value.<sup>54</sup> The watch tower (although missing its top look-out platform) is of particular importance as an illustration of early firefighting methods in colonial Victoria.

The former fire station is of historical importance, too, for its associations with the early Prahran brigade leader, Captain James Kelly, who played a key role in the 1880s campaign for government legislation, and the equipment and manning of brigades, which revolutionised fire fighting services throughout Victoria.

---

<sup>54</sup>.

The early Fitzroy fire station has gone. An early fire station in Wellington Street, Flemington, dates from 1896, is two-storied but has no tower. An 1895 fire station in Selwyn Street, Elsternwick, is a small single-storey structure, without a tower, but with its original entrance archway. The 1893 red brick fire station in Lord Street, Richmond, also does not have a tower. The 1892 Albert Street, Prahran, station with firemen's quarters, also survives.

List of Significant Dates

- 1838 First recorded fire in Melbourne.
- 1839 Melbourne Fire and Insurance Co. formed.
- 1845 Melbourne's first fire brigade established.
- c1855 First volunteer brigade at South Melbourne.
- 1856 Prahran volunteer fire brigade formed.
- 1857 Prahran obtains manual fire engine housed at Prahran Inn, Cnr. Andrew and George Streets, Windsor.  
Burns down but engine saved.
- 1857 Yan Yean Reservoir opens.
- 1858 Prahran Council builds first bluestone fire station with wooden tower in Greville Street.
- 1860-61 Town Hall and Municipal Chambers at Prahran.
- 1862 New Court House.
- 1877 Post and Telegraph Office, Library and Police Station at Prahran.
- 1886 Prahran City becomes owner of Macquarie Street site (occ. by timber house). Transfer registered 1892? (See Begg).
- 1888 Old fire station demolished to make way for new buildings. Sold for 20 pounds.  
New Court House on corner Greville/Macquarie Streets.
- Aug.  
1889 Remodelled Town Hall opens.
- Nov.  
1889 Macquarie Street Prahran City Fire Station opens.  
Two storey brick with brick watch tower.  
(Central depot for Prahran district).
- Dec.  
1890 *Fire Brigades Act* passed.
- March  
1891 Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board meets at Melbourne Town Hall.
- 1891 Eastern Hill fire Station - MFB Headquarters.  
Two storey with tower - model for other stations.
- 1892-97 Number of other metropolitan stations built, some designed by notable architects.

List of Significant Dates continued

1900 Macquarie Street fire station converted to other Prahran Council uses.

Volunteer service gradually phased out replaced by paid firemen working continuous duty.