

Commercial Road at Paterson in the 1800s

As you leave Paterson heading north, you pass a derelict church on your right (formerly St Ann's). Immediately after the church there is a grassy paddock between Gresford Road and the Paterson River. Commercial Road once ran through this paddock as the business hub of the district from the 1830s to the 1870s.

Along it or nearby stood three hotels (Bush Inn, Cricketers' Arms and the Plough Inn), a blacksmith's shop, Keppie's store, grain store, miller's cottage and several other cottages, St Ann's and the Wesleyan Chapel. There were also two flour mills – Keppie's (the upper mill) and Horsley's (the lower mill).

The area was largely abandoned after the massive 1875 flood, then the biggest flood on the Paterson River since European occupation.

Early land ownership

The precinct was originally part of 550 acres granted to Susannah Matilda Ward in 1823. In 1834 David Brown purchased from Mrs Ward the 104 acres on which Commercial Road stood.^[1] This land adjoined the government land that was subdivided to form Paterson township. Between 1842 and 1855 David Brown sold small blocks along Commercial Road and Market Street, thereby creating a business and residential area north of the town. Brown became bankrupt in 1858 and in 1859 William Corner purchased much of his land.

The buildings

The image shows the location of the main buildings on Commercial Road in the 1800s. Below the image a timeline shows when the buildings were established. Today's surviving buildings are marked with yellow pins. They are William Corner's grain store (minus its roof), Hayward, ruins of Stanbridge Cottage (beside Hayward) and St Ann's (decommissioned).

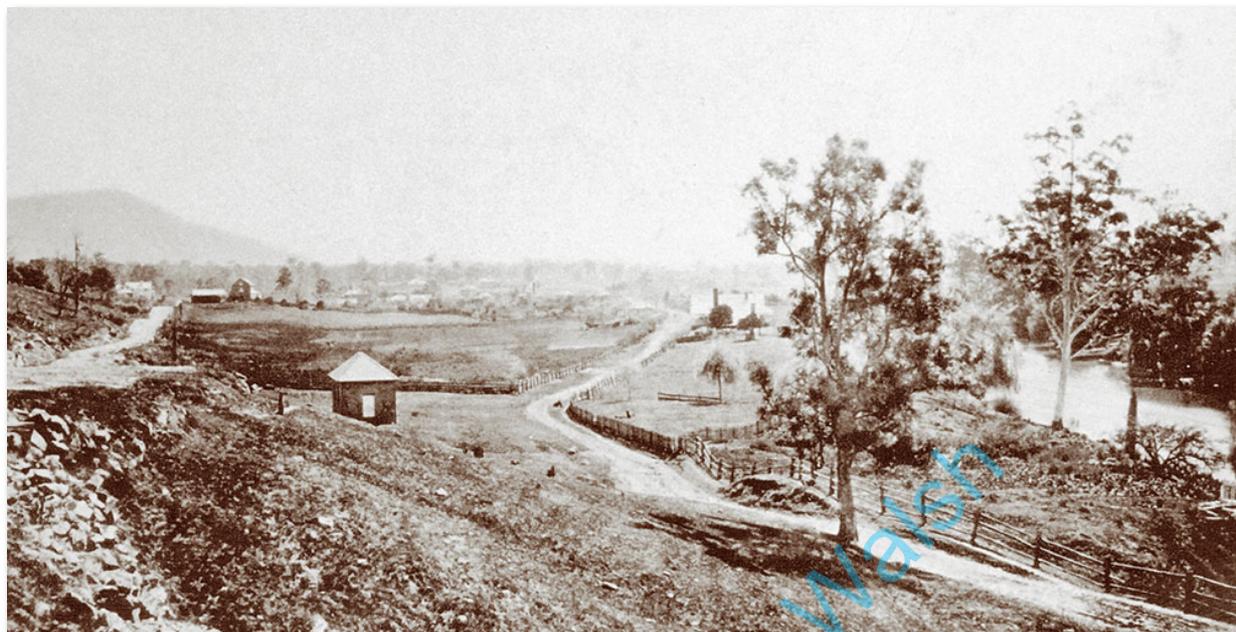
The main buildings on Commercial Road at Paterson in the 1800s.



Timeline for buildings on or near Commercial Road in the 1800s

- Bush Inn – built 1836, licenced 1838, demolished 1966.
- St Ann's – opened 1842, decommissioned 2009.
- Keppie's Inn – called the Plough Inn, opened 1845, closed 1882.
- Keppie's flour mill (the upper mill) – opened 1849, sold to William Corner 1863, closed 1905.
- Horsley's flour mill (the lower mill) – opened by David Brown by 1850, sold to William Corner in 1859. He leased it to Horsley in the 1860s.
- Store and blacksmith's, north of Commercial Road (top left of above image) – by 1850.
- Wesleyan Chapel – by 1850, later called the "Ranters' Chapel" [it is sometimes incorrectly located further north on Tillimby].
- Stanbridge Cottage – built by Stephen Stanbridge snr between 1857 and 1872, now a ruins (it is alongside Hayward).
- Grain store – built by William Corner in 1863, by which time he owned both flour mills. His grain store still stands but without its roof.

- Cricketers' Arms – opened by Frederick Wilson in 1864. He demolished it after the 1875 flood and reused the materials to build Paterson's Court House Hotel.
- Hayward – built between 1865 and 1875, probably by Henry Wilson.
- Keppie's Sawmill – opened about 1890, closed in 1912 or later.



Above: Commercial Road in 1873. The building in the foreground is the Wesleyan Chapel. The building with three chimneys on the river is Horsley's flour mill. The Bush Inn and Corner's grain store can be seen in the background at right. Evidently the old high road (at left) had recently been realigned (compared to that shown on an 1850 map) and in the photo it roughly follows today's Gresford Road (photo: Paterson Historical Society).

Below: another view of Commercial Road in 1873, with Horsley's flour mill in the centre and Corner's grain store on the left.



Notes

1. NSW Old Systems Title, Book G, #504, 29 & 30 September 1834.

References

Map 5141, by Henry Carmichael, dated 7 December 1850, NSW State Archives and Records.

Commercial Road - undated research notes held by Paterson Historical Society, author not stated but probably Shirley Threlfo.