

Brisbane Town in 1829

by

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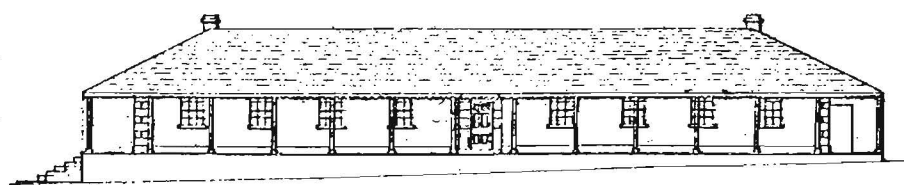
Introduction

This article presents a map of Brisbane Town reconstructed from trigonometrical data collected by Allan Cunningham in August and September 1829. Up to the present, the earliest map known to exist was that signed by Major G. W. Barney; it was attached to his report to the Government dated 8 May 1839. Barney's map has frequently been published, and most of what has been written about the layout of the penal settlement of Brisbane Town has been based upon that map. In fact, the settlement underwent many stages of reconstruction between the time of its foundation about May 1825², and the time of its virtual abandonment in 1839³. In 1825 the sixty or so soldiers and convicts were housed in temporary huts made of slabs⁴. Until 1832 large buildings of stone and brick were constructed, as required by the steadily increasing population. It is estimated that in 1832 the total population was over 1,000⁵, but the convict population had already begun to decline and buildings were gradually abandoned or converted to other purposes than those for which they had been constructed. The result was that by 1839 the appearance of Brisbane Town was rather different from that during the visit of Allan Cunningham in 1829. The map accompanying this article has been based on Barney's map of 1839 but in the light of Cunningham's data it has been redrawn and considerably extended. In addition, a conjectural map of the earliest settlement of 1825 has consequently been made possible and is included as an inset to the 1829 map.

Allan Cunningham at Brisbane Town

The botanist and explorer Allan Cunningham was one of the first white men to travel on the Brisbane River. In September 1824 he accompanied Oxley on the latter's second voyage up the river and was fascinated by the botanical productions of the district as well as the unusual landscape. In 1827 Cunningham viewed the Moreton Bay district from the Great Dividing Range just south of

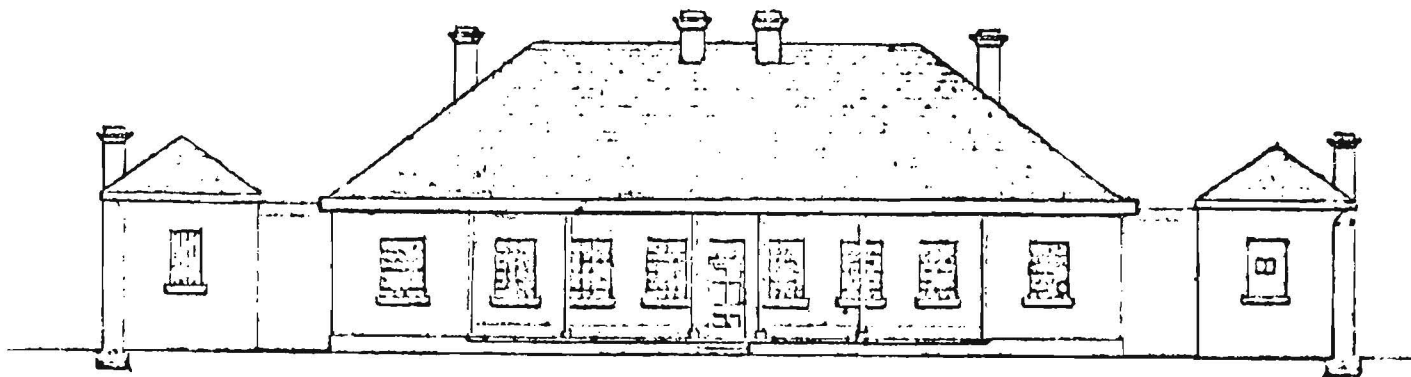
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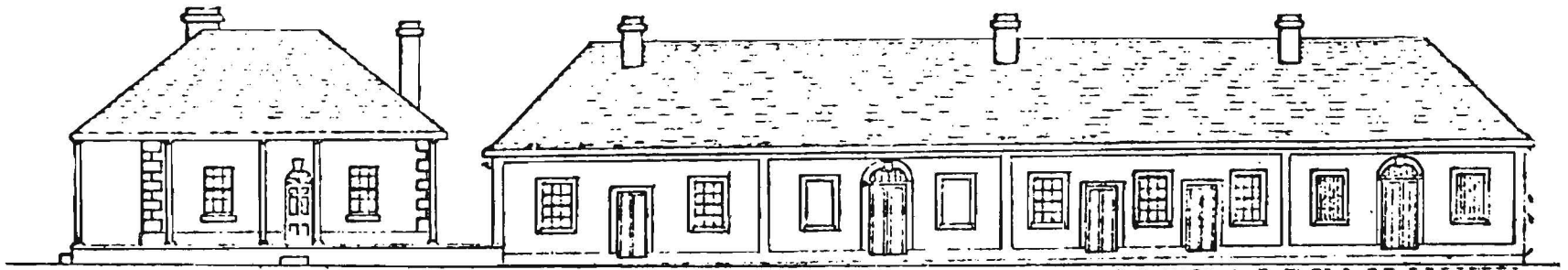
Hospital, including surgeon's quarters, constructed between May 1826 and January 1827. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 31, Convict and Military Hospitals and Surgeon's Quarters, 1840: Elevation of Convict Hospital). Cunningham started his survey from the steps at the left of the picture.

Spicer's Gap. One year later Cunningham visited Brisbane Town and accompanied Captain Logan on an expedition to Mount Barney, and then led an expedition from Ipswich to what is now Cunningham's Gap. In 1829 Cunningham again visited Brisbane Town and conducted an expedition from Ipswich, west to the Dividing Range, and north through the Brisbane Valley as far as the present township of Moore⁶.

Before leaving Brisbane Town for Sydney in September 1829, Cunningham conducted a survey of the settlement with a view to drawing a map. It is not known whether he actually drew this map or whether such a map, having been drawn, is still in existence. Cunningham's data, however, has been preserved in his Field Book in the Archives Office of New South Wales [SZ29]. The data begins on a page headed "21 August 1829. Trigonometrical Details for Sketch of Brisbane Town." The survey began at the steps at the north-western corner of the hospital. The hospital stood in the grounds now occupied by the Supreme Court. Cunningham was housed at the hospital as the guest of the surgeon, Henry Cowper, and during this period he took careful observations to determine the latitude and longitude of the hospital. As he proceeded from the hospital steps he measured the compass bearing of his course, and also the distance travelled on any particular course using a measuring wheel or *odometer*.



Female factory, constructed about 1828-29. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 26, Female Factory, 1837: Elevation).



Hansord's house, and building containing solitary cells, etc., constructed about 1827. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 34, Commissariat Clerk's Quarters, Superintendent of Convicts' Quarters, Solitary Cells, Barrack Sergeants' Quarters and Married Soldiers' Room, 1838).

Drawing the Map

In drawing the 1829 map it was assumed that Barney's map was correct as to the position of the mill and the main buildings of the settlement. It was found that the key to reconstructing the 1829 map was the location of the wheat hut and the gardener's house, which do not appear in Barney's map. When these positions had been established, it was relatively easy to identify the other buildings mentioned in Cunningham's Field Book.

In particular, it became possible to plot the course of the road leading to New Farm. Cunningham numbered his stations along this road, numbers 1 to 14. These stations have been located by two methods: first, by means of consecutive trigonometrical plotting from his starting point; and second, by means of the compass bearings which he took from these stations back towards the main buildings of the settlement. The course of the road between Stations 13 and 14 is not known in detail.

One difference between Cunningham's data and Barney's map concerns the length of Gardens Point. According to Cunningham, the Garden Angle, as he called it, should be considerably closer to the settlement, and therefore this shortening has been carried out in the present map. As for the buildings existing in the settlement, Cunningham made no mention of the Military Barracks shown in Barney's map. Cunningham mentioned only the old Military Barracks which were subsequently to be known as the

Lumber Yard, on the site of the present Prudential Assurance building. The new Military Barracks may have been under construction, but little progress had been made and these barracks were probably not completed until 1831^o. It would also seem that the large barrack building for the prisoners was still under construction in 1829^o. The eastern corner of the site was still occupied by slab huts providing temporary accommodation for the overseers. What has since become Queen Street was blocked by these temporary huts, and the main access to the north-east was by crossing a bridge on the road leading to the mill, and then by following the western bank of the creek to the river at what was then known as Kangaroo Point, slightly north of the present Customs House at Petrie Bight.

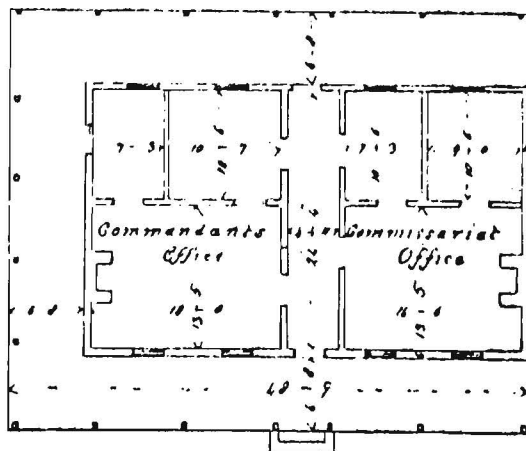
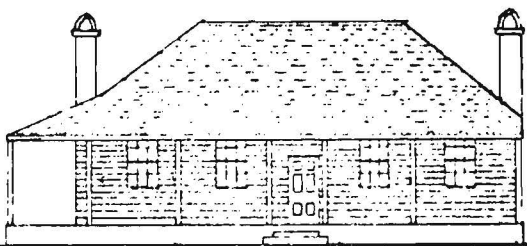
In drawing the map, it has not been possible to include all the fences. Although it is known that a network of fences did exist in 1829, only those which can be inferred from Cunningham's data have been inserted in the map.

A Tour of the Town

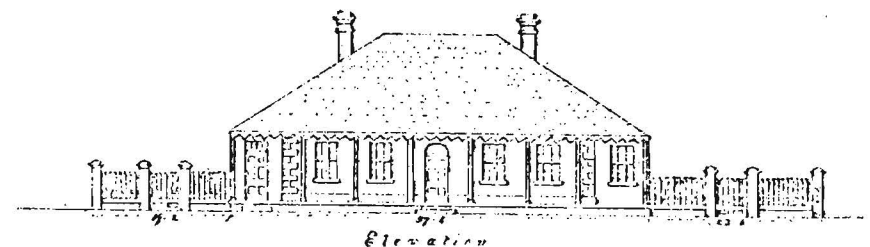
Let us accompany Allan Cunningham on his walks through Brisbane Town in 1829. Leaving the hospital steps on 21 August, he walked through the hospital garden to the north-east garden gate, then to the corner of the fence surrounding the brick field. He then followed in a north-easterly direction what must have been a major thoroughfare of the settlement, even though it passed to the rear of the prisoners' barracks. The number of prisoners at that time was about seven hundred^o.

He proceeded across the creek, and along the road towards Kangaroo Point. At various positions on this road he looked back towards the settlement, the nearest building of which was the factory on the hill now occupied by the General Post Office. He then passed within fifty-two yards of Kangaroo Point, and looking back up the river he observed the stone quarry, and the "stone wharf" presumably used for landing the blocks of stone ferried across the river for the construction of buildings in the settlement.

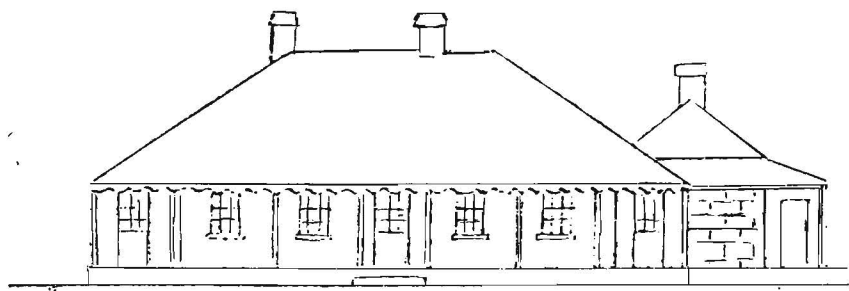
From Station 5 Cunningham took a bearing towards the centre of a distant hill which he called Telegraph Hill. This can be identified with White's Hill and it was presumably a relay station for communication between the settlement and Dunwich. At Station 6 Cunningham took a bearing towards a "notch on Telegraph Hill", but on this occasion he seems to have been referring (erroneously) to Mount Petrie^o.



Bainbrigg's quarters; probably the original Commandant's cottage, re-erected about May 1825. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 28, Public Office, 1838: Elevation and Plan).



Chaplain's house, constructed between February and June 1828; divided into two dwellings early in 1830. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 15, Commissariat Officer and Chaplain's Quarters, 1838: Elevation).



Commandant's cottage, constructed during second half of 1825; annexe constructed in first quarter of 1826. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 12, Commandant's Quarters, 1838: South Elevation).

Station 6 was at the junction of two roads. One of them continued in the general direction of Wickham Street and led eventually to Bell's Valley¹².

The other road, veering to the right from Station 6, went through forest country above the steep bank where the Story Bridge now is. Cunningham followed this road, and on reaching a fence (Station 11) he was able to look back towards the settlement through an opening in the trees. At this point he mentioned that he was on the road to Breakfast Creek. At Station 13 he emerged from the forest and crossed the open wheat fields to the river bank opposite the mouth of what was then known as Norman's Creek.

On returning to the division in the road he walked cross-country to the windmill. From the windmill he was able to take bearings on almost every building in the settlement, ranging from the old brick kiln near the burial ground to the wheat hut across the river.

His second excursion, possibly on the same day, also began at the hospital steps. This time he first walked to Hansord's quarters. Hansord was the Deputy Assistant Commissary-General in charge of the Government Stores in the settlement. In Cunningham's notes Hansord's quarters are sometimes designated as the Officers' quarters, probably referring to the fact that other civilian officers lived in this house or close to it. He passed Bainbrigg's quarters of which more will be said shortly. Lieutenant Bainbrigg was the Engineer of the settlement. Cunningham then continued along the terrace with the Parsonage on his left. The Parsonage was a handsome brick house occupied at that time by the Reverend John Vincent. Further along on the left was the Commandant's Office and the brick cottage occupied by the Commandant, Captain Patrick Logan, with his wife and family. Cunningham had stayed there during his 1828 visit to Brisbane Town. On his right Cunningham would have passed the new Commissariat Store but he made no mention of this building. Probably it was still under construction, for Cunningham referred to the long barn attached to Parker's hut as the Commissariat Store¹³.

He continued to the gardener's hut, sometimes referred to as the gardener's house. This house was octagonal in shape containing three rooms surrounded by a verandah on all sides. The gardener was Mr Hobson and he cultivated fourteen acres of vegetables including peas, cabbages, pumpkins, yams, sweet potatoes, and arrowroot¹⁴. Cunningham passed among the vegetables as far as the river bank, at what he called the Garden Angle, by a winding path, probably one of the paths laid out in the previous year by the botanist Charles Fraser¹⁵.

Walking up the street from the Botanical Garden gate, Cunningham arrived at Parker's hut. Parker was the Superintendent of Agriculture, and was soon to be transferred to supervise the establishment of the new farm at Eagle Farm. At the top end of the street stood the imposing archway of the prisoners' barrack building. Beneath the archway stood the triangle where the prisoners were punished by means of the lash. Above the archway and occupying two floors of the central tower of the building was the chapel, said to be capable of holding nine hundred people¹⁶. Continuing along what is now Queen Street Cunningham passed the cells used for solitary confinement.

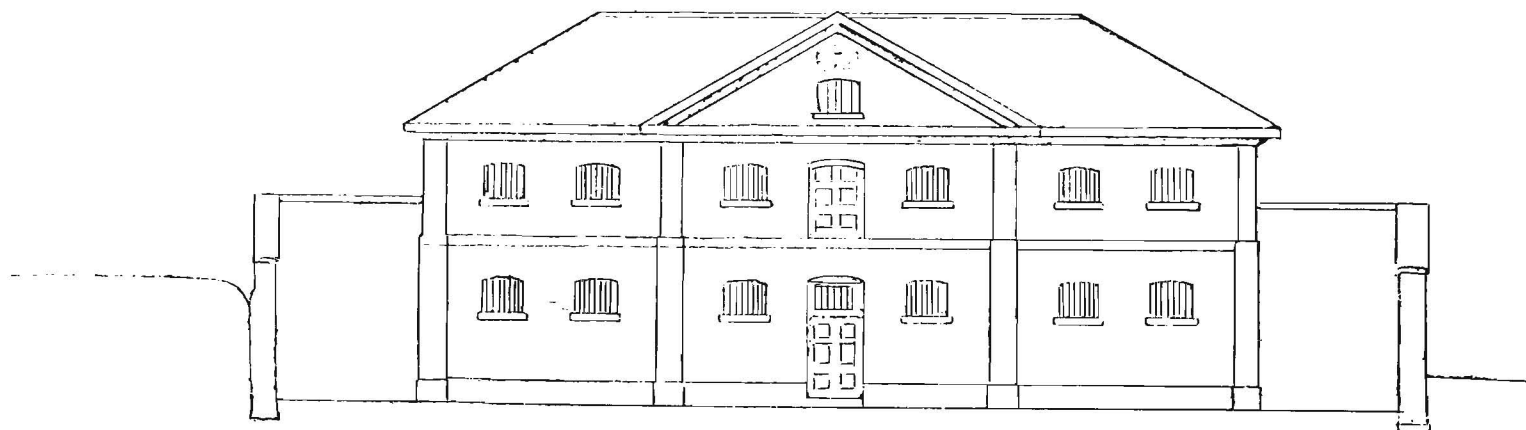
On 28 August 1829 Cunningham crossed the river to the guard hut. This hut had been established primarily for the use of the military guard whose purpose was to protect the crops from raids by the Aborigines. The hut was also called the wheat hut, possibly because it was used as a storage barn. Cunningham took a large number of bearings from this hut. One building referred to cannot be located: it was an old house at bearing 257½° in line with the southern corner of the military barrack and a barn. Cunningham then descended across the wheat fields eastwards to the river bank, where he was able to see Norman's Creek.

On 1 September Cunningham went to the burial ground and took a number of bearings from the southern corner of the burial ground fence. In the vicinity of the burial ground was the old brick kiln. Its position on the map has been located from bearings taken at the mill and at the hospital steps, entitled "Bend of river at old kiln"; it has been assumed that these bearings were taken towards the kiln itself.

The Original Commandant's Cottage

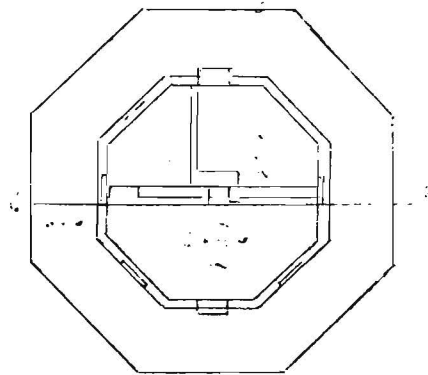
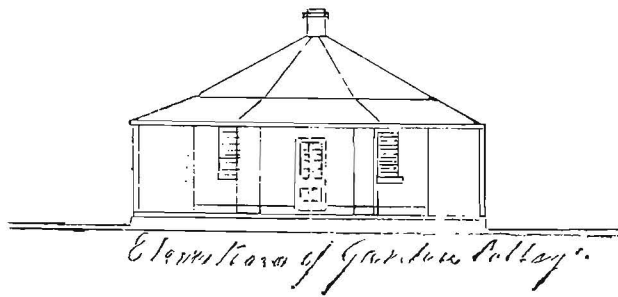
Bainbrigg's quarters consisted of a wooden cottage. This can be deduced from the fact that in Barney's map this building is designated as Police and Commissariat Offices. In the Queensland State Archives there is a plan of the "Public Office" at Brisbane Town in 1838 containing a Commandant's Office and a Commissariat Office, so this is evidently the same building. The plan shows a weatherboard cottage with a verandah on three sides and a chimney at each end. It seems likely that this building was originally intended as a dwelling house.

As the other buildings erected at Brisbane Town were apparently



Elevation

New Commissariat store, constructed between May 1828 and the end of 1829. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 17, Commissariat Store, 1838, Elevation).



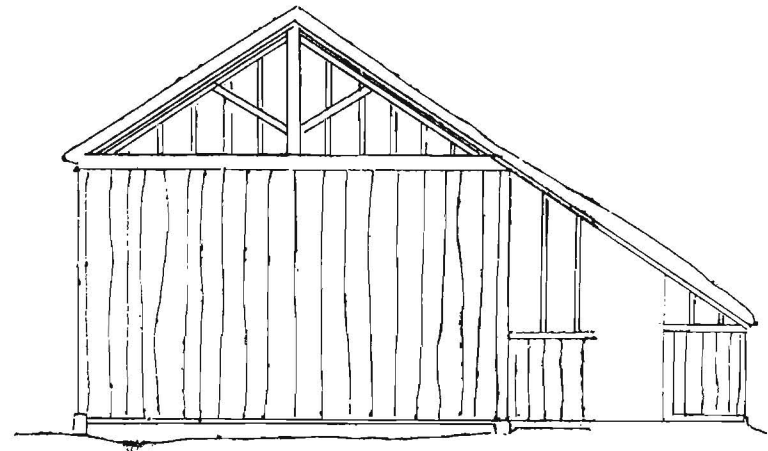
Plan of Garden Cottage

Gardener's hut, constructed about July to December 1828. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 19, Garden Cottage, 1838: Elevation and Plan).

either slab huts or stone or brick buildings this weatherboard house is anomalous. The only weatherboard house mentioned in early records seems to be the prefabricated house brought from Sydney in 1824 and erected at Redcliffe as a dwelling for the Commandant¹⁷. The Commandant at that time was Lieutenant Henry Miller, and the transfer of the settlement from Redcliffe to Brisbane was carried out under his supervision. It is suggested that Miller's house was dismantled and re-erected at Brisbane about May 1825. It probably continued to be used by the Commandant until the new brick cottage was built probably towards the end of 1825.

The Settlement in 1825

From the map of 1829 it is possible to make a conjectural reconstruction of the layout of the settlement in 1825. In accordance with Governor Brisbane's instructions to Lieutenant Miller, the first buildings erected (apart from the Commandant's cottage) would have been the Military Barracks and the huts for the convicts¹⁸. The instructions commanded that these two sets of dwellings should be 300 yards apart. This is indeed the distance between the Military Barracks and the Overseers' huts shown in the 1829 map, so it is presumed that these huts were the original convict quarters. The Military Barracks, according to the instructions, were enclosed by a strong palisade and ditch to secure them from assault. The instructions also stated that as



Barn. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 19, Barn, 1838: Section).

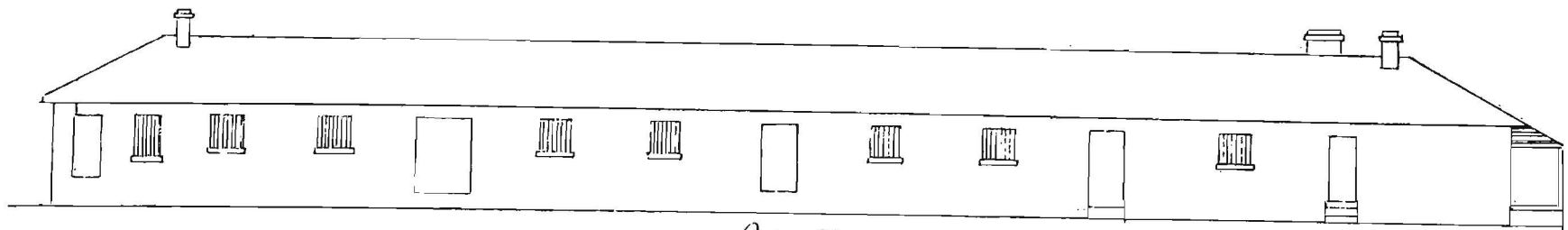
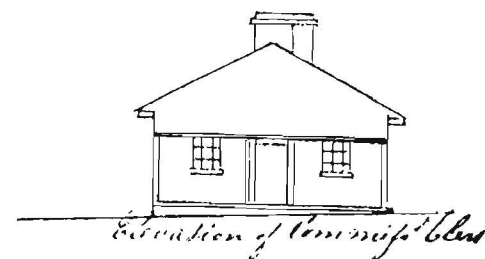
soon as possible after this had been done, a store, a guardhouse, and a gaol ought to be erected. It is possible that the low-roofed store or barn associated with Parker's quarters was the original store of 1825. The guardhouse and gaol, however, were not constructed in 1825; indeed in April 1827 Logan complained that he was still without the means of solitary confinement¹⁹. The old brick kiln must have been in operation in 1825 because it is known that brick buildings were being constructed in the first quarter of 1826, when a total of 44,500 bricks were made²⁰. The conjectural map of Brisbane in 1825, inset in the 1829 map, is therefore substantially correct, although no doubt a number of slab huts and outhouses have been omitted.

The Buildings Remaining (1971)

Of the buildings erected in Brisbane during the life of the penal settlement, only two remain: the windmill, now known as the Observatory, and the second Commissariat Store, now used by the Law Reform Commission.

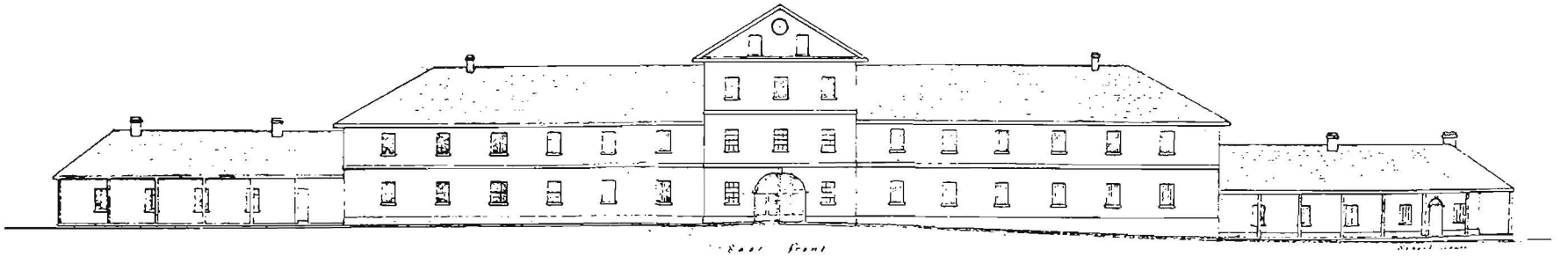
The windmill is believed to have been built in 1827²¹. The machinery was defective and the mill was consequently subject to frequent breakdown²². A treadmill was added to it in 1828, as a humanitarian gesture to provide an alternative means of punishment²³. The tower was partly demolished about 1850 but was later rebuilt.

The Commissariat Store was completed late in 1829, evidently after the visit of Cunningham²⁴. A further floor was added in 1912 on top of the original building²⁵.



Side Elevation of Commissariat Store & Parker's Quarters

Original Commissariat store and Parker's quarters. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 19, Commissariat Store and Commissariat Clerk's, 1838: Side and End Elevations).



Prisoners' barrack building, east front; southern half constructed between May 1826 and April 1828; central tower fitted out as chapel between April and August 1829. (From Moreton Bay Plans, Q.S.A., Plan 37, Prisoners' Barracks, 1838: East front).

Conclusion

The map of Brisbane Town in 1829 shows the settlement in the last stages of its transition into a permanent township. The slab huts for the overseers were soon to be demolished to make way for the extension of the prisoners' barrack building and the surrounding wall. By about 1832 the soldiers were to be re-housed in their new barrack building on the site of the "large paddock".

Although Captain Logan was killed in October 1830 practically all the major works were begun during his period as Commandant. Furthermore, the extensive agricultural projects, including the wheat fields at New Farm and what is now known as Kangaroo Point, and the gardens in what is now the central city area, testify to the energy and resourcefulness of a man who, had he not been committed to military service, would have made his mark in the civil development of the Colony.

But it is to Cunningham that we owe a debt of gratitude for handing down a detailed account of how the settlement appeared at the time of his 1829 visit. Logan was a man of action rather than of words whereas Cunningham, if he sometimes erred, did so on the side of excessive repetition of detail. Cunningham collected not only botanical specimens but facts about all that he saw. It seems likely that he did not find time to reduce his observations of Brisbane Town to the form of a map. The present work is an attempt to remedy that omission.

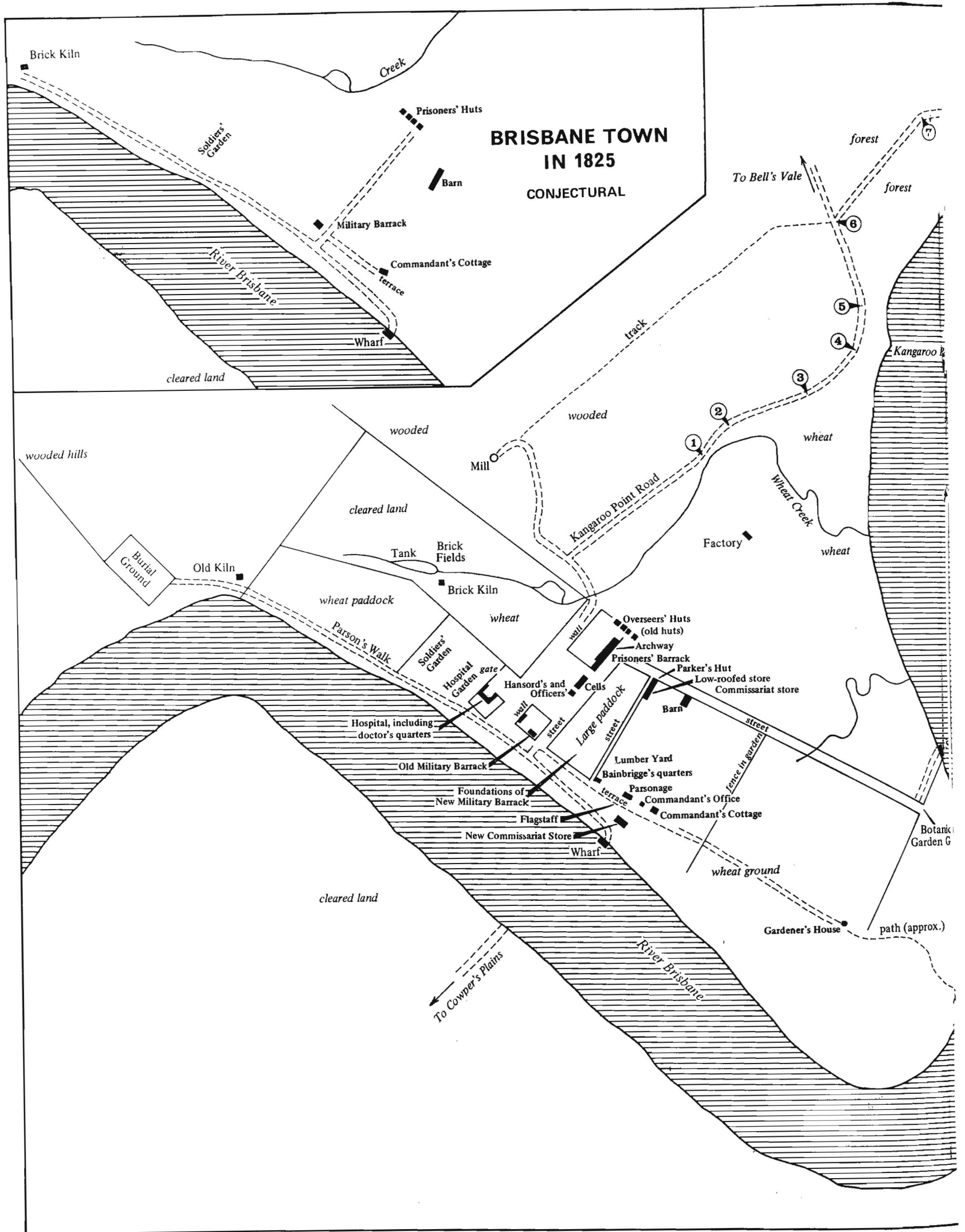
REFERENCES

Abbreviations : A.O.N.S.W. — Archives Office of New South Wales

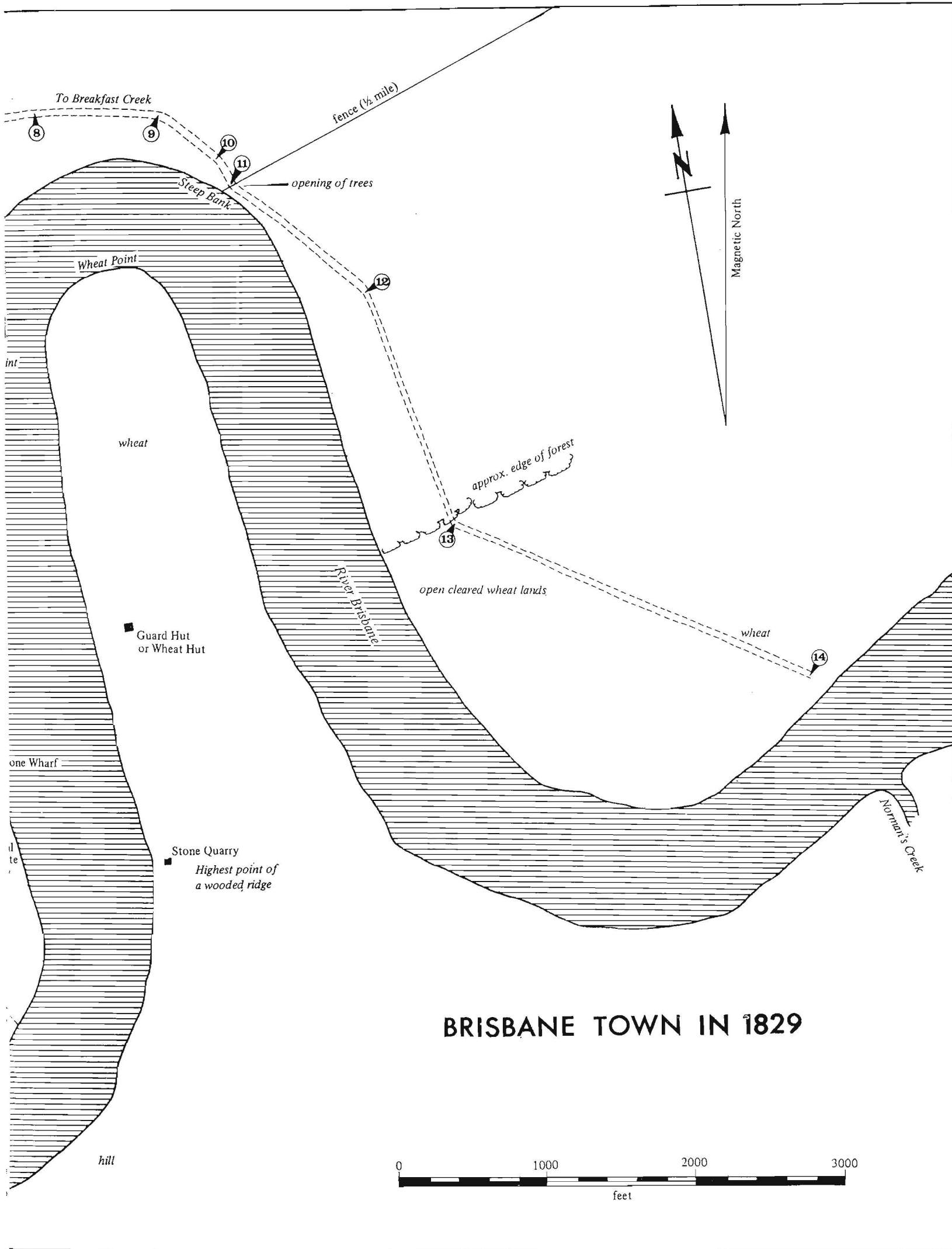
M.B.L.B. — Moreton Bay Letter Books in A.O.N.S.W.

1. For example, in C. C. Petrie. — *Tom Petries Reminiscences of Early Queensland*. Brisbane, Watson, Ferguson and Co., 1904.
2. Miller to Balfour, 25 Apr 1826 [Tasmanian Archives]; Lieutenant Henry Miller received orders for the transfer of the settlement in Apr 1825. Cunningham stated that the settlement at Brisbane Town was formed in May 1825 [Field Book, June to Sep 1829; A.O.N.S.W. Ref. SZ29].
3. D. Gordon. — "Sickness and Death at the Moreton Bay Convict Settlement"; in *Medical Journal of Australia*, Vol. 2, 1963. pp. 473-80.
4. The first contingent in Sep 1824 had comprised the Commandant, his wife and two sons, a sergeant, a corporal and 12 privates with their wives, a storekeeper and his assistant, and 30 convicts [Cunningham, Journal, 1 Sep 1824; A.O.N.S.W. Ref. SZ9]. Miller to Balfour, 25 Apr 1826 [Tasmanian Archives]; between then and Aug 1825, only 7 convicts were sent as reinforcements.
5. Gordon, *loc. cit.*
6. J. G. Steele. — *The Explorers of the Moreton Bay District*. Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, in press.

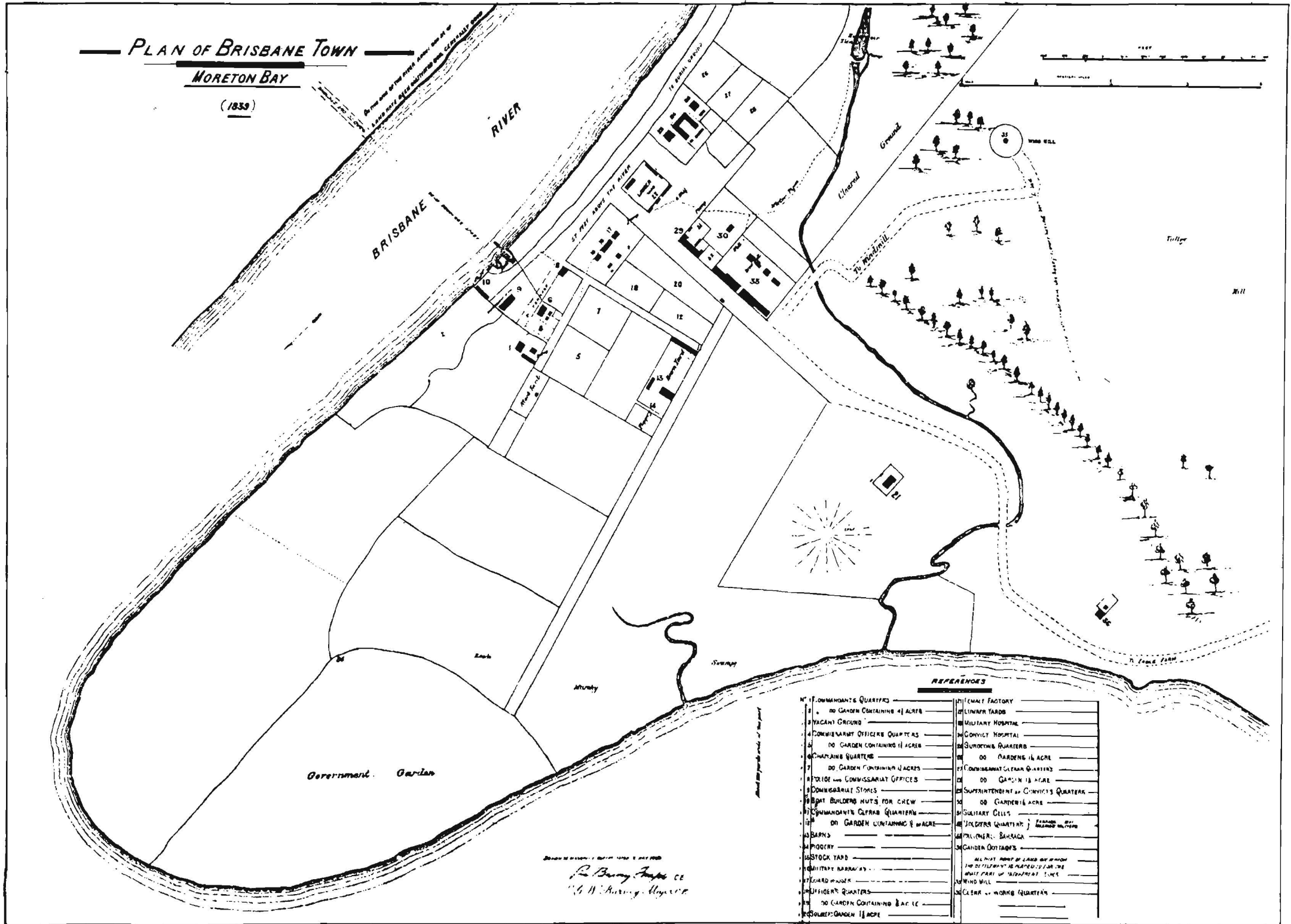
7. Cunningham. — "Observations made at the penal settlement on the Brisbane River, Moreton Bay in 1828 [and 1829]" [Mitchell Library Ref. D79-4]; in Steele, *op cit.* A separate house for the surgeon was not built until about 1832.
8. Cunningham on 30 June 1828 recorded that the permanent military barracks were under construction [Mitchell Library Ref. MSS 1374]. However permission was not granted until 1830 [Colonial Secretary to Logan, 31 Jul 1830], and the plan drawn in Sydney is dated 28 Sep 1830 [Queensland State Archives]. The completed barracks are shown in a sketch, "Moreton Bay in 1831" [Mitchell Library Ref. SSV4B/More B/1].
9. Logan to Colonial Secretary, 1 May 1828 [M.B.L.B.]; only half of the prisoners' barrack was completed by May 1828. Logan intended to complete it after building the permanent Commissariat Store, but the rapid increase in the convict population probably caused him to build both simultaneously.
10. Gordon, *loc. cit.*
11. In 1829 Mt. Petrie was known as Campbell's Range [Map MT55 in the Survey Office, Brisbane]. "Telegraph Hill" was also mentioned by Cunningham on 3 Aug 1828 as having been seen by Logan from the summit of Mount Barney, but it cannot be precisely identified from the bearing given [A.O.N.S.W. Refs. SZ26 and SZ27] and Logan's report refers instead to a "Box Hill" at this bearing [Steele, *op cit.*].
12. D. W. Fraser. — "Settlement in Queensland in the Logan Period"; in *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal*. vol. 7, no. 3 (1964-65). pp. 437-55; Lieutenant Bell had been stationed at Moreton Bay in 1826 and 1827.
13. Logan to Colonial Secretary, 28 Jan 1828 [M.B.L.B.]; the building occupied as a store in Jan 1828 had originally been intended as a barn.
14. Charles Fraser to Colonial Secretary, Jul 1829 [M.B.L.B.].
15. Charles Fraser, Journal; in W. J. Hooker. — *Botanical Miscellany*. 3 vols. London, John Murray, 1830, vol. 1. pp. 237-69.
16. Logan to Colonial Secretary, 22 June 1829 [M.B.L.B.]; the chapel could accommodate every person at the settlement. The total population in June 1829 was 901 [Gordon, *loc. cit.*].
17. "The Commandant's lodge, which had been brought from Port Jackson in frame, was also in progress, but the actual absence of some of the parts, and those that had been attempted not fitting, much inconvenience had arisen, obliging new materials to be cut by the sawyers, who were fully employed cutting weather boards, scantling and rafters from the blue gum of these forests" [Cunningham, Journal, 28 Sep 1824; A.O.N.S.W. Ref. SZ9].
18. Brisbane to Miller, 27 Aug 1824 [M.B.L.B.].
19. Logan to Colonial Secretary, 6 Apr 1827 [M.B.L.B.].



A partially complete map of Brisbane Town in 1829 compiled by J. G. Steele, 15 February 1829. This is a conjectural map of Brisbane.



971, using data collected by Allan Cunningham, 21 August — 1 September 1829; inset, Brisbane Town in 1825.



Map of Brisbane Town in 1839, by Major Barney.

20. L. V. Dulhunty, Report, 25 Dec 1825 to 24 Mar 1826. Quoted by D. W. Fraser. — “Early Public Service in Queensland”; in *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1962-63). pp. 48-71. The report mentions the completion of the brick forge, and the erection of a brick building, “detached to the Commandant’s house”; and slab buildings, including a house for the boat crew, a prisoners’ cook house, an overseer’s house and two wings of the Military Barracks; also a 10-foot-high fence enclosing the Military Barracks.
21. Colonial Secretary to Logan, 13 and 20 Mar 1827 [M.B.L.B.]; in Mar 1827 a set of millstones was purchased in Sydney for use at Moreton Bay.
22. Craig to Deputy Commissary General, 2 Feb 1829 [M.B.L.B.]; the storekeeper complained in Feb 1829 that the windmill needed continual repair as the machinery had been very coarsely constructed.
23. Logan had complained of the lack of a treadmill [Logan to Colonial Secretary, 6 Apr 1827]. He asked that the treadmill originally intended for Dunwich be sent to Brisbane Town [Logan to Colonial Secretary, 20 Dec 1827], which Governor Darling approved. It was certainly in operation by Sep 1829, for a man became tangled in the tread wheel and was killed [Logan to Colonial Secretary, 14 Sep 1829]. [All in M.B.L.B.].
24. Plans for the Commissariat Store were sent from Sydney in Apr 1828 [Colonial Secretary to Logan, 10 Apr 1828], and Logan started building it in May [Logan to Colonial Secretary, 1 May 1828]. On 27 Sep, during work on the foundations, a murder was committed [Logan to Colonial Secretary, 2 Jan 1829]. [All in M.B.L.B.]. The original inscription above the door gives 1829 as the year of completion.
25. Annette P. Harvey. — “Queensland State Archives Building”. *Queensland Heritage*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1965). pp. 27-30.