An interim report on the archaeological possibilities

at the site of

DARLINGHURST GAOL (1841-1912)

SYDNEY, NSW

by

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on behalf of the Department of Public Works

of the NSW Government

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Acknowledgements

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I Possible benefits of archaeological excavation

What is archaeology? Archaeology is an interdisciplinary subject. It is closely related to, and guided by, historical and other documentary evidence. It requires an appreciation of social and economic activities. It uses tools of analysis provided by the natural sciences. Calling upon all of these disciplines the purpose of archaeology is to discover, record and analyse information about the activities of human beings.

Clearly, preliminary information about human activities on a specific site is available from various sources which range from documentary evidence to heresay and gossip which has been handed down over the years. All of these sources are useful in the process of trying to understand the complete happenings on a site over time. However, greater reliance can be placed on the former rather than the latter because the written word has greater objectivity and less variability over time than the spoken word. Furthermore, documentary evidence can be verified and reinterpreted at a later date in the light of information that is, or has become, available.

Hence, two things are important to an archaeologist when an investigation is undertaken. First, all available documentary evidence must be obtained and a synthesis made of the major activities that took place on site. Second, any information that becomes available through excavation must be recorded meticulously. This is not only in order that a temporal analysis of the social and economic activities on site can be made, but also in order to allow verification of findings (and the interpretation placed on these) at a later date by interested parties who have not been allowed the privilege of a first hand investigation of the site.

In many instances there is little or no historical evidence available about a site. Archaeological investigation is crucial in these cases because the process of discovery
through excavation destroys the physical record contained in a site's stratigraphy. Once the physical record is destroyed the only source of evidence relating to excavated areas will be the documentary evidence relating to the site as provided by the archaeologist, any artefacts that may have been found (and recorded evidence of the manner and context in which they were found) and any standing structures such as buildings or foundations that are conserved after the excavation is complete.

In other cases some recorded history of the site is available. This is the situation with the Darlinghurst Gaol site. Once the information has been gathered and a synthesis made it is evident that certain aspects and periods of human activities on the site are not well documented. It may well be that artefacts relating to those (and other) periods could be discovered in situ, could be recovered and, after appropriate conservation, be placed on display as an aid to public understanding of what life was like in those earlier days. Some authorities like to build up such knowledge where documentary evidence is lacking and artefacts are few. In addition, the archaeological evidence may serve to provide independent verification of the existing documentary evidence. In this context some of the important areas where archaeological research could be employed fruitfully at the Darlinghurst Gaol site are mentioned below.

It was stated above that when archaeological excavation takes place the physical record contained in the ground has, by the nature of the work, to be destroyed. An analogous situation arises when new phases of building, repairs and renovations take place on site. Again the archaeological record is destroyed, but in this case the destruction takes place in an unsystematic and unrecorded fashion. Before such an occurrence archaeologists can attempt, within a limited time horizon, to rescue any artefacts and record any details that
might be of interest.

There is little doubt that this form of 'rescue' archaeology would have been useful, indeed, should have been used, at Darlinghurst Gaol. Unfortunately, the building programme has progressed to such an extent that (subject to available information about building activities) no 'rescue' archaeology is feasible at this late stage of events. Hence, it appears in this instance that basic archaeological research would have to be the adopted strategy. Of course, in any future building activities 'rescue' archaeology would have a full part to play.

Note: A real criticism possibly.
2 Background to the interim report

(a) Aims of an interim archaeological report

An interim archaeological report on the site of the Darlinghurst Gaol (now known as the East Sydney Technical College) was commissioned by the Department of Public Works of New South Wales as part of the 'historical building and site upgrading programme' for the East Sydney Technical College.

The site is located in the city of Sydney, NSW behind Darlinghurst Courthouse on Taylor Square and is bounded by Darlinghurst Road, Forbes and Burton Streets. The College has been accepted as a 'classified' building by the National Trust of Australia (New South Wales).

The work which is associated with the present building programme at the College began in 1977 under the supervision of the Department of Technical and Further Education of the NSW Government. In the process of planning for improvements in the accommodation and teaching facilities at the College the Department has also 'recognised an obligation to the community to preserve whatever remains of the Gaol'. It recognises that the buildings are 'the only surviving example of Gaol architecture of that period in Sydney and are a unique design in their own right'.

(Report prepared for the Department of Technical and Further Education by the Department of Public Works, Government Architects Branch, August 1980)

The brief for this interim report requests

(I) information on 'the history of the site, its occupants, buildings and walls'

(2) assistance with 'establishing a collection of items for the proposed museum' and

(3) 'where necessary supervision of excavation work and classification of any articles found'.

Insofar as point (I) is concerned, as explained above, the first stage of any archaeological investigation is to seek out and prepare a synthesis of all available documentation which refers to the site. A preliminary survey has been undertaken for this interim report and the chronology that is indicated by the material examined so far can be found in Appendix I. Also, source documentation for this chronology is located in the Bibliography.

Rather than use the commissioned time for undertaking a full survey of available documentation the author considered it more important to report upon the contribution that archaeological work could make to an understanding of events and life at the site. This approach to the report should place the Committee in a better position to appraise the value of possible archaeological work at the Darlinghurst Gaol site. Nonetheless, a comprehensive search for documentation has been undertaken and, in Appendix 2, a list is attached of sources which would merit close examination if it was decided that a full survey of the contents of relevant documents is required in the next phase of this investigation.

The second and third points in the brief cannot be acted on directly at this stage of the investigation. Rather, a collection of items for the proposed museum would follow from any archaeological excavation undertaken. It would of course include copies of documentary evidence and existing artefacts displayed as appropriate. The author would be happy to provide advice about the display of such material if the Committee feels that this is desirable. Also, the question of supervising excavation work is beyond the scope of this interim report, but recommendations about possible focal points for archaeological attention are made below and the author would be happy to undertake full responsibility for the organisation and direction of any work that the Committee approves in this context.
A preliminary investigation of two sources of evidence has been undertaken:

(i) A detailed survey of the catalogues and reference material at the Mitchell Library, Fisher Library, East Sydney Technical College Library and the NSW State Archives led to the compilation of a large body of documentary evidence about Darlinghurst Gaol. Two possible sources of information which have yet to be investigated, and which would be for the purposes of any extended report, are (1) the archives of the Department of Corrective Services and the records of the Prison Department of NSW at Roden Cutler House and (2) the prison records associated with the foundation of Long Bay Gaol (the Central Industrial Prison).

(ii) A preliminary survey of maps, plans and existing structures on the site led to the culling of information about possible areas for archaeological excavation and to the consideration of the practicality of such proposed excavation.
Summary of the documentary evidence examined to date

The chronological development of the site is outlined in Appendix I of this report. Much of the information discovered originated from the Historical Records of Australia, Series I.

While there is no need to reiterate the facts contained in the Appendix here, several issues which require further investigation have come to light.

(a) The social implications of the lengthy lead time for planning and construction of the new gaol.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that from about 1820 the Old Sydney Gaol was overcrowded and in poor condition (Burritt, PE, Old Sydney Gaol-the 1979 Excavation, Sept. 1980, a report held by the Heritage Council of NSW). However, the correspondence cited in the chronology in Appendix I shows clearly the amount of indecision and irregular development of the new gaol between 1824 and 1836. In fact, completion of the main phase of the Gaol did not come about until 1885 some 65 years after the idea was first mooted. It is ironic to note that the gaol was overcrowded as soon as it was completed.

(b) The influence of Francis Greenway.

Evidence indicates that the following architects were considered for contracting on the Darlinghurst Gaol at various stages during the construction:

1821-Francis Greenway, 1st architect
1822-SL Harris, appointed architect and built the walls designed by Greenway
1828-Mr Ainslie's plans were being used
1835-Colonial Architect Mortimer Lewis designed a plan of the buildings based on the Penitentiary in Philadelphia, USA
1856-William Weaver became the architect. He adapted Lewis's plans.
At this stage of the investigation the above list is incomplete, but it does raise the interesting question of the influence that Greenway had over the original plan of the site and design of the structures that were considered for construction up until the time that Mortimer Lewis took over as architect. A mark of Greenway's architectural style was symmetry and mathematical precision in design of structures. Although these characteristics are evident in the existing structures for a different reason, it would be valuable to locate (if possible) a complete sequence of plans associated with the phases in the development of the site from 1821.

(c) Other events on the site include the following:

(i) The 1900 plan of the Gaol, seen in Appendix 3(c), shows that only the east and south walls of the original Woolloomooloo Stockade (pegged out in 1821; built by 1824) remained intact.

(ii) Construction of the Gaol buildings was underway by 1825. There is some confusion as to the source of the stone used in the construction; further search is needed to determine whether the three sites referred to in Appendix I are the same.

(iii) In 1841, three of the 7 cell blocks planned for the Gaol were completed along with the residence of the governor of the Gaol. The prisoners were moved from the Old Sydney Gaol.

(iv) In 1910, all workshops were removed to Paramatta and two years later all prisoners were moved to Long Bay State Penitentiary.

(v) In 1921, the buildings were taken over by East Sydney Technical College.
Recommendations for future archaeological work

(a) A full investigation of documentary evidence would help to provide a greater understanding of the chronological development of the site.

Two benefits would stem from such an extended investigation. First, the evidence would be useful as an end in itself. It would clarify the social, cultural, political and economic milieu of the period. Second, it would provide further information which could be used to establish, or confirm, focal points on the site where excavation might produce evidence of prior structures and traits related to occupation.

In relation to the first benefit the following topics merit some consideration and any publication about the Darlinghurst Gaol would undoubtedly be enhanced by some discussion of these aspects of the site:

(i) Accommodation—structures, facilities, furnishings, conditions.
(ii) Administration—staff, rules, maintenance, finance.
(iii) Prisoners' welfare—health, welfare, activities, occupation, punishment
(iv) The prisoners—conviction types, sentence length, specific characters.
(v) Special incidents.
(vi) Study of the prison system of the period—comparative prison establishments, policies.

While a detailed study along these lines is feasible the second benefit mentioned above must not be overlooked for documentary evidence is a key indicator, in this instance, of where archaeological excavation may lead to important discoveries, including discovery of artefacts for inclusion in the museum.
After the preliminary investigation it became clear that at least four areas on the site merit detailed archaeological investigation. The plans included in Appendix 3 of this report show areas which have been built on at an earlier date, but from which the buildings have since been removed.

The promising question is how much of the foundations of these structures still remain? If structural remains were discovered they could be renovated and highlighted for public viewing. By chance, if these foundations exist they are now in what might be described as easily accessible areas.

FOUR AREAS FOR 'RESEARCH' EXCAVATION.

(i) SITE OF POSSIBLE WELL (AREA I)

There is some heresay evidence that when certain types of restraint and instruments for punishment of prisoners were abandoned they were deposited in a well and that the well was sealed. No documentary evidence has come to light about this action, but it unlikely that such a course of action would be documented. Again, two pieces of information provide useful commentary on this heresay evidence. A plan dated 1863 (See Appendix 3(a)) shows a well in the southwest corner of the site to be in use. By 1885 (See Appendix 3 (b)) the well is no longer marked. Instead the wall of a building that was constructed in 1872 spans the old diameter of the well. Cracks in this wall, caused by some movement in the foundations, can be seen today. Second, changes in the penal system did occur in the late 1860's. Although a detailed examination of these changes has not yet been undertaken it is suggested in a recent publication (Walkabout 1973) that punishment became less harsh after that reform.

In view of these factors it is recommended that consideration be given to the location and excavation of the well (Area I
on the plan in Appendix 3(a)). While the nature of the supporting evidence for artefacts in this area is not completely objective the rewards from excavation could be substantial.

(ii) WORKSHOPS (AREA II)
On the 1885 plan some workshops, including a mason's shed and a dye house, are located to the south-east of the site (between buildings 14 and 26 on the plan in Appendix 3(d)). This area is in close proximity to Area I and it would be convenient to excavate the two areas in parallel.

There is good reason for suggesting excavation in Area II. There would be a high chance of finding artefacts relating to a single period falling between the dates of 1863 and 1900, before and after which the workshops did not exist. Also, no documentary evidence could be found of later disturbance on this area, except for surface work, thus, artefacts relating to the period in question are likely to be in situ. Finally, the opportunity for locating and retrieving tools, and other artefacts associated with workshop activities is high, especially relative to the opportunities that exist in other workshop areas that have since been reused.

(iii) WASHING SHED/ISOLATION HOSPITAL/TOILETS (AREA III)
These structures formed part of the post-1866 extension of the site. They are marked as Area III on the plan in Appendix 3(d). They were constructed to the south of building number 5. Although there is no surface evidence of these buildings today part of the area is now a garden and no evidence of later disturbance of the area exists (except for surface covering). The buildings related to a single period of construction work and it is possible that foundations and undisturbed artefacts would be present and convenient to locate.
(iv) HARD LABOUR/EXERCISE YARDS (AREA IV)

This area lies between buildings 24 and 25 on the plan in Appendix 3 (d). Documentary evidence suggests two phases of use for the site. The first phase is associated with early construction on the site and excavation would provide one of the few opportunities to locate artefacts and remains of structures associated with that period. Use of the site was changed before 1885 and, hence, evidence of a second phase of use as a gaol, and associated artefacts, should be revealed. The area has since been razed.

(b) One further recommendation, apart from excavation of the four areas mentioned above, is for a thorough photographic survey of the site as it currently exists. The wide-ranging extent of reconstruction and renovation on the site makes this an urgent task. The author would be pleased to undertake an appropriate survey early in the next stage of archaeological investigation of the site. The survey would highlight building techniques and phases of construction. It would also illustrate any adaptation that has occurred in the use of the buildings over time and record for posterity the contemporaneous structures which will be drastically altered in the existing building programme.

(c) The author understands that the site is to undergo professional landscaping as a part of the renovation programme. It would be useful for the consultant archaeologist to be made aware of any discoveries during this process.

(d) Assistance in the presentation of historical information about the site to the public

(i) It has been suggested that a Guide Book be prepared on the history of the site. If further documentary search is to be undertaken the author is prepared to compile an appropriate document.
(ii) The author is willing to assist with the wording and location of appropriate plaques for buildings and landmarks of historical interest.

(iii) The author is willing to assist with the compilation of appropriate display material for the museum, display of artefacts (existing and yet to be discovered), plans, maps and other documents relating to life in the gaol.

(iv) If excavation of any of the areas referred to in 4(a) above is undertaken, the author is willing to advise on display of the artefacts, excavation procedure and conservation of any structural remains as deemed appropriate.
Appendix I

Chronological Development of the site at Darlinghurst Gaol, according to Documentary Evidence

1820 Correspondence between Commissioner Bigge and Governor Macquarie discusses the need for a new gaol in Sydney. Bigge suggests the building should be the largest gaol in the colony and sited on the hill on which Fort Phillip now stands in full view of the town. Macquarie states his preference for the ground lying between the Convict Garden and the New Convict Barracks in Hyde Park. Bigge decides to make a recommendation to His Majesty's Government for the construction of the new gaol in the enclosure between the Turnpike Gate on the South Head Road and the road leading to the 'Brickfields'.

Documentary Source:

1821 Francis Greenway was appointed as the architect for the new gaol (refered to as the 'Wooloomooloo Stockade'). A 4 acre site (approx.) was selected and the position of the prospective enclosure walls was pegged out.

Documentary Source:
Landsborough (1973:24). Source to be determined.

Francis Greenway was dismissed from the position as architect later in the year.

Documentary Source:
Ellis (1953).
I822 A document is issued by Governor Brisbane in which S. L. Harris is engaged to discharge the duties of the Civil Architect of the Colony of N. S. W. on the building of a new gaol which was then in progress. Convict labour was to be used for the work in construction of the buildings.

Documentary Source:

I823 Further recommendations by Commissioner Bigge to Parliament for the erection of a new gaol in Sydney.

Documentary Source:

I824 The enclosure wall of the 'Woolloomooloo Stockade' is finished (approx. 22 feet high and 27 inches thick).

Documentary Source:
(i) HRA I Vol. XV P. 815 (30:10:1830)
(ii) Herman (I954:105).

I825 Governor Brisbane notes that the building of a new gaol in Sydney is in progress.

Documentary Source:

Details are provided of the work at the quarry, which is to provide the stone for the construction of the new gaol, by the supervisor of the operation, Major Ovens, to Secretary Goulburn. The source of the stone is recorded as being:
(I) a quarry at the meeting of William and Forbes Streets,
(2) Barcom Glen,
(3) The site of St. Peters Church in William Street.
Series of letters between the Engineer Ovens and Colonial Secretary Macleay negotiating terms for the acceptance of a contract by G. Cookney (Civ. Arch't) to act as the architect on the building of the new gaol.

Despatch from Governor Darling to the Right Hon. W. Huskisson which explains that from want of means 'the building of the new gaol in Sydney, using the published designs of Mr Ainslie, was discontinued after only the external (south portion) walls and drains had been completed'. A request is made that 'persons be found to undertake completion of the contract urgently as the old gaol is 'very insecure and delapidated and in need of constant repair'. The Engineer is directed to prepare 'an Estimate of Expense for completing the Jail as far as be necessary for immediate purposes'.

[Enclosure No. 1]
Report on the present state of the New Gaol commenced in the neighbourhood of Sydney.

1. The Plan, on which this Gaol has been laid out, is that of the published design of Mr. Ainslie.
2. The works necessary to the Building are nearly completed in a very sufficient manner, also the excavation required for the foundations of the Buildings.
3. The surrounding Wall enclosing an Area of 400 feet square, the entrance under an Archway with a Porter's Lodge on each side is finished with the exception of the Pediments to the latter. The Wall is 21 feet high and two feet six inches thick, exclusive of the external Piers.
4. The Work hitherto done is substantial and well executed, and is estimated to be worth (if valued at the price of Free Labour in the Colony) at least £11,000.
5. It appears to me the entire Plan of Mr. Ainslie's Gaol is larger than the necessaries of the Colony at present call for; but it possesses the advantage that it may be limited in its extent, by only commencing with two or more of the Wings, until the whole is successively completed, as the wants of the Colony increase.
6. The present disposable means of the Government is by no means calculated to carry on a Building of this nature, in conjunction with the other pressing demands for Labour in keeping in repair and replacing worn out Buildings.
Governor Darling concluded that 'the building should be substantial as best suited to the purpose and finished in the plainest manner'.

**Documentary Source:**

(i) HRA I Vol.XIV P. 201 (27:5:1828)
(ii) HRA I Vol.XIV P. 353 (29:8:1828)
(Source document of Mr. Ainslie's plan is yet to be discovered)

1830 Correspondence between Governor Darling and Sir George Murray explains that the ex-architect Harris proposes legal action to acquire expenses for maintaining convict labour and providing materials for building work on the gaol, since suspended.

**Documentary Source:**

HRA I Vol. XV P. 815 (30:10:1830).

1833 Despatch No. I9 (5:2:1833) includes further recommendations with suitable plans and estimates, for a new gaol in Sydney in lieu of the overcrowded and dilapidated George Street one.

**Documentary Source:**


1835 A despatch from Governor Bourke includes a comment which emphasises that public prisons are the most urgently required buildings after national schools. As no reply has been forthcoming since Despatch No. I9 (15:2:1833) Bourke proposes to the Council in Sydney that the building of the new gaol be undertaken at the expense of the Colony. He notes that 'as it is intended to be of a permanent character and will be
available probably long after the Mother Country shall have ceased to send out convicts, it is not inequitable to call on Colonists to pay the expense'. The Council agrees.

Documentary Source:

(i) HRA I Vol. XVII P. 630 (I3:I:1835)
(ii) Mitchell Library Catalogue A I267 P. 5; 704 (1835).

Reply from London to Governor Bourke (refers to the Despatch of I5:II:I834) to prevent adoption of any specific plans for the erection of the new gaol in Sydney as the Colony would lose the benefit of the advice of the Senior Officer of the Royal Engineers who is about to proceed to N. S. W. to undertake an enquiry in to the arrangements of prisons in the Colony.

Documentary Source:

HRA I Vol. XVIII P. 59 (3:8:1835).

A report is lodged at the N.S.W. Legislative Council from The Committee on Police and Gaols. The unsatisfactory conditions at the old gaol are once again emphasised. Mortimer Lewis (Colonial Architect) is engaged to supervise the design and completion of the new gaol. Lewis prepared a plan based on the Penitentiary in Philadelphia U. S. A. (which was itself based on a British concept). The design incorporated the idea, untried in Sydney before this date, of accommodating the prisoners in double cells. The buildings were planned to accommodate 428 prisoners in seven 3 storey cell blocks which radiated from a central drum shaped building housing the chapel and bath house. The Governor's residence was to be constructed opposite the main entrance. Ironed gangs of convicts were to be used for labour. Lewis estimated that the project would take 3 years to complete.
In a despatch Bourke mentions a sum voted in 1836 for the erection of large gaols in Sydney and Parramatta (not less than £58,000).

1837 The new gaol in Sydney is under construction. Estimated expenses total £45,000. The work had begun in 1836. Total expenditure to date £37,948:8:8½.
I837-I84I

Three buildings are completed— the Governor's Residence, and one men's and one women's cell block.

I84I

The prisoners were moved on foot from the old gaol in George Street to the new accommodation at Darlinghurst on 17th June.

The first execution in the new gaol took place on 29th October. The gallows stood within the walls and, although the public were not admitted to the gaol compound, the scaffold could be seen from the outside situated close to the opened gates.
1846 Governor Gipps informs London that the Treadmill has been moved from Carter's Barracks in Sydney to the gaol at Darlinghurst (which is situated about a mile out of the town).

Documentary Source:

HRA I Vol. XXV P. 82 (2:6:1846)
Australia in the Victorian Age Volume I Page 66.

1850's

Building programme still not completed. Gaol already overcrowded. It is reported that about 450 women are accommodated in an area suitable for 156.

Documentary Source:

Information from the library of the East Sydney Technical College (ESTC). Source yet to be determined.

1855-6

Original gateway in the west wall built. The structure was fitted with gallows.

Documentary Source:

Information from ESTC Library. Source to be determined.

1856

Tenders were called 'To Quarrymen and Others willing to contract for building stone' and for timber required in the roofing of the 4th wing of the prison buildings. The construction work was being undertaken by the prisoners under the supervision of the Colonial Architect William Weaver. Alterations to the original design of the 4th wing were made to provide solitary confinement cells. Documents provide evidence of constant delays as a result of problems in the supply of materials.
1859 Letter from a prisoner (concerning his release) who claims to have been employed as a mason on the buildings at the gaol during his sentence. He explains that to date he has taken part in the construction of the stonework in the new wing; the receptacle for the dead; the kitchen; wash house for females; additions to the lodge; and the new hospital which was then in progress. The prisoner adds that the present Colonial Architect in charge of the building work is Alexander Dawson.

1861 A Committee on Public Prisons reported that the gaol at Darlinghurst possessed more adequate accommodation for the proper management of the prisoners than any other gaol in the colony. If the building proposals were to be completed to the original plan the institution would be 'commodious and well arranged'.

1863 Further Committee reports on the need for improvements in the gaol and problems of overcrowding brought about plans to extend the northern enclosure of the gaol complex with a new wall which would align with Burton Street. Changes in the policies for the treatment of prisoners which were also taking place during this period meant that
the completion of the design by Lewis would be difficult. The addition of the other radiating wings of the 1835 plan would require the demolition of temporary buildings which covered this area of the site and would cause a further sub division of the complex. It was decided to locate the workshops along, but clear of, the eastern boundary wall and to locate additional cells in the northern extension of the site.

The 'Y' shaped building (echoing the original theme of radiating wings and exercise yards) was completed by 1866 under the direction of the Colonial Secretary James Barnet. This new accommodation doubled the number of cells in the gaol.

**Documentary Source:**

Literature from the Library of ESTC and plaques in the building themselves. Source yet to be determined.

1869 A new gallows was erected in the north-east corner between two wings of the 'Y' building at the upper level.

**Documentary Source:**

As above.

1870's

Additions to the buildings include the chapel, watchtower, kitchens and workshops.

1871 The Forbes Street entrance was rebuilt next to the existing entrance. Administrative facilities and staff quarters were built against almost the entire length of the west wall.

1872 Workshops were completed with accommodation for brushmakers, carpenters, joiners and upholsterers as well as bathrooms and storerooms.
Documentary Source:

Literature from the library of ESTC and plaques in the buildings themselves. Source yet to be determined.

1877 Darlinghurst Gaol referred to as a Labour Gaol.

Documentary Source:


1881-93

Name may be Sydney Gaol.

Documentary Source:


1884 Darlinghurst Gaol referred to as a Industrial Working Prison.

Documentary Source:


1885 The buildings of the gaol are now completed to accommodate 732 prisoners. Overcrowding is already a problem again. Henry Parkes orders that the windows of the gaol should be enlarged and that the women prisoners should be given facilities to keep cells clean as no other amenities or water was provided.

Documentary Source:

(i) Report to the Legislative Assembly 1885
(ii) Landsborough (1973:26). Source to be determined.
1889 Conditions in the gaol had by this time become a subject of public debate. It was proposed that the gaol should become the town penitentiary and that long term prisoners should be moved to country gaols. Others suggested that the gaol should be replaced altogether as it had become out of date and unsuitably placed. This action was opposed by Harold Maclean, the Comptroller General, who valued the industries which had been built up in the institution.

Finally 170 prisoners were transferred to Biloela and a Separate Treatment centre was introduced at Darlinghurst under which young offenders between the ages of 16 and 25 years worked and ate in their cells.

In 1889 a new hospital was also built in the gaol complex.

Documentary Source:


1896 The Comptroller General Neitenstein confirms that the Darlinghurst Gaol is out of date and should be sold.

Documentary Source:

Annual Report of the Comptroller General. Archives Office Of N.S.W.

1899 Further building takes place. Associated cells are divided and reception rooms and observation wards are added.

Documentary Source:

J. M. Forde Olde Sydney Newscuttings 'Old Chum' Mitchell Library. Source to be determined.

1909 Due to the decline in prison population the Darlinghurst Gaol becomes classified as a distribution gaol and for prisoners awaiting trial.
1910 All workshops were removed to Parramatta Gaol.

1912 All prisoners were removed to Long Bay State Penitentiary.

1914 Demolition or alterations of the building delayed because of the outbreak of the 1st World War when the Gaol became an internment camp and military detention centre.

1921 The East Sydney Technical College took over the use of the buildings.

Documentary Source:

Information from material placed in the ESTC Library. Source yet to be determined.
Appendix 2

Additional sources of Documentary Evidence

ENTRANCE BOOKS

1825 - I844  (A.O. 4/6430-4I)
May I842 - Aug. I844  (A.O. Microfilm 854; 4/6440)
I850 - 7 July I9I4  (A.O. I89I-I946  56 vol.)
Index to I850-I9I4  (A.O. 4/6392-4I3,2209  23 vol. Incomplete)
I898 - I908  (A.O. I947-74  28vol.)

The volumes contain various degrees of information, usually date of entry, name, ship, when tried, crime, sentence and details of discharge.

Entrance books for prisoners transferred from N.S.W. or sentenced to death.
I83I - 7 June I847  (A.O. Microfilm 855; 4/6442)

ENTRANCE and DESCRIPTION BOOKS  (Trial Wing)

5 Aug. I899 - I7 Jan. I90I
I903 - I904  (A.O. I975-I978  4 vol.)

DESCRIPTION BOOKS

I83I - I908  (A.O. Microfilm 855-889;4/6296-6359  64 vol.)
I898 - I908  (A.O. I947-74  28 vol.)

The volumes record registered number, name, year of arrival, ship, year of birth, and physical description of prisoner. There are columns for general remarks, connections and history.


Shows name, sentence, and marks (ie.tattoos, scars etc.), fingerprints, reference to photographs.
PHOTOGRAPH and DESCRIPTION BOOKS

I873 - I897 (A.O. I696-7  2 vol.)
c. I87I - July I9I4 (A.O. 5/I696-7; 3/I4030-I403I;3/6036-6086; 
I9/9835  55 vol.)
Shows prisoner's name, number on gaol register, where born, 
year of birth, arrived in colony (ship and year), trade or 
occupation, religion, degree of education, colour of hair and eyes, 
height, special marks, general description, portrait on 
admission, portrait on discharge, date portrait taken, prison 
history (where tried, date, charge, sentence).

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS

I860 - I9I3 (A.O. I699-I702  4 vol.)
Gives name, ship, court at which convicted, date offence, 
sentence- lists conviction in order for each prisoner, 
reference numbers of photographs.

CIVIL DIVISION CONFINES

I900 - June I9I4 (A.O. I734  1 vol.)
Shows date, dependent's name, amount, Plaintiff's name, 
type of work, disposal date and remarks.

RETURNS of PRISONERS under sentence of transportation in 
Darlinghurst Gaol

Oct. I844 - Feb. I845
Sept.I847 (A.O. X747)
Oct. I847 - Mar. I848
May I848 - July, Sept., Oct., Dec., I848 (A.O. X748)

Received into Gaol from Quarter Sessions

I856 - I862 (A.O. I703  I vol.)
Shows number, name, date of trial, offence, judge, verdict, sentence, date of sentence, remarks.

**RECORD of FEMALE PRISONERS**

Aug. 1896 - Sept. 1898 (A.O. I705 I vol.)

Gives gaol number, date received, name, when sentenced, offence, sentence.

**INDEX to MALE and FEMALE PRISONERS**

1885 (A.O. I706 I vol.)

**GENERAL INDEX to MALE PRISONERS**

1876 - 1912 (A.O. I707-I719 Incomplete I3 vol.)

**GENERAL INDEX to FEMALE PRISONERS**

1887 - 1908 (A.O. I720-I730 II vol.)

**DEBTORS' BOOK**

1829 - 1900 (A.O. 4/6446-7 2 vol.)

List of persons detained under civil process. Shows date received in gaol, defendant's name, amount, plaintiff, writ or process, discharged, when and by whom, remarks.

**MUSTER BOOK**

1845 (A.O. 4/6414 Part I vol.)

Shows date received, religion, name, sentence, divided into military, civilians, admissions and discharges. A total number of prisoners in various classes is included.
I868 - I877 (A.O. I731 I vol.)

A record of imprisonments showing each prisoner's name, year and ship of arrival, calling, date received in gaol, whence, offence, sentence, date of and court where convicted, disposal.

Gaolers Muster Book

I876 - I877 (A.O. I732 I vol.)

Shows gaol number, name, when and where committed, the offence, the sentence and how, why and where disposed of.

Muster Book (Women)

I904 - I914 (A.O. I733 I vol.)

Shows number, date received, name, religion, sentence, remarks.

DAILY DISTRIBUTION BOOK

I907 - I915 (A.O. I74I I vol.)

Shows the number of prisoners assigned to various tasks on different days.

EMPLOYMENT BOOK

I853 - I857 (A.O. 4/6442 I vol.)

SALARY ABSTRACTS


Abstracts of the salaries of the ironed gangs, 2nd class convicts and detached parties stationed at Carters' Barracks, Woolloomooloo, Goat Island and Grose Farm.
CASH BOOK—Prisoners Money

1852 - 1862 (A.O. I749 1 vol.)

PRISONERS EARNINGS BANKED

1848 - 1854 (A.O. 4/64I6-7 2 vol.)

Shows prisoners' name and ship, date, number of hats produced, price of hats, total amount, cost of materials, amount paid to seller, amount paid to savings bank, monthly amount, signature of visiting Justice. The date of discharge and details of whether free or with ticket-of-leave.

OCCURRENCE BOOK

1840 - 31 July 1851 (A.O.1316 1 vol.)

Daily record in summary form of occurrence related to the administration of the gaol. The volume contains "Rules and Regulations laid down for Prisoners Sydney Gaol, Jan. 1840".

CONFISCATED PROPERTY OF PRISONERS

1857 - 1876 (A.O. I740 I vol)

SEPARATE CONFINEMENT BOOK

1855 - 1864 (A.O. 4/64I4 Part 1 vol.)

Shows date, name of prisoner, offence, Turnkey reporting, by whom confined, by whom released, date of release.

PUNISHMENT BOOK

1867 - 1871
1876 - 1879
Nov. 1892 - Feb. 1898

I897 - I913 (Women)
I912 - I914
(A.O. I781-I784, 2207 5 vol.)
CONDEMNED PRISONERS DAILY RECORD

1892 - 1903 (A.O. I739 I vol.)

Shows name, religion, date placed in condemned cell and put in irons. Then follows a daily record showing date, name of day warder, name of night warder, occurrences during day.

RECORD OF DAILY SEARCHES made of prisoners under sentence of death

21 Nov. 1904 - 14 June 1921 (A.O. 7/37II I vol.)

Shows name, sentence, date of conviction and time received, weight and height, religion of each prisoner, daily date, name of persons doing the search, name of visitors, and daily record.

PRISONERS REQUEST BOOK

1902 - 1904 (A.O. I735 I vol.)

Shows date, name, number, sentence, request, decision.

MARRIAGE REGISTER

3 Jan. 1907 - II Dec. 1909 (A.O. 7/3710 I vol.)

Register of HOSPITAL CASES

1904, 1911 (A.O. 7/3708-9 2 vol.)

INEBRIATES MEDICAL JOURNAL

1907 - 1915 (A.O. I742-3 2 vol.)

Shows name, confinement period, date, age, religion, where received from, weight, treatment, remarks, when discharged.
Record of the issue of MEDICAL COMFORTS

July - Oct. 1883 (A.O. 7/3707.5 I vol.)

Port wine, brandy, rice oatmeal, sage and tabacco.

Register of OBSERVATION WARD

1879 - 1912 (A.O. I744-5 2 vol.)

Date of admission to ward, date of admission to gaol, number, name, sentence.

SICK PARADE BOOK (Women)


Shows daily- name, complaint and treatment.

DIARY of officer doing duty over JIMMY GOVERNOR

6 Dec. I900 - 12 Jan I901 (A.O. 6/1029 I vol.)


E. L. V. GREENAWAY. Stamp album (c. I900) with a diary kept by an unidentified man in Darlinghurst Gaol I864-5. (M.L. MSS I625 6-622C)

Rev. C. KAVANAGH. Address to The Reverend Father Kavanagh from the R. C. Prisoners in H. M. Gaol; Sydney I888, with an Order of Daily Services held at the Gaol. (M.L. MSS 2902 7-660C).

'Under Lock and Key' Nos. I-8 I894 (Pages 63; II7; 478-9) "Being Original and Graphic Pictures of Life in Gaol. An Exposure of Official Corruption. Treating Particulary of the
Reformatory Question, and containing Humorous Anecdotes of Judges, Barristers, Governor, Warders and Other Persons”.
(M.L. 042).

PRISONERS DISCHARGED

Jan. I835 - June I851
Oct. I856 - 13 July I914 (A.O. 4/6361-91 3I vol.)

Contain gaol number, ship and year of arrival (where relevant); name, offence, sentence, when and where convicted, how and when discharged.

FEMALE PRISONERS DISCHARGED

I890 - 3I Aug. I897 (A.O. I747 I vol.)

DISCHARGE of INEBRIATES

I908 - I925 (A.O. I748 I vol.)

Copies of LETTERS SENT

I4 Nov. I837 - 3I Oct. I863

The letters are addressed chiefly to the public officers of the Gaol.

Copies of LETTERS RECEIVED

4 July I860 - 22 Nov, I864 (A.O. 4/64I8 I vol.)

Some letters are addressed to the Sheriff. Most are from the Colonial Secretary, Crown Solicitor, other Gaolers, Colonial Architect, Sheriff’s Office, Police Department and other officials.

CORRESPONDENCE REGISTERS (With Index)
I876 - I914 (A.O. I844-I884 Incomplete 4I vol.)
I884 - I913 (A.O. I885-I890 6 vol.)

Report and Minutes of Evidence of Select Committee on
Darlinghurst Gaol in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Votes and Proceeding

Daily Report of PRISON GUARD

I844 - I848 (A.O. 4/64I5 I vol.)

Contains details of prisoners received and discharged, prisoners
sick, in irons, out of irons, in hospital, visitors, any unusual
occurrences.

PETTY CASH BOOK

3 Mar. I883 - 3I July I885 (A.O. I750 I vol.)

LEDGER- Stores

I887 - I888 (A.O. I75I I vol.)

Record of OFFICERS SERVICES

I862 - I92I (A.O. 2I83-4 2 vol.)

Shows name, date of appointment, age, height, colour of hair
and eyes, complexion, where born, single or married, calling,
religion, remarks.

GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT

Estimate of Repairs to Gaols, Sydney I892-3 (A.O. 2/579)
Correspondence on Darlinghurst Gaol (A.O. 2/589A)
Watch house I847-64 (A.O. 2/589B)
Darlinghurst Gaol I854-9 (A.O. 2/64I)
Treadmill I847-5I, I853 (A.O. 2/64I)
GOVERNORS DIARY

1873
1897
1899 (A.O. I736-I738 3 vol.)

A daily record of events occurring within the gaol.

Annual report of the COMPTROLLER GENERAL of Prisons

1885
1896 - 1919
1902 - 1910 (A.O. Box 3 B.M. 10 or 3/3203; 5/1785)

ACT on REGULATION of GAOLS and PRISONS in N.S.W. I840
(M.L. AI29I Page 679-80)

Report of the INSPECTOR of PRISONS I840 (M.L. A I283 Page 85I-8)
I84I (M.L. A I225 Page 695-7I)

COLONIAL ARCHITECT The Gaol and Courthouse (N.E. Corner) I872
(M.L. X 98I.I/5 Page I6I-2)

MAPS, PLANS AND OTHER VIEWS of the site

I802 Sydney (M.L.I39I)
I8I2 Plan of De Ville De Sydney. Freycinet. (M.L.)
(M.L. PXA I76O)
I837 Sydney from the new Gaol wall. R. Russel. 3 pencil sketches.
(M.L. 2PXAI7I)
(M.L. F 98I.I/R; F98I.I/N; F98I.I/I)
1856 (approx.) City of Sydney N.S.W. M.W.S.& D.Board Map
(A.O. Map No. 36)

1872-3 Panorama of Sydney looking east from tower of the
Central Post Office. (M.L.)

1878 (approx.) Sydney. Collins. Ink and watercolour. (M.L.)

1905 Map showing the situation og gaols in N.S.W. Gov. Printers.
(M.L. M2 810 fbc I905/3)

1914 Photographic Views Vol. 4 Pages 8-9 (M.L. Q 98I.I/P)

(M.L. PX* D237)

1932-4 East Sydney Technical College. Film lent by E. Goodman (M.L.

1940 (pre) Aerial view of Darlinghurst Technical College.
Gov. Architect. (AO. 9/5879 Page I34)

(M.L. Slides/7)

1961 Darlinghurst Gaol (Shoemakers Shop; Womens Quarters; General

1974 The entrance to E.S.T.C. C. Fearnley. Photograph. (M.L.)
Darlinghurst Gaol- the Entrance and Chapel. Photographs. (M.L.)
'The Gallows from the Keep Yard'.Darlinghurst Gaol. A Confinee
Sketch. (M.L. SSVI/GAO DARH/2)

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Scott, G, Gaol Governor: Prisoners paid for privileges Sunday Mirror March I2 I967 Page 40


The Sun Prison Governor really looked after inmates March 29 I976 Page I8

Appendix 3

Relevant dated Plans of the Site

(a) May 1863 (Scale 50 feet to 1 inch) Source: Government Architect Report August 1980

(b) March 1885 (Scale 1/2 inch to 1 foot) Source: Government Architect (A.O. Plan No. 752-4)

(c) 1900 (Scale 50 feet to 1 inch) Source: Government Architect Report August 1980

(d) 1978 (Scale 5 metres to 9 mm.) Source: Government Architect Branch of the Dept. of Public Works, N.S.W.
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