COMMISSARIAT STORES / SUPREME COURT
Site of the highest state court in Western Australia

ABOVE: Among the most important permanent buildings required by the fledgling Swan River Colony was a Commissariat Store in which to keep government supplies. Like the Old Court House, this building was designed by Henry Reveley and completed in July 1835. It had a large door opening on to the river, from which supplies could be transferred from river boats, with a grander, classical portico on the other side of the building as the main entrance. The building continued as stores until it was converted into a court building in 1879. However, working conditions in the former store were not comfortable, with complaints continually being made to the Legislative Council about how cold it was in winter and stuffy in summer. Parliamentary debate about the need, or not, for new law courts dragged on throughout the 1890s, with no firm conclusion being reached.

RIGHT: The Commissariat Stores taken from the south side in 1861. The old police lock-up, Old Court House and Government House can be seen to the right.
The knell for the Commissariat Stores sounded in 1898 when it came to light that the jury room could be overheard in a section of the river to create a new public park. The new building was designed by the principal architect of the Public Works Department, John Grainger (father of a famous Scott Grainger). Soon after work began, the local press and a Royal Commission was appointed to look into the problem. The matter settled, a foundation stone was laid in June 1902 and the building's official opening took place amid much pomp and ceremony.