

Paradise Probation Station

Orford, Tasmania

Researched and compiled by Maureen Martin Ferris

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Painted by Bishop Francis Nixon
[1851, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery]

Paradise Probation Station is situated on the northern bank of the Prosser River approximately 2kms along the convict built road at Orford.

References to the Paradise Probation Station are few, this would indicate that it operated for a short period. It was not mentioned in the La Trobe Report (1847) on Probation Stations.

Paradise Station is referred in conjunction with the Buckland (Prosser's Plain's) Probation Station which was later moved to Paradise. The Assistant Police Magistrate of Prosser's Plains, John Forster, in his letter to the Comptroller General of Convicts in December 1843 stated:

*"I find the road towards Spring Bay cleared for five miles and partially formed and towards Richmond already one mile."*¹

Comments on the back of this letter mentioned that a road party was being sent to Paradise to continue with the road.

"There is at present no accommodation for housing men at Paradise, I would suggest that the framework of huts sufficient for 1st class be prepared on the station and when ready the men moved to their station – a few days would then suffice to finish the temporary buildings for their accommodation. Should the Comptroller General decide in removing this class to Paradise, I recommend Mr. Young and Mr. Seaburgh as the officers to be put in charge."

The reply to how long it would take, is as follows:

"It would occupy at least two months to have the party so that they might all be employed at the works. They must be supplied with extra tools and without a smithy the work cannot be carried on the cutting is in place through the solid rock. Tin tools can be spared from the station and those of little use for the work to be performed. Most supplies could be easily

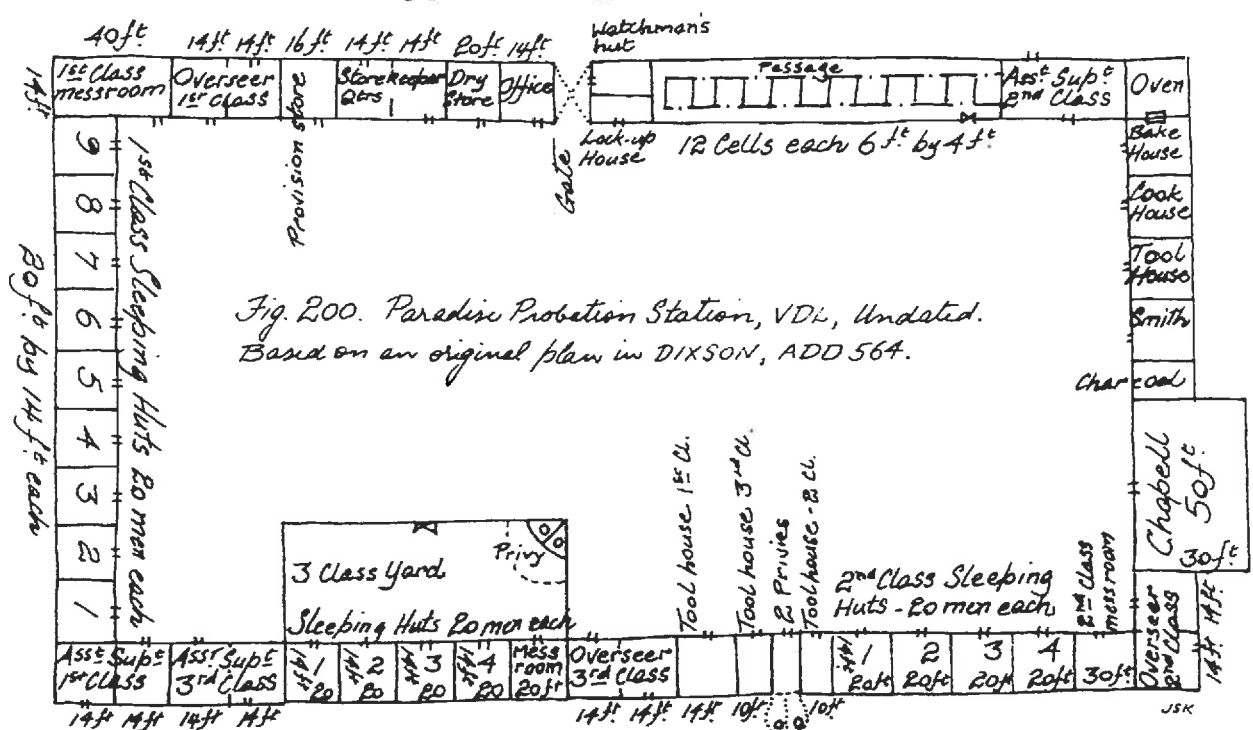
¹ Comptroller General File No 218

furnished by shipped to Prossers Bay – a road 20 feet wide in my opinion cannot be made in less than two years with 100 men.”

There was much disturbance amongst convicts at Prosser’s Plains Station in January 1843 reported a visiting Magistrate. His recommendation was:

“I should recommend the removal of the whole party to the Prosser River the materials required from Buckland being carried down at once by the whole gang.”²

This recommendation was approved and the gang was move to Paradise the 12th February next.³ The new Station was almost ready by October 1844.⁴



Proposed plan of the Paradise Probation Station circa 1845
[James Sempie Kerr Design for Convicts...]

² Comptroller General File No 218
³ Comptroller General File No 2746
⁴ TAHO CON1/1/29 File No 2315

COMMISSARIAT OFFICE

Hobart Town, 5th March 1845

Fresh Meat for Paradise Station

Tenders will be received at this office until 12 o'clock on Wednesday, the 12th instant, for the quantity of Fresh Meat required at the Station of Paradise, Prosser's River, from the 1st April, 1845 to the 31st March 1846, subject to the terms and conditions of the annual advertisements.

GEO MACLEAN

Deputy Commissary - General

The Courier Newspaper, 8th March 1845, p. 2

It is believed the Station was abandoned in 1847.

Mr. George Rudd applied in October 1855 to the Surveyor General to lease the Paradise Station plus 500 acres of land attached. The buildings, it was decided were not for lease because it was thought they may be required at some future date for police purposes.⁵

In February 1856 the Chief Secretary received a report re the destruction of part of the old Probation Station at Paradise.⁴ It is believed it was destroyed by fire.

In 1870 the land was purchased from the Crown for the purpose of farming.

⁵ TAHO LSD 1/31 pp641-642



David Parham and Brett Noble of the Tasmanian Archaeological Society together with Philip Smith Education Centre in 1994 undertook a survey of the Paradise Probation Station, the following is part of their report.⁶

Dating Parameters: 1844 - ?

Location:

Approximately 2km along convict built road which begins just north of the bridge across the Prosser River at Orford. The site is situated on a rise encountered immediately after crossing Station Creek.

Access:

Restricted – private freehold land (2 allotments, open woodland)

Historical context of site:

References to the Station at Paradise are limited; it is not referred to in the La Trove Report (1847), nor is it listed in any Returns of Probation Stations. Correspondence files of the Convict Department refer to the Station in conjunction with the Buckland Station which was removed to Paradise in 1844. An undated plan of the station [page 10], along with a Key to Numerical Annotations are included in this report [page 11].

Site Description:

The site comprises of any area approximately 100m x 300m, the main concentration of structures being located on a relatively level area approximately 100m x 150m between 15 and 20m (AHD) above the Prosser River. The site is characterized by numerous dolerite random rubble structures (none of which survive to their original height), consisting mainly of stone platforms, brick scatters and associated stone mounds identified as remnant chimney butts and fireplaces. A distinctive gravel feature is evident within the main nucleus of the site possibly indicative of the former yard area. Several pathways diverge from the main area leading to a structure tentatively identified as a privy [F0006] and, to a jetty [F0017], a remnant stone structure which protrudes a short distance into the Prosser River, now only visible at low tide. The remains of twelve cells [F0009] shown on the original plan are identifiable, surviving to a height of 1.5m in some places, and exhibiting a system of alternate access designed to minimize communication between prisoners. The convict built road provides access to the station from

⁶ TAHO LSD 2/3 FileNo 2214

Orford and continues past the station towards Buckland. Much of the road is supported by 1-3m dolerite walls on the southern (river) side.

Condition:

The site has been considerably altered by the laying of water pipe line associated with the same upstream. The pipe has been laid along the top side of the convict built road from Orford and passes through the southern limit of the main site area accompanied by a modern access road which forks and cuts through the main site. A stone mound would appear to have acted as the accretionary nucleus for bulldozing activities associated with construction of the vehicle access track. A cleared HEC transmission line cuts through the area north but does not appear to have disturbed any remains, being beyond the extent of the site. Other threats include visitation to the site over a long period of time which resulted in vandalism contributing to the collapse of the remains and the removal of almost all of the bricks bearing the broad arrow.

Discussion:

The layout of the site does not appear to correlate with the original plan, apart from the presence of the twelve cells, described above. The site appears to have more in common with the layout observed at the Victoria Valley and Seven Mile Creek sites, consisting of a series of separate structures. In most cases it was not possible to identify the function of structures. This site contained the greatest proportion of extant structures encountered during this survey.

Recommendations:

- That both landowners be contacted and advised of the importance of the site and, therefore, the need for (and implications of) listing.
- Any further activity with regard to vehicle access tracks should be restricted to areas located away from the site, based on archaeological advice prior to any road works.
- Any physical intervention associated with HEC transmission line and water pipe line be preceded by archaeological advice.

Sources:

CON 1/218, CON 1/2/315, LSD 1/21/641-642, CSO 2/3/2214

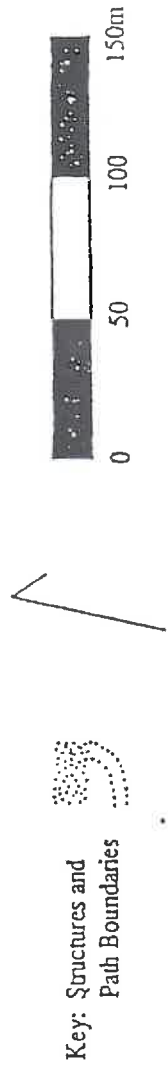
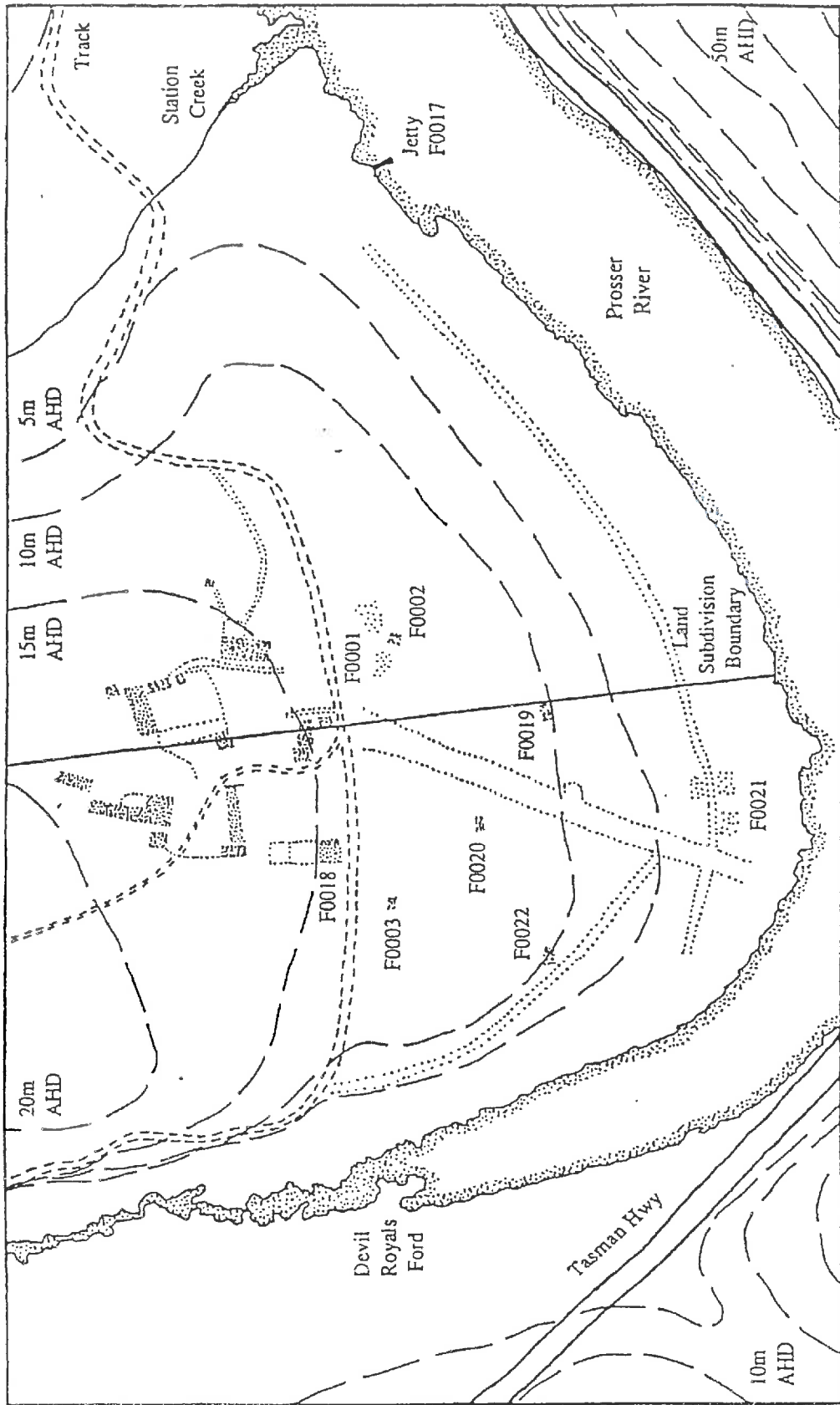
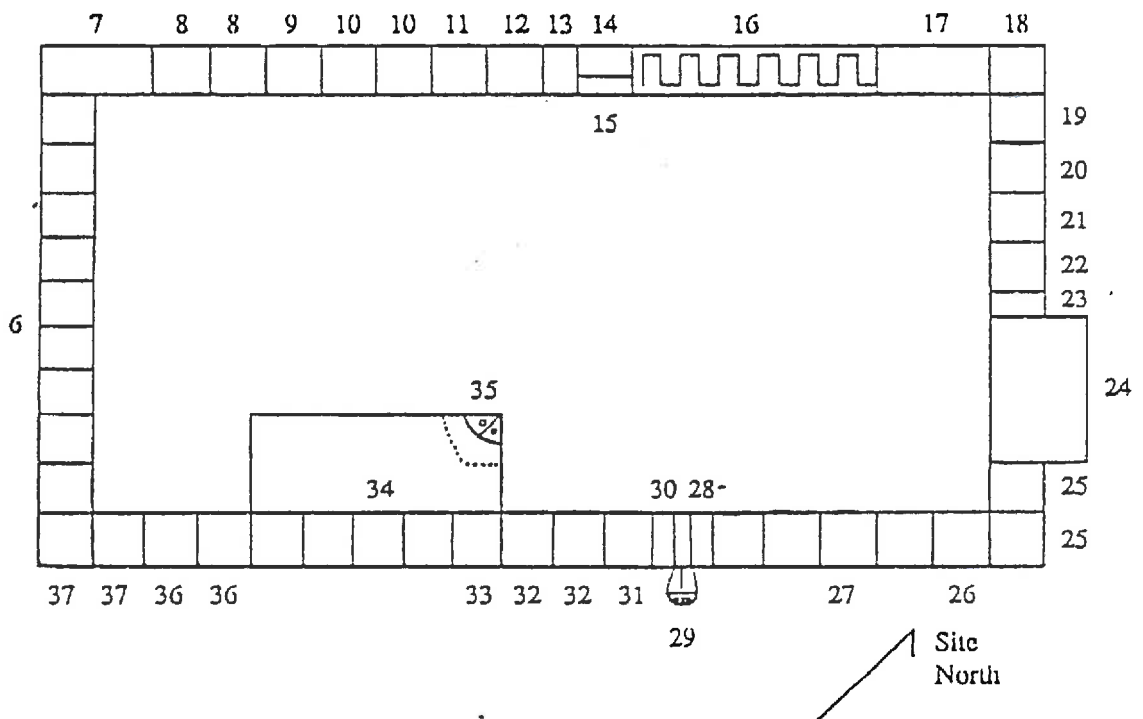
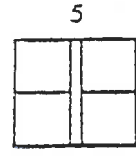
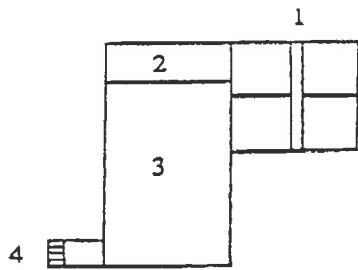


Fig. 28 : Field Survey of Paradise Probation Station, Showing Outer Structures and Tracks.



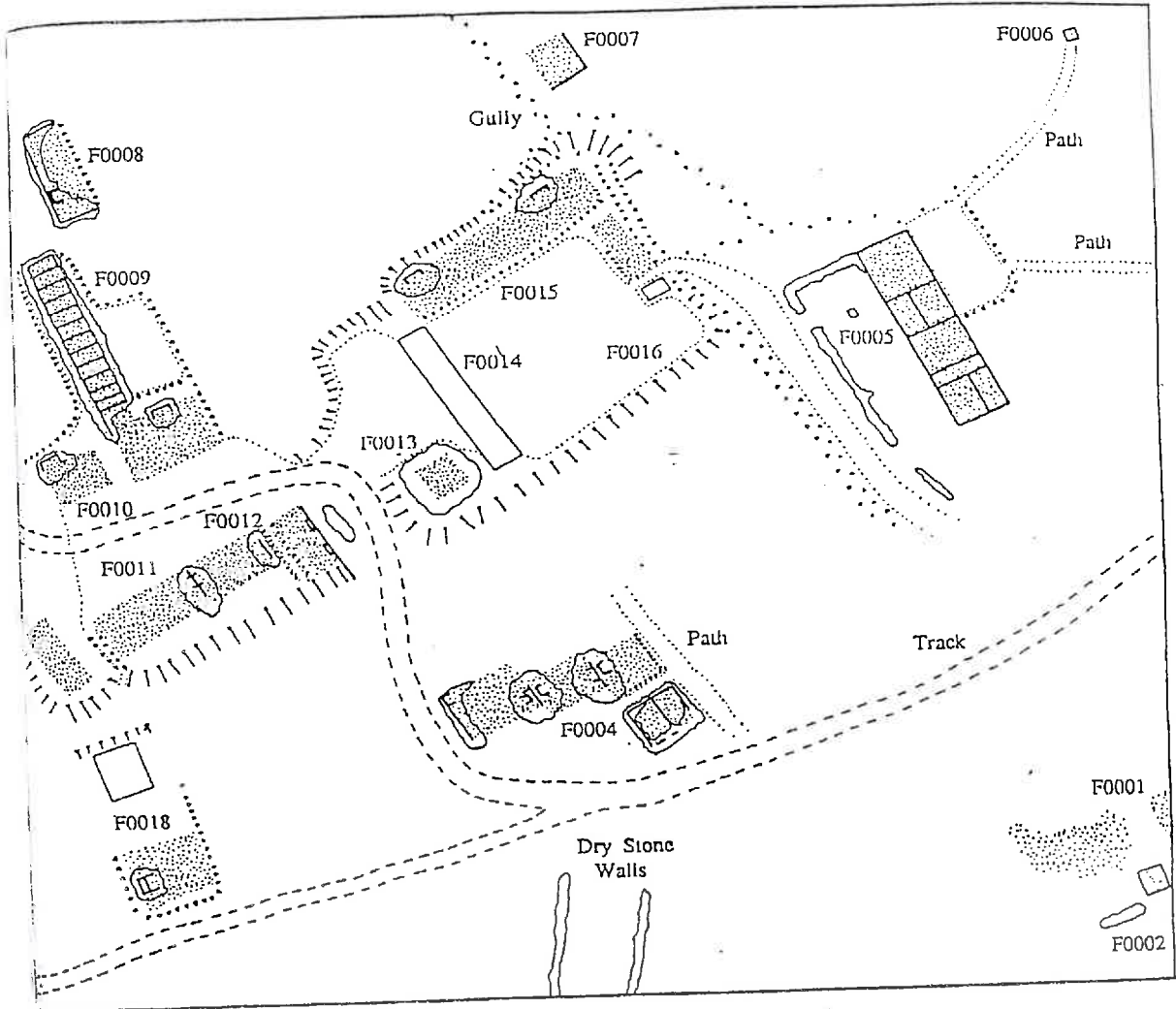
Original Schematic Plan of Paradise Probation Station
 [Source: Undated Plan, Dixon, ADD 564]

Key to Numerical Annotations

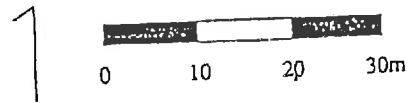
Plan of Paradise Probation Station

1	Doctor's Quarters	20	Cook House
2	Dispensary	21	Tool House
3	Hospital	22	Smith House
4	Privy	23	Charcoal
5	Superintendent's Quarters	24	Chapel
6	Nine 1 st Class Sleeping Huts	25	Overseer
7	1 st Class Mess Room	26	2 nd Class Mess Room
8	1 st Class Overseer	27	2 nd Class Sleeping Huts
9	Provision Room	28	Tool House 2 nd Class
10	Store Keepers Quarters	29	Privy
11	Dry House	30	Tool House 3 rd Class
12	Office	31	Tool House 1 st Class
13	Gate	32	Overseer 3 rd Class
14	Watchman's Hut	33	Mess Room
15	Lock-up-Hole	34	3 rd Class Yard & Sleeping Huts
16	Twelve Cells	35	Privy
17	Ass. Supt. 2 nd Class	36	Ass. Supt. 3 rd Class
18	Oven	37	Ass. Supt. 1 st Class
19	Bake House		

Convict Probation Stations Archaeological Survey



Field Survey of Paradise Probation Station.



Key:

Structure, Walls
Rubble and Fireplace



Suspected
Structure



Suspected
Structure Site



Stone
Platform



B:VN