HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE EAGLE FARM AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENT, FEMALE FACTORY AND PRISON, EAGLE FARM, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND.

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## Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison

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**APPENDIX 1. EAGLE FARM AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENT AND FEMALE FACTORY AND PRISON, EAGLE FARM, BRISBANE. HISTORY REPORT.**

Paul Ashton with Sue Rosen

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Figure 1.1  Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Transport, Queensland Region, Plan no. BS 9216. This plan indicates the location of the Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison in relation to runway 13/31. The evidence for its location is derived from the 1842 survey by Henry Wade (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2  WADE, Henry, 1842. Moreton Bay District. Plan of Small Farms situate in the Parish of Toombul, County of . John Oxley Library, M.1118.8. This survey plan of the Eagle Farm Establishment may be compared with the detailed plans and elevations produced in 1839 by George Browne (Browne, 1839) (Appendix 1, Ashton, 1990, figures 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.2).

Figure 2.1  Australian Survey Office, Department of Administrative Services, Queensland, 1980, Brisbane Airport. Contour, detail and level, Plan no. SB. 33-402 (B1), sheet 7. The original topography may be visible at the south-eastern corner of the airport property and also at the low point immediately to the south-west of the end of runway 13/31.
1.1. INTRODUCTION.

This report was commissioned 9 January 1990 by the Australian Construction Services in Brisbane, Queensland. Its purpose was to assess the cultural significance of the former agricultural establishment, female factory and prison (1829 - 1838) at Eagle Farm, near Brisbane, and then to make recommendations for the disposal of the land, in such a way as to conserve the cultural significance of the site.

The site is located within the present boundaries of the international airport at Eagle Farm, Brisbane. The boundaries of the site have been described by the Australian Heritage Commission as follows (Figure 1.1):

'Approximately 12 ha. located under and around the south-eastern end of runway 13/31 at Brisbane Airport, comprising the land occupied by and all foundations and portable artefacts of the former farm and prison / factory, as delineated in Department of Transport Plan BS 7216, dated July 1979.'

This plan, namely Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Transport, Queensland Region, BS 9216, indicates the site of the former penal establishment as shown on the survey by Henry Wade, entitled 'Moreton Bay District. Plan of Small Farms situate in the Parish of Toombul, County of ', submitted to the Surveyor General, with written descriptions, on 22 August 1842. The 1979 and 1842 plans compare closely, although it is not known whether the recent map is simply an overlay, or if the original surveyor's field books have been used (Figure 1.2).

The Australian Heritage Commission gave notice of its intention to enter the site in the Register of the National Estate on 18 April 1989.

This report does not include an assessment of the cultural significance of structures associated with aviation and the development of Brisbane Airport.

2 Wade 1842.
Figure 1.1 Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Transport, Queensland Region. Plan no. BS 9216. This plan indicates the location of the Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison in relation to runway 13/31. The evidence for its location is derived from the 1842 survey by Henry Wade (Figure 1.2).
Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison

Figure 1.2  WADE, Henry, 1842. Moreton Bay District. Plan of Small Farms situate in the Parish of Toombul, County of . John Oxley Library, M.1118.8. This survey plan of the Eagle Farm Establishment may be compared with the detailed plans and elevations produced in 1839 by George Browne (Browne, 1839) (Appendix 1, Ashton, 1990, figures 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.2).
2.1. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

2.2. Summary of historical research

Paul Ashton was commissioned by Consultant Archaeological Services to complete the historical research necessary for this project. His report may be found in appendix 1.1.

In summary, the first settlement at Moreton Bay was commenced in 1824. It was designed as a convict establishment for the punishment of secondary offenders. In terms of secondary punishment it may be compared with Newcastle (1804 - 1824), and Port Macquarie (1821 - 1830, but continuing as a penal establishment until 1847) in New South Wales. Moreton Bay was the logical extension of the policies which had seen the development and later demise of the two N.S.W. establishments, as settlement expanded.

Elsewhere, Norfolk Island was re-opened in 1825 for secondary offenders, while a whole series of institutions were operated in Tasmania, including Macquarie Harbour (1821 - 1833), Maria Island (1825 - 1832), and Port Arthur (1830 - 1877).

At Moreton Bay, the settlement commenced at Brisbane Town in 1824, while the agricultural establishment at Eagle Farm opened in 1829. It had a relatively short life and was closed in 1838. All the buildings at Eagle Farm were of wooden or slab construction. In 1838 these structures included the Superintendent's Quarters with separate kitchen, Male Prisoners' Hut, Matron's Quarters, and the Female Factory, surrounded by a strong double stockade. The latter enclosed a range of 4 Female Prisoners' Huts, Store, School, Cook House with attached Needle Room, Laundry and attached Wash House, Hospital, and a building containing 6 cells within a separate enclosure. All these buildings may be identified and located using the historic plans that are available (Figure 1.2).

By 1840 the buildings within the Female Factory enclosure had probably been demolished, while one or more of the adjacent buildings were still occupied. The area was used as a government cattle station from 1841 until the land was sold.

1 Ashton 1990.
2 Ashton 1990, figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2.
Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison

perhaps to maintain the value of improvements before disposal. Auction sales were conducted from 1842 onwards, the land subsequently being used for agricultural purposes.

After World War I the area became associated with civil aviation, and in 1941-1942 the U.S. forces constructed an important air base for the Pacific Military Command. After the war, the Department of Civil Aviation decided to establish Brisbane Airport at Eagle Farm.

### 2.3. Archaeological evidence.

Site survey revealed no above ground remains of the agricultural establishment, female factory or prison. Visible remains were not expected for two principal reasons, first because of the predominant use of slab construction, and second because of the recent development of the site.

The documentary evidence clearly indicates slab construction, which would have rapidly fallen into decay, once the buildings ceased to be maintained. With the rotting away of the wood, only the disturbance of the soil caused by human occupation would survive below the ground surface. This would include post-holes, pits, layers, other archaeological features and inorganic artifacts. Organic remains will only have survived in waterlogged conditions, for example, in a well-shaft. The low lying nature of the site may have contributed to the survival of a larger quantity of organic remains than would be generally expected on a higher site.

The second principal reason for the absence of above ground remains is due to the recent development of the site for airport facilities, including one of the main runways being constructed across most of the site in 1941-1942 (Figure 1.1). At this stage it is difficult to resolve whether or not this runway and its associated grading and drainage works have substantially destroyed the archaeological evidence, or merely covered the remains by the dumping of fill layers.

Prior to their proposal for including the site on the Register of the National Estate, the Australian Heritage Commission were of the opinion that:

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3 Ashton 1990:11.
'As far as can be determined, the site has not been excavated or otherwise damaged since the buildings were demolished at an unknown date. During the construction of the Brisbane Airport in WWII the site was covered with a variable depth of fill.'

Close scrutiny of the available maps and plans, showing contours or spot heights, is the most appropriate method of evaluation before archaeological excavation on an exploratory or a large scale basis. The two most important maps are:


Both maps appear to be drawn using the Brisbane City Council Datum (BCCD), which is 1.06 metres (3.48 feet) above state datum or Australian Height Datum (AHD).

The earlier plan indicates swampy ground below 2.74 metres (9 feet) (BCCD). Converting this to Australian Height Datum by subtracting 1.06 metres, gives an absolute height of 1.68 metres above mean sea level (AHD), approximately the high water mark and the upper height limit for local mangrove swamp. No archaeological remains of settlement would be expected below this height.

Both plans in fact confirm this hypothesis when the site of the convict establishment is overlain (compare figures 1.1 and 2.1). On the eastern side the paddock rises up from c.3.5 metres BCCD to the Female Factory, which is likely to have been sited on a slight rise in the terrain. The original topography is obscured in this area by the

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4 Documentation supplied by the client, Australian Construction Services.
5 Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Civil Aviation, Directorate of Airports, 1949.
6 Australian Survey Office, Department of Administrative Services, Queensland, 1980.
Figure 2.1. Australian Survey Office, Department of Administrative Services, Queensland, 1980, Brisbane Airport. Contour, detail and level, Plan no. SB. 33-402 (B1), sheet 7. The original topography may be visible at the south-eastern corner of the airport property and also at the low point immediately to the south-west of the end of runway 13/31.
runway and associated grading works up to 6 metres BCCD. On the basis of the unchanged topography to the south and the local low spot immediately to the south-west of the runway (5 metres BCCD), it can be suggested that the original topography in the vicinity of the Female Factory was between 4.5 and 5 metres BCCD. Between 1 and 1.5 metres of fill can therefore be expected over the site of the Female Factory enclosure and related buildings. 7

Unfortunately what appears to be a substantial fill layer protecting the archaeological remains beneath may in fact conceal a substantial depth of metalling and concrete under the runway itself, in order to meet the standards necessary for international air traffic. This material may have been of sufficient depth to destroy the archaeological remains.

It will be necessary to excavate a series of test-trenches on the runway as well as on its graded apron, to evaluate the actual survival of the original soil profile and archaeological deposits.

7 These conclusions are substantially in agreement with correspondence sent by R Casey to E Higginbotham on this matter. ACS file 89/557. 19/3/90.
3.1. ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL.

3.2. Definitions of cultural significance and archaeological potential.

The importance of the archaeological sites identified by this study will be assessed in general terms according to their cultural significance. The term, "environmental heritage", as defined by the Heritage Act of 1977, is interchangeable with the term "cultural significance": it "means those buildings, works, relics or places of historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic significance".¹

However this report will not describe all aspects of cultural significance, but will concentrate on the archaeological potential of the site. The term "archaeological potential" may be defined as the extent to which a site may contribute knowledge, not available from other sources, to current themes in historical archaeology and related disciplines.²

In the assessment of archaeological potential, several factors or criteria have to be taken into account. Questions include:

1. Does the site contribute knowledge not available from other sources? In this respect, the preservation of the site, the availability of comparative sites, and the extent of historical documentation should be considered.

2. Does this knowledge contribute meaningfully to current research themes in historical archaeology and related disciplines? The relevance and importance of this contribution should be assessed on a spatial basis. For example, the contribution may be relevant to the site, between sites, or on a regional or wider basis.

It is also necessary to clarify the significance of a site in terms of its ability to "demonstrate a way of life, taste, custom, process or function of particular

¹ Heritage Act, 1977, no.136, s.4(1).
² This definition is based upon the following reference, among others; Bickford and Sullivan: 19-26.
interest." An archaeological site does not need to survive above ground to have this quality. Even the most insignificant sub-surface archaeological feature can demonstrate such information. This aspect of significance can be realised in its simplest form by marking the site of a former structure or feature in a meaningful way.

3.3. Cultural significance of the site of the Eagle Farm Establishment.

The site of the Eagle Farm Establishment is significant partly because of its rarity. It is one of only seven sites in Australia associated with secondary punishment. Houses of Correction for Females (Female Factories) were only constructed at four places, namely Hobart and Launceston, Tasmania, Parramatta, N.S.W., and Moreton Bay. Eagle Farm is also one of only a small number of convict period sites that survive in Queensland.

3.4. Archaeological potential of the site of the Eagle Farm Establishment.

Assuming that the site survives, the Eagle Farm Establishment has the archaeological potential to substantially contribute to a number of research themes:

1. The administration of the convict system in the final years of transportation.

2. The confinement and punishment of female convicts.

3. Building materials and construction technology. While locally available products were frequently used, the importation of other building materials from New South Wales and elsewhere will shed light on the self-sufficiency and organisation of the convict system as a whole. The classification of each building will also indicate

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4 Kerr 1984, passim.
the organisation of the penal establishment, and the status of each member of the population, be they convict or administration.

4. Artifactual evidence. The objects found in association with the penal establishment will indicate the activities, occupations, and social status of individuals or groups within the population. They will also indicate the usage of different areas. It is expected that the artifacts will reveal trading patterns as well as the effects of remoteness from population centres and the resulting self-sufficiency. The evidence will contribute towards an understanding of access to services and products among the prison population. Food debris, both shell and bone, will contribute towards our knowledge of eating habits, food supplies and the living conditions within the establishment.

5. Environmental evidence. The soils on the site and in the vicinity will preserve evidence of the local environment, both for the pre-European and historic periods. Pollen sampling may reveal the manipulation or changes to the vegetation over time.

3.5. Eagle Farm and its ability to demonstrate a past way of life.

As mentioned above in section 3.2, the site of the Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison possesses the ability to "demonstrate a way of life, taste, custom, process or function of particular interest." Because of the present undeveloped nature of the site, the opportunity exists of physically marking out the layout of the former penal establishment on the ground using a combination of historical documentation and archaeological evidence. Modern materials may be used to indicate this layout, according to accepted practice for museum display.

The example of Risdon Cove, Tasmania's first settlement, is relevant. The settlement consisted of one or two masonry buildings, but the majority were wooden structures, as is the case at Eagle Farm. The National Parks and Wildlife

Service of Tasmania have interpreted the site by exposing a small sample of the masonry footings, but have also marked out the sites of the wooden buildings using wooden frameworks. As with Risdon Cove, the site at Eagle Farm could be interpreted in this way using the excellent historical documentation contained within the various surveys and inventories of the site.\textsuperscript{6}

In this way the ability of the site to demonstrate a past way of life may be realised. Its potential to become an asset in terms of education and tourism is maximised, resulting in substantial direct and indirect economic benefits to the community at large.

\textsuperscript{6} McGowan, 1985.
4.1. RECOMMENDATIONS.

The purpose of this report is to assess the cultural significance, and in particular the archaeological potential of the Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison. Furthermore, it is to enable the sale of the now redundant parts of Brisbane Airport without causing the cultural significance of the place to be diminished.

4.2. Recommendations for archaeological investigation by test-trenches.

It will be necessary to undertake physical investigation of the site, in order to determine the extent to which the archaeological remains survive. It is therefore recommended that:

1. a number of small test-trenches, 1 metre wide, should be excavated by machine at the southern end of runway 13/31, both through the runway surface and on the graded apron, in the vicinity of the archaeological site.

2. These test-trenches should not be placed close to the sites of historic buildings, and unnecessary disturbance of archaeological deposits should be avoided.

3. These test-trenches should be excavated through the fill of the runway, and through to natural subsoil, so that the complete soil profile can be recorded.

4. A brief report should be prepared outlining the results of this investigation, and should be included as an appendix to this report, together with final recommendations.

4.3. Options for the conservation of the site.

Depending on the results of the above excavation, there are three principal options appropriate for the conservation of the site:
Option 1. Conservation as a historic site.

The site is of national significance in terms of its association with other historic places in New South Wales, Norfolk Island, and Tasmania. Should it survive without substantial disturbance, then the archaeological site should be conserved in its totality. In order to ensure permanent protection, consideration should be given to making the site a national park or historic site under the appropriate state or federal legislation.

Option 2. Controlled redevelopment.

The cultural significance of the site would be reduced, if it had been substantially destroyed by the construction of the runway or by other means. In this case, the surviving archaeological remains should be conserved, but development of the site could be allowed under controlled conditions. Structures could be placed outside the areas of surviving archaeological evidence, or constructed so as not to disturb the underlying soil. The latter could be achieved by using concrete slab or beam over fill layers.

There will be a need to ensure the permanent conservation of the surviving archaeological remains after the site is redeveloped.

Under this option, an alternative solution might be to complete the excavation of the surviving archaeological deposits, thereby removing the necessity of controls over redevelopment.

Option 3. Redevelopment without further archaeological investigation.

If all of the site has been destroyed, then it could be sold for redevelopment without any control to conserve archaeological deposits.

In order to determine the correct option for conservation or redevelopment of the site, it will be necessary to complete the archaeological investigation recommended.
Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison

above. Once the precise condition of the site is known, then it will be possible to recommend in more detail the appropriate course of action.
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Abbreviations.

AHD  Australian Height Datum.
BCCD  Brisbane City Council Datum.

Published sources.


*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette.*


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Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison

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APPENDIX 1. EAGLE FARM AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENT AND FEMALE FACTORY AND PRISON, EAGLE FARM, BRISBANE. HISTORY REPORT.

Paul Ashton with Sue Rosen.
EAGLE FARM
AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENT
AND
FEMALE FACTORY AND PRISON
EAGLE FARM BRISBANE

HISTORY REPORT

PAUL ASHTON
WITH
SUE ROSEN

FEBRUARY 1990
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Repositories consulted

Australian Construction Services, Department of Administrative Services
John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland
Macquarie University Library
Mitchell Library
Museum of Mapping and Surveying, Department of Geographic Information
New South Wales Lands Titles Office
Queensland Freehold Land Titles Office
State Archives of New South Wales (AONSW)
State Archives of Queensland
Sunmap, Department of Geographic Information

Bodies contacted

Australian Archives, Brisbane
HERA, Canberra
National Trust (Queensland Branch)
Nundah and District Historical Society
Queensland Air Museum
Queensland Museum
Convict Establishment

The name 'Moreton Bay District' dates from the period of free settlement. The boundaries of the District were defined by Governor Gipps in the Sydney Gazette of 12 May 1842 after the penal settlement had been disbanded. The area was defined as being

On the south by the ranges which separate the sources of the Rivers Brisbane and Logan from those of the Richmond and Clarence; on the west by the range dividing the sources of the rivers flowing into the western interior from those which fall to the eastern coast; on the east by the coast; and on the northward by the limits of colonization, until a more definite boundary shall be determined on that side.¹

Cook sailed past the area in 1770 and Flinders surveyed Moreton Bay in 1799. Serious exploration of the area began in 1822 and in the following year the Brisbane River was discovered. By 1830 the area had been mapped and explored, principally by Oxley, Cunningham and Logan. Favourable reports from Oxley after his expedition of 1823 prompted Governor Brisbane to establish a settlement in the area. On 1 September 1824 fourteen soldiers and approximately thirty convicts under the command of Lieutenant Henry Miller of the 40th Regiment were dispatched from Sydney to Moreton Bay. John Oxley was charged with selecting a settlement site and charting the region.² Captain Patrick Logan of the 57th Regiment arrived in Brisbane Town in March 1826 to take command of the settlement until his death in 1830. And during Logan's command, the settlement expanded significantly.

Moreton Bay was founded as a penitentiary for 'the worst class of [convict] offenders' in a period when the convict system was becoming increasingly characterised by a growing tendency towards more brutal treatment of convicts and by demands for administrative efficiency and leanness. Commissioner Thomas Bigge, for example, particularly favoured remote establishments in hot climates since they would ensure that hard, public labour would 'be more oppressive and more effectual in subduing the refractory or turbulent spirits'.³ Newcastle had been the first site in New South Wales of a place of secondary punishment (1804-24). But as settlement spread to the Hunter Valley, and officials

¹ Cited in J.G.Steele, The Explorers of the Moreton Bay District 1770-1830, UQP, St Lucia 1972, p.1.
² ibid, pp.2, 127.
feared greater opportunities for escape, the establishment was
moved to Port Macquarie which functioned in this role from 1821
to 1830. (Port Macquarie was to be eventually disbanded in
1847.) Moreton Bay, then part of New South Wales, was
established under the same circumstances to form one of the three
most important places for secondary punishment in the colony.
Norfolk Island - popularly known as 'Isle of Despair' and 'Ocean
Hell' - was also reopened as a place of confinement for secondary
offenders in June 1825 while Macquarie Harbour (1821-33), Maria
Island (1825-32) and Port Arthur (1830-77) were likewise
established in Van Diemen's Land.5

Eagle Farm was a secondary settlement of the Moreton Bay Penal
Establishment: it was set up in September 1829 as a result of a
dysentery epidemic during 1828-29 and a 'want of fresh water'.6
In a report dated 11 June 1829, Principal Medical Officer John
Bowman had recommended a better diet and an adequate water supply
as a remedy for dysentery. Though Governor Darling had initially
recommended that the settlement be moved to Stradbroke Island,
the advice of Logan and his surveyor to form a settlement at
Eagle Farm was eventually followed. In the later half of 1829
Darling agreed to the establishment of a second settlement six
miles down river which had an abundant supply of water and flat
agricultural land.

One hundred and fifty men were selected and placed under
Superintendent Parker (previously 'Superintendent of Convicts at
Brisbane Town) to set up the new agricultural establishment and a
slab hut was constructed to provide temporary accommodation.
(This was later to be used as a barn.) One thousand acres were
expected to eventually be put under cultivation. In September
1829 one hundred acres were being prepared for cultivation. By
January 1832 six hundred and fifty three acres were under maize
and twenty-eight under potatoes at Eagle Farm. Cattle were also
recorded at the settlement from 1831 as were pigs a little
later.7

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4 It was to close again in June 1856. See
Merval Hoare, Norfolk Island: A history
through illustrations 1774-1874, AGPS,
Canberra 1979, pp.25-6.

5 Generally, see Australian Encyclopedia,
Grollier Society, Sydney 1963, Vol.3, p.27ff
and Shaw, op cit.

6 John Bowman to Medical Department Sydney, 30
April 1832 in 4/2186.2 AONSW; HRA, Vol.15,
p.21.

7 Commandants Report 11 February 1834, in
4/2246.1, AONSW; J.G.Steele, Brisbane Town in
Convict Days 1824-1842; (Hereinafter Brisbane
The farm prospered and later became the main penal establishment for the female convicts (see below). In 1832, however, Bowman recommended that cultivation of land near 'the swamp' - that is, at Eagle Farm - cease due to an increase in malaria and its high incidence amongst the Eagle Farm residents. Clunie was asked in August 1832 to justify the continuation of Eagle Farm and used Crawford's statistical analysis comparing the Brisbane and Eagle Farm malarial rates. The farm remained, despite the supposed presence of miasmas.8

Although agricultural production at Eagle Farm 'had made a difference to the food supply of the settlement' by the end of 1830,9 official correspondence regarding the abandonment of the Eagle Farm agricultural establishment dates from around 1831.10 Rumours of an imminent closure spread and in 1832 The Australian applauded a supposed government decision to close Eagle Farm, that 'swampy, unhealthy, and profitless mock-agricultural establishment'. Convicts, the newspaper argued reflecting contemporary labour shortages, would be better employed on road work or by private settlers in remote regions.11 Later, in 1834, Captain James Clunie - Commandant of Moreton Bay between October 1830 and November 1835 - was to report that 'the employment of women in field labour is attended with little or no advantage while it unavoidably causes crime and irregularities'.12 Others, too, noted that 'intrigue and licentiousness were rife' at Eagle Farm where 'the worst of them [sic female convicts] were... drafted'.13 The failure of an attempt to grow rice at the agricultural establishment in 1834 also led to disappointment and to claims that the land was unsuitable for rice cultivation, though the lack of success had resulted from the sowing of polished rice. But despite difficulties and criticisms operations continued at Eagle Farm.

8 Brisbane Town, pp.318-19.
10 HRA, Vol.18, p.394; Vol.18, p.244.
11 Brisbane Town, pp.169-70.
12 Commandant's report, 11 February 1834, in 4/2246.1 AONSW. See also Clunie to Col Sec, 12 December 1834, in 35/284 AONSW.
13 Pugh's Almanac, 1849-61, p.64.
By 1836, thirty women were employed at the Female Factory in Brisbane doing needle work, washing and picking oakum: this figure was to rise to seventy-nine during the course of the year. In the same year there were forty women at Eagle Farm who worked in the fields. Seven hundred and sixty-eight acres had been cleared at Eagle Farm by this stage by male convicts, seven hundred of which were used to grow maize. No more than thirty-five acres, however, were under cultivation with corn and twelve acres were devoted to vegetables. And it would appear from reports that female convicts attended to these latter crops. (There were, in addition, forty cows, six oxen, one bull forty-one heifers and thirty-eight calves 'in excellent condition' at Eagle Farm.) All buildings at the establishment at this time were made of wood including a small cottage occupied by the superintendent and his wife and a number of huts which had been formerly occupied by the male convicts whose task it had been to cultivate and then harvest the maize crop.\(^{14}\)

While stringent attempts were made by officialdom to keep male convicts away from females prisoners where practicable, their gaolers were also forbidden to fraternise with the female convicts. The military were forbidden to cross a bridge at Breakfast Creek which was halfway between Brisbane Town and Eagle Farm. But despite threats of punishments — women, for example, who absconded to meet the military in the 'Bush' were placed in irons — assignations were frequent.\(^{15}\) (Unlike men, female convicts could not be subjected to the lash.)

Complaints also reached Sydney regarding men entering the factory in Brisbane Town. And in April 1836 Surgeon Robertson noted that 'the female prisoners employed at Eagle Farm... were in the habit of leaving that place on pretence of illness and for the most improper purposes'. In a letter requesting permission to keep a horse in order to ride out to Eagle Farm and thus stem such illicit meetings, Robertson observed that

\[
\text{There being no building capable of containing all the women at Brisbane Town who are considerable increased in number they have been necessarily sent to Eagle Farm, and employed there at field labor at a distance}
\]

\(^{14}\) James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*, 1843, cited in *Brisbane Town*, pp.222-23. Backhouse also notes that on 'the way to Eagle Farm, there are a few small... species of Coral-tree, out of which, the natives to the north, are said to form canoes'.

and secure from the depraved intercourse of the male prisoners; and in order that no intercourse might be continued to be carried on, it was the Commandants particular desire that I would attend at Eagle Farm regularly, to prevent the women attending the Hospital at the settlement under the pretence of sick[ness]...18

By the end of June 1836, Commandant Captain Foster Fyans' report to the Governor included mention that the unruly behaviour of female prisoners at Eagle Farm had necessitated the erection of 'strong gum slab' cells at that establishment. (It was also noted that the buildings at Eagle Farm were in a dilapidated state and that a shingle roof had had to be covered with bark.) In Brisbane Town, however, one Patrick(?) McDonald was replaced as Supervisor of the Female Factory having abetted access to the factory by a number of amorous constables.

1837 saw the 'entire removal of the female Prisoners from the Settlement [sic at Brisbane Town] to Eagle Farm.17 A slab hut was subsequently 'thrown up' at no expense to extend accommodation and the female factory barrack at Eagle Farm was enclosed by a stockade around the outer fence to stop 'improper behaviour'. Built over a period two months by three men and a team of oxen, the stockade was seventeen feet high, three hundred and twenty-seven feet long and three hundred and eleven feet deep; it was constructed of strut poles with sharp tops and there was only one entrance. Further, a new school - the Convicts' Children's School - was erected outside the stockade wall for the chaplain and supervisor of schools, the Reverend J.C.S.Handt.18 At this time Corporal McDonnell or McDonald and his wife were in charge of the female factory at Eagle Farm. McDonald was also the schoolmaster. In September 1837 McDonald was removed from Eagle Farm because of his misconduct at the factory. Hanly (or Handley) replaced him.19

16 Robertson to Bowman (Inspector of Hospitals), 1 April 1836, in 4/2324.4 AONSW.

17 Major Sydney Cotton to Col Sec, 28 May 1837, in 4/2367.1 AONSW.


19 The 1837 Returns of the Government Resident at Moreton Bay indicate that Christiana McDonald was appointed Matron of the Factory in July 1836 and that she held this position until 30 August 1837. Patrick McDonald was appointed Schoolmaster on 1 July 1837 and held the position until August he was also a Corporal in the 4th Regiment on full pay. Michael Hanley was Schoolmaster from the 31
In a letter dated 12 April 1838 to the Colonial Secretary, Commandant Cotton expressed his opinion that the female convicts at Eagle Farm could be profitably occupied manufacturing soap and woollen clothing. Schoolmaster Henry Cox had requested materials in the previous month to enable the women to spin, weave and knit. But a recommendation came from Sydney that nothing be done at Eagle Farm in this regard until work at the Parramatta Factory had been evaluated as part of a broader program of reorganisation and rationalisation which had been recommended by the 1837 Select Committee on Transportation. (Rams had, however, been sent from Sydney but they had arrived in various conditions: one, for example, was dead on arrival and another blind.) Female convicts were now employed at Eagle Farm in positions such as those of the Hospital matron, the gatekeeper, the hospital overseer and as constables. But most further requests for non-essential supplies were disallowed: a note on correspondence dated 9 November 1838 in part regarding Eagle Farm indicated that 'the settlement is to be abandoned'. Only requests for more stock and grain that would add value to the land when 'thrown open' for private purchase after the discontinuation of the penal settlement were granted.

When the instructions from the Commissariat for the removal from Moreton Bay (dated 22 November 1838) were penned there were three hundred and forty-five 'souls altogether' at Moreton Bay (including Eagle Farm), sixty-seven of whom were female convicts. (This population included one hundred and forty-four male convicts.) The instructions for removal were forwarded to Cotton on 12 January 1839. The closure of the settlements at Moreton Bay, like the reorganisation of the Parramatta Female Factory, fitted into a broader scheme. Economic recession in England during the 1830s, which lead to the depression of 1839-43, fuelled criticisms of the convict system in Australia in August to 5 November 1837 and was a private on full pay from the 28th Regiment. Mr Henry Cox was Schoolmaster from 6 November 1837. He had no other appointments. Mrs Cox became matron of the Factory at this time. The 1838 returns list Spicer as the Superintendent of Convicts and Parker as the Superintendent of Agriculture. In the 1838 return none of these positions exist. The last date of employment is listed as 31 December 1838. (See returns in 4/7376 AONSW.)

Correspondence from Moreton Bay, 22 June 1838; 13 October 1838; 9 November 1838, in 4/2411.1 AONSW.

Memo to Col Sec, 22 November 1838, in 4/2411.1 AONSW.
terms of its cost and its ability to reform criminals, a class of inhabitants which was steadily growing in England given economic conditions. Thus the creation of the 1837 Select Committee on Transportation which finally concluded that transportation should be abolished and that only Norfolk Island and Tasman's Peninsula should be retained in the Australian colonies as penitentiaries for secondary offenders.\(^{22}\)

On 15 March 1839 an 'Abstract of Public Property under the Charge of the Royal Engineer Department Moreton Bay'\(^{23}\) included an account of the structures at Eagle Farm. Item number twenty-one noted 'A slab building Walls plastered interior and exterior a slab built detached Kitchen in rear of ditto' (eight and one 'apartments' respectively; occupied by Superintendent of Agriculture 'Situated about 7 Miles East of Brisbane Town'); item twenty-two listed 'a slab building' (two apartments; occupied by male prisoners); item twenty-three, 'ditto' (a slab building; two apartments; Matrons quarters; 'Additional room in Progress') along with 'do' (a slab building; 'kitchen in rear'; one apartment). Item twenty-four of the abstract listed the 'Female Factory': this consisted of 'A Range of Slab buildings' of four 'apartments' for 'female prisoners'; 'A small slab building detached', one apartment - used as a store; another small slab building detached with one apartment - used as a school; a further small slab building 'Plastered with 2 [word unclear]’, one apartment - used as a hospital; 'A slab building', one apartment - used as a workhouse; a slab building, two apartments - Cook house and needle room; and a final slab building with six apartments all of which were 'cells' (possibly the 'strong slab cells' built in 1838). It was remarked generally of the 'Female Factory' that the 'whole of this building is surrounded by a double fence. Interior ditto [sic of the buildings?] 7 feet high. Exterior ditto [of the buildings] 13 feet high'. (See Figures 1.1-3 and 2.1-2 for plans for some of these buildings.)

Four months after this 'Abstract of Public Property' was made Governor Gipps wrote to Lord Glenelg advising him that 'the whole of the women, 57 in number, have been withdrawn, and the male convicts reduced [in overall number at Moreton Bay] to 94.'\(^{24}\) In all, 144 female convicts were sent to Moreton Bay between the late 1820s until the settlements closure in 1839.\(^{25}\) Only a few

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\(^{22}\) See Shaw, op cit, and Australian Encyclopedia, op cit.

\(^{23}\) Correspondence to Col Sec from Moreton Bay 1839, 4/2460.3 AONSW.

\(^{24}\) HRA, Vol.20, 1 July 1839, pp.209-10.

\(^{25}\) Up to 1840, approximately twenty thousand female convicts were transported to Australia, a figure representing around ten
women were transported in the pre 1830 period - there were about sixteen women convicts in Moreton Bay in 1829. In the early
1830s the number of women convicts at Moreton Bay averaged -
according to Douglas Gordon - on an annual basis, between 30 and
50; their numbers rose, again on an average annual calculation,
to between 60 and 70 in the period leading up to the closure of
the convict establishments in Moreton Bay. Gordon has argued
that the 'Eagle Farm settlement functioned so well that there was
a tendency to concentrate the more troublesome women convicts of
New South Wales in this settlement'. Some contemporaries,
however, were to note the general severity of system in Moreton
Bay as opposed to its functionalism. In his evidence to the
Select Committee on Secondary Punishment, Allan Cunningham stated
that the system of punishment at Moreton Bay 'is' more severe;
the labour is heavier; and it is much warmer there in the summer
months [sic than at Norfolk Island]' Thus Moreton Bay and the
Eagle Farm establishment had served their original purpose.

Subdivision and free settlement

By 1840 Eagle Farm was described as an 'open palisade-enclosed
space, in which female prisoners had at times been confined. It
was now untenanted; but in a cottage hard by there still dwelt
two gentlemen'. In the following year the German missionary
Christopher Eipper observed that Eagle Farm was 'now a Government
cattle station'. But the mathematical subdivisions which
surveyors had been directed to undertake at Moreton Bay since
1839, when three surveyors - Robert Dixon, James Warner and
Granville Stapylton - began carving the land up on paper, were
indeed to see the land thrown open to would be private settlers

per cent of all convicts transported. A
further five thousand female convicts were
transported to Australia in the years up to

26 Evidence of Allan Cunningham, Report of the
Select Committee on Secondary Punishment,
London 1832, p.38.

27 op cit, p.473.

28 op cit, p.38.

29 Elliot and Hodgson at Brisbane Town, 1840,
quoted in Brisbane Town, p.282.

30 Christopher Eipper, Statement of the Origin,
Condition, and Prospects, of the German
Mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay,
1841, in Brisbane Town, p.282.
for purchase. Thus, on 7 October 1842, two months after surveyor Henry Wade submitted his plan of Eagle Farm to the Surveyor General in Sydney (large scale plan attached), thirty allotments were put up for auction. 31 Seven of these were sold at Sydney on 7 December 1842. The allotments encompassing the site of the agricultural establishment and female factory, however, were to be sold over the next few years; allotment number three of portion three (numbered eleven in the New South Wales Government Gazette of October 1842); number four of portion three (twelve); number five of portion three (thirteen); and number six of portion three (fourteen). These were sold respectively to I. Hollinworth on 18 January 1843; James Gibbon (date unknown); William Pitt Trevelyan on 28 March 1843; 32 and John Vaughan Thompson (date unknown). Hollinworth's allotment included 'Eagle Farm House, and the greater part of the garden' (that is, part of the former agricultural establishment and female factory); Trevelyan's took in 'the out-buildings attached to Eagle Farm House' while part of the garden extended into Gibbon's allotment. The position of the structures and gardens in relation to the subdivision is depicted in Wade's survey plan. 33 (See also figures 3 and 4.)

The four allotments taking in the immediate site of the agricultural establishment and female factory passed through various hands and underwent subsequent subdivision. Part of Trevelyan's allotment, for example, was purchased as subdivision two of allotment five portion three by Maurice Schneider of Eagle Farm on 7 November 1863. On Schneider's death (26 October 1871), the land passed to his wife Mary Ann and on her death (21 June 1901) it was willed to Richard Westaway and John Lynton Fox who subsequently sold the land to Lily Davis and John Alfred Schneider in January 1903. 34 And as with other surrounding properties, the land was used for farming. (Citrus and dairying

31 NSW Government Gazette, 1842, pp.1502-4. This was one of the earliest land sales in Moreton Bay. The first took place (again in Sydney) on 14 July 1842. See Gipps to Stanley, 15 July 1842, HRA, Vol.22, p.148.

32 For Trevelyan's allotment see also Vol.25 Folio 42 (Certificate of Title 2524), Queensland Freehold Lands Title Office.

33 Sunmap M118.8, Queensland Department of Geographic Information. See also 1842 Map of Moreton Bay, John Oxley Library attached (copy also held at Queensland State Archives A1/44/1842+).

34 See Queensland Freehold Land Titles Office Certificate of Title No.2524, Book Vol.25 Folio 42.
seem to have been predominant in the area though there were some scattered residences.)

Eagle Farm and Aviation

While the site of the Eagle Farm agricultural establishment and female factory appears to have been used for dairying during the first two decades of the twentieth century, its significance after World War I lies largely in civil aviation.

Australian involvement in the history of aviation dates from the 1850s with William Bland’s theoretical, though perhaps modest contributions. The first ‘sustained’ flight in Australia was undertaken by G.A. Taylor at Narrabeen Beach in 1909. But as was the case internationally, advances in aviation and pilot training were to gather pace after the utilization of aircraft during World War I.

It has been claimed that ‘Civil aircraft operations began at Eagle Farm (initially from the racecourse) as early as 1912’. But such a claim has yet to be substantiated. It seems more likely, as Wixted contends, that the first landing took place at Eagle Farm late in 1922 when Jack Treacy landed his Sunbeam Arvo on what was then the ‘new government aerodrome’. According to Wixted, Commonwealth involvement with Eagle Farm as the site for an aerodrome began around February 1922. (Part of the site may have been nominated as a Defence Reserve during World War I.) Apart from a shed (which may have been associated with Wilson’s dairy) and ‘the fence’, facilities were not developed until 1925, and even then only modestly, when a government hanger was constructed at the aerodrome. Two years later QANTAS erected a hanger at Eagle Farm. (See figures 5 and 6.)

Eagle Farm aerodrome had its share of famous flyers. Charles Kingsford Smith was associated with Eagle Farm during the 1920s. Australian National Airways, operated by Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm, were flying out of Eagle Farm in the late 1920s. And

35 Edward Wixted, in his *Fifty Years of Eagle Farm*, Queensland Government Printer for Queensland Museum, Brisbane nd, p.2, claims that in 1920, a dairy was being run on the broader site by a Mr Wilson.


38 Wixted, op cit, p.2.
in June 1928, 'Smithy', Ulm, J. Warner and H. Lyon landed at Eagle Farm in the Southern Cross having completed the first crossing of the Pacific via Hawaii and Suva.39 Bert Hinkler and Amy Johnson were also associated with Eagle Farm. And by the late 1920s, Wixted argues, the aerodrome had become an 'airline junction for London and San Francisco'.40 Problematic terrain, however, was to lead to the closure of Eagle Farm as a civil establishment. Eagle Farm was not an all weather airport: bad flooding in 1928 saw the transfer of the government aerodrome to Archerfield in the following year. And in 1931 the airport was closed after heavy rains.

Eagle Farm aerodrome was used by gliding clubs during the 1930s. But after the entry of the United States into World War II, the Pacific Military Command was to establish a major air base at Eagle Farm. Late in 1941 US forces set up a camp at Doomben Racecourse (next to Eagle Farm) and in 1942 US engineering forces constructed an air base at Eagle Farm. (See figures 7 to 14.) The ground was cleared, drained and filled, hangars were erected and three runways were laid down, the first in March 1942, the second in June 1942 and the third some time after. (All runways had Bituminous surfaces.) Thus Eagle Farm became a pursuit field and an Aircraft Erection Depot, the 81st Air Depot Group being 'responsible for the erection, servicing and repair of air frames, engines and equipment'.41 Aircraft assembled at Eagle Farm - principally P38s, B25s, A20s, B26s and P47s - were also test flown from the air base. A major camp was also established at the base.

At the close of World War II, the Department of Civil Aviation made public its decision to establish Brisbane Airport at Eagle Farm. (Archerfield was to become a secondary airport.) During 1948 a program of reconstruction was developed to upgrade Eagle Farm to a B class airport under ICAO standards and in the same year Brisbane Airport was commissioned. Thus in 1949 Eagle Farm began operations as Brisbane's principal airport for regular civil aviation.42 It continued in this role until March 1988 when the New Brisbane Airport was opened. A month later, on 16 April, a plaque commissioned by the Nundah and District Historical

39 Wixted, op cit, p.5; Australian Encyclopedia, p.344.
40 Wixted, op cit, pp.5-6.
41 B.Creer, Eagle Farm 1942 - Airacobra Assembly, Service Aero Prints, Archerfield 1967.
Society was unveiled by the Member for Lilley, Elaine Darling, at the old airport not far from the site of the convict agricultural establishment and female factory. This plaque – the only indication on site of the convict settlement's passing – was later removed.
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Fig. 1.1 - Part of Plan of Superintendent of Agriculture's Quarters 1839 by George Browne. (Moreton Bay Plans No 8: Queensland State Archives)
Fig. 1.2 - Part of Plan of Superintendent of Agriculture's Quarters 1839 by George Browne. (Moreton Bay Plans No 8: Queensland State Archives)
Fig. 1.3 - Part of Plan of Superintendent of Agriculture's Quarters 1839 by George Browne. (Moreton Bay Plans No 8: Queensland State Archives)
Fig. 5 - Eagle Farm Airport 1925. (Brisbane - Airports - Eagle Farm Airport 1941: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 6 - Eagle Farm Airport c1929. (Brisbane - Airports - Eagle Farm Airport c1929: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 7 - Eagle Farm Airport 1941. (Brisbane - Airports- Eagle Farm Airport 1941: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 8 - Eagle Farm Airport 1941. (Brisbane - Airports - Eagle Farm Airport 1941: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 9 - Eagle Farm Airport 1942. (Brisbane - Airports- Eagle Farm Airport 1942: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 10 - Eagle Farm Airport 1942. (Brisbane - Airports- Eagle Farm Airport 1942: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 11 - Eagle Farm Airport 1942. (Brisbane - Airports - Eagle Farm Airport 1942; John Oxley Library)
Fig. 12 - Eagle Farm Airport 1942. (Brisbane - Airports - Eagle Farm Airport 1942: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 13 - Eagle Farm 1942
(Brisbane - Suburbs - Eagle Farm 1942: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 14 - Eagle Farm 1882
(unidentified site)
(Brisbane - Suburbs - Eagle Farm 1882: John Oxley Library)
Fig. 15 - Parish Map Moreton
Sheet No 1: 1888. (AG2 Sheet 1:
Queensland State Archives)
Fig. 16 - "Queensland Brisbane" 1825. (Map 183 - south G50-Queensland State Archives)