Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment
Cultural Heritage Management Plan

In association with
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Introduction

The Eagle Farm Agricultural Station was established in 1829 as part of the expansion of the Moreton Bay penal settlement. The Eagle Farm site was only used for less than ten years. After Moreton Bay was opened for free settlement in 1842, the site was subdivided and sold as agricultural blocks. The building were dismantled and gradually no surface evidence remained. The site became an airfield in World War II and a runway was constructed over the site of the main buildings. After the war, the airfield became the main airport for Brisbane and during the 1950s the runway was upgraded.

The history of the site since the 1840s suggests that despite some disturbance, sub-surface evidence of the Agricultural Establishment remains. The site has been recognised as of cultural heritage significance and is entered on the Queensland Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.

Various studies and reports have been undertaken of the site since the late 1980s. These reports include a historical overview by Ashton, two archaeological reports by Edward Higginbotham, and a Conservation Management Plan prepared by Works Australia. This Conservation Management Plan was a detailed document that included the history of the site, an assessment of significance and policies for the management of the site.

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1 Paul Ashton, 1990, *Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment and Female Factory and Prison, Eagle Farm.*

2 E Higginbotham, 1990, *Historical and archaeological assessment of the Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison, Eagle Farm, Brisbane, Queensland,* Report for Australian Construction Services, Brisbane, Queensland.


AIMS

The purpose of this Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is to update the 1996 document, particularly in the context of the proposed redevelopment of the former airport for light industry. This CHMP also takes into consideration results from a 2006 archaeological survey which has more clearly identified the extent of the archaeological resource.

The specific aims of this Plan are to:

• assess the results of the 2006 archaeological survey and how they provide a more informed understanding of the archaeological deposit;
• revise the statement of significance;
• provide policies and guidelines for development of the site including how the site should be interpreted, and what site development could be undertaken;
• provide guidelines for monitoring excavations works on the site.

METHOD

This conservation plan uses the method of investigation and analysis established by the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter)* and *The Conservation Plan: a guide to the preparation of conservation plans for places of European Cultural Significance*.

Nomenclature

Various names have been used for the site including:

• Former Agricultural Establishment, Female Factory and Prison
• Eagle Farm Prison site
• Eagle Farm Women’s Prison and Factory Site

These names are either inadequate or rather cumbersome. The name adopted in this report *Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment* was the original name and denotes succinctly the purpose and function of the site from the 1820s to 1840.

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Location

The site is located at the south-eastern end of the former runway 13/31, Old Brisbane Airport, Eagle Farm Brisbane on Lot 30 on RP 895254, Parish of Stanley.

Figure 1 Location of Eagle Farm convict site
1 Historical overview

Almost twenty years after the establishment of a penal colony at Port Jackson in 1788, the British government was increasingly concerned about the effectiveness of the penal program and also the need to introduce new measures to deal with a rise in crime within Britain. Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, was directly responsible for the administration of New South Wales and in 1819 commissioned an enquiry into its administration, as well as the convict system and sundry other matters.5

Bathurst appointed Thomas Bigge to undertake the enquiry. Bigge completed his report in 1822 and his extensive list of recommendations included the establishment of new penal settlements. These settlements, he argued should be places which did not allow for any ‘means of indulgence to profligacy’ and would be characterised by greater discipline and control. After a northern survey, the Surveyor-General John Oxley recommended a site for the settlement at Redcliffe.

The penal settlement at Redcliffe survived less than a year. The site did not meet earlier expectations, with adequate fresh water being a problem. The settlement was relocated to a site on the banks of the Brisbane River, 30 kilometres from the mouth.6 The new site was under the control of Lt Henry Millar for only two months before he was replaced as Commandant by Captain Peter Bishop. Bishop, in turn, only served for seven months before being replaced by Captain Patrick Logan.

Under Logan, the penal settlement expanded from a small colony of less that 50 inmates to more than 1000 by 1830. Logan instigated a building program which included the constructed of a number of substantial masonry structures. He was also under instructions to develop self-sufficiency in terms of grain and other food items. Logan’s response was to establish farms at outlying locations.

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5 Ross Johnston, 1988, Brisbane, the First Thirty Years, Boolarong, Bowen Hills. pp. 4-5.

6 John Steele, 1985, Brisbane Town in the Convict Days 1824-1842, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, p. 27.

7 Steele, Brisbane Town in Convict Days, p. 45.
In 1829 the Colonial Botanist Charles Frazer travelled from Sydney to select a suitable site for an agricultural establishment. He recommended a site about seven miles by land and eleven by water from Brisbane Town. He wrote:

The capabilities of this land are considerable – that part next the stream being admirably adapted to the growth of rice, should it be required – the high dry land next it, consisting of between four and five thousand acres, is well adapted for the growth of wheat. It is formed of undulating ridges, of gentle height, each ridge separated by a small water course, now dry, but in seasons
of ordinary moisture they no doubt contain water.\textsuperscript{8}

Governor Darling wasted little time in approving the new establishment.

Logan immediately began work on the new establishment at Eagle Farm once he was given approval by Governor Darling. Darling was prompted to approve the new outstation not only on the basis of Frazer’s report but also because of a report by the Principal Medical Officer Bowman. Bowman had been sent to Moreton Bay in response to a dysentery epidemic and recommended the need for a better water supply and diet. Darling saw the Eagle Farm proposal as addressing some of these concerns.

Logan was equally prompt in commencing work at Eagle Farm. In September 1829 he reported:

\begin{quote}
I have commenced the new Agricultural Establishment and have selected 150 men and I propose to increase them to two hundred as soon as there are quarters for them; a slab house is now being prepared for their temporary accommodation and afterwards to be used as a barn. I shall defer putting up any other buildings until the arrival of the Director of Public Works. I propose to take 1000 acres into cultivation but if necessary it can be increased to any extent as there is an extensive tract of fine land in the immediate neighbourhood that will require very little clearing. Mr Parker has taken charge of the new establishment.\textsuperscript{9}
\end{quote}

Various buildings were erected in 1830-31 and the farming operations expanded. The expansion of Eagle Farm was halted in 1832 with an outbreak of malaria, prompting a review of operations. The \textit{Australian} newspaper in March 1832 noted that the ‘Government, we hear, are wisely resolved upon abandoning the swampy, unhealthy, and profitless mock-agricultural establishment, called Eagle Farm, Moreton Bay’.\textsuperscript{10} Eagle Farm was not closed but gradually most of the male prisoners were removed back to the main settlement and replaced by female prisoners.

The first female prisoners had arrived in the late 1820s and a building was constructed to accommodate them. Known as the Female Factory, it was located on the site of the present General Post Office in Queen Street. The presence of female prisoners in the midst of the main settlement was always a concern. The removal of the more rebellious to Eagle Farm was seen as a solution to overcoming problems of illicit relationships and maintaining greater control. By 1836, forty women were based at Eagle Farm.

When two Quaker missionaries James Backhouse and George Waker visited the Moreton Bay settlement in 1836, they included a visit to Eagle Farm. They noted in their diary:

\begin{quote}
We visited the establishment at Eagle Farm, six miles from Brisbane Town, toward the mouth of the river: It is under the direction of a Superintendent who, with his wife, resides in a small cottage, close by some huts, formerly
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{8} Steele, \textit{Brisbane Town in Convict Days}, p. 114.

\textsuperscript{9} Steele, \textit{Brisbane Town in Convict Days}, p. 115.

\textsuperscript{10} Steele, \textit{Brisbane Town in Convict Days}, p. 169.
occupied by the male prisoners; by whose labour seven hundred acres of land were formerly cultivated, chiefly in maize. At present, there are no male prisoners here; but forty females who are employed in field-labour: they are kept in close confinement during the night, and strictly watched in the day time, yet it is found very difficult to keep them in order. Some of them wear chains, to prevent them from absconding, which they have frequently done, under cover of the long grass.11

Backhouse and Walker also commented on visits from Aboriginal people. In discussing how males from a northern tribe frequently visit Brisbane Town, they noted that ‘the Females also, of this tribe, occasionally, show themselves at Eagle Farm, where there are no male Prisoners or Soldiers to molest them’.12

A different perspective on interaction with Aboriginal people was provided Thomas Atkins, who had served briefly as the chaplain at Norfolk Island. He visited Moreton Bay settlement in January 1837 and he remarked in his memoirs that at the ‘agricultural establishment I saw [Aboriginal] men entirely naked, employed in the carrying of wood and water to the houses of the government officers, in which were British white women of respectability’.13

By 1837 all females within the Moreton Bay penal settlement were residing at Eagle Farm. An additional slab hut was erected and also an extensive timber palisade. The palisade was 325 feet (99.7 m) long and 311 feet (94.8 m) wide. The Moreton Bay Penal settlement, including the Eagle Farm establishment was closed in 1839. The remaining 57 female convicts were removed elsewhere. The superintendent’s quarters was temporarily occupied by assistant surveyor Robert Dixon and then briefly by Stephen Simpson who took up the post of the Commissioner for Crown Lands. An inventory in 1839 listed the following structures at Eagle Farm.

- superintendent of agriculture’s house
- two-roomed building for male prisoners
- matron’s quarters
- four-room female factory
- store
- school
- hospital
- two-roomed cookhouse and needle room
- six-room cell block.14

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11 Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days*, p. 223.

12 Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days*, p. 213.

13 Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days*, p. 239.

Figure 3. Plan, Superintendent's quarters

Figure 4. Elevation, Superintendent's quarters

Figure 5. Plan and elevation, Matron's quarters

Figure 6. Plan and elevation, Hospital
After the departure of the convicts Eagle Farm was also used for a brief period as a Government cattle station. The area was surveyed in 1839 with the intention of offering the land for sale. Allotments were gradually sold and occupied.

The history of the site from the 1840s to 1930s is sketchy except that the predominant land use was mixed farming – citrus fruit, dairying, cattle grazing, and small crops. What happened to the buildings is unknown but some were possibly used by the new owners and materials reused in other structures. A

\[\text{Figure 7. Plan, Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment, 1838}\]

\[\text{Figure 8. Elevation, female barracks}\]

\[\text{15 Steele, Brisbane Town in Convict Days, p. 282.}\]
1890s photograph of a building along Schneider Road suggests that one of the buildings may still have been standing at that time.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{EAGLE FARM AIRFIELD}

Following the successful demonstration of aerial flight by the Wright brothers in early 1900s, motor-propelled aircraft offered great potential as a means of revolutionising transportation in Australia. The Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Service (later known as QANTAS) was established at Winton in 1920 to capitalise on the potential of commercial air travel in western Queensland and beyond.

The Commonwealth government also became an active and early player in the development of aviation. In 1922 the Commonwealth acquired an extensive area of land at Eagle Farm for an airfield. The area did not include the core buildings which formed the Eagle Farm agricultural establishment. In 1924 a hanger was built at Eagle Farm.\textsuperscript{17} and the airfield was the site of several significant landings including that of Bert Hinkler after a solo journey from Britain and Amy Johnson after her solo flight from the United States.

The Eagle Farm site proved to be less than suitable as a airfield due to problems with drainage.\textsuperscript{18} In 1931 the Commonwealth government decided to close the airfield and develop Archerfield airfield on the southern outskirts of Brisbane as the main airfield for the city. Eagle Farm was subsequently leased for farming. The government had intended to sell the land but prices were low due to the economic depression.

The Eagle Farm airfield was re-activated in the late 1930s as World War II loomed. The RAAF established a training school at Eagle Farm in late 1939. The escalation of the war with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour in December 1941 and the entry of the United States into the conflict had a direct impact on the Eagle Farm site. Suddenly, it became strategically very important as an airfield. The Commonwealth acquired additional land to enable larger runways to be built including the properties of the Wilson and Campbell families. Within these properties were located the site of the Eagle Farm Agricultural establishment.

The Queensland Main Roads Commission was engaged to construct new runways at Eagle Farm. More than 25 000 cubic metres of fill was used to build up the site in addition to 9 000 cubic metres of gravel for the base of the runway and 995 cubic metres of screenings for the asphalt.\textsuperscript{19} Hangers, workshops and other infrastructure were also constructed. By 1944 more than £500,000 had been expended on the Eagle Farm airfield. Eagle Farm became the base for the 81st Air Depot Group of the United State 5th Air Force.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{16} Allom Lovell, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{18} Dennis, ‘Wings and Windsocks’, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{19} Dennis, ‘Wings and Windsocks’, p. 230.
\end{flushleft}
After the war, the airfield became Brisbane’s principal civil aviation airport with extended and upgraded runways. New hangars and other infrastructure were built as use of the airport increased.

The airport was closed in 1988 to domestic aviation when the new Brisbane airport to the north-east was opened.

1991 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

In 1990 archaeologist Edward Higginbotham was commissioned by Australian Construction Services to assess the cultural heritage significance of the site, and in particular the archaeological potential of the site. He concluded from the documentary evidence that the Eagle Farm establishment had 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
4. Artifactual evidence
5. Environmental evidence.

He recommended a physical investigation of the site to determine the extent to which the archaeological remains survive. Higginbotham undertook this investigation in 1991. He excavated seven trenches approximately 1 m wide and 2 to 3 m long. He asserted that the excavations confirmed ‘the survival of the majority of the archaeological site, except for existing service trenches, other cable trenches, and an area where the topsoil had been removed.’ Higginbotham, however, recovered no artifacts nor did his report describe in any detail the stratigraphy of the site.

**2006 Archaeological Survey**

In 2006, Riddel Architecture was commissioned to undertake a more detailed survey to ascertain extent and nature of the archaeological deposit. The aims of the survey were:

- to determine what and how much of the fabric of the original convict site remains;
- to re-evaluate the cultural heritage significance in the context of any material remains found;
- to recommend strategies to document the site and to formulate appropriate mitigation measures.

Six trenches varying in depth from 800 mm to 1200 mm and 10 to 15 metres in length were excavated.

The key features revealed in each trench are described in the table below.

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20 Higginbotham, 1990, p. 11.


Table 1 - trenches and key features

<table>
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<th>Key Features</th>
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| 1 | • Several hand-made bricks on the southern side of the trench wall.  
• A line of bricks across the trench – not in a regular pattern but with a mixed orientation suggesting it may be remnants of a demolished feature  
• A post hole impression between the two brick features – no wood but distinct impression.  
• World War II runway below the existing runway but much thinner than the later runway which had a substantial fill base.  
• 1950s runway – varying depth of asphalt between 300 to 500 mm. The asphalt was on a gravel and crushed coral base. At the eastern end the base material truncates the World War II runway and extends below the upper loam layer into the clay. The depth of this base has destroyed all evidence of the 1830s site. |
| 2 | • 500 mm of the World War II development covered the original ground surface.  
• stone pitching was revealed at the base of trench - approximately 1850 mm in length and comprising stone 20 – 40 mm. This stone pitching was located in the vicinity of the female quarters.  
• This trench contained some evidence of recent use in the form of galvanised iron star picket and a bottle.  
• numerous brick fragments, pottery fragments in the upper parts of the natural deposits.  
• concrete slab with DCA Electric cable marker. |
<p>| 3 | • numerous small artifacts |</p>
<table>
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<th>T</th>
<th>Key Features</th>
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| 4  | • profile similar to trench 1.  
     • Aboriginal artefact (retouched flake found in the upper layer of the original ground surface.  
     • distinct post hole impression with wood in the base of the pit. |
| 5  | • similar profile to trench 1 with evidence of World War II and 1950s runway  
     • remnants of leather shoes, probably dating from 1940s - associated with grass and matted vegetation. |
| 6  | • Some artifacts recovered during sieving including metal objects and ceramics. |

The 2006 survey demonstrated that while some areas of the site have been disturbed by the construction of the runway and also possibly farming activity, significant features remain. The trenches represent a small sample of the site and suggest substantial archaeological evidence is yet to be uncovered.
The original level Agricultural establishment has been filled with approximately 400 mm of sandy loam and clay.

The 1950s runway varied in depth from 200 to 300 mm. Below is the thin 20 mm layer of the World War II runway. Below is the original convict era layer.

These bricks possibly are remnants of a chimney base or dismantled chimney.

These fragments are typical of 1820s and 1830s porcelain.

The boot probably dates from the construction of the World War II runway.
2 Significance of the site

Brisbane has the rare distinction of being founded as a penal settlement. Although only of a limited duration, the penal era was to have a significant influence on the shape of Brisbane as a town, city and later capital of Queensland. Material evidence of the penal era is limited with the most significant structures being the windmill on Wickham Terrace and the Commissariat Store in William Street. The Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment site is also significant as evidence of the early phase of European occupation.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The entry in the Queensland Heritage Register contains the following statement of significance.

The Eagle Farm Women's Prison and Factory Site is significant as one of few sites surviving in Brisbane from the convict period and a remnant of only seven sites associated with secondary punishment in Australia. Further, the Women’s Prison and Factory Site is one of even fewer sites, both in Brisbane and in the national context, associated specifically with female felons.

The Eagle Farm Women's Prison and Factory Site is significant as one of the earliest sites of building activity in Queensland, initial construction having occurred within 5 years of the establishment of the settlement of Brisbane Town.

The Eagle Farm Women's Prison and Factory Site has potential to reveal substrata evidence of a number of factors including the administration of the convict system in the final years of transportation, the confinement and punishment of female convicts, building materials and construction technology and artefacts associated with the activities, occupations and social status of groups and individuals.

The establishment of the Eagle Farm Women’s Prison and Factory Site is associated with early historical figures such as New South Wales Governor, Darling and Commandant Logan.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The recent archaeological investigations confirms this statement of significance. They confirmed that substrata material survives and that further excavations and research could contribute to an understanding to the administration of the Moreton Bay penal settlement and in particular the Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment.

The significance of the Eagle Farm as a airfield

The statement of significance does not refer to the later history of the site as an airfield. The 2006 archaeological investigations revealed that evidence survives of the World War II runway and also the upgraded 1950s runway. This material is also significant and should be reflected in the statement of significance. It is suggested that the following could be added to the statement of significance.

*The site is also significant as a major airfield developed in World War II and later as the main domestic airport for Brisbane.*
3 Managing the site

The site of the Eagle Farm Agricultural Establishment is unquestionably highly significant and an important part of Queensland’s heritage. The following policies are intended to guide the management and development of the site.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

Policy 1: Maintaining the significance of the site
The conservation and management of the site should be guided by the acknowledgement of the site as one of the most important archaeological sites in Queensland relating to early European occupation.

As discussed in previous chapters, the archaeological deposit resource is highly significant. The site has the potential through archaeological research to provide a greater understanding into the Moreton Bay penal settlement. The importance of the site should shape how the site is conserved and managed.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

Policy 2: Development of site
Development could occur on the site provided that the archaeological deposit is not disturbed. If development is necessary that requires excavation that would potentially impact on the archaeological deposit, a thorough archaeological excavation by a suitably qualified person should be undertaken.

While recognising that the site is highly significant, limited and carefully planned development could occur on the site. The simplest way of managing the significance of the site is to ensure that the archaeological deposit is not disturbed. The archaeological deposit is located generally between 500 to 800 mm below the current ground level. Development that does not require any significant excavation or disturbance of the subsurface could be undertaken.
INTERPRETATION OF THE SITE

Policy 3: Interpretation
Interpretation should be an integral part of any development of the site.

A range of approaches could be adopted in the history of the site. These include:
• interpretative panels/plaques at appropriate locations throughout the site.
• delineating the footprints of structures in landscaping elements
• construction of skeleton buildings where the location and form of the original structures can be verified
• an interpretative centre.

The site offers the potential for an innovative approach to interpretation.

ALTERING EXISTING GROUND LEVELS

Policy 4: Altering existing ground levels
The existing ground level could be raised if required. Any change in the levels should be accurately surveyed and a copies lodged with the EPA and Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit.

The advantage of raising the existing ground level is that it would provide and additional buffer between the archaeological deposit and any development. It will be important to survey new levels to ensure that with any future works on the site, the depth of the archaeological will be able to be assessed.

ACCESS TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSIT

Policy 5: Access to archaeological deposit
Ready access to the archaeological deposit should be incorporated into the design and location of any structures that are erected on the site.

Some new structures may be erected on the footprint of original buildings. For example, if skeleton frames are erected, they would obviously be located over the original building. As further archaeological excavations could be undertaken, it is important to ensure that ready access to the archaeological deposit is maintained. This could involve designing structures and elements that are easily removed or disassembled to provide access.

MONITORING OF EXCAVATIONS

Policy 6: Monitoring of excavation
Any excavation or disturbance of the subsurface which is below the 2007 ground level should be monitored by an archaeologist to ensure that the archaeological deposit is not disturbed.

The following procedures should be adopted whenever excavation of the site is undertaken.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Policy 7: Archaeological research
Archaeological research on the site should only be undertaken under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist. A research plan and methods statement should be submitted to the EPA for approval.

The site offers the potential for ongoing archaeological research. It important that any research is undertaken with the highest standards and protocols to ensure that significant evidence is not inadvertently destroyed or damaged.

ARTIFACTS

Policy 8: Artifacts
All significant artifacts recovered from the site should be recorded and photographed. All artifacts should be deposited with the Queensland Museum.

Because of the significance of the site, it appropriate that all objects are deposited with the Queensland Museum. All artifacts should be processed in accordance with accepted practice.
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