



Editor - Peter Ludlow

Exploring the Remains of Peel Island's Quarantine Station

The Quarantine Station stood atop The Bluff on Peel's South-East corner from the early 1870s until 1910. From 1910 until 1916, its empty buildings housed a Home for Inebriates and in 1916, the wooden buildings were demolished. Today, the area is thickly wooded and the only remnants of the Quarantine Station are the so called "jail" and the former well.



A former lazarret patient recalled that there was no roof or partition remaining in the "jail" during his stay on the island (1940s).

The roof and partition may have been added later as a holiday house for a patient (or by a boatie).

The iron door, however, was there and in about 1990, it was taken by QPWS rangers to St Helena Island.

There were no trees around the "jail", only grass, yellow flowers, and daisies.

The shape of the previous quarantine gardens can still be seen from the position of the flowers.

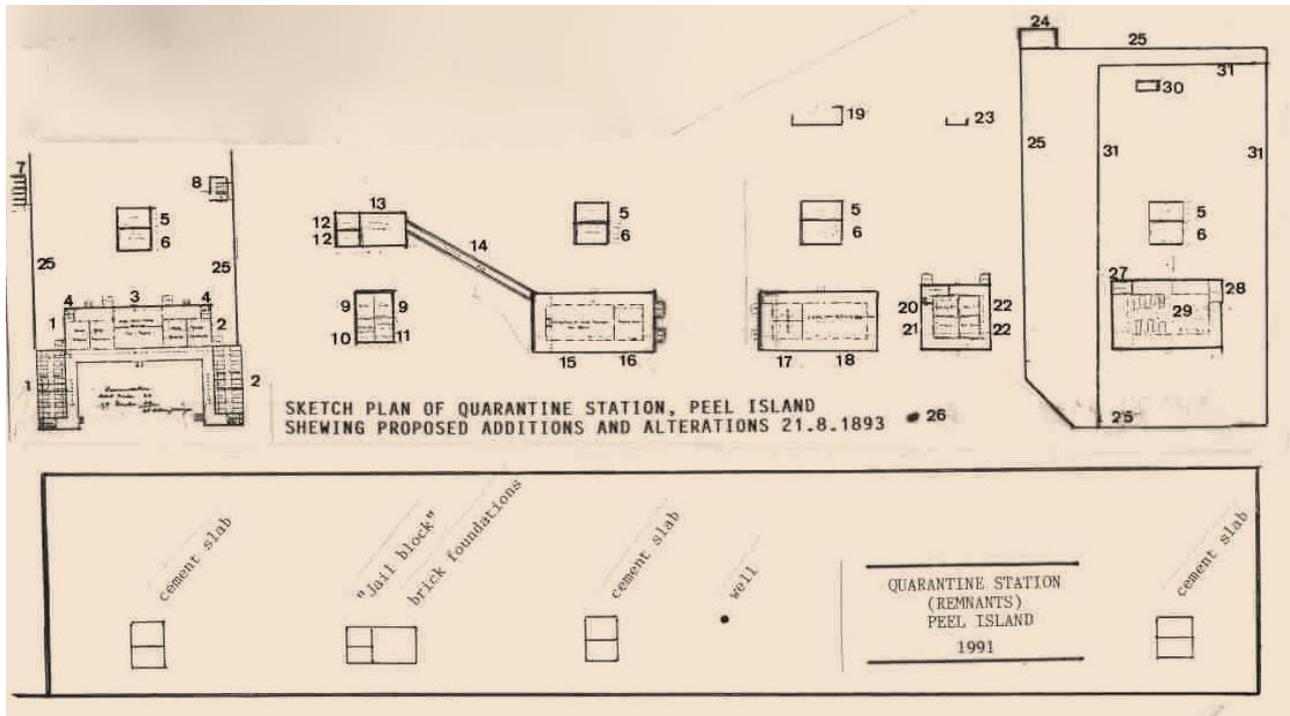
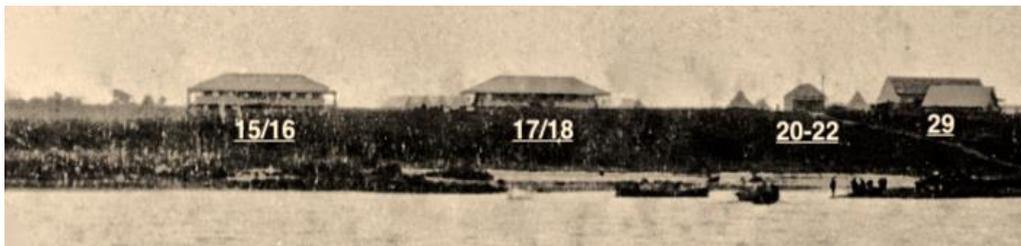
The "jail" was originally the oven rooms for the former Quarantine Station

The well is bottle shaped with a narrow opening at the top. It seems to be lined with bricks and may have been constructed by prison labour.

Earlier in 2019, the well appeared dry, but in 1991, Ray Cowie, the then ranger for the Redland Shire Council, attempted to pump it out with a portable petrol driven pump - without succeeding to dry it out. The water content may depend on the level of the island's water table from time to time.



A protective grill now covers the Quarantine Station's well



1 Saloon males	11 P.O. & W'Office	20 Kitchen
2 Saloon females	12 Ovens	21 Surgery
3 Saloon male & female	13 Kitchen	22 Bedroom (Dr)
4 Bathrooms	14 Covered way	23 E.closet (Dr)
5 Shed	15 Dining room	24 Stables
6 Kitchen	16 Reading room	25 Galvanized iron fence
7 Earth closets for saloon males	17 Officers' quarters	26 Flagstaff
8 Earth closets for saloon females	18 Dining room for steerage males & crew	27 Dining room
9 Store	19 Earth closets for steerage females	28 Kitchen
10 Telegraph operator's room		29 Sleeping for steerage females
		30 Earth closets for steerage females

The "Jail"

In July 1991, I measured the distance between the remaining cement slabs (still to be found under the leaves and undergrowth) and the "jail" at the old Quarantine site. (See plan)

By comparison with the sketch plan of 1893, the cellblock proved to be the former oven rooms (#12 on the sketch above) which were attached to the bakehouse (#13).

The term "jail" may have originated when prisoners from nearby St Helena Island were housed there for overnight detention whilst they worked on the completion of the Quarantine Station's stone jetty.

The building may also have served as a "jail" for isolating obstreperous inmates from the Inebriate Home between 1910 and 1916 when it operated on the former Quarantine Station site.

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