

## Place Details

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### St Helena Island National Park Historic Area, St Helena Island, Moreton Bay, QLD, Australia

#### Photographs



<b>List</b>	Register of the National Estate (Non-statutory archive)
<b>Class</b>	Historic
<b>Legal Status</b>	<a href="#">Registered</a> (21/03/1978)
<b>Place ID</b>	8394
<b>Place File No</b>	4/01/094/0001

#### Statement of Significance

St Helena Island is significant for its association with the settlement and subsequent development of the Moreton Bay region through its use as a quarantine station in 1865 and penal complex from 1866 to 1932 (Criterion A.4). The surviving remnants of the complex provide important evidence of prison design and practice of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as building methods, landscape and garden design of this period (Criterion B.2). Aesthetically, St Helena Island is significant for the scenic qualities of its man modified environment and for its visual contribution to the landscape of Moreton Bay (Criterion E.1).

#### Official Values Not Available

#### Description

St Helena Island is located in Moreton Bay near the mouth of the Brisbane River. Prior to European settlement Aboriginals periodically visited the island from the mainland to gather foods including fruit bat and dugong. Matthew Flinders made the first European sighting of the island in 1799. With the increasing number of immigrants arriving at Moreton Bay after the opening up of the area to free settlement, a quarantine station was proclaimed at Dunwich on North Stradbroke Island in 1850. By the 1860s an alternate site was sought and in 1865 it was decided to develop St Helena Island for such purposes. The construction work was carried out by prisoners from the hulk, *Proserpine*, anchored at the mouth of the Brisbane River, the prisoners being confined here to relieve the overcrowding in Brisbane's gaol. By the end of 1866 it was decided to convert the new institution to a penal establishment and the first prisoners were confined here in May 1867. With the growth of the population and the increase in the number of prisoners, additions were made to the original buildings, and eventually St Helena became the principal prison in the state with accommodation for 300 prisoners. The limited area of St Helena Island and the increasing needs of the settlement resulted in the conversion of the natural environment into a manicured landscape of gardens, agricultural plots and grassed paddocks. Sitting within this landscape were collections of timber, brick and beachrock buildings to accommodate prisoners and wardens, workshops, agricultural buildings and stores. For many years different trades were carried out on the island including bootmaking, carpentry, cloth making, baking and blacksmithing. Sugar cane was grown quite extensively during the early years and a mill for crushing was erected on the island. Difficulties in managing an island prison, deterioration of structures and changing attitudes to penology led to the downgrading of the penal establishment to a prison farm in 1921 and to eventual closure in 1933 when the remaining prisoners were relocated to Boggo Road Gaol in South Brisbane. When the penal settlement closed, the island was handed over to the Brisbane City Council and was briefly promoted as a pleasure resort (1933-34). This venture did not prosper and the island was subsequently leased for agricultural and pastoral purposes until its declaration as a National Park in 1979. In 1980 it was further declared an historic area, the first in Queensland. Grazing leases were finally resumed in 1985. Although many of the prison buildings have not survived, there is still much evidence remaining to show what the penal establishment was like. The island, and the historical documents pertaining to it, have been extensively surveyed in recent years, principally by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service.

## History Not Available

## Condition and Integrity

The conservation of St Helena Island, and its development as a National Park, has been undertaken as a major bicentennial project by the Queensland Government funding for management planning and physical conservation works has been provided through the Commonwealth government's bicentennial grants program and the National Estate Grants program.

## Location

About 75.1ha, St Helena Island, 8km north-east of Manly in Moreton Bay, comprising National Park 3004.

## Bibliography

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