

Early Town Planning in Hobart

By

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(Read 18th May, 1943)

PLATES XIII, XIV

Of the older cities of the Commonwealth, Hobart alone retains anything of an early colonial character. For this reason any record of its early development is of great interest. The purpose of this paper is to place on record an attempt at town planning (with maps) that was made in 1826, and is not noted in the *Historical Records of Australia*. This report was found amongst some papers placed in the writer's hands by Lt.-Colonel Dumaresq of Mt. Ireh, near Launceston. Lt.-Colonel Dumaresq is a grandson of the Edward Dumaresq who was one of the three signatories to the report.

Hobart was first laid out by Macquarie during his visit in 1811. This is fully reported in the *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, Volume I, page 512. This should be studied.

In 1825, Governor Arthur appointed three Commissioners of the Survey. These commissioners were Edward Dumaresq, R. O'Connor, and Lieut. Peter Murdoch. Dumaresq was chief commissioner. The main duty of these commissioners was to conduct a general survey of the Island. Another of their duties, however, was to report on the state of Hobart Town, and to make suggestions for the improvement of its layout. It is this report that is attached herewith as an Appendix.

It is unnecessary to comment on this excellent report. The proposed changes were not all put into effect at once, but the important recommendations were all carried out in the hundred years that followed the date of the report.

In any enquiry into early Tasmanian history, it is inevitable that great interest should be aroused in the men who took part in the making of that particular part of history. The following biographical details are therefore given of the three commissioners, all of whom were men of outstanding character.

Lieut. Edward Dumaresq, was one of three brothers, all of whom played a notable part in the early land development of Australia. Their sister, Eliza, had married General Ralph Darling, who became Governor of New South Wales in 1825. The career of each of these brothers has been well described in the Australian Encyclopaedia, so only the broad outlines of Edward's life in Tasmania will be given. Dumaresq visited Van Dieman's Land first in 1824, when he was on leave from the East India Company. This is his description of his impression of Hobart Town at that time:—

'April 7, 1824. Came up the River Derwent to within 8 or 9 miles from Hobart Town. About 7 o'clock the pilot came on board and told us that the "Triton" was to sail the next morning for Madras, and that Major Bell and all

the officers were on board. So I wrote a short letter to Ovans, and the next morning in going up the River met the "Triton" going down. Went on board. Saw Major Bell and family, (a very fine one) and gave the letter for Ovans. Landed about 11 o'clock and went to the hotel, which is only just ready. Feel delighted with everything and the climate is as near perfection as any I have ever known. At present it is exactly like that of England in the fine, clear, cold days of Autumn, but it is said to be very rainy and wet in the winter. New houses of a very neat, clean, and many of a very handsome appearance are rising up in all quarters. Everyone appears to be fully employed and intent on his business. The different appearance of the people of Mauritius and those of Hobart Town seems to me very remarkable. Instead of seeing the poor fellows fagging away in the burning sun, puffing, blowing, and wiping their pale faces with their kerchiefs already soaked through, here they are fine, ruddy faced men who rather seem walking fast to keep themselves warm and for pleasure than from the urgency of their affairs. There is something quite exhilarating in the sensation of being in a place which is so rapidly and wonderfully increasing and in hearing everyone's account of his present prosperity, hopes of the future and well-founded confidence of success.'

When Dumaresq returned in 1825 with the Darlings he was at once appointed Acting Surveyor-General by Arthur. Had Arthur had his own way he would have appointed him permanent Surveyor-General. It was most unfortunate that orders from England prevented him doing so. A full account of this matter is given in the *Historical Records of Australia*. From his reports, it is easy to see that Dumaresq attacked his work with enthusiasm and with success. He undoubtedly laid the foundations for the distinguished work subsequently done by the Survey Department in Van Dieman's Land. For a few years he was Police Magistrate at New Norfolk, but in the early thirties he retired to his grant at Illawarra, near Launceston. Some time later he built a house at Mt. Ireh, where his family have lived ever since. Edward Dumaresq lived to the very old age of 104. Most of those concerned in the dramatic doings of Arthur's time were dead by 1860 and 1870, but long after this Dumaresq was taking an active and alert interest in all the affairs of the day. He lived on into the present century and is well remembered as a 'grand old man' by many people in Launceston and its neighbourhood. He died in 1906.

Peter Murdoch, who was a Lieutenant of the 35th Foot on half-pay, arrived in New South Wales about 1821. He was appointed Superintendent of a horse-breeding establishment at Emu Plains, (Port Stephens, New South Wales). As a reward for his success there, he was granted 2000 acres by Sir Thomas Brisbane about 1824, and in 1826 it was recommended to Governor Darling that he be granted a further 2000. He arrived at Hobart Town on 3rd January, 1825. He was appointed Military Commandant to the Convict Settlement at Darlington, Maria Island, but was only in charge from April to October, 1825. In Van Dieman's Land he received a grant of 2000 acres and a further grant of 1000 acres in 1832. His original grant was at Broadmarsh, where he began farming at the end of 1825. As already noted, he was appointed a Land Commissioner in 1825. In 1828 he rented 1000 acres of dairy farming land, and after 1833 imported Hereford cattle and also horses. In 1832 he and his brother Wallace, who had emigrated in 1828, owned an allotment on Sullivan's Cove where they carried on a wholesale shipping and mercantile trade. In 1834 the brothers sold their wharf property and confined themselves to their farming interests. In 1834 Peter accepted the magistracy of Oatlands, but resigned on 2nd January, 1835. A son was born to his wife on 3rd March, 1836, and another on 8th August, 1837. He

visited England with his wife, but returned on 9th March, 1839. Another child was born at Glasgow. He sold his estate at Oatlands to R. O'Connor. He and his brother appear to have lost interest in Van Dieman's Land after 1840, when they removed to the mainland.

Roderic O'Connor arrived in the Derwent on 5th May, 1824. He had previously paid a visit to the port in 1817 from Port Jackson. On his second arrival his sons, Arthur and William, came with him. Soon after his arrival he received a maximum grant of 2000 acres at Avoca, which he named 'Benham'. He also rented 1000 acres in 1828 in the same neighbourhood. In December, 1831, he is stated to have acquired by grant and purchase 15,000 acres. In 1826 he was appointed third commissioner for the survey and valuation of land in Van Diemen's Land. He held this office for less than a year. In 1828 he was gazetted a Justice of the Peace, and on 11th April, 1829, was appointed Inspector of Roads and Bridges. He was a Legislative Councillor from 1844 to 1848. He was nominated as Member of the Legislative Council under the new semi-elective constitution in 1852. Martin Cash records that after his capture in 1843, O'Connor visited him in his cell. O'Connor was a member of the Avoca Road Trust in 1853. He was frequently a party to legal actions, particularly against Lieutenant Murdoch in 1833, and against John Burnett in 1833, both of which he won. He died at Benham of influenza in 1860.

I am very much indebted to Miss Wayn, Honorary Archivist to the Chief Secretary's Department, for most of the biographical details.

APPENDIX

Hobart Town,

August 4th, 1826.

His Excellency,
Lt. Governor Arthur,
etc., etc., etc.

Sir,

1. We have the Honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Colonial Secretary's Letter of the 21st ultimo, enclosing the report of the Board of Survey on Public Buildings, and desiring us to report to your Excellency, (having reference to our instructions) on the most eligible [*sic*] situations for the various Public Buildings and Establishments [*sic*] which are required in Hobart Town, considering it as the Seat of Government and Capital of the Island and its Dependencies; and also to point out the reservations which in our opinion it would be advisable to make, for the various Establishments and Departments of Government, and generally for all Public purposes; either for the Health convenience or Gratification of the Inhabitants—
2. In accordance with your Excellency's desire we have made a careful and minute Survey of the site of the Town and its Environs, and deliberately considered on the means and plan, by which the objects

desirable on so important an occasion, may under all attendant circumstances be the most advantageously and economically attained, either at present or at future times—

3. We beg to make our report in the following Order—viz.—

1STLY

As regards the Church and School Establishments—

On the best situations for Churches,
Schools.
Parsonages.
Burial Grounds.

2NDLY

4. As regards the Community generally and collectively—

On Reservations of Ground for purposes connected with the Health, Convenience, or Recreation of the Inhabitants—

1st The future extension of the existing Town.
2nd Public Improvements, Walks, and Drives.
3rd Public Baths and Beaches for Bathing Places.
4th Quays and Landing Places.
5th Town Hall and Market Places.
6th Public Grounds for Games and Exercises.

3RDLY

The Government Civil

5. 1st Domain and Residence for Governor.
2nd Court House.
3rd Residence for Chief Justice.
4th Offices for Departments.
5th Customs House.
6th Stores.
7th Hospital.
8th Lumber Yard and Dock Yard.
9th Penitentiary for Male Prisoners.
10th Penitentiary for Female Prisoners.
11th Jail.

Military

1st Barracks.
2nd Parade Ground for Military Exercises.
3rd Forts, Batteries, and Magazines.
4th Posts of Observations.

1STLY

6. As regards Church and School Establishments.

Churches

See
Church A
on Plan.

There is at present only one Church built, which is in Macquarie Street it will probably soon be found insufficient for the Inhabitants, we therefore recommend that reservations of Plots of Ground for two

See
Church B
on Plan.
See
Church C
on Plan.

more may be made, one at the South West end of Macquarie Street, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the present Church to the South West, and the other on the Hill between Elizabeth Street and Argyle Street, about 5 furlongs North Westward from the present Church, which is Eastward of the greater part of the Town.

7. The proposed reservations will be at the most convenient points for the attendance of the Inhabitants at Divine Service, as your Excellency will perceive on reference to the plans which we have the Honor to transmit in accompaniment to his Report.

Schools

8. 1st. For a School House within the Town there is a very good site in Macquarie Street, on the allotment adjoining the Government Mill where we recommend that one should be erected.
9. 2nd. But as we conceive it will be desirable that there should also be a School at a short Distance from the Town, (in which the Scholars may be taught the rudiments of Agriculture,) we recommend that 30 acres should be reserved to the South of it adjoining the reserve for Church B. (see plan,) 20 acres of which are now enjoyed by the Superintendent or Inspector of Schools as a Glebe attached to His Office.

Parsonages

10. 1. Adjoining the last mentioned plot of Ground there are 6 acres well adapted for a Parsonage and which we recommend should be reserved as such.
2. Another Parsonage should be reserved adjoining Church C for which we have marked 4 acres on the Plan.
3. That which is at present enjoyed by the Chaplain may be considered as attached to the Church already built, it is situated in Liverpool Street and comprizes $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres, which being in the middle of the Town is all that can be obtained.

Burial Grounds

11. 1. The Burial Ground in use at present being in the Centre of the Town, should be shut up forthwith and a new one of 10 acres marked out and fenced in behind the 1 Mile Stone on the Road to New Norfolk, as shown on the Plan.
2. Another Burial Ground should be reserved to the Westward of the Town of 5 acres, as shown on the Plan.

2NDLY

12. As regards the Community generally and Collectively.
On Reservations connected with the Health, Convenience, or Recreation of the Inhabitants.

1. The Future Extension of the Existing Town

The whole of the Land on the North, North-West, and South-East sides of the Town which lies between it and the boundary lines of Grants already made and on the West side within the unconnected line—should be reserved for the future extension of the Town and only given in allotments for Houses and Gardens.

2. Public Improvements, Walks, and Drives

13. The part of the Town near the Penitentiary for Female Prisoners is susceptible [*sic*] of great improvement—On the south of the allotment mentioned a Street should turn off Eastward leading in a direct line through the New Road, to the Walk along the South side of Sullivan's Bay.
14. By this very great and most desirable improvement a considerable space (compared with the trivial extent of the alteration required) will be obtained in the best and most valuable part of the Town, and it is moreover necessary to make the plan of it—uniform and correct. The Improvements may at present be made at a trifling Expense by the purchase of one allotment having only two small Houses built on it, which are the only Impediments, but if this allotment is not soon obtained the value of the property will increase, and consequently the Improvements so particularly desirable rendered more difficult and expensive.
15. Considering the great importance of pure Water for the Health of the Inhabitants we beg to recommend that in making the Town Grants and Leases a space of 20 feet should be reserved for the Public on each side of the Rivulet where-ever it is possible, and no building whatever be permitted within that space—unfortunately this has not yet been attended to, but if as much clear space as possible is now reserved, the whole may be gradually obtained.
16. A Bridge should be thrown across the Creek at the North-East end of Macquarie Street, to connect it with Macquarie Point, and which will also be requisite in forming a road from the Town to the Government Domain. From the Bridge a walk and Drive should continue round Macquarie Point turning to the Left (where it approaches the Hill immediately behind,) into the New Town Road by the side of the Domain Hills. It will then go through New Town and join the New Norfolk Road beyond Mr. Brodribb's.
17. On the South side of Sullivan's Bay there will be another delightful Walk and Drive by Mulgrave Battery, and a 3rd may be up Wellington Valley, round the Parsonage and School Ground to Sandy Bay.
18. Other Walks and Drives need not be described, as they will be formed by the different roads and pathways leading to the Interior of the Country, and we may certainly affirm that they will vie with one another in grand and Beautiful Scenery.

3. Public Baths and Beaches for Bathing Places

20. Altho' we cannot omit taking notice of so desirable an Establishment as public Baths, yet it is impossible to fix on any particular place for them as this must be determined by circumstances which it is impossible to foresee. But to the South-East of the Town beyond Wellington Rivulet there is a small Sandy Bay, the beach of which should certainly be reserved for Bathing Machines, and Bathing Houses.

4. Quays and Landing Places

21. The whole distance from Mulgrave Battery round Sullivan's Cove to Macquarie Point will be reserved either for Mercantile and Government Stores or Batteries.

The whole may therefore be considered as reserved at the same time for Quays and Landing Places, as they can be made where-ever and when-ever they are required.

5. *Town Hall and Market Places*

22. For the first Market Place there cannot be a better site than that which has been already reserved between the Jetty, Macquarie and Campbell Streets. It does not seem to us desirable to turn the whole of the Stream which waters the Town into the New Aqueduct. It affords a good channel for conducting away speedily to the Estuary the great and sudden accessions [*sic*] of water to which the stream is liable, from the Mountain Torrents which come down after very heavy rains, and will secure the market place from being flooded. The Banks of the stream passing through it should be properly built up and wooden Bridges thrown across here and there, or if necessary, the upper part might easily be covered over entirely: but it should remain open towards the lower end, in order that Boats from the Shipping in the Harbour may come into the Market for the supplies which they require.
23. 2. Another Market Place with a Town Hall may hereafter become requisite, and we recommend that the Plot of Ground between Liverpool and Bathurst Streets next to the allotment of the Principal Superintendent of Police, should be appropriated to this purpose (see 2nd Market on Plan).
- 24.

6. *Public Grounds for Games and Exercises*

25. There is not any Ground so well adapted for these purposes as the flat beyond Wellington Rivulet and behind the Beach above mentioned to be reserved for Bathing. It has been granted to Individuals but if it could be obtained at a reasonable price, we recommend that it should be purchased and reserved for Places of Public Amusement and recreation generally.
26. Macquarie Point (which will hereinafter be mentioned for a military Parade ground) might also be occasionally used for some particular Games, and Exercises.

3RDLY

THE GOVERNMENT CIVIL

1. *Domain and Residence for Governor*

27. Were it not foreign to the nature of an Official report here we would expatiate on the Beauty and Magnificence of the Scenery of the Island generally, and of this spot in particular, so judiciously chosen by General Macquarie for the Government Domain.
28. An agreeable degree of retirement, with immediate vicinity to the scene of Bustle and Business, both Public and Private, is most admirably and conveniently combined, and even the exact spot seems to be pointed out where a House should be erected, by its having (independently of other inducements) one of the finest quarries of Stone which has yet been discovered in the Island. It is therefore almost unnecessary to recommend this piece of Land for those purposes, to which by its admirable adaption it so forcibly recommends itself.

2. *Court House*

29. This is already built in Macquarie Street; the allotment belonging to it should be extended half-way to the water's edge.

3 & 4. *Offices for Department of Government and Residence for Chief Justice*

30. Although it appears by the report of the Board of Survey that the Building at present inhabited by the Lieut.-Governor is in an unsafe and dilapidated state, and is obviously most incommodious and unfit for His Residence; still we consider with some alterations it may be made applicable for various Public Offices, and might with great economy be appropriated to that purpose.

We therefore recommend that when another Government House is built in the Domain, the present one should be turned into Public Offices; and the whole space between the New Road towards Mulgrave Battery and the Ordnance Stores, together with the Government garden in Macquarie Street, should be reserved for the various Offices and Departments of Government for a Residence for the Chief Justice, and for Public Purposes generally.

It will appear from the Plan that Offices for the Departments of Government could not any where be better situated.

5. *Custom House*

31. A space should be reserved on the South side of Sullivan's Bay where marked on the Plan there being sufficient depth of water at this Place for large vessels to come close to the shore.

6. *Stores*

32. The whole distance from opposite the Court House and the Colonial Secretary's Offices, (on the shallow flat below the reserve for Offices of Department, and for Public Purposes generally) should be kept for Government and Public Stores of all description.

7. *Hospital*

33. The Site of the present Hospital has been well selected, and there is space sufficient in the allotment for its enlargement if required. It is central and airy, commanding a fine prospect over the Harbour and Estuary.

8. *Lumber Yard and Dock Yard*

34. These should be on the South side of Macquarie Point on the small inlet forming the mouth of the Town Rivulet.

This situation having the back of the Jetty Line of Merchant Stores, and a muddy Creek in front of it is inapposite [*sic*] for any other purpose than the site of Establishments of the nature of a Lumber Yard or Dock Yard, its adaption for the latter is already exemplified by the only attempt, near the Town at Boat and Ship Building, being made on this Creek; and for the former it is particularly appropriate, being the nearest place to the Penitentiary or Barracks for Male Prisoners where the timber and other bulky and weighty articles on which they have to perform their work can be landed.

35. The Old Slaughter House which occupies part of this Ground should be removed Eastward of where it now stands, to the other side of Mr. Collin's allotment; it will be close on the water-side and shut out from view by the perpendicular banks immediately behind.

9. Penitentiary for Male Prisoners

36. For this purpose a large building has been erected and Yard enclosed, in a very proper situation at the angle of Campbell and Bathurst Streets, and its allotment extends from Bathurst to Melville Street.

10. Penitentiary for Female Prisoners

37. This building is adjoining the Jail which should be removed and the whole thrown into one for Female Prisoners.

11. Jail

38. The Present Jail being reported by the Board of Survey on Public Buildings to be very insecure and totally unfit for the purposes for which it is required, we beg to recommend that a new Stone one should be built on the large vacant plot of ground next to the Penitentiary for Male Prisoners. This site has many advantages which no other possesses; it is elevated and airy and the drains and Sewers will be conducted immediately down a Steep Bank to a small Creek, there is ample space, and above all for aconomy [*sic*] in building, the best Stone Quarry in the Town is close by; and lastly, though of no trifling importance, it will not spoil the best and most valuable part of the Town, which it would do if built adjoining the Court House.

39. There are two springs of water from the Hills to the North-West and Westward which are never dry, and might be brought through the Jail Yard. Water may be also obtained by Sinking Wells.

The water of the Spring to the Westward and of the wells in this vicinity is used by the Inhabitants for all purposes, but the water of the wells is the best. In quarrying the stone for building the Jail, with a little attention, a fine large Tank may be formed, with the same labor and at the same time that the Stone is raised for the Building.

40. The disadvantage of criminals not being so near the scene of their Trial will be at least counterbalanced by the benefit of Evil disposed Persons having all excuse taken away for loitering in the Vicinity of the Jail, which they now have from its proximity to the Court House, and of which there is too much reason to suppose they avail themselves to contrive and prepare false evidence.

There will be a strong room in the Court House for the confinement of the Prisoners who are for Trial during the day.

GOVERNMENT MILITARY

1. Barracks

41. The site for the Barrack Square, it appears to us, was most judiciously chosen by Governor Macquarie.
42. The Lumber Yard has hitherto occupied ground which we conceive should be thrown into the Barrack Square, should Your Excellency be pleased to order the removal of the former. The Barrack Square would then comprize an area of 19 acres affording ample space for a Muster

43. and Drill Parade Ground for ordinary occasions; but as a 2nd Parade Ground for Military Exercises the flat piece of Ground in Macquarie Point is well adapted, and would afford sufficient space to manoeuvre as considerable a body of troops as will probably be ever stationed in Hobart Town.

*3. Forts, Batteries, Magazines, and Posts of Observation
for Telegraph and Signals*

44. The Barrack Hill is a Commanding position but is itself Commanded by an Arm of the High Round Hill, called Woodman's Hill, between Mount George in the Government Domain and Mount Wellington. It therefore appears to us advisable to reserve the Top of Woodman's Hill and that part of the arm running out from it, which commands Barrack Hill, for any Military Works which may be requisite hereafter.
45. These reservations, with Barrack Hill, Mount George (in the Domain), the space round Mulgrave Battery of 6 acres, and Macquarie Point, comprize all that it appears to us need be reserved for Forts, Batteries, Magazines, or other Military Works and Posts of Observation, in the immediate vicinity of the Town.
46. In concluding and presenting our report we beg to assure Your Excellency that in performing the momentous and Important duty confided to us, we have exerted our best Imagement [*sic*] and Ability, and have given our opinions on the very Interesting subjects, to which our attention has been directed, with the most anxious, solicitous and cautious Consideration.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your Excellency's Most Obedient and
Most Humble Servants,

(Signed) E. DUMARESQ,

Chf. Comsr. & Ac. Sur. Gen.

R. O'CONNOR }
P. MURDOCH } Commissioners.

PLATE XIII

Map of Hobart Town which was attached to the Report made by the Commissioners in 1826.
(Copy, with shading simplified, by D. C. Pearse.)

