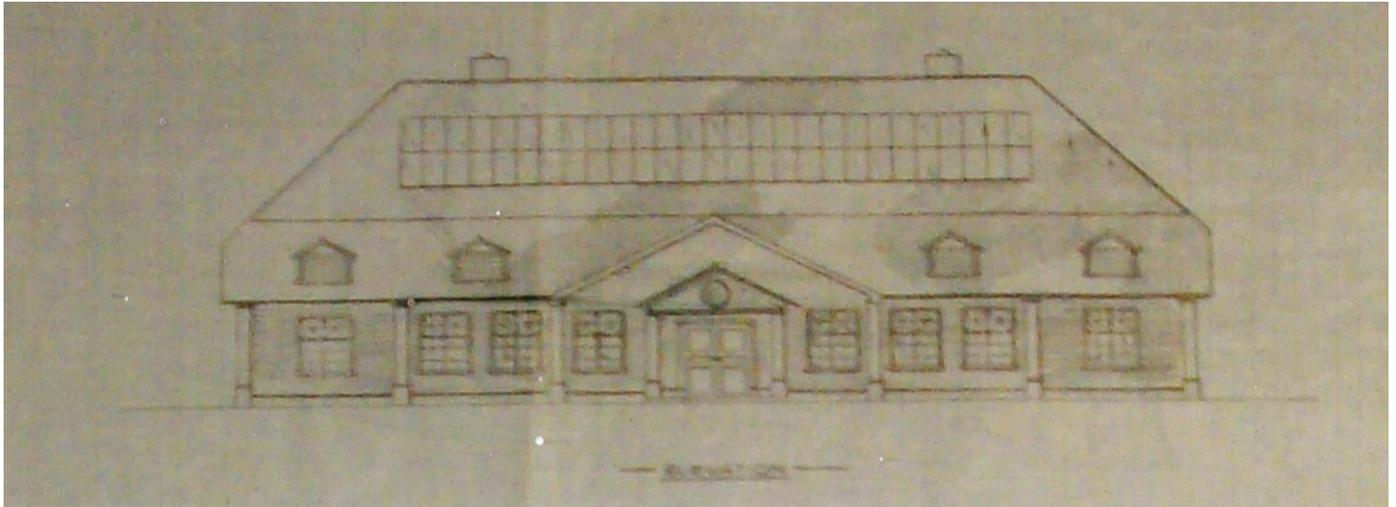


THE GYMNASIUM

Recognising the need for better sanitation and for facilities for recreation and a brighter social outlook for people materials were purchased during 1929 and shipped to the Falkland Islands for the erection of public baths and a gymnasium. Described as *“an imposing and commodious building situated near the Town Hall”*, the Public Baths and Gymnasium were constructed in 1930 at a cost of £6,000 and opened early in 1931. The building was equipped with six bathrooms, two shower-baths, a reading and waiting room, toilets, caretaker’s office, storerooms and a spacious main hall.



The Colonial Annual Report of 1931 reported that *“the newly constructed Public Baths and Gymnasium have proved themselves immediately to be a most popular institution and have become a central feature of the life of the town.”* Sewerage in Stanley at this time was disposed of partly by water-carriage and partly by earth-closet and many houses did not have adequate bathing facilities. By 1933 there was no longer overcrowding in Stanley and distributing mains were extended so as to serve the whole of Stanley. Eventually there was no longer a need for the public baths part of the building and this part fell into disuse.



Gymnasium from south west, 1930s – photograph Hamilton collection

By 1948 a cinema show was being held twice a week, usually on a Saturday and Sunday and the gymnasium was also being used weekly for public dances pending the completion of the new town hall. After completion of the Town Hall the Gymnasium was still popular for dances and in 1954 folk dancing was held in there on a regular basis. In 1970 the Museum was housed in the old public baths.



Despite some public objection the Gymnasium was dismantled in 1994 to make way for the new Standard Chartered Bank building.

