

ROSS ROAD – GAOL AND POLICE STATION

The original gaol and gaoler's accommodation was in the Dock Yard and is still standing today, forming part of the Falklands Historic Dockyard Museum. Construction of the new stone gaol commenced in 1868 on Ross Road and the original building is still used to date as part of the Police Station and Prison.

The construction of the new gaol commenced 11 February 1868 and was finished in 1871 at a total cost of £401-18-4. [S26]

A further £312-2-1 was spent on finishing interior fittings in 1872 bringing the total expenditure to £714-0-5. [S26]

On 18 June 1878 John Oliver, bricklayer, and John Steel, stonemason examined the wall surrounding the new gaol and reported:

"1st That the accident which has happened to the wall arose partly from the recent severe weather and partly from the wall having been built with clay and no buttresses erected on the inside.

2nd We found that the stonework on the wall is not properly bonded, which ought to have been done every three feet in height, each course. Even if this had been done we are of opinion that the accident would have happened.

3rd The eastern wall in our opinion will be safe, provided that three brick buttresses, three bricks wide are batter 4 ft from the wall at bottom to within 2 ft of the top.

4th We propose that the western wall should be taken down to within 3 ft of the bottom and rebuilt supported by buttresses similar to those supporting the eastern wall, but 6ft from the wall at bottom.

5th Further we propose that the southern wall be pulled down entirely and rebuilt from the footing to within two feet of the original height and that three brick buttresses be erected as support similar to those on the other walls.

6th The two north walls adjoining the gaol we consider safe providing there is no drain underneath.

But we are of the opinion that if the present wall is entirely pulled down and an 18 inch wall rebuilt with grey stone lime, 10ft on the eastern and western sides, and 12ft on the southern side it would afford greater security to the prison and the cost of the lime required for building the wall would not exceed the cost of the materials used in the building the brick buttresses by £15.

We suggest that the coping should be set in cement and mortar mixed (3 of mortar to 1 on cement).

We advise that the rebuilding should not be carried on in wet weather and that a competent person should supervise the work to see that it is properly bonded.

However, according to the report in the Blue Book during 1878 considerable progress was made with the interior of the new gaol *"which is hoped will soon be ready for occupation"*. [S33] A prisoner, McKEEN, was employed by James HOCKING, the gaoler, to occasionally go to the new gaol to mangle. [H35; 12d; 38g; 50m; 224a]

On 18 September 1879 James PRIOR, builder, agreed to erect the prison wall including pointing, labour only, for £90. [H35; 68a] During 1879 the wall around the new gaol was completed and the new gaol came into occupation. [S34] On 4 November 1879 Arthur Bailey certified that T HARDY had built 99 ½ yards of stone wall behind the new gaol to his satisfaction and the governor recommended that the mortar to be used for pointing be of a richer quality than that used for building the wall. [H35; 292a] The chief constable's quarters were also in the building; in 1879 this was John McNIECE who was appointed 3 January 1879. His constables sworn in 3 January

1879 were James PRESCOTT, Brice LEECH, Charles McALLISTER, William CLAPPERTON, Frederick HARDY and Charles CAREY. [H35; 1]

During the Executive Council meeting of 28 February 1888 Governor KERR reported that the Chief Constable had reported “*that the Gaol was in a very bad state and that the joists where they entered the walls were rotten*”. Messrs BIGGS and LELLMAN, two experienced carpenters made a report on the condition of the gaol. [P2: 341; 348]

On 9 March 1888 William BIGGS, foreman carpenter of the Falkland Islands Co Ltd, and Joseph LELLMAN, carpenter made the following report:

“...the building is constructed of native stone bedded with a mixture of clay, peat ashes and a very small portion of lime the coins and window facings being imported brick bedded with a mixture of lime and sea sand which has not amalgamated to any extent.

We also found that the front of the building is supported by two buttresses and the same seems to have been placed there sometime after the building was erected and at that time the whole appears to have been pointed with cement which has cracked from the further bulging of the building which extends from top to bottom.

The other three faces of the outer walls are cracked and bulged in much in the same manner as the front wall.

Inside under the bottom flooring there are three ventilators near the ground with about a three foot air space – the earth being very damp and also the foundation.

We also found the ends of the sleepers joisting and flooring very rotten.

On examination of the beams and sills on the first floor we found the outer walls had left the parting walls to some extent cracking the plaster in several places.

All the door frames being solid are built into the walls as well as the window frames which are all more or less rotten and falling away from the stone and brick work in fact any wood that is in or near the walls is more or less rotten.

On examining the upper rooms we found every thing much in the same state joisting floor and door and window frames and casings rotten and the outer walls cracked in several places. In the attic we found the roof had been leaking in several places but the framing of the roof is in reasonable good condition but we are of opinion that the girders and wall plates are rotten where coming in contact with the outer walls...” [H42; 164]

According to the verbal report made to Governor KERR by Mr TUMBER “*it appeared that the East and West walls of the Building were separating through the strain and weight of the roof, and that the rottenness of the ends of the Joists was caused by their not being properly protected when the Gaol was built.*” It was recommended that the building be measured and that a sufficient number of iron tye-rods be ordered. [P2: 349]

In Despatch 49 dated 10 May 1888 Governor Kerr wrote “*...the Gaol in Stanley has for some time past been showing signs of weakness from faulty and imperfect construction.*

2. I have had the building surveyed by competent workmen who report that there are cracks extending through the substance of the walls at both ends; that the material used as mortar has not sufficient lime, and is wanting in cohesion, and that the wood work at all points of contract with the walls is rotten or unsound.

3. It is recommended that strong iron tie rods should be used to brace and keep the walls together, and that iron girders should be placed under the beams and sleepers...the chimneys have to be taken down, the arches supported and repaired, and the rotten joists and flooring removed and replaced by new materials.” [B22; 31]



The Gaol after the fitting of the iron tye-rods – Luxton Collection

In the Executive Council meeting of 20 April 1903 it was resolved that as there was a female prisoner in the gaol that it was essential to remove the Printing Office from the Gaol to afford accommodation for a matron. [P3; 397]

On 6 November 1903 the Governor in Executive Council declared that the "*Gaol Paddock shall be a Public Pound under Section 3 of the Pound Amendment Ordinance No 8 of 1897*". [P3; 405]

In 1927 a wooden extension was built on to the west end of the building and heating installed.



Defences around the Police Station in 1942

The police station was seriously damaged 11 June 1982 when hit by an Argentine guided missile.

The Police Station was designated as being a building of Architectural or Historic Interest 10 September 2001.

A new extension to the east of the building was designed in 2006/2007 and completed in 2009 ready to be officially opened by HRH Princess Anne on Tuesday 24 March 2009.

