

WELCOME TO THE CASCADES FEMALE FACTORY HISTORIC SITE

This is Australia's most significant site associated with the female convict story. Between 1788 and 1853 some 25,000 women were transported to Australia for their crimes. Approximately half came to Van Diemen's Land, most spending time in one of the colony's five female factories (as prisons for women were known at the time). Operating solely as the Cascades Female Factory between 1828-1856, other government institutions then moved in, occupying unused yards until the property was sold in 1905.

Today, three of the original five factory yards form the Historic Site. The tall stone walls display many scars of the past, where barred windows and heavy doors were once the only connection to the outside world. The Matron's Quarters in Yard 4 offers testimony to the civilian women administrators of the site who played such an important role in the daily reform and punishment of the female convicts. As you explore the site, consider the thousands of women and their children who walked through Hobart town from the prison ships at the docks, to arrive here at the foot of Mt Wellington. Imagine the noises that once filled its walls – babies crying, the rub of cold fingers on the washboard, the clunk of the flat iron onto its stand.

WELCOME



Catherine Bartley had served nine months in Ireland for stealing a parasol before she was convicted of cattle theft and transported to Van Diemen's Land. Arriving in 1850 she was sentenced immediately to hard labour at the Female Factory. During 1852 Catherine was issued her Ticket of Leave and was able to chose her own employ, however when discovered to be pregnant, her Ticket of Leave was revoked and and she returned to the Factory to have her 'illegitimate' child. Catherine's son spent a year at the factory before being taken away to the Orphan school to live only another year before his death, recorded as a result of 'Teething'. Collection: Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office, PH30-1-1425

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

In 1823, 20-acres of land area – including the area where the Female Factory now stands – was allocated by Governor Sorell to Mr Thomas Yardley Lowes. Building commenced that year of what was to become T.Y. Lowes & Co. Distillery. Regrettably for Mr Lowes, his plans to run a successful distillery were thwarted by a series of unfortunate circumstances. When Mr Lowes embarked from England with almost £2000 and goods including alcohol and distilling equipment, not a single legal distillery was operating in Van Diemen's Land. By the time Mr Lowes opened his doors in 1824, there were at least 16 distilleries in operation, which no doubt made business tough. To make matters worse, 1825 saw the reduction of import tax on spirits, encouraging those outside the colony to bid for local business. Lowes' plans were doomed. Meanwhile, the conditions at the Hobart Gaol/Factory were less than satisfactory, not least because the two establishments stood on the same ground, separated only by a brick wall. The buildings were in a ruinous state and upon inspection by Lieutenant Governor Arthur, reported to be 'exceedingly confined and dilapidated... altogether insecure'. Arthur had planned to build a new gaol for the men and refurbish the existing structures for a Female House of Correction. However, after his October 1826 visit, his memorandum to the Colonial Secretary requested that the government be on the '...look out for a Building either to be purchased or hired, capable of receiving 40 or 50 women...'

In late 1826 when the Government advertised for a suitable building, Mr Lowes saw an opportunity to dispose of his property and offered the distillery and three acres to the Colonial Secretary for £2500. The government eventually purchased the land for £2000 pounds in 1827, planning to convert the distillery buildings and high walls (Yard 1) into a female factory. Upon the arrival of Colonial Engineer John Lee Archer in August 1827, architectural plans were drawn up for the conversion of the site and the work took over a year to complete. In late December 1828, the first women were transferred to the refurbished distillery site, which was to become known as the Cascades Female Factory. The choice of location was greatly disputed. Some were concerned about its position at the base of Mt Wellington, identifying it as damp and dark. Others celebrated its isolation from the main settlement, a chance to remove the inmates from the disruptive elements of the town. Discussion surrounding the factory continued throughout its years of operation, least of all, the question of how to best foster 'proper feminine behaviour' in the women who, according to Reverend Henry Phipps Fry, were 'utterly insubordinate' and led 'the most flagitious lives'.

LIFE IN THE FACTORY

Just days after the first women were relocated to Cascades, the Rules and Regulations for the management of the House of Correction were issued to the Principal Superintendent. The rules outlined the staff required to manage the establishment: a Superintendent, a Matron, an Overseer and Task Mistress for the Crime Class, a Porter, a Clerk and two Constables. They also stipulated how the women were to be divided, in both class and duties. Arthur insisted that the women be placed in three distinct classes that 'on no account be suffered to communicate with each other'. The first class was to consist of women recently arrived from England who exhibited good behaviour on the journey – as reported by the surgeon on-board, as well as those returning from service with good characters and those who had successfully seen out



Mary Ann Cranstone, believed to be pictured here (with her husband and son, both named James Heather) was a 16 years old when she was transported for stealing bank notes. A housemaid from Castle Barr, described on her record as a thief and a prostitute, she had been imprisoned eight times for stealing in England prior to arriving in Van Diemen's Land. Mary Ann appears to have spent time at the Factory in both 1847 and 1852 before receiving her Conditional Pardon in July 1852. Collection: Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office, PH401346

their probation in second class. This class alone was considered assignable, and the women were sent to service when the appropriate employment could be obtained. The second class was to comprise those who had been guilty of minor offences and those who, by their improved conduct, merited removal from the crime class. The latter was the lowest rung on the ladder, comprised of women who had been transported for a second time, those guilty of misconduct on their journey to the colony, convicted of offences before the Supreme Court, or those who committed offences within the walls of the establishment. The class system regulated both clothing and daily tasks of the women while in the factory. The first class (or more trustworthy) women were employed as cooks, task overseers and hospital attendants. Second class convicts were employed in making clothes for the establishment and preparing and mending linen. The crime class was sentenced to the washtub, laundering for the factory, the orphan school and the penitentiary; they also carded and spun wool. All of these tasks were

subject to change at the discretion of the Principal Superintendent. November to March saw unrelenting hours of labour, with the shorter days in winter being the only solace. With the sun not setting until after dinner for a large part of the year, the women were labouring up to 12 hours a day and even the slightest disobedience to the rules was punishable. Females guilty of disobedience of orders, neglect of work, profane, obscene, or abusive language, insubordination, or other turbulent or disorderly or disrespectful conduct, shall be punished by the superintendent with close confinement in a dark or other cell, until her case shall be brought under consideration of the Principal Superintendent. – Rules & Regulations, 1829.

Below: Nursery at Brixton Prison built in 1820, converted into a women's correctional facility in the mid 1800s and a military prison in the 1880s returning to Crown Prison status in 1898. Brixton still operates today as a prison training facility. This image is dated c1856.

Solitary confinement cells at the northern end of Yard 2, c1870. Collection: State Library of Victoria, H22309



THE LATER YEARS

When convict transportation to Van Diemen's Land ceased in 1853, new institutions started using unoccupied parts of the Female Factory site. The main site was proclaimed a gaol in 1856 and transferred to local authorities – although remained known as 'the Female Factory'. Three new site users moved in during 1869: a male invalid depot, a female invalid depot and a boys' reformatory. At this time the Female Factory was scaled back to Yards 1 and 2 and the rear of Yard 5. The years to follow saw other institutions come and go, including a Contagious Diseases Hospital, Lying-in Home and Hospital for the Insane. The Women's Prison at the site finally closed in 1877 with most of the other institutions moving out between the 1880s and 1904. The Cascades Female Factory complex was subdivided and in 1905 auctioned by the government to private buyers. Since then nearly all the buildings have been demolished with a number of industrial buildings constructed across the site including paint and fudge factories. In the early 1970s the Women's Electoral Lobby sought out Federal government grant money for the

purchase of Yard 1, handing over management to the Parks and Wildlife Service. Between 1999-2004, the Female Factory Historic Site Ltd acquired Yard 3 and the Matron's Quarters; finally in 2008 the Tasmanian state Government purchased the remaining part of Yard 4 to form the Historic Site as it is today.

A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Cascades Female Factory Historic Site is one of 11 convict sites that together form the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage property. Collectively these sites represent an exceptional example of the forced migration of convicts and an extraordinary example of global developments associated with punishment and reform. Representing the female convict experience, the Cascades Female Factory demonstrates how transportation was used to expand Britain's spheres of influence, and ultimately led to building the Australian nation as we know it today.

CONTACT US

The Cascades Female Factory Historic Site is managed by the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.

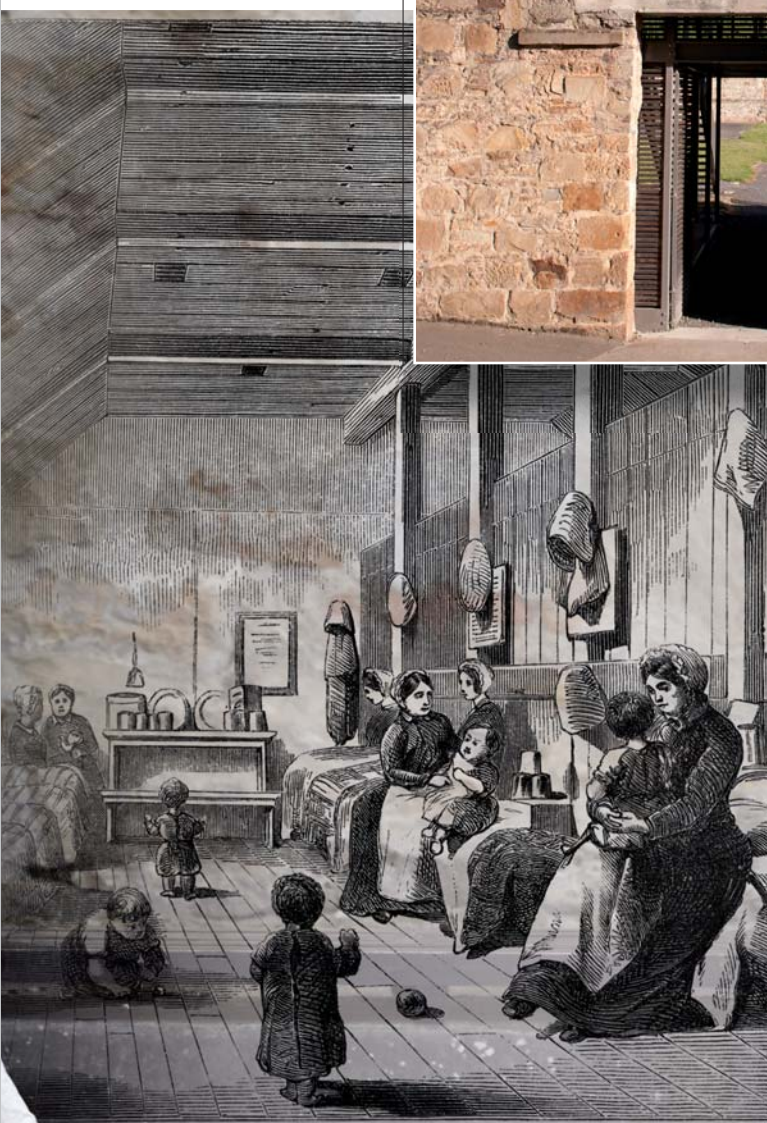
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Cascades Female Factory Chapel in Yard 1, c1900
Collection: Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office, NS 1013/1571



	Nov–Feb.	Mar. Apl. Sep. & Oct.	May–August
Master	½ past 5	Six	Seven
Labour	Six	½ past 6	
Breakfast	Eight	Eight	Eight
Prayers & Labour	½ past 8	½ past 8	½ past 8
Dinner	Twelve	Twelve	Twelve
Labour	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset
Evening Meal	½ past 7	½ past 6	½ past 6
Prayers	Eight	Seven	Seven

Hours of labour



CASCAD FEMALE FACTORY HISTORIC SITE





CASCADES FEMALE FACTORY

Historic Site



World Heritage Site

SITE MAP

EVOLUTION OF THE FACTORY SITE

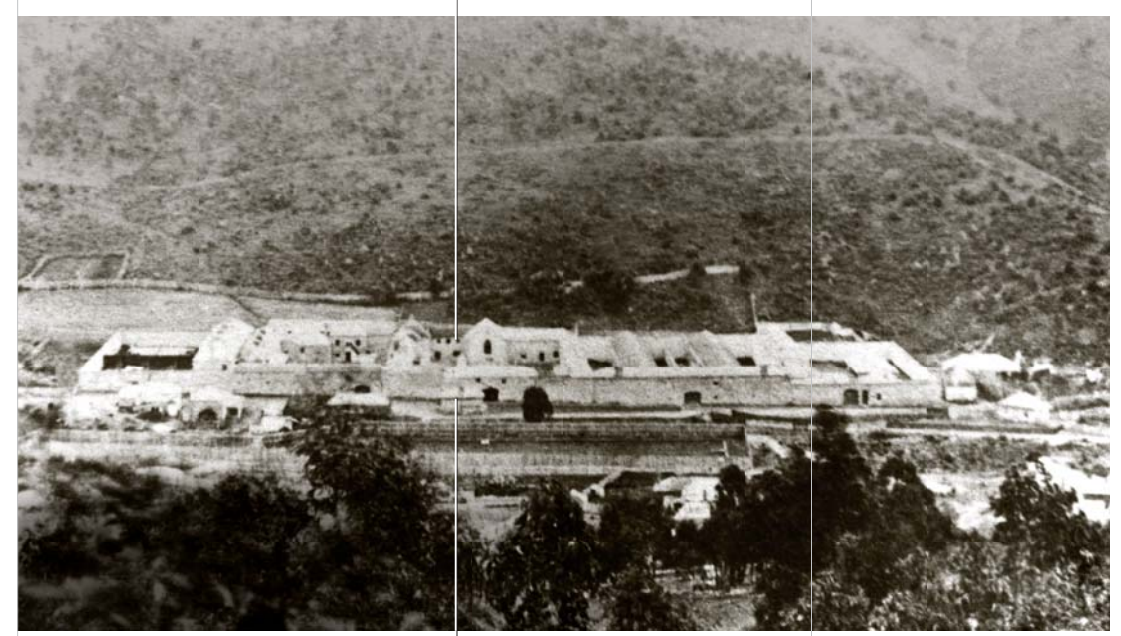
The problem of overcrowding was evident from the first intake of women in December 1828. By late 1829, numbers had grown to nearly 200 women. These women worked, slept, ate, prayed, and gave birth within the 13 feet walls that surrounded the single yard establishment.

YARD 1 (1828)

The first yard had been heavily redesigned from its distillery days and during its first incarnation contained a two-storeyed building housing staff against the southern wall. Two-storey buildings lined each side of the yard with dayrooms to house the women, a hospital, kitchen and nursery. The courtyard was divided into seven individual yards, one for the entrance and offices, one each for the hospital, kitchen and nursery, and a yard for each classification of women adjacent to their sleeping rooms and work spaces. The establishment also contained 12 solitary confinement cells in the northwest corner, a chapel and sleeping rooms in the centre. Store rooms and workshops lined the northern wall.



In its early days, Yard 1 saw its fair share of activity, not all of it relating to the reform of the women, in fact quite the opposite. A riot occurred in February 1829 when soldiers from the 40th Regiment had thrown bread, butter and cheese over the walls of the factory to the women. The food had been confiscated and the women responsible for requesting the food from the soldiers had been confined to their sleeping rooms. As a result of this treatment the women rebelled, first abusing the staff and then starting small fires using clothing and blocking ventilators. With the assistance of Convicts and a few constables brought in from Hobart, the situation was calmed, but resulted in a flurry of communication regarding the riot and conditions in the factory.



Cascades Female Factory looking north, c1860s
Collection: Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office, PH 52/1/35

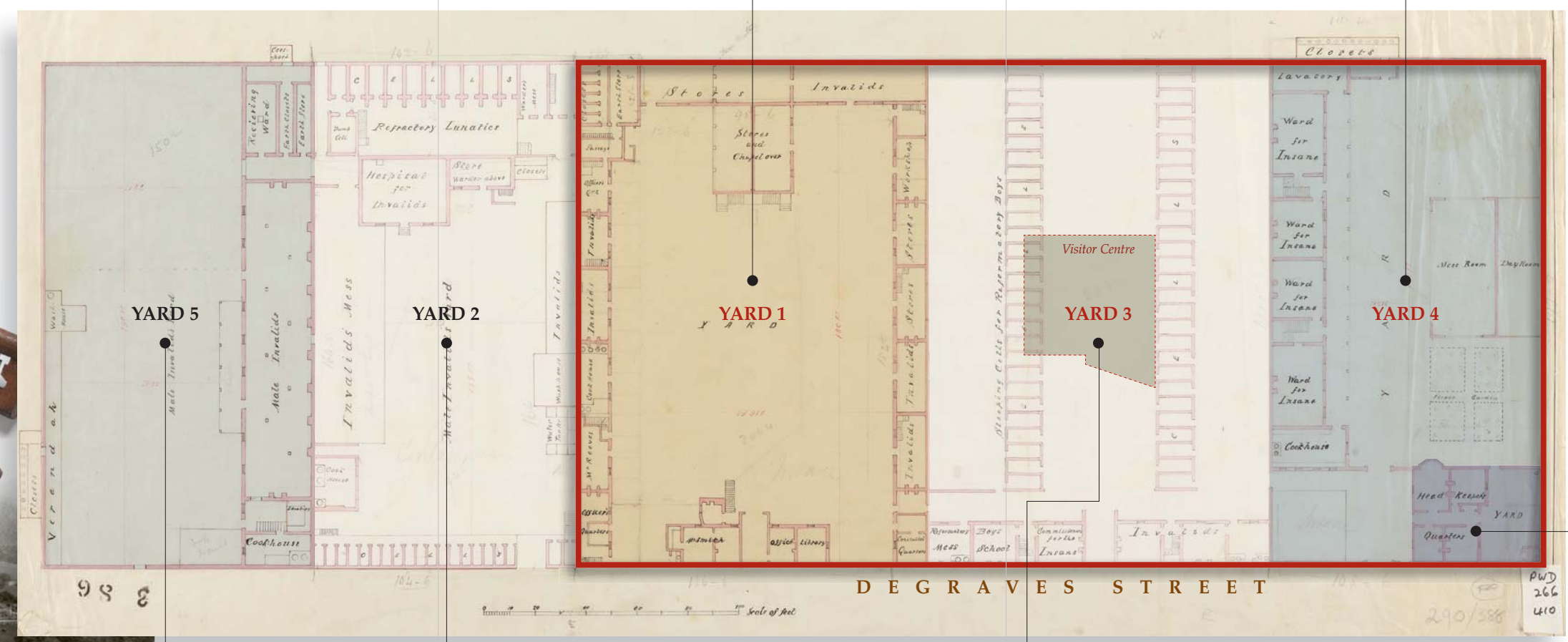
YARD 4 (1850)

During the 1840s convict establishments to manage female convicts and their children were spreading throughout Hobart. With Cascades being well over capacity and the conditions and infant death rates drawing much public attention, a number of other sites were established to take the pressure off the factory. Women were held at a nursery site in Dynnyme, and on board the convict hulk the *Anson*; some were moved to hiring depots and to other female factories at Ross and Launceston. Meanwhile the infant death rate was not improving, despite various locations being trialled as alternatives to Cascades. In order to alleviate the problem and in

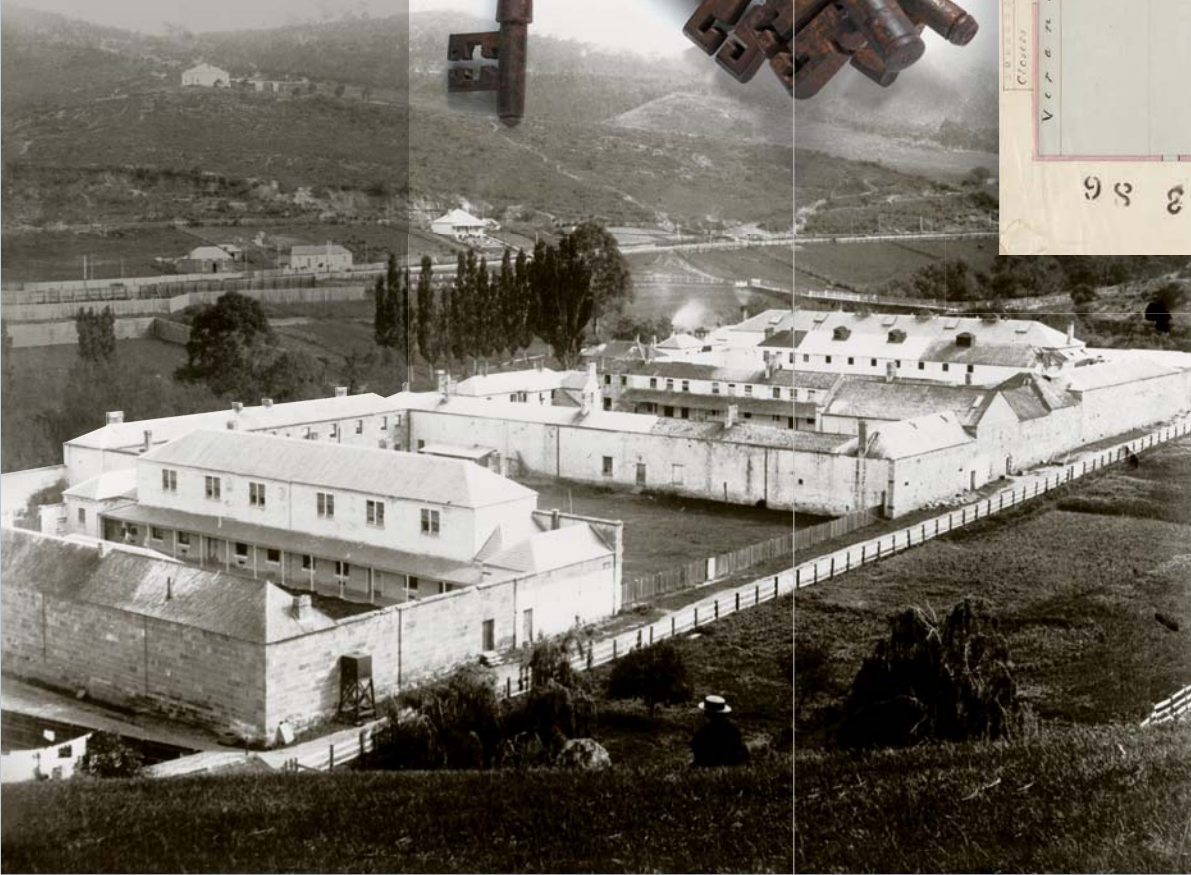
an effort to re-centralise the convict administration of females, plans were prepared in mid 1849 for a nursery – in the new Yard 4.

A large nursery building ran along the western wall in this yard, with windows and a verandah facing east to capture much of the daily sun. The building was designed to house 88 women and 150 children, allowing for babies to stay with their mothers until they were weaned and placed in the care of other nursing mothers. They remained here until admitted to the Queen's Orphan School at 3 years of age. The yard also hosted a commodious cookhouse/laundry and a shelter shed was located in the centre of the large exercise yard. The yard's buildings were completed in late 1850 and were visited by Colonel Mundy on New Year's Day 1851: *In a large exercise yard, with an open shed in the centre to afford shelter from the sun, we found sixty women, with as many babies from two years to as many days old... Some of the females, I found, were the hired nurses of the establishment – not the mothers of the children... many of the wretched little ones, in the hands of the nurses, will never know either parent... There were a score or so of wooden cribs, in each lay two, three or four innocents, stowed away head and tail, like sardines a l'huile; while others were curled about like a litter of kittens in a basket of straw.* Mundy recorded 730 women and 130 infants at the factory at the time of his visit. Obviously, despite the good intentions, overcrowding and poor conditions continued to plague the establishment and saw the nursery move in and out of the site for its remaining years of operation.

SITE PLAN
This 1877 plan gives the best idea of the dense layout of buildings within the walls of the factory site. The notations on the plan indicate how the original Female Factory buildings were to be modified to become the Cascades Invalid Establishment in Yards 1, 2 and 5 as well as being used to house a Boys Reformatory in Yard 3 and wards for the insane in Yard 4.
Collection: Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office
PWD266-1-410



Cascades Female Factory looking south west, c1900
Collection: Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office, NS 1013/1/48



YARD 5 (1852) – Outside the site

The fifth or western most yard was completed during 1852, the year before convict transportation ceased to the colony. This yard, unlike the adjacent yards, had a wall of only 5 feet surrounding it. A two-storey structure running along the western exterior wall of Yard 2 was designed to house pass-holders or probationers awaiting employment. The building was used as a dormitory and mess hall and was intended to replace the Hiring Depot at the Brickfields in New Town. Any evidence of this yard now lies under the houses of Degraives Street.

YARD 2 (1832) – Outside the site

This yard was designed after public pressure and interest began to build in both the media and community regarding the conditions within the factory walls. In the January of 1830, Assistant Surgeon Bryant suggested that additions to the factory were urgently needed to alleviate overcrowding and for sanitary reasons. A few days after receiving this information, Governor Arthur approved the construction of a second yard with solitary working cells; however, it took another two and a half years to build. The second yard was smaller than the first, the northern and southern walls

were lined with solitary cells, washtubs and drying lines filled the yard space and washing sheds lined the east and west walls. Not surprisingly this yard became known as the Washing Yard. The *Hobart Town Courier* reported on the construction on June 15 1832, suggesting that the solitary cells had an *'awfully dismal and sepulchral appearance'* and must have had a *'salutary effect in forcing reflections and leading to self examination and reform'*.

YARD 3 (1842)

Governor Arthur was replaced by Sir John Franklin in 1837, and by 1841 pressure on the establishment was building with more and more female convicts arriving in the colony. Franklin ordered an enquiry into the factory and the results were horrifying; the women could not work as there was little room to do so, the sleeping quarters were overcrowded and women were sharing hammocks, and congestion in the yards made it nearly impossible for staff to control outbursts. In March 1841, the arrival of the convict transport vessel the *Mary Ann* saw 112 of the 124 women

onboard off loaded and moved to the already very crowded factory. This took numbers to over 500, all crammed into an establishment designed for 200. In 1842, an overflow establishment was set up at the 'Brickfields' in New Town, however with new arrivals continually flooding in, numbers rarely dropped below 600 during this time. Work began on the separate apartments in December 1842 and one third of the new cells were occupied by mid 1844. The dimensions of this yard were similar to that of Yard 1, a number of offices were built along the southern wall and

two long double-storeyed cell blocks divided the yard into three sections. Each cell block housed 28 cells on both floors making a total of 112 cells each 4 feet six inches by 12 feet. Believe it or not, these 'apartments' were not necessarily designed to punish the women, but rather isolate and control, and reform them through separation.

THE MATRON'S QUARTERS (1850)

The Matron's Quarters was built at the southern end of Yard 4 and was originally designed with four main rooms, three for use by the Matron – her parlour, bedroom and kitchen. The other housed messengers conveying correspondence to and from convict and government officials in Hobart. The amenities were in a yard to the east where the front extension rooms of the house stand today. This cottage is the only remaining building from the convict era on the site today. An almost identical mirror image of the Matron's cottage – the Sub-Matron's cottage – was built in the south-western corner of Yard 4 at the same time the main cottage was constructed. Foundations were located through archaeological investigation, however little evidence of its existence survives today in the historical records.