

## HALL & DODS



Left: Robert (Robin) Dods, n.d. [Negative no. 107372](#)

Right: Lyndhurst, the residence of Mrs J. Reid, in London Road, Clayfield [designed Hall & Dods, built 1896-97], n.d. [Negative no. 191603](#)

Robert (Robin) Smith Dods was born in 1868 in Dunedin, New Zealand. The family moved to the United Kingdom in 1870, settling there until Robin's father Robert died around five years later after which the family returned to New Zealand. Mrs Dods subsequently married the well-known Queensland doctor and politician Dr Charles Marks and the large blended family was established in a large timber residence at 101 Wickham Terrace, in what would become the heart of Brisbane's medical community.

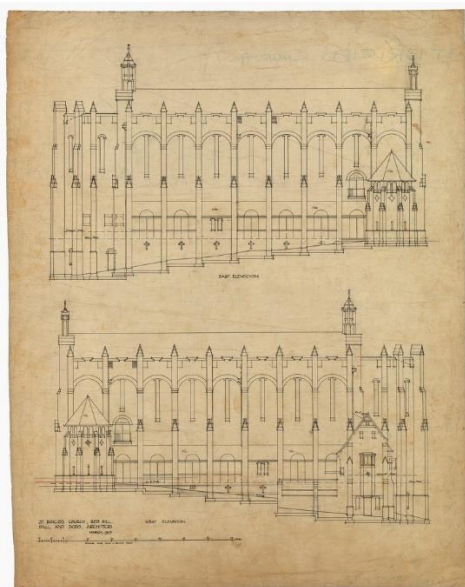
After finishing his schooling at Brisbane Boys Grammar, Robin returned 'home' like so many others at the time, to further his education. He became an articled student in the architectural firm of Hay & Henderson in Edinburgh in 1886. Once qualified, he moved to London to join the design branch of the Imperial War Office working under architects Ingress Bell and W. Dunn who was an early specialist in reinforced concrete. Robin's work broke no new ground during this period, his competition entries having no success. Despite this, Dods' natural charm and wit saw him mingle easily in architectural and artistic circles. He undertook a study tour of Italy in 1891 where he met Charles Rennie MacIntosh, destined to be known as one of the main pioneers of modernism. In Italy Dods also got engaged to an American girl, Mary King, and although they went their separate ways, they were destined to be married seven years later.

Dods returned home to Brisbane in 1894 to see his mother. While in town he entered, and won, an architectural competition for a new Nurses' Quarters at the General Hospital. He returned for a short time to England, via America, until receiving an offer of partnership with Brisbane architect Francis Hall. With the Nurses' Quarters yet to be built, the practice of Hall and Dods was established in 1896. Francis was primarily an administrator and left the majority of design work to Dods. As the city boomed following the economic depression of the 1890s, work was plentiful and the firm soon established a high reputation in all fields of building.

In 1904 the firm was appointed Diocesan Architects for the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane, where they oversaw Church offices and St John's School and supervised the Cathedral, designed by English architect J.L. Pearson, in Ann Street. Other commissions for private chapels and churches around Brisbane are included as some of Dods' best work. Hall and Dods were then commissioned to design the new Mater Misericordiae Hospital at South Brisbane for the Catholic Church. This led to a commission to design St Brigid's Church at Red Hill, still an icon of the inner-city, and perhaps Dods' finest work. The firm also undertook a large number of residential projects right across Queensland and the house designs shows Dods at the peak of his architectural prowess. His domestic work, which mixed a sophisticated discipline with a common-sense approach to the local climate, was radically new. Dods' charm also made him popular in Brisbane's business and club circles, attracting a large amount of commercial work carried out during Hall and Dods' partnership.

In 1913, Dods' ambition saw him terminate his partnership with Francis Hall and relocate to Sydney, hoping to work on large commercial projects. After going to join the practice of Spain and Cosh as a partner, where some of his projects were abandoned due to the First World War. He did design the South British Insurance Co. building and the Newcastle Club but didn't live to see their completion. Robin Dods died, aged only 52, in 1920. He is remembered as one of only a handful of architects who actually advanced Queensland architecturally, creating some of the most original and vital work of the period.

Francis Hall, whose father John had also been an architect, continued in architecture, partnering with Alan Devereux in 1923 and Harold Cook from around 1928. Hall was content to be the administrator, delighting in supervisory work and was considered scrupulously fair and impartial. Hall, a keen race-goer whose firm was architects for the Queensland Turf Club, died at Ascot racecourse during a race in 1939. He was Australia's oldest practising architect at the age of 77.



Left: *St. Brigid's Church, Red Hill [east & west elevations, built 1913-16], March 1913. Hall & Dods. [Item no. 27671-166.](#)*

Right: *St. Brigid's Catholic Church at Red Hill, c.1928. [Negative no. 71124.](#)*

## Collection resources

- [OM75-112 John Hall and Son records 1885-1912](#)  
John Hall & Son later became Hall & Dods when John's son Francis went into partnership with Robin Dods. This collection comprises two tender books with names and prices tendered for various projects.
- [OM81-118 Tamrookum Chapel specifications 1913](#)  
All Saints Memorial Church, Tamrookum, in the Scenic Rim region of south east Queensland was designed by Robin Dods and built in 1915.
- [27671 Hall and Dods architectural drawings 1898-1984](#)  
This collection contains almost 300 architectural drawings and plans for a variety of projects designed and overseen by Hall & Dods, some that were never realised. Many are digitised.
- [27964 Richard Stringer photographs of Hall and Dods designed buildings 1965-2005](#)  
This 40 year project undertaken by Richard Stringer, one of the most renowned photographers of architecture in Australia, includes Hall & Dods buildings that survived up to this period.
- [30291 Hall & Dods New Zealand Insurance Company architectural plans 1907-1908](#)  
A group of 7 architectural plans for the NZ Insurance Company building on Queen Street in Brisbane. The building was completed c.1910 and demolished in the 1970s.
- [7144 TILL Hall & Dods proposal for the Post and Telegraph Office, Brisbane, 1900](#)

This accession consists of one large framed coloured drawing entered into a competition held in 1900 for a new Post & Telegraph Office in Brisbane. Hall & Dods were awarded 'second place' however, the project was later abandoned.

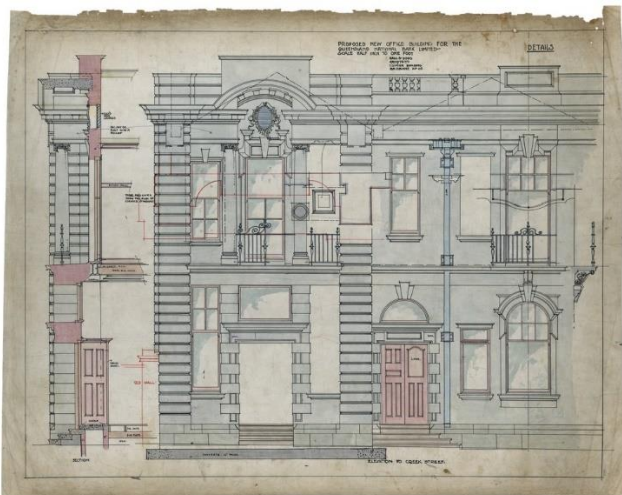
- [28407 Miscellaneous architectural plans 1880-1941](#)  
A number of architectural plans by a variety of architects for projects in Brisbane and Cloncurry, including three drawings for an infectious diseases hospital in Brisbane (1909) by Hall & Dods.
- [Q690.0212 QUA](#) "Quantities of materials etc required in alterations and additions to 'Nindooinbah' at Beaudesert for William Collins Esq."  
This publication contains the specifications for extensive renovations and extensions designed by Robin Dods which were constructed in 1906-1907.

### State Library blogs

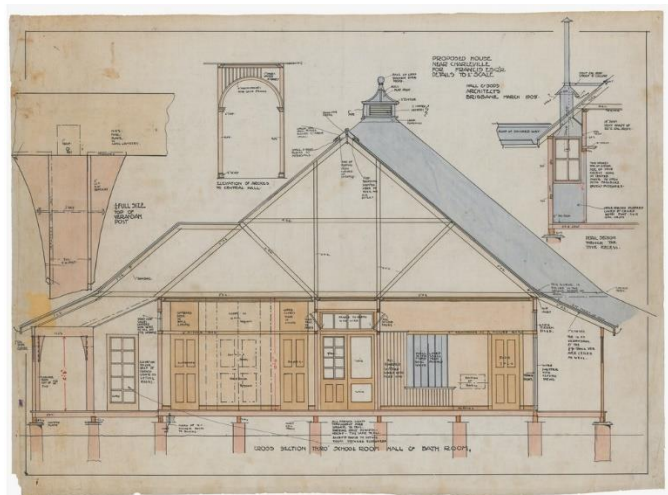
- [The Hall and Dods project](#) (2010)
- [Our conservators at work: restoring the Hall and Dods Collection](#) (2011)
- [Hall and Dods architectural drawings: conservation and digitisation](#) (2012)
- [The Albion flour mill, Scottish links and another era](#) (2013)

### Other resources

- [Hall & Dods: Designing Queensland](#)  
Flickr album featuring architectural plans by Hall & Dods
- [R.S. \(Robin\) Dods: An interview with Robert Riddell](#)  
This video features Dr Robert Riddell, curator of State Library's exhibition *Art in Architecture: the work of Robin Dods*, discussing the significance of Dods' work and the importance of maintaining Queensland's built heritage.
- [Conservation of the Hall and Dods architectural plans](#) (2011)  
State Library of Queensland Conservator, Rachel Spano, discussed the conservation work undertaken to preserve this important collection of architectural drawings, including the stages involved in treatment. This video was produced to complement the State Library exhibition *Art in Architecture: the work of Robin Dods*.



Left: *Proposed new office building in Creek Street, Brisbane [Queensland National Bank], April 1905. Hall & Dods. [Item no. 27671-91.](#)*



Right: *Proposed house near Charleville [for D.E. Francis Esq.], March 1908. Hall & Dods. [Item no. 27671-300.](#)*