

Mount Stromlo Observatory

The Commonwealth Solar Observatory was established in 1924, on Mount Stromlo, on the outskirts of Canberra. Founded mainly to study the sun and support research into geophysics, the complex included residences, plant and maintenance buildings as well as scientific observation and recording equipment. This fact sheet provides information on the National Archives' holdings relating to the construction and maintenance of the complex.

Records relating to Mount Stromlo Observatory

Records held by the National Archives relating to Mount Stromlo include correspondence files, photographs, and architectural plans and drawings dealing with the design, construction and maintenance of the complex. A selection of records is listed below.

Correspondence files

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Mount Stromlo – Observatory buildings</u>	1925–29	CP698/30, 1
<u>Mount Stromlo – general file</u>	1925–28	CP698/30, 1/1
<u>Mount Stromlo – Director's residence</u>	1920–25	CP698/30, 1/2
<u>Mount Stromlo – buildings</u>	1927–28	CP698/30, 1/3
<u>Mount Stromlo Observatory – estimates only</u>	1927	CP698/30, 1/4

Photographs

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Small dome on Mt Stromlo looking northeast</u>	1926	A3560, 4
<u>Cottages under construction at Mt Stromlo</u>	1926	A3560, 201
<u>Administrative building on Mt Stromlo</u>	1925	A3560, 909
<u>Cottages on Mt Stromlo</u>	1926	A3560, 1642
<u>Pine plantation on Mt Stromlo</u>	1926	A3560, 2623
<u>Construction site – Mt Stromlo with Mason crane</u>	1927	A3560, 3597
<u>Observatory dome under construction</u>	1927	A3560, 3602
<u>Director's house under construction</u>	1927	A3560, 3621

<u>Observatory dome</u>	1928	A3560, 4194
<u>Observatory dome and administration buildings</u>	1928	A3560, 4414
<u>Buildings at Mt Stromlo</u>	1928	A3560, 4654
<u>Director's residence – Mt Stromlo</u>	1929	A3560, 5386
<u>Administrative building – Mt Stromlo</u>	circa 1921–34	A3560, 7460
<u>Telescope</u>	1928	A3560, 7532
<u>Workmen on Solar Tower – Mt Stromlo</u>	1928	A3560, 7535
<u>Workmen on dome over Farnham telescope</u>	1928	A3560, 7543
<u>Office buildings at Stromlo under construction</u>	1927	A3560, 7561

Architectural plans & drawings

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Details of senior mechanic's residence – Mt Stromlo</u>	1925	A2502, AB429
<u>Layout of buildings</u>	1924	A2502, AB430
<u>Detail of bronze lettering</u>	circa 1924–30	A2502, AB649
<u>Lavatory – Oddie House – Mt Stromlo</u>	1929	A2502, AB747
<u>Steelwork to laboratory and Sun Telescope Building</u>	1924	A2502, AB835
<u>Garages, fuel stores</u>	1927	A2502, AB881
<u>Stromlo pump house</u>	1927	A2502, AB968
<u>Additions to staff quarters (AC1202)</u>	1926	A2503, folder 6
<u>Reynolds Reflector house (AC1389)</u>	1926	A2503, folder 7
<u>Director's residence (AC1445)</u>	1927	A2503, folder 7
<u>Reynolds Reflector house (AC1475)</u>	1927	A2503, folder 7
<u>Excavation to store building site (AC1485)</u>	1927	A2503, folder 7
<u>Temporary Farnham house (AC1504)</u>	1927	A2503, folder 8
<u>Details of lab and sun telescope building (AC1548)</u>	1927	A2503, folder 8
<u>Sub station and Farnham telescope building (AC1554)</u>	1927	A2503, folder 8
<u>Detail of workshop store and office (AC1645)</u>	1927	A2503, folder 8
<u>Architectural drawings with AG prefix</u>	1930	A2506
<u>Residence 'A'</u>	1930	A2506, AG164
<u>Residence 'H'</u>	1930	A2506, AG164
<u>Groundsman's cottage</u>	1930	A2506, AG167
<u>Remodelling of the Administration building</u>	1930	A2506, AG171
<u>Reynolds Reflector House – details of reinforcements to concrete</u>	1930	A2506, AG324
<u>Aperture cards for ACT architectural plans and drawings</u>	1921–59*	A9663
<u>Bingar dome</u>	undated	A9663, M1957D
<u>Timing gear details</u>	undated	A9663, M8381

Dome for 48 inch telescope	undated	A9663, 19927
Building for cosmic rays	undated	A9663, 4788
Variations to addition	undated	A9663, 13747
Optical munitions annexe	undated	A9663, 15114
New bachelor quarters	undated	A9663, 19435
Restoration of fire damaged building	undated	A9663, 22028
Proposed dome and annexe for CATTs 20 inch telescope	undated	A9663, 23338
New ionospheric station	undated	A9663, 20866

* Most items in this series are not individually dated. The series date range provides some indication of when individual items were created.

For more information

You can obtain more information about the record series listed above (and the items within the series) from [RecordSearch](#), the National Archives database. As well as records relating to the complex and its maintenance, you should be able to identify records relating to solar and astronomical observations, and other scientific activity and research undertaken at Mount Stromlo (including the Observatory's wartime role in optical munitions production).