

Keith McKay

The prison buildings.

When the war prison became obsolete, if you like, the enterprise for re-establishing it as a convict prison meant basically that the essential footprint, that circular walled enclosure with the radial blocks was maintained but it was, I would say it became more robust in its form, and indeed the original war prison, these blocks with 1,500 men in were rigged out with hammocks - that was something that seafarers particularly were used to - but when it became a convict prison there was more the approach to create individual cells.

And you said that the prison now is a listed building, can you describe a little bit about the buildings as they are?

Well, firstly they're listed because of their special interest, the whole site, the wall, the buildings, the blocks within the wall, the gated entrance and the reservoir opposite the main entrance they all have this special architectural and historic interest. As the Prison went from that transition into a convict prison the architecture was very much more formalised, typified particularly by the massive parapetted gable end walls to the blocks, and, well the small openings, and all of this change and the nature of the materials used, add up to buildings which are particularly distinctive, and they have, obviously, their architectural origins in that early war prison but more so in the convict prison that we see today.