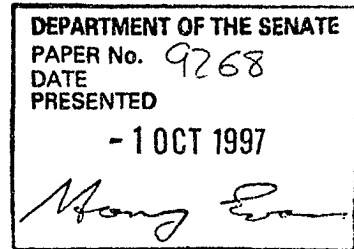


The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works



Report relating

to the proposed

**Redevelopment of facilities for 51st Battalion
Far North Queensland Regiment throughout
Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait**

(Tenth Report of 1997)



Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

REPORT

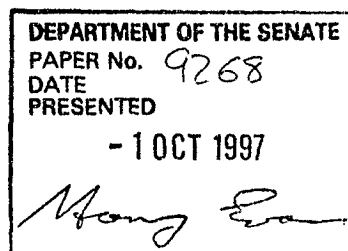
relating to the proposed

REDEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES FOR 51st BATTALION FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIMENT THROUGHOUT FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND AND THE TORRES STRAIT

(Tenth Report of 1997)

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
1997

The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works



Report relating

to the proposed

**Redevelopment of facilities for 51st Battalion
Far North Queensland Regiment throughout
Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait**

(Tenth Report of 1997)

© Commonwealth of Australia 1997

ISBN 0 644 51046 3

CONTENTS

	Page
Members of the 32nd Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works	vi
Extract from the <i>Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives</i> , No. 85 dated 15 May 1997	vii
	Paragraph
THE REFERENCE	1
THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION	3
BACKGROUND	5
History of the Battalion	6
Role of FNQR	10
Area of operations	12
Regional climatic factors	17
Detection capability	18
Future of GRES	23
Recruitment	25
THE NEED	28
Increase in personnel	30
Training courses	32
Extent of requirement for improved facilities	36
Cairns, Porton Barracks	39
Atherton	40
Innisfail	43
Weipa	46
Thursday Island	49
Horn Island	52
Bamaga	54
Mount Isa	56
Normanton	57
Patrol locations	61
Deficiencies in facilities	65

Committee's Conclusions	66
OPTIONS CONSIDERED	70
Cairns options	73
Committee's Conclusions	80
Weipa options	82
Committee's Conclusion	83
Atherton options	84
Committee's Conclusion	86
Thursday Island options	87
Committee's Conclusion	94
THE PROPOSAL	95
Master planning	96
Concepts	97
Cairns	99
Atherton	100
Innisfail	102
Weipa	108
Thursday Island	109
Horn Island	110
Normanton	111
Bamaga	112
Cooktown	113
Burketown	114
Property considerations	115
Committee's Conclusion	119
Design standards	120
Fire protection	121
Energy conservation	126
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE	128
CONSTRUCTION	129
Occupational Health and Safety	129
Local impact	130
Project delivery	131

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS	134
CONSULTATION	135
OTHER DEFENCE WORKS IN THE REGION	136
Redevelopment of Cairns Naval Base	136
RAAF Base Scherger	137
COST AND PROGRAM	138
Cost	138
Construction cost indices	139
Construction program	141
Committees Recommendation	142
Conclusions and Recommendations	143
APPENDICES	
	Page
Appendix A - Witnesses	A - 1
Appendix B - Project Plans	B—1 to B—20

**MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC WORKS**

(Thirty-Second Committee)

Mr Wilson Tuckey MP (Chairman)¹
Mr Colin Hollis MP (Vice-Chairman)

Senate

Senator Paul Calvert
Senator Alan Ferguson
Senator Shayne Murphy

House of Representatives

Mr Richard Evans MP
Mr John Forrest MP
Mr Ted Grace MP
Mr Michael Hatton MP²

¹ Replaced Mr Neil Andrew MP as Chairman on 4 September 1997

² Replaced The Hon Michael Lee MP on 26 June 1996

Committee Secretary: Bjarne Nordin

Inquiry Secretary: Michael Fetter

Administrative Officer: Lynette Sebo

**EXTRACT FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

No. 85 dated 15 May 1997

**PUBLIC WORKS—PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE—
REFERENCE OF WORKS—REDEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES FOR
51st BATTALION FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIMENT
THROUGHOUT FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND AND THE TORRES
STRAIT**

Mr Jull (Minister for Administrative Services), pursuant to notice, moved—That, in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, the following proposed works be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: Redevelopment of facilities for the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment throughout Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait.

Question-put and passed.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Redevelopment of facilities for the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment throughout Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait

On 15 May 1997, the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report the proposed redevelopment of facilities for the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment throughout Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait.

THE REFERENCE

1. The terms of the reference were as follows:

The Department of Defence proposes to redevelop facilities for the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment throughout Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait. This proposal will enhance the unit's ability to meet its operational commitments. The proposal involves redeveloping some existing facilities and providing new facilities where appropriate to address current deficiencies with respect to functionality, size, non-compliance with building and Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) standards

2. When referred to the Committee, the estimated out turn cost of the proposed work was \$22.5 million.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

3. The Committee received a written submission from the Department of Defence (Defence) and took evidence from Defence officials at a public hearing held at Porton Barracks, Cairns, on 11 July 1997. The Committee also received a written submission from Johnstone Shire Council and took evidence from the members of the Council. On 10 July 1997, the Committee inspected existing facilities at Porton Barracks and the site proposed for the construction of new facilities. The Committee also inspected facilities at Atherton, including the rifle range.

4. Witnesses who appeared before the Committee at the public hearing are listed in APPENDIX A. The Committee's proceedings will be printed as Minutes of Evidence.

BACKGROUND

5. The 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment (51 FNQR) is a General Reserve (GRES) Regional Force Surveillance Unit (RFSU) primarily located in Cairns. The current establishment of the unit is 43 Australian Regular Army (ARA) and 479 GRES personnel, with 97 per cent of positions presently filled.

History of the Battalion

6. The Battalion traces its origins to the First World War. It was formed at Serapeum, on the Suez Canal, on 1 March 1916 with personnel from alternate platoons of each company of 11 Battalion, 1st Australian Imperial Force (AIF), veterans of Gallipoli, and from reinforcements already in Egypt. After training in Egypt, the unit sailed for France and disembarked at Marseilles on 11 June 1916.

7. The unit's battle honours included Egypt, Somme, Pozieres, Bullecourt, Messines, Ypres, Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Passchendale, Villers Bretonneaux, Hamel and Amiens. On the day of the Armistice, the unit was still pushing the Germans in retreat. After two and a half years, the continual fighting had taken its toll, with total battle casualties of 2,560 of whom 867 were killed in action or died of wounds. The unit had lost more than three times its full strength. Members of the unit were highly decorated. During the attack on Villers Bretonneaux on 25 April 1918, Lieutenant C W B Sadlier won the Victoria Cross.

8. Following the Armistice, the Battalion, now a militia unit, was located in Perth, the home of its original members. It was subsequently located in Launceston and later Sydney. In 1936, the unit was transferred to Queensland and based in Cairns and given the title of the Far North Queensland Regiment. When war was declared in 1939, the unit lost many of its members to the 2nd AIF, but continued to function as a Citizens Military Forces unit. In 1943, 51st and 31st Battalions were linked to form the 31/51 Battalion and embarked for Merauke. The unit was demobilised in June 1946, having added battle honours "Liberation of Australian New Guinea, Tsimba Ridge, Bonis-Porton and South West Pacific 1943-45" to its history.

9. The Battalion was reformed in Cairns in 1949. In 1971, the unit moved to a new training depot named "Porton" in recognition of the unit's engagement there during the Second World War. The unit commenced recruiting in the Torres Strait area during 1981-82 and commenced training as a RFSU.

Role of FNQR

10. The role of the unit is to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations in Cape York Peninsula, the Gulf country and Torres Strait. The unit is an important element of the ADF detection capability. The major task of the unit is to gather information to support future ADF and Government operations. Information is collected either through contact with local authorities or by monitoring and reporting operations.

11. *Defending Australia* (1994) defines surveillance of maritime areas and northern Australia as a key role for the ADF. It also recognises that relatively high levels of readiness are required for land force surveillance and reconnaissance elements. The unit is one of three RFSUs deployed across northern Australia.

Area of operations

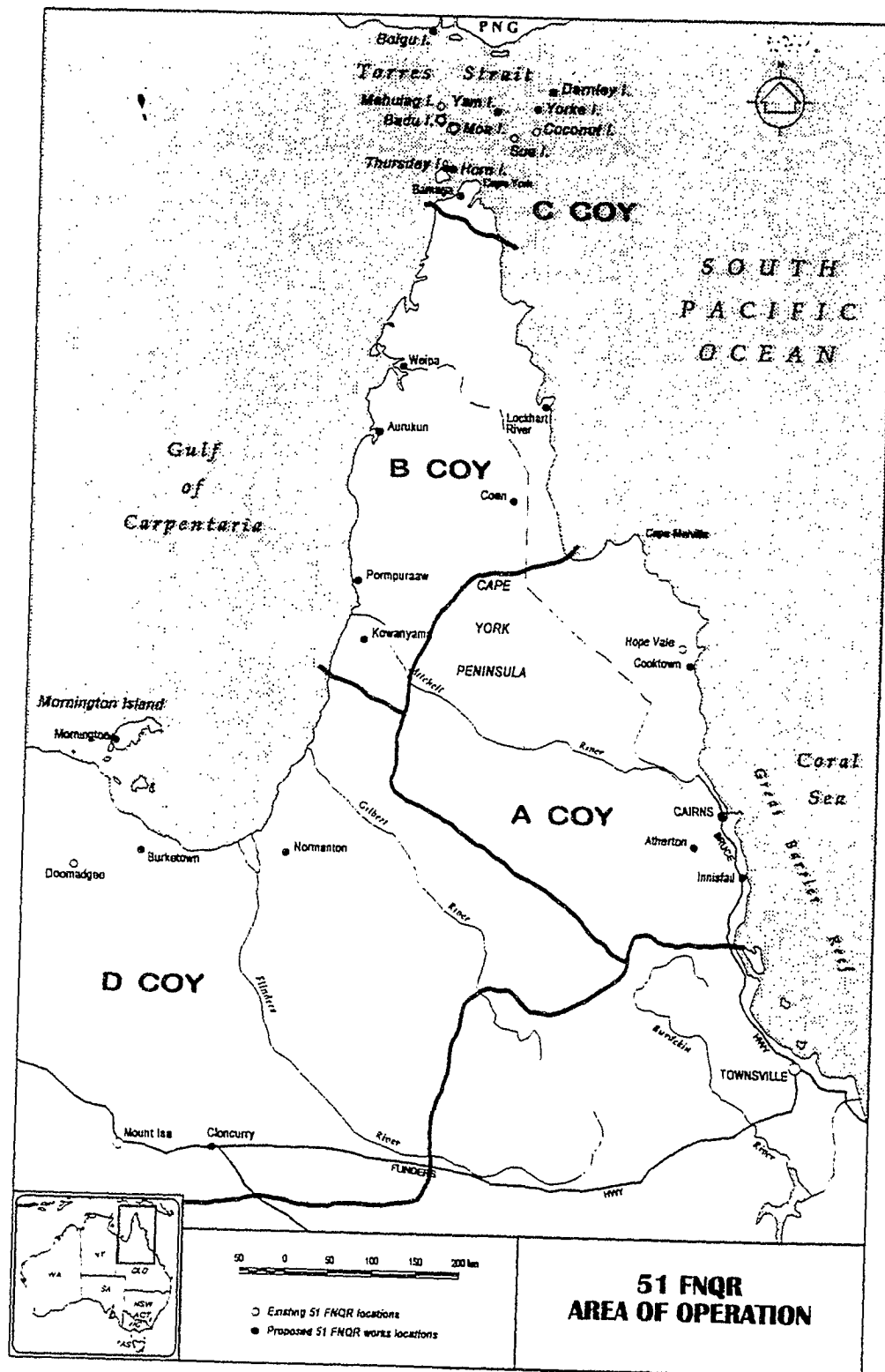
12. The concept of operations for 51 FNQR is based on the need to provide a reconnaissance and surveillance capability which will cover the three major approaches to the north-east of Australia and to the strategic and national assets located within the region.

13. Elements of the unit are widely dispersed over more than 20 locations throughout its area of operations, which covers 640,000 square kilometres.

14. The area of operations extends from Cardwell in the south, to the Northern Territory/Queensland border in the west and taking in the Gulf country, and through Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands in the north. The area of operations is divided into four company areas of responsibility which allows the command and control of operational resources to be managed efficiently. (A map showing the area of operations is on the following page.)

15. Each company headquarters is located in a major population centre within its area of operations—Cairns, Weipa, Thursday Island and Mount Isa. This disposition facilitates access to a recruiting base for GRES personnel as well as interaction with civil authorities.

16. Each Company is divided into a number of tactical patrols with each patrol being located in a small town or Aboriginal community.



Regional climatic factors

17. The FNQR area of operations has a tropical climate characterised by a warm dry season between May and November and a hot wet season for the remainder of the year. The majority of communities are inaccessible to surface transport for large parts of the wet season due to widespread flooding. Air operations can be limited by adverse weather conditions and inoperable airstrips. In the dry season, dust can adversely affect equipment, visibility and roads (the majority of which are unsealed) can become unusable. Bushfires can hamper movement and visibility.

Detection capability

18. The unit is trained and equipped to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance on land, enclosed waterways and between the islands of the Torres Strait.

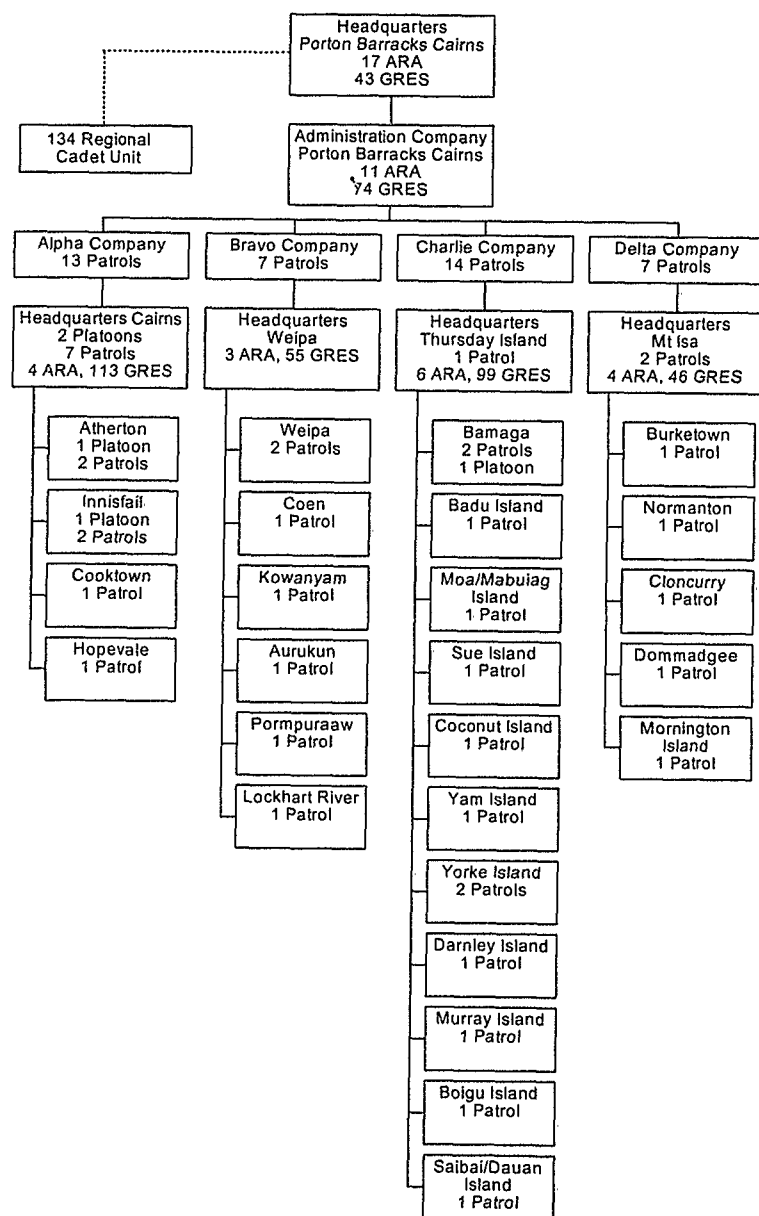
19. While traditionally organised into a company/platoon structure, the unit essentially consists of 41 tactical patrols. Normally a tactical patrol is a team of six commanded by a Sergeant. Most patrol members are trained as drivers of the unit's specialised regional force surveillance vehicles and as watercraft operators.

20. Patrols may deploy by RAAF aircraft, Army aviation, Naval patrol boat, watercraft, vehicle or on foot. The majority of missions generally concentrate on one static observation post during monitoring and reporting activities, but patrols are also trained and equipped to operate in a mobile role.

21. During any move towards conflict, FNQR would be a vital element of the first three layers of land defence. The unit's observation posts or reconnaissance patrols would be the source of initial strategic information which, combined with information gathered by Naval and air elements in the sea-air gap, would provide early warning of any changing situation. Once other military forces are in place, the unit would operate in a zone well forward of any protected vital asset in far north Queensland to provide a surveillance screen.

22. While ARA personnel fill specialist and key command positions in FNQR, patrols are manned by GRES members of the unit. Patrol bases are located in communities which are capable of supporting the personnel requirements for a patrol. This strategy is consistent with the need for patrol members to belong to communities within their areas of responsibility. This ensures that members are able to respond quickly to operational tasks, identify and report unusual events, have comprehensive knowledge of local conditions

and geography and are effective points of contact for liaison with community councils. (The organisational structure of FNQR is shown below).



Future of GRES

23. The Committee questioned Defence about the future role of the Army Reserve. Defence advised that the Army is being restructured to meet the operational dimensions of detection, response and protection and that the highest priority operational dimension is detection. Present plans to restructure the Army are strongly founded on an integrated Army, composed of part-time and full-time members. This is in recognition of costs associated with a full-time Army required to meet the capabilities and operational requirements of the Government. Some units will have a 50:50 ratio of part-time and full-time members. Others will have predominantly full-time or part-time members. The mix of part-time and full-time members will be influenced by the readiness requirements imposed on specific units and by the equipment and technical complexities of their roles.

24. Proposals involving the restructuring of the Army prescribe a long term future for RFSU. A senior Army officer advised the Committee as follows:

In fact, while the rest of the Army is being stood on its head, the only constant about the Army at the moment has been the three Regional Force Surveillance Units. I think this is a very strong indication of the importance of the role and confidence that the Army has in the present arrangements for the three Regional Force Surveillance Units. (*Minutes of Evidence—Public Hearing 11 July 1997—p. 71*)

Recruitment

25. The Committee also questioned Defence about recruitment practices. Defence advised a multi-pronged approach is adopted to recruitment due to the diversity of the recruiting base, population and demographics. The general GRES recruitment advertising program is applied in the area, as in other parts of Australia, through the media. In addition, FNQR had a recruiting cell located in Cairns which conducts formal recruiting briefings around Cairns and the Atherton Tableland area. In remote areas, there is reliance on recruiting tours where the local company commander, in conjunction with specialist recruiters, will tour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and speak with local people about the unit, its role and how training is conducted. In these areas, there is considerable reliance on word of mouth as a method of recruitment. The fact that after a decade of operating in remote communities, senior members have a good understanding of FNQR, is also a factor. There is considerable respect and goodwill towards the unit and senior community

members are very supportive of recruitment efforts and provide assistance accordingly.

26. A fundamental principle of RFSU is to recruit people from local communities who have specific knowledge and understanding of their areas and use this to support the surveillance capability. The history of the unit has been characterised by strong representation of members of local communities. At present, 40 per cent (200 members) of the unit are indigenous.

27. It was also pointed out that FNQR is currently manned to its full establishment. This, Defence believes, is a good indication of the effectiveness of the recruitment campaign and a strong indicator of the support for the GRES in far north Queensland.

THE NEED

28. Defence believes there is a need to provide facilities which will enhance the unit's ability to meet its operational commitments. To achieve this requires the redevelopment of some existing facilities and the provision of new facilities. Defence believes this work will address current deficiencies such as non-functionality, size, non-compliance with building and (OH&S) standards and location.

29. Facilities deficiencies in the other two RFSUs (NORFORCE and the Pilbara Regiment) have, to a large extent, been rectified during the past six years.

Increase in personnel

30. Since being designated a RFSU in 1985, the unit has increased in size by approximately 400 per cent in personnel numbers with an even greater increase in holdings of major equipment.

31. The initial provision of facilities was based upon an independent, conventional rifle company with subsequent programs only providing temporary and ad hoc solutions which have failed to keep pace with the unit's expansion. This has resulted in significant deficiencies in facilities at most locations.

Training courses

32. FNQR conducts both individual and collective training in various locations throughout its area of responsibility. Twelve formal courses are

conducted annually including recruit, initial employment training and specialist courses.

33. Each course runs for 16 days and is attended by up to 20 students. Courses are conducted at existing depots located at:

- Cairns;
- Thursday Island;
- Bamaga;
- Weipa;
- Innisfail; and
- the Defence training area at Cowley Beach.

34. Collective training involves either concentrating patrols at Company headquarter locations or deployment of training teams to patrol locations. This is determined by the nature and duration of the training activity as well as the availability of GRES soldiers. Should only a few individuals in each patrol location be available, the training activity would normally be conducted at a central location. Alternatively, a training team would deploy to a patrol location if the majority of members were available and suitable facilities were available on location. These training needs require flexible facilities at company and platoon bases, with capacity to cater for a surge in numbers, particularly in terms of kitchen, ablution, storage and training facilities.

35. A flexible approach to training is necessary to suit local conditions and meet the requirements of the unit. Training for GRES elements in Cairns and at other Company Headquarter locations generally conforms with the traditional Army Reserve approach (one night per week, one weekend per month). However, personnel serving in isolated communities parade under special conditions where the minimum annual requirement is 27 days, normally comprising a nine day patrol, a 16 day course and one weekend. Patrols tend to parade more frequently than the minimum requirement.

Extent of requirement for improved facilities

36. Twenty two (out of 27) sites have been identified within the FNQR area of operations requiring the development of facilities.

37. Defence believes that headquarters and training facilities should continue to be located in the larger population centres where communications and other supporting infrastructure are available.

38. Facilities occupied by FNQR and their deficiencies are described in the following paragraphs.

Cairns, Porton Barracks

39. The Cairns depot—Porton Barracks—is occupied by the Regimental Headquarters, Administration Company, Alpha Company and 134 Regional Cadet Unit. A total of 33 ARA and between 100-120 GRES personnel occupy this facility. Numbers increase during periods of collective training. A large volume of high value equipment is stored on site, the majority of which (including vehicles and watercraft), is stored in the open. Defence identified the following deficiencies at the site:

- the site is too small. An area of 3-4 hectares is required; the present site is 1.2 hectares. Lack of space causes congestion necessitating constant movement of vehicles and equipment; congestion would also restrict access in the event of fire;
- activities undertaken at the site—including after hours activities involving lighting, noise and vehicle movements which are not compatible with neighbouring residential areas and a child care centre;
- the lack of a close training area where minor short duration training activities can be conducted. Access to such facilities requires travel which results in additional cost and wastage of training time;
- the present layout of buildings is inefficient;
- the main administration building does not meet fire safety standards;
- kitchen finishes do not meet health standards;
- lighting does not conform with present building standards;
- the workshop does not comply with standards for collection and disposal of waste oils;

- battery storage and charging facilities do not meet safety standards;
- flammable liquid storage facilities do not comply with current separation standards;
- the electrical mains switchboard is undersized which results in regular overloading;
- current storage facilities are undersized and lack ventilation and insulation. Shipping containers are used as expedient storage facilities and are regularly moved around the compound to enable access. This is an inefficient use of space; and
- airconditioning is limited to a few office spaces. Units are generally under sized and in a poor condition.

Atherton

40. The Atherton depot is used as a platoon base for Alpha Company, as a unit training facility and a transit location by other units. The depot supports two patrols and is located close to a field firing range and training area, essential to support training, used by the unit.

41. Up to three separate 16 day courses are conducted three times each year. Approximately 60 persons are accommodated at the depot during each course. In 1996, the depot was used on eight occasions by other units for transit accommodation ranging from 4 to 45 persons staying from 1 to 12 days.

42. Existing facilities consist of two 50 year old timber framed buildings which do not meet Building Code of Australia (BCA) requirements in terms of fire egress. Additionally, electrical, mechanical and communication systems require upgrading and the roof and external walls require recladding and insulation.

Innisfail

43. The Innisfail site is presently used as a platoon depot for Alpha Company and for conducting boat handler courses. Like Atherton, Innisfail supports two patrols.

44. The site is leased from the State Government and existing facilities consist of a drill hall used for administration and storage, two ablution blocks, an armoury and an unpaved carport structure.

45. Defence advised that the facilities do not comply with OH&S and BCA requirements, particularly the drill hall and ablution blocks. Vehicles are stored in the open on unpaved areas, where they are subject to the effects of the harsh north Queensland climate.

Weipa

46. The Weipa depot is the only facility presently provided for Bravo Company. Company Headquarters and two patrols are located at Weipa.

47. Existing facilities consist of a prefabricated steel shed (28 metres by 16 metres) which includes administration, stores, kitchen, training and ablution areas as well as an armoury used for the storage of weapons and ammunition. While the structure is generally serviceable, internal and external finishes are in a dilapidated state, the building is uninsulated and its dimensions restrict efficient and functional use of space.

48. Defence believes the building is also poorly positioned on the site, which restricts future site planning. The depot also includes a double garage used as a workshop and store, a carport structure, a vehicle servicing ramp and a container used for flammable liquid storage.

Thursday Island

49. The existing Thursday Island depot, located in the commercial area, accommodates Headquarters Charlie Company and is shared with the Navy. The Navy is allocated two offices, a reception and administration area as well as covered and uncovered workshop and storage areas for two work boats, two dinghies and a vehicle.

50. Vehicles and boats are presently stored in the open on a leased site located near the depot. Charlie Company requires accommodation for five ARA personnel, two long boats, two dinghies, one *Shark Cat*, one *Unimog*, four land rovers and a tractor.

51. One to two boat handler courses are conducted at the depot each year and the site is used for company concentrations and training 3 to 4 times per year. Defence believes the existing facility is too small and does not provide sufficient storage space for unit equipment. Due to unsuitable storage facilities, equipment is currently rotated on a six monthly cycle to Cairns to reduce the effect of the extreme climate on equipment.

Horn Island

52. The Horn Island Field Training Area is on Commonwealth land controlled by the Army. The nine hectare site is located about 500 metres from Thursday Island Airport.

53. Existing facilities consist of a small fenced area comprising a single shed, a tent slab and a basic ablution area. The area is used for company level training once per year. Defence described existing facilities as inadequate to enable these functions to be carried out.

Bamaga

54. Bamaga, located about 40 kilometres south of Thursday Island, is the administrative centre for several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities located near the tip of Cape York. The depot supports two patrols organised into a platoon structure.

55. Existing facilities comprise an administrative/training building, storage space for two vehicles and an external covered training area which, Defence advised, does not comply with building standards. The main building requires minor repairs and upgrading to comply with the BCA. The site is fenced and two boats are stored in the open. The depot is used as a base to conduct two courses per year.

Mount Isa

56. The Mount Isa depot is the principal site used by Delta Company. It is in reasonable condition and adequately accommodates the company's Headquarters and supports two patrols. No work is required at Mount Isa.

Normanton

57. Normanton, located about 400 kilometres north-east of Mount Isa, is the administrative centre for the Gulf country. It is an expanding community, situated at the junction of the Gulf and Burke Development Roads. The local airport has the greatest capacity of any in the area and Normanton is close to the expanding port of Karumba, which logistically supports Weipa.

58. The depot supports only one patrol because Normanton does not currently have the population to support a greater number. However, Normanton and the surrounding area are strategically important within Delta Company's area of operations and patrols from Mount Isa and Cloncurry deploy to the Normanton area for operations and training three to four times per year.

59. Due to the significant distance from Mount Isa (about 400 kilometres) the Company Headquarters also deploys to Normanton for command and control reasons and to arrange resupply.

60. Defence submitted that the existing facility, comprising a double carport, is inadequate to support this need.

Patrol locations

61. Apart from patrols located with company or platoon depots, there are in addition 22 separate patrols within the FNQR area of operations. Most patrols are located in Aboriginal communities.

62. Each patrol is allocated either two vehicles (if land based) or two boats (if water based), together with associated equipment. Presently, equipment is stored at either company or platoon headquarters locations or in Police or State Emergency Service compounds located in communities.

63. Where equipment is stored in Company or platoon locations, additional costs of about \$24,000 per year is involved in transporting equipment to and from patrol locations for training and operational activities. Where equipment is stored in communities, it is not protected from the elements and relies upon the goodwill of other Government agencies for safe keeping.

64. Defence advised the Committee that secure storage facilities are required at patrol locations to reduce maintenance associated with storage in the open, to reduce operating costs associated with movement of equipment to and from patrol locations and to improve operational capability by establishing permanent patrol bases within communities.

Deficiencies in facilities

65. Defence believes that deficiencies in facilities are having an adverse impact on the ability of FNQR to efficiently undertake assigned tasks. As the unit's operational tasks do not change in times of heightened tension, present facilities-related problems would become more significant with any increase in activity rates. Defence submitted that the following factors are affected by the state of existing facilities:

- limited readiness—the ability of the unit to maintain required states of readiness is limited by a lack of secure equipment storage which also provides protection from the elements and reduces wear and tear and subsequently maintenance effort.

Equipment distribution, particularly to patrol bases, is limited by the lack of appropriate facilities in those locations;

- reduced productivity—directly related to poor working conditions. Inefficient and ad hoc accommodation solutions together with a lack of airconditioned work areas are the main contributing factors;
- inadequate capacity—at most sites or, in some cases, non-existent. Ten years of increases in personnel and equipment have not been matched by improved facilities;
- substandard quality—current facilities are below Defence and Commonwealth scales and standards and in many locations do not meet fire safety standards. Depots in Cairns, Weipa and Atherton are especially poor;
- environmental protection—all existing depots, with the exception of Mount Isa, have inadequate environmental protection for the handling and disposal of hazardous wastes. The main areas of concern are oils and lubricants as well as kitchen waste;
- OH&S—there are instances, particularly at the major sites, where the unit is unable to comply with OH&S guidelines due to the present state of facilities;
- community standards and expectations—working conditions at Cairns and Weipa, and to a lesser extent at Thursday island, are below community standards. The extreme climate experienced throughout the area of operations increases the need for suitable facilities for the unit; and
- operating costs—there is a significant operating cost overhead associated with movement of equipment to and from patrol bases. About \$24,000 per annum is presently expended on barge hire to move Charlie Company equipment to and from islands. It is a two day drive to move equipment from Weipa to Kowanyama or Pormpuraaw in the dry season. New, purpose designed facilities would obviate the requirement to relocate equipment on a recurring basis.

Committee's Conclusions

66. The role of the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment, as a Regional Force Surveillance Unit, is to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations in Cape York, the Gulf country and the Torres Strait.

67. Elements of the unit are dispersed over more than 20 locations and its area of operations covers more than 640,000 square kilometres.

68. Since 1985, the unit has increased in size by 400 per cent in personnel numbers, with an even greater increase in holdings of major equipment.

69. The general lack of modern storage facilities and poor working conditions at headquarters, company headquarters and patrol locations are having an adverse impact on the ability of the unit to undertake assigned tasks.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

70. Defence advised that consideration of facilities options which would rectify deficiencies related primarily to locations which would enable the unit to perform its role of covering likely approaches and the protection of vital assets. The availability of infrastructure, which is generally limited to population centres within the area of operations, was a further consideration.

71. Headquarters FNQR and the Administration Company are located in Cairns, the major administrative centre and port for far north Queensland. Surveillance Companies are located in major regional centres at Cairns, Weipa, Thursday Island and Mount Isa, where the population base is capable of supporting the number of personnel required. These regional centres also tend to be located near key assets and lie across possible approach routes.

72. Platoon and patrol bases are located either in small towns or in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities at strategic locations. Defence advised the Committee that when these factors are considered, viable siting or location options for new or upgraded company or platoon facilities are generally only available in Cairns, Weipa, Atherton and to a lesser extent, on Thursday Island.

Cairns options

73. The Cairns facility at Porton Barracks is occupied by the Regimental Headquarters, Administration Company, Alpha Company and 134 Regional Cadet Unit.

74. The Committee questioned Defence about the suitability of a location in Cairns for the Regimental Headquarters. Defence advised that the FNQR's responsibilities require the Headquarters and associated support elements to be located near a major population centre. Cairns is the largest population centre in the area and has the ability to provide the support required by the Headquarters and Administration Company.

75. Defence advised that the following options are available at Cairns:

- Option 1—refurbishment of facilities on the present site to accommodate all current occupants. Defence advised that this option is not viable as the site is too small and is inappropriately located in relation to neighbouring properties given the role and training requirements of the unit. The size of the property does not permit siting of fuel storage, battery charging and storage and workshop facilities in compliance with OH&S.
- Option 2—refurbishment of facilities on the present site for occupation by the Regimental Headquarters, Administration Company and 134 Regional Cadet Unit and the development of a new facility for Alpha company on Defence owned land at Mann Street. The estimated cost of this option is \$5.2 million. Defence advised that while this option would reduce congestion and noise levels at Porton Barracks to a degree, the Mann Street property is bounded by residential development on two sides and is low lying with a high water table. Its location is poor from a public exposure point of view. Adoption of this option would not resolve many existing problems and would split the unit over two sites with resultant inefficiencies in terms of overheads and common use facilities.
- Option 3—construction at Mann Street of a new facility for the Regimental Headquarters, Administration Company and 134 Regional Cadet Unit and the refurbishment of Porton Barracks for Alpha Company. The estimated cost of this option is \$6.557 million. Defence advised that this option appears to be the more attractive. Facilities at Porton Barracks were originally

constructed to accommodate an independent rifle company so they would be sufficiently large to meet Alpha Company's requirement. However, existing noise problems associated with weekly training nights and monthly weekend training in a residential area would continue. The same problems would occur at Mann Street and, as for Option 2, the unit would be spread over two sites.

- Option 4—relocation of the Regimental Headquarters, Administration Company, Alpha Company and 134 Regional Cadet Unit to a new site. The estimated cost of this option is \$7 million. The net cost would be significantly less, however, being offset by revenue from the sale of Porton Barracks and the Mann Street property. Defence advised the Committee that the Porton Barracks and Mann Street sites are very marketable properties. Defence indicated that a new site, if appropriately located, would enable realistic training to be undertaken by permitting higher noise levels and provide better access to waterways. This is the preferred option as it would provide modern, functional and workable facilities, and would enable the unit to conduct normal Army training activities on site. It also has the advantage of reducing administrative inefficiencies and costs associated with dividing the unit between two locations. Defence advised that this option is the most economic in net investment terms, given that Option 1 is not viable.

76. Ideally, a new site should be located in:

- an industrial zone, fronting a major road—for visibility and profile reasons and to enhance recruitment;
- be of sufficient size to allow development of the full facilities requirement—3-4 hectares; and
- have access to a close training area and have nearby access to waterways for training purposes.

77. Defence has identified a suitable site on the Bruce Highway. The property is the former Queerah Meatworks site, located 10 kilometres from the city centre. This 29 hectare property is owned by a developer who has recently received Council approval to subdivide. Acquisition costs, for four hectares of the property, would be in the order of \$3 million.

78. The site offers far greater capacity to develop purpose built, modern facilities in an appropriate and suitable location. Defence believes the disadvantages of the additional capital cost of adopting the new development option on this site would be more than offset by the advantages offered in terms of location, size and capacity to develop functional facilities, which will enhance the unit's ability to perform its role.

79. A search by Domestic Property Group failed to identify any other suitable site in Cairns.

Committee's Conclusions

80. Consideration, by Defence, of options which would overcome deficiencies at Porton Barracks revealed that the most cost effective solution would be to relocate all Cairns based elements to a greenfield site.

81. A property on the former Queerah Meatworks site has been identified as suitable for acquisition, costing in the order of \$3 million, which could be offset by revenue from the sale of Porton Barracks and the Mann Street property.

Weipa options

82. The RAAF Base Scherger airfield, 26 kilometres from Weipa, was considered as a possible site for facilities for Bravo Company. Advantages of collocation include revenue from disposal of the present Bravo Company site in Weipa. However, the benefit gained from property disposal would soon be offset by increased transport and administrative costs involved in travel to and from Weipa. A further disadvantage would be effective isolation of the depot from the population centre with associated loss of profile, interaction with the community and recruitment levels. Therefore, retention and upgrade of the present site is preferred.

Committee's Conclusion

83. Relocation of Bravo Company Headquarters to RAAF Base Scherger would not be practical due to the remoteness of the site and associated transport and administrative costs.

Atherton options

84. There are two options available in Atherton: the refurbishment of existing facilities or new construction. The provision of new facilities would enable buildings to be better situated on site and would result in functional, purpose

built facilities. While refurbishment would be viable, a less functional, flexible and capable facility would result due to planning limitations imposed by existing building layouts, dimensions and relationships. Given the small difference in cost between the two options, namely refurbishment costing \$782,000 and new construction costing \$849,000, Defence believes new construction would provide a better result.

85. The Committee questioned the suitability of the site at Atherton for redevelopment. Defence advised that based on experience with the construction of similar facilities for the north-west mobile force, the site meets Defence requirements. The site has the advantage of having natural barriers to urban encroachment, with a railway line and wetland on one side. A bus company is located on another boundary. Across the road from the site are three houses. Defence advised the Committee that the area has been rezoned by the Council for general industry and central business. Defence believes therefore that the site will not experience problems associated with adjacent residential use.

Committee's Conclusion

86. The Atherton site is adequate in size has the potential to be redeveloped and is protected from urban encroachment.

Thursday Island options

87. Two options have been considered for Thursday Island and Horn Island. First, obtain additional storage space on Thursday Island; and secondly, relocate the depot to Horn Island.

88. Land on Thursday Island is extremely scarce, so there is little possibility for the acquisition of additional property. However, a Defence site accommodating a Naval fuel installation is presently underutilised. While the steeply sloping site would require additional earthworks and may require some decontamination works, it could be developed to meet FNQR requirements.

89. Retention of the existing site in Normanby Street and its redevelopment as a kitchen/dining facility would reduce the development requirement at the Naval fuel installation site, thereby reducing costs.

90. A further site on Thursday Island, Quarantine Hill, has been identified as suitable, but the property is subject to a Land Rights claim under Native Title Legislation.

91. The second option is to relocate to Horn Island. A suitable site has been identified on Jardine Jetty, but development of this site would involve land

acquisition as well as construction costs. In addition, it would isolate the unit from the main commercial, Government and community centre on Thursday Island.

92. Defence therefore prefers to retain and refurbish the Normanby Street property and develop the Navy fuel installation site on Thursday Island.

93. The Committee questioned the extent to which the functionality of operations would be affected by the unit operating from two locations. Defence advised that the Normanby Street site is 1.5 kilometres from the former Naval fuel installation site. Defence believes this distance is not significant in terms of the internal operations of the company headquarters. Defence recognised that collocation would have advantages but no single site on which the unit could be collocated is available. The Quarantine Hill site would be viable, but the Native Title claim would remain an issue for some time, thus preventing resolution of a critical situation in a short time frame.

Committee's Conclusion

94. Use of the Naval installation site on Thursday Island, in conjunction with the Normanby Street site, is acceptable to Defence due to their close proximity.

THE PROPOSAL

95. The following work is proposed:

- construction of a new facility on the Queerah Meatworks site in Cairns for the Regimental Headquarters, Administration Company, Alpha Company and 134 Regional Cadet Unit;
- new Company facilities at Weipa;
- new platoon facilities at Atherton and Normanton;
- upgrading of existing platoon facilities at Innisfail and Bamaga;
- upgrading of the camp on Horn Island;
- upgrading of existing facilities at Normanby Street and the construction of new facilities at the Naval fuel installation site on Thursday Island; and
- provision of secure storage for vehicles, boats and associated equipment at 14 patrol locations at Cooktown, Coen,

Kowanyama, Aurukun, Pormpuraaw, Lockhart River, Cloncurry, Burketown, Mornington Island, Badu Island, Boigu Island, Yam Island, Darnley Island and York Island.

(A table which summarises the extent of the proposed work at the various locations is below.)

Element	Location	Facilities Requirement	Site Issues
Regimental Headquarters, Administration Company, Alpha Company & 134 Regional Cadet Unit	Cairns	New facilities to collocate Company elements	New site
Alpha Company			
Platoon	Atherton	New Platoon facilities	Existing
Platoon	Innisfail	Upgrade platoon facilities	Existing
Patrol	Cooktown	Secure storage shed	New
Bravo Company			
Headquarters	Weipa	New Company Headquarters depot	Existing
Patrol	Kowanyama	Storage shed	New (lease)
Patrol	Pormpuraaw	Storage shed	New (lease)
Patrol	Aurukun	Storage shed	New (lease)
Patrol	Coen	Storage shed	New
Patrol	Lockhart River	Storage shed	New (lease)
Charlie Company			
Company Headquarters	Thursday Island	Additional secure storage and upgrade facilities	Navy fuel depot
Platoon Headquarters	Horn Island	Upgrade Scale A camp	Existing
Platoon	Bamaga	Minor works	Existing platoon depot
Platoon	Yorke Island	Storage shed	New (lease)
Patrol	Boigu Island	Storage shed	New (lease)
Patrol	Yam Island	Storage shed	New (lease)
Patrol	Badu Island	Storage shed	New (lease)
Patrol	Darnley Island	Storage shed	New (lease)
Delta Company			
Patrol	Normanton	Platoon depot	Existing but expanded
Patrol	Burketown	Storage shed	Existing
Patrol	Mornington Island	Storage shed	New (lease)
Patrol	Cloncurry	Storage shed	New

Master planning

96. Facilities will be designed to meet present needs. While there are presently no plans for future expansion of the unit, buildings will be designed to facilitate any future expansion or modification which may result from the introduction of new equipment or changes in the unit's role.

Concepts

97. As far as possible, design of buildings will be based on standards provided for other RFSUs, particularly NORFORCE. For locations other than Cairns, buildings will be single level, concrete slab on ground, steel frame with pre-finished metal external walls and roof sheeting. Internal walls and ceilings will be plasterboard. Durable fixtures and fittings are proposed to provide longer life and reduce maintenance costs given the location of proposed developments. Occupied buildings will be insulated and airconditioned where necessary.

98. Similar design concepts are proposed for the majority of buildings at Cairns although a two storey building with rendered blockwork external walls is proposed for the Regimental Headquarters building. Detailed descriptions of facilities proposed at each location are in the following paragraphs.

Cairns

99. New buildings comprising the headquarters, messes, accommodation, quartermaster store, technical support platoon, transport platoon, secure storage for vehicles and watercraft, magazine, flammable liquids store, wet weather training shelters and a battery charging and storage facility are proposed. External works include sealed access roads, compound and carparking, a parade ground, fencing and space for an obstacle course and radio antennae.

Atherton

100. Existing buildings will be removed and replaced with new buildings comprising a platoon administration and quartermaster store, covered vehicle shelters, a wet weather training shelter and four tent slabs. The existing armoury and flammable liquids store will be retained. A sealed access road and carparking will be provided.

101. Atherton Shire Council supports the proposed development and indicated a willingness to accept the relocation of two buildings on the site for a historical museum. Defence advised the Committee that under normal circumstances arrangements would be made for the demolition of the buildings. Their size and

type would preclude any revenue being obtained from sale. In these circumstances a contractor would be required to lodge a bid to remove the buildings from the site, make good the site and cap existing engineering services. Defence would therefore not have any objection to the Council undertaking these tasks to meet the construction program provided it did not involve Defence in additional costs.

Innisfail

102. Defence proposes to refurbish the existing drill hall and ablution block to comply with current building legislation and to provide additional undercover storage for vehicles, a sealed access road and carpark. The estimated cost of the proposed work, which Defence described as "maintenance", was \$70,000.

103. The site, located in Park Street, is leased from the Queensland Government and the lease will expire in 2009. Johnstone Shire Council submitted that the site is no longer appropriate, given surrounding land uses, which are predominantly sport and recreation. The Council is in a process aimed at the development and expansion of the recreation reserve surrounding the site by closing off Park Street. Continued occupation of the site by GRES facilities is considered by the Council to be an impediment to expansion and development plans.

104. Council suggested that more appropriate locations for the facilities are available in the Innisfail area and has identified a site at Innisfail Aerodrome, which is owned and operated by the Council, as an alternative. Council also suggested that No 7 Squadron (North Queensland Air Training Corps), could be collocated with the Army on the aerodrome site. The Air Training Corps occupies two freehold sites in a residential area, which could be sold to defray relocation costs. Council recognised that the current lease on the Army site will expire in 2009 and would be prepared to encourage Defence to relocate to the aerodrome site before then, either by financial contribution or by the establishment of infrastructure. In response to a suggestion that the aerodrome may be too remote from the local recruitment base, Council advised the Committee that the aerodrome is 5.8 kilometres from the Post Office, while the current site is 1 kilometre from the Post Office.

105. In response to the Council's submission, Defence advised they were unaware of plans for the redevelopment of the site before the matter was raised by the Council in its submission to the Committee. Defence believed the extent of the proposed work at Innisfail would be comparatively minor and therefore did not see the need for extensive consultation with the Council and the local community.

106. Defence expressed a desire to work together with the Council in meeting the long term planning objectives for the site. Accordingly, pending discussions with Council, Defence indicated a willingness to delete the proposed work at Innisfail from the overall scope of the works in this reference. The overall proposal has a fixed budget, which cannot be exceeded and if Defence were to include the cost of the provision of new facilities at the aerodrome site, other elements of work in the overall scope of the proposal would need to be deleted. For the moment, the Innisfail facilities meet Defence requirements.

107. As a first step, Council would need to formally advise Defence of the long terms plans for the site. Defence also advised that any proposal involving the construction of new facilities at an alternative site would have a relatively low priority and could therefore take many years before being commenced, unless compelling reasons were advanced by the Council. Defence also indicated that the process could be assisted if Council were prepared to make a contribution.

Weipa

108. It is proposed that the existing building be demolished and replaced with a new company administration building, a company quartermaster building, an accommodation block for six transit persons, covered accommodation for vehicles and boats, a magazine, battery store, flammable liquids store, a wet weather training shelter and four tent slabs. External works comprise a sealed access road and carpark.

Thursday Island

109. Proposed work includes refurbishment of the existing administration building at the Normanby Street property as a kitchen/dining facility. New facilities will be developed at the Naval fuel installation site, comprising a company quartermaster store, secure storage for a *Shark Cat* boat, undercover storage for five vehicles/boats, a wet weather training shelter, a battery store and eight tent slabs. External works will comprise a sealed access road and car park and rain water tank. Site works will be necessary due to the steep nature of the site.

Horn Island

110. New buildings will include an administration/kitchen/dining facility, an ablution block, a wet weather training shelter and four tent slabs. External works will include an unsealed access road and vehicle park, a rain water tank and fencing.

Normanton

111. A modified platoon administration building (to enable it to be used periodically as a company command and control base), a platoon quartermaster store, a flammable liquids store, covered accommodation for six vehicles, a wet weather training shelter together with four tent slabs are proposed. External works will include a sealed access road, carparking and fencing.

Bamaga

112. The existing administration building will be refurbished so that it complies with current building legislation. A new wet weather training shelter, a two bay secure vehicle storage facility and three concrete tent slabs are proposed.

Cooktown

113. A secure storage facility for two vehicles and associated equipment are proposed. External works will include a gravel access road, a concrete wash pad, a rain water storage tank and fencing around the perimeter of the property. Similar facilities are also proposed for Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Aurukun, Coen, Lockhart River, Cloncurry and Mornington Island.

Burketown

114. The proposed works at this site include a secure storage facility for four vehicles or water craft and associated equipment. A simple ablution block comprising a shower and toilet will also be provided. External works will include a gravel access road, a concrete wash pad, a rain water storage tank and fencing around the perimeter of the property. Similar facilities are also proposed for Badu, Boigu, Yam, Darnley and York Islands, which support two or more patrols.

Property considerations

115. Except for Cairns, Cooktown, and Cloncurry and patrol bases, most facilities will be constructed on existing Commonwealth land. The Cairns property is estimated to cost \$3 million. Patrol bases are located on community controlled lands, which will require leasing arrangements to be negotiated with local indigenous communities.

116. The Committee questioned the process of negotiating leases. Defence advised that although negotiations with the local communities have started, no firm leasing commitments will be entered into until the project is approved by

Parliament. It is planned that leases will have a life of up to 25 years. Defence will employ the Australian Property Group to assist with negotiations and arrangement of leases. In many cases, the land will be leased from local communities and the State Government. Local communities hold the land under a deed of grant in trust which includes conditions over the use of the land.

117. Patrol base sites at Cooktown, Coen and Cloncurry will also need to be acquired.

118. Ministerial approval has been received for the acquisition of the Cairns site and negotiation to purchase sites at Cooktown, Coen and Cloncurry will commence during project development.

Committee's Conclusion

119. The extent of the development of facilities at 22 sites within the Far North Queensland Regiment's area of operations is necessary to enable the performance of its role in an efficient and cost effective manner and can therefore be justified.

Design standards

120. Where appropriate, design of proposed facilities will conform with the relevant sections of the following publications:

- current Australian Standards and Codes including the BCA—particularly in respect of wind loadings and other cyclone requirements;
- local, State and Commonwealth Environmental Acts;
- the Defence Manual of Fire Protection Engineering (FACMAN 2);
- the Defence Security Manual (SECMAN);
- OH&S legislation;
- the Defence Explosives Safety Manual (OPSMAN 3);
- the Army Facilities Cabling Manual (AFCM); and
- the Manual of NATO Safety Principles for Storage of Military Ammunition and Explosives.

Fire protection

121. All construction and fire protection will, as a minimum, comply with the BCA, FACMAN 2 and all other applicable codes and standards. FACMAN 2 details Defence fire protection policy for asset protection and building function protection. The levels of fire protection specified generally exceed BCA requirements and have been determined by a risk assessment and a risk management approach to fire protection.

122. Defence will require certification from a suitably qualified and accredited building surveyor, to confirm that design and construction meet the requirements of the BCA, FACMAN 2, relevant codes and standards and any additional State, Local Government and Defence requirements.

123. The Queensland Fire Service will be invited to comment on the proposal, visit major sites and offer comment throughout construction to ensure that the Fire Service's operational requirements are met.

124. Any proposed departures from BCA and FACMAN 2 requirements in relation to the proposed work will be assessed by specialist Defence fire protection staff. Any concessions (ensuring an equivalent or higher level of protection than BCA requirements) will require written approval at Director General level.

125. Successful tenderers will be required to prepare a quality assurance plan which demonstrates how BCA, Australian Standards, and any other Defence requirements in relation to fire protection/fire safety, will be met and the required standards for construction/installation maintained.

Energy conservation

126. Design of all power supply, as well as all electrical and mechanical equipment, will include an assessment of energy use by applying life cycle costing techniques and power demand analysis. Where appropriate, facilities will incorporate building management systems, metering and other means of measuring and monitoring energy use to facilitate regular energy auditing.

127. To reduce energy consumption, where appropriate, lighting will be controlled by photo electric switches in conjunction with time switch schedules. Provision of personnel sensor controlled lighting to amenities and other occasionally occupied spaces will be included where appropriate. Lamps will be high efficiency fluorescent, compact fluorescent or discharge type. External lighting will be designed to minimise glare and colour distortion. In addition to

use of efficient artificial lighting, maximum use will be made of natural lighting by using sky lights, where applicable.

ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

128. No major environmental issues are associated with this proposal and an Environmental Certificate of Compliance will be sought. A review of heritage issues for Atherton and Innisfail concluded that, although the Atherton depot was of some historical interest, the report stopped short of recommending the inclusion of either depot on the Register of the National Estate or the Queensland Heritage Register. Nevertheless, Atherton City Council has expressed interest in relocating the Atherton building to a community historical area and Defence would support this proposal.

CONSTRUCTION

Occupational Health and Safety

129. The health and safety of all workers employed both during construction and during operation of facilities will be protected by strict compliance with the Commonwealth Employment Act 1991 (Occupational Health and Safety).

Local impact

130. Infrastructure developed under this project will provide limited economic advantage to the far north Queensland community. A short term benefit will be derived from construction work which is planned to extend over a period of two years

Project delivery

131. The project will be delivered as a series of discrete work packages based on the type of work and location using the standard Defence suite of contracts. This approach will allow the project to be organised into a series of smaller packages, enable competitive pricing and provide increased opportunities for participation by smaller contractors and trades persons.

132. The Committee questioned Defence about opportunities for the local construction industry to be involved in the project. Defence advised that elements of the project will be packaged to maximise opportunities for involvement by locally based companies. Normal tendering processes will be followed. Advertisements calling for notification of registration of interest will appear in *The Australian*, and in newspapers published in Cairns and Townsville.

133. A criterion to be used in the awarding of contracts will be the ability of the tenderer to demonstrate a capability of working in remote locations and employment of local labour. The Committee was advised that the Commonwealth has a policy of creating employment opportunities for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. This statement of policy is included in tender documents and in design and construction contracts. Tenderers are requested, when opportunities exist, to indicate how employment opportunities will be created, the nature and duration of employment proposed and the number of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders who will be involved.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

134. FNQR is staffed to its operational level of capability. While completion of facilities proposed under this project will improve effectiveness and reduce costs associated with maintenance of equipment, it is not expected to result in reductions to staffing levels. The proposal is concerned primarily with enhancement of capability.

CONSULTATION

135. Preliminary discussions have occurred between the unit and Aboriginal communities. Local authorities, as well as Members of Parliament in whose electorate work is proposed, were briefed during May 1997.

OTHER DEFENCE WORKS IN THE REGION

Redevelopment of Cairns Naval Base

136. *HMAS Cairns* is located on Trinity Inlet, adjacent to the city centre. Navy currently berths five patrol boats, one survey ship, two Landing Craft Heavy and two mine-hunters at the base. Further development of the base is subject to decisions on the replacement of the Fremantle-class patrol boat and the resolution of 'home port' issues.

RAAF Base Scherger

137. A bare base airfield, RAAF Scherger, is under construction at a location 26 kilometres from Weipa. The project is valued at \$142.3 million, construction commenced in March 1993 and will be completed in the 1999/2000 financial year.

COST AND PROGRAM

Cost

138. The preliminary estimate for the proposed construction works is \$21.271 million at January 1997 prices. The out turn cost is \$22.5 million. Estimates include the necessary price indices to complete construction in remote far north Queensland.

Construction cost indices

139. The Committee questioned Defence about the way in which competitive prices will be obtained for comparatively minor work proposed at a large number of remote locations. Defence advised that penalties associated with remote locations have been factored into cost estimates. During the design stage Defence will ensure that facilities proposed for remote locations, which will cost between \$100,000 to \$150,000, are capable of being prefabricated for transportation to remote locations. By this method on-site work will be limited to the assembly and erection of prefabricated components.

140. Defence advised that cost indices used for each location are based on the Cairns index and are as follows:

- Cairns, Atherton and Innisfail - 100
- Cooktown and Cloncurry - 135
- Normanton, Coen and Burketown - 155
- Bamaga, Thursday Island, Horn Island, Darnley Island and York Island - 165
- Weipa, Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Aurukun and Lockhart River - 170
- Badu Island - 175
- Boigu Island and Yam Island - 180
- Mornington Island - 190

Construction program

141. Subject to Parliamentary approval, works are planned to commence in March 1998, with completion by December 1999.

Committees Recommendation

142. The Committee recommends the redevelopment of facilities for the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment throughout Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait at an estimated out turn cost of \$22.5 million.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

143. The Committee's conclusions and recommendations and the paragraphs in the report in which they occur are set out below:

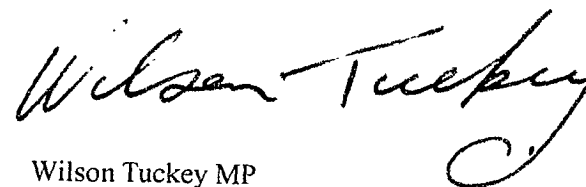
1. The role of the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment, as a Regional Force Surveillance Unit, is to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations in Cape York, the Gulf country and the Torres Strait. (Paragraph 66)
2. Elements of the unit are dispersed over more than 20 locations and its area of operations covers more than 640,000 square kilometres. (Paragraph 67)
3. Since 1985, the unit has increased in size by 400 per cent in personnel numbers, with an even greater increase in holdings of major equipment. (Paragraph 68)
4. The general lack of modern storage facilities and poor working conditions at headquarters, company headquarters and patrol locations are having an adverse impact on the ability of the unit to undertake assigned tasks. (Paragraph 69)
5. Consideration, by Defence, of options which would overcome deficiencies at Porton Barracks revealed that the most cost effective solution would be to relocate all Cairns based elements to a greenfield site. (Paragraph 80)
6. A property on the former Queerah Meatworks site has been identified as suitable for acquisition, costing in the order of \$3 million, which could be offset by revenue from sale of Porton Barracks and the Mann Street property. (Paragraph 81)
7. Relocation of Bravo Company Headquarters to RAAF Base Scherger would not be practical due to the remoteness of the site and associated transport and administrative costs. (Paragraph 83)

8. The Atherton site is adequate in size has the potential to be redeveloped and is protected from urban encroachment. (Paragraph 86)

9. Use of the Naval installation site on Thursday Island, in conjunction with the Normanby Street site, is acceptable to Defence due to their close proximity. (Paragraph 94)

10. The extent of the development of facilities at 22 sites within the Far North Queensland Regiment's area of operations is necessary to enable the performance of its role in an efficient and cost effective manner and can therefore be justified. (Paragraph 119)

11. The Committee recommends the redevelopment of facilities for the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment throughout Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait at an estimated out turn cost of \$22.5 million. (Paragraph 142)



Wilson Tuckey MP
Chairman

25 September 1997

WITNESSES

McCANN, Brigadier Raymond Leslie, Director General Accommodation and Works—Army, Facilities and Property Division, Department of Defence, Campbell Park Offices, Department of Defence, Canberra, ACT

MOYLE, Councillor Barry David, Mayor, Johnstone Shire Council, PO Box 887, Innisfail, QLD

PARAKAS, Councillor Peter, Johnstone Shire Council, PO Box 887, Innisfail, QLD

RERDEN, Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm, Commanding Officer, 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment, 45 Till Street, Cairns, QLD

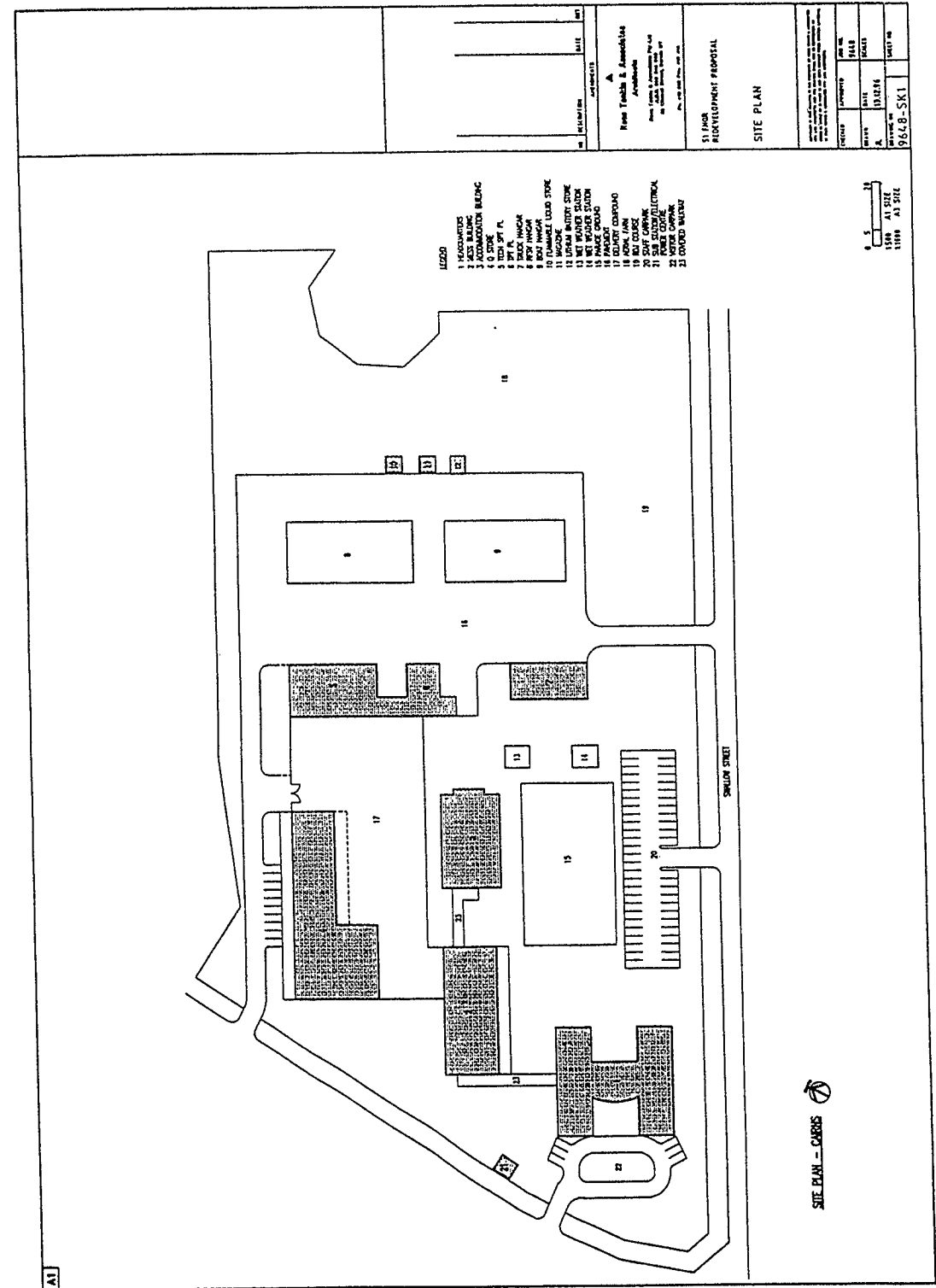
STRACHAN, Lieutenant Colonel Olga Nina, Project Director, Facilities and Property Division, Department of Defence, Campbell Park Offices, Department of Defence, Canberra, ACT

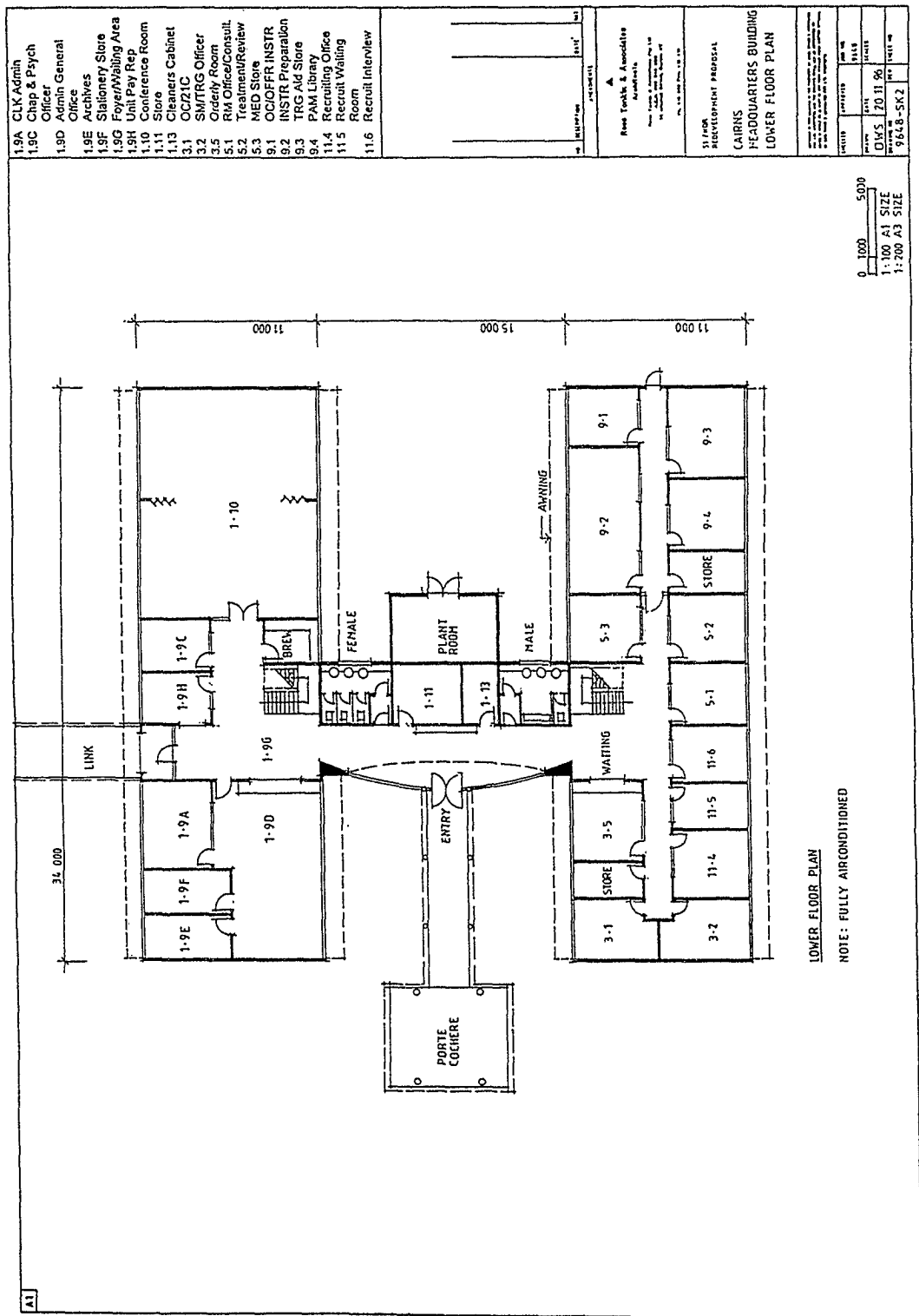
TONKIN, Mr Ross David, Managing Director, Ross Tonkin and Associates Pty Ltd, 26 Mitchell Street, Darwin, NT

APPENDIX B

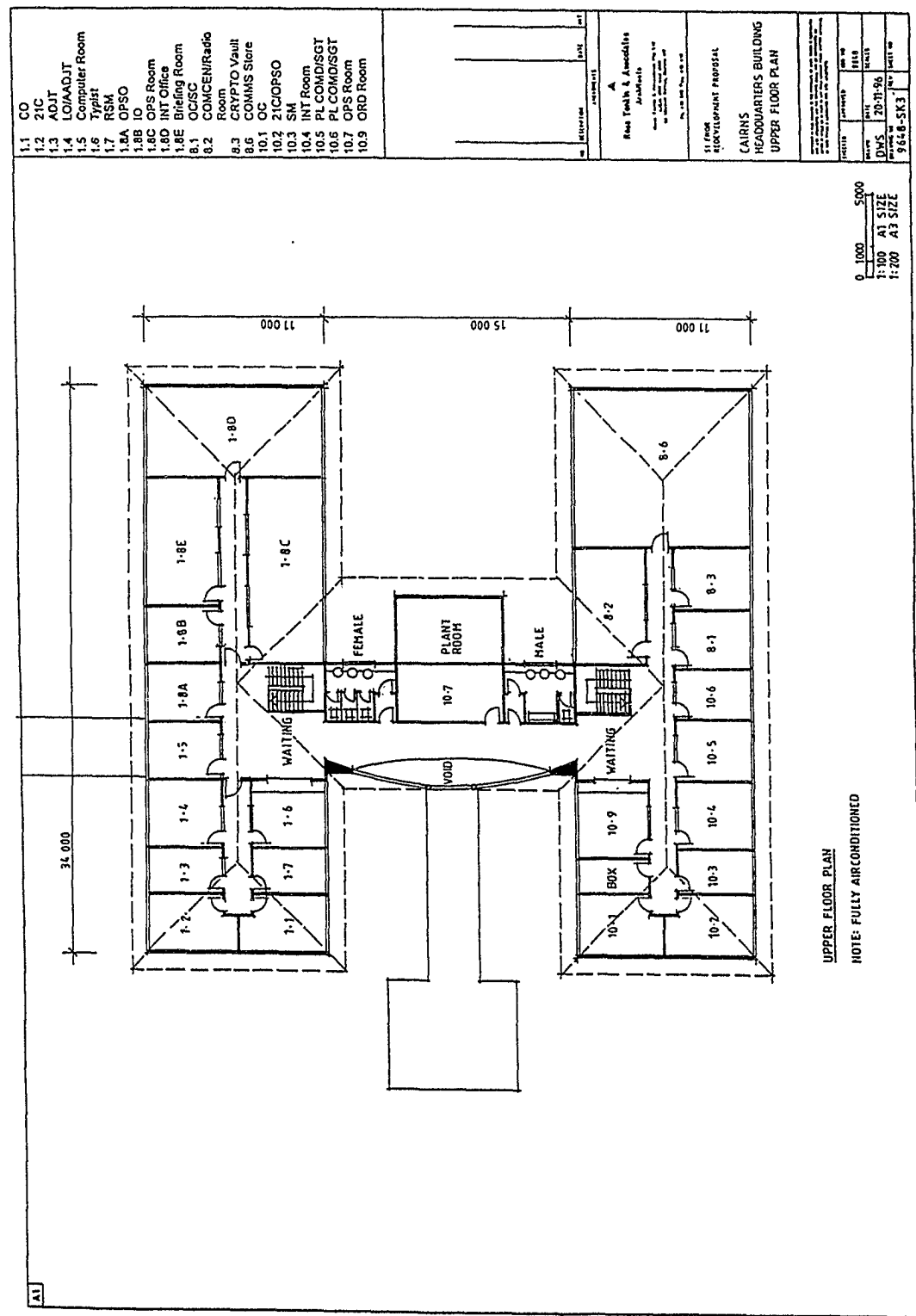
PROJECT MAPS AND DRAWINGS

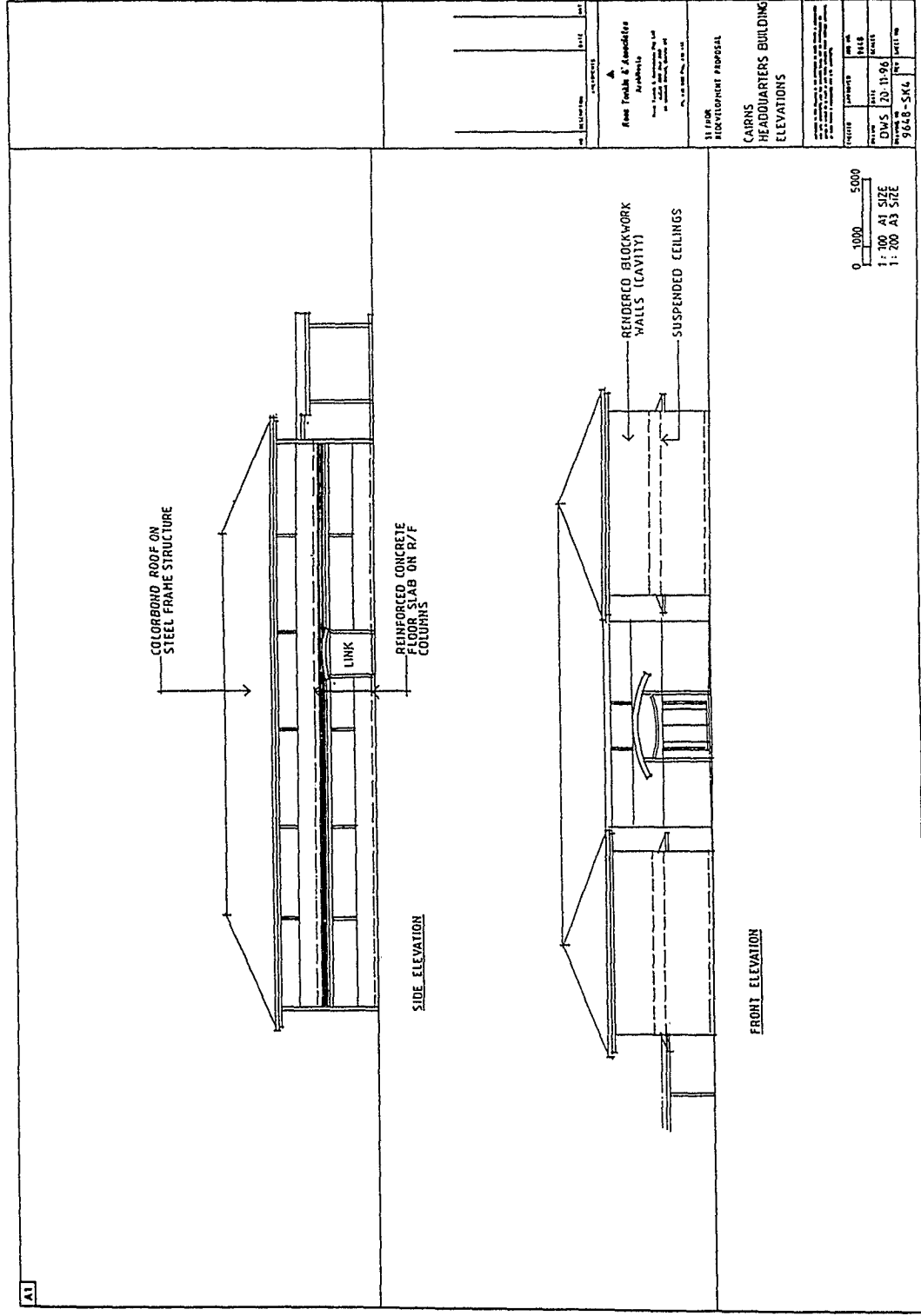
	Page
Cairns—Site Plan	B - 1
Cairns—Headquarters Building Lower Floor.....	B - 2
Cairns—Headquarters Building Upper Floor	B - 3
Cairns—Headquarters Elevations	B - 4
Cairns—Mess Plan and Elevations	B - 5
Cairns—Accommodation Plan and Elevations	B - 6
Cairns—Quartermaster Store Plan and Elevations.....	B - 7
Cairns—Technical Support Platoon, Transport Platoon Plan and Elevations	B - 8
Cairns—Vehicle and Boat Hangar Plans and Elevations.....	B - 9
Cairns—Truck Hangar Plans and Elevations	B - 10
Normanton, Wiepa, Innisfail, Atherton—Site Plans	B - 11
Thursday Island, Bamaga, Horn Island—Site Plans	B - 12
Atherton—Platoon Administration Building—Plan and Elevations.....	B - 13
Atherton and Normanton—Platoon Quartermaster Store Plans and Elevations	B - 14
Wiepa—Company Administration Building Plan and Elevations	B - 15
Wiepa and Thursday Island—Company Quartermaster Store Plans and Elevations	B - 16
Wiepa, Atherton, Normanton—6 Bay Carport Plans and Elevations.....	B - 17
Wiepa and Thursday Island—Company Quartermaster Store Plan and Elevations.....	B - 18
Thursday Island—5 Bay Garage and Large Vehicle Garage Plans and Elevations.....	B - 19
Wiepa—Accommodations and Bamaga—Dinghy Store Plans and Elevations	B - 20



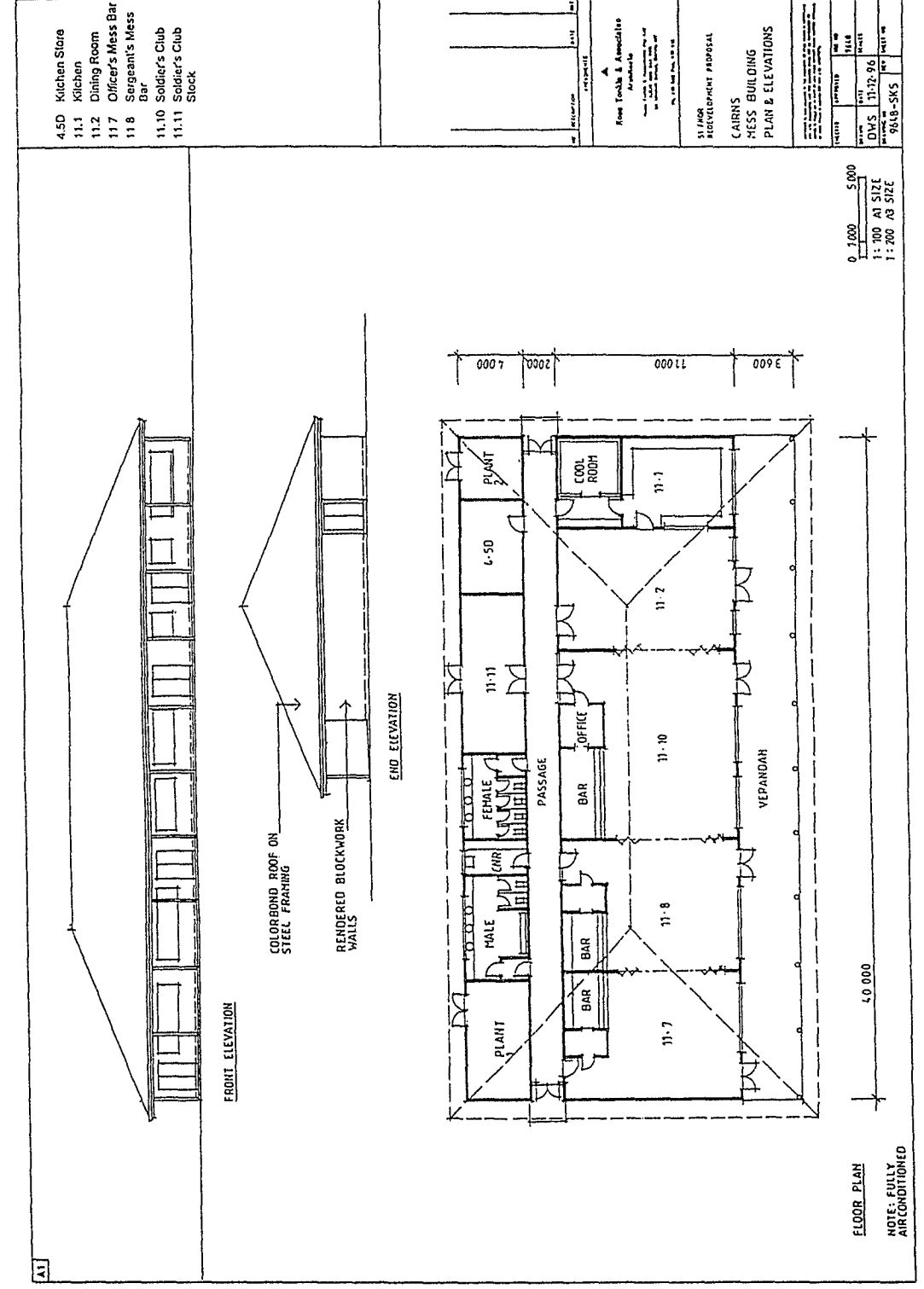


B-2

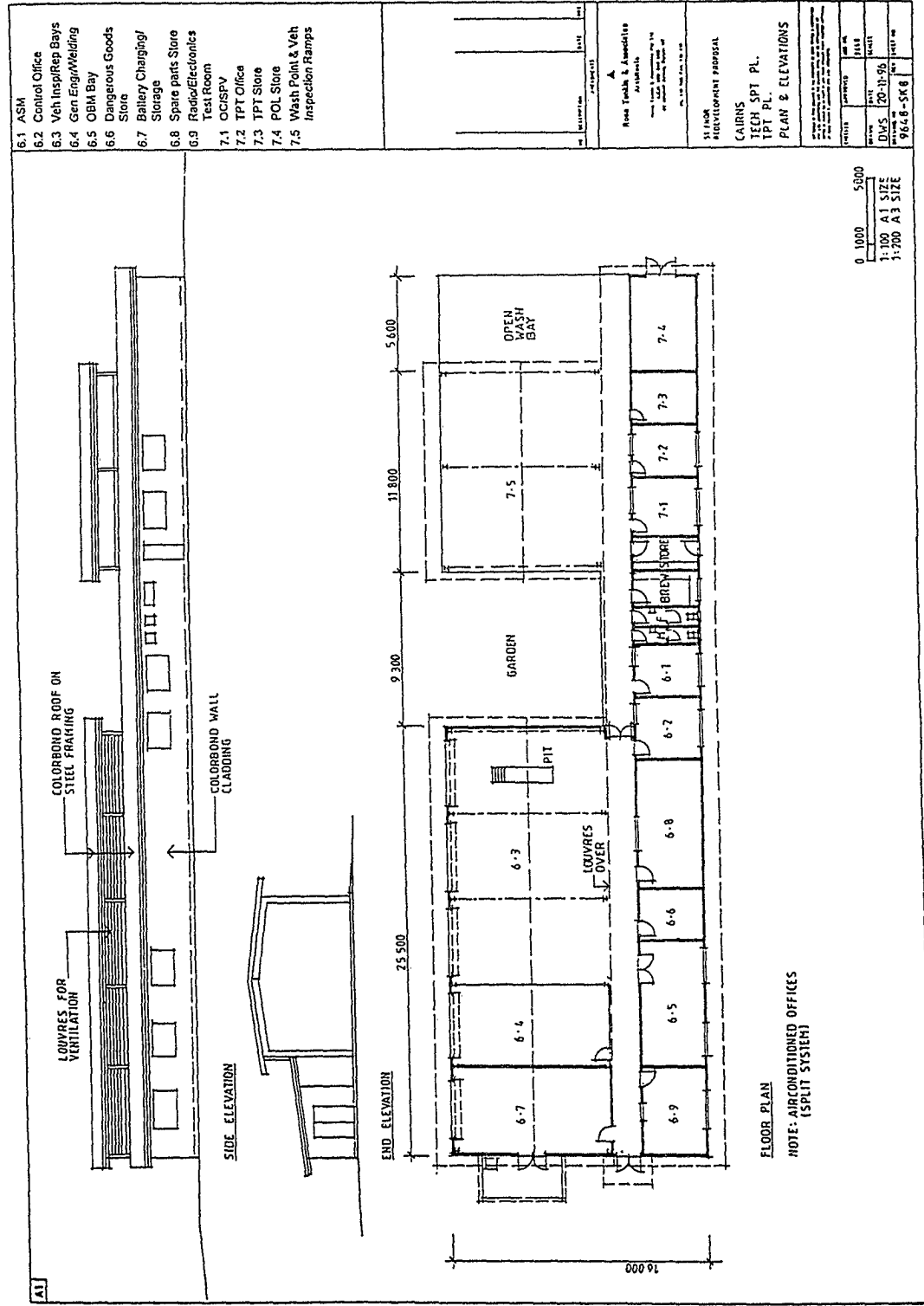




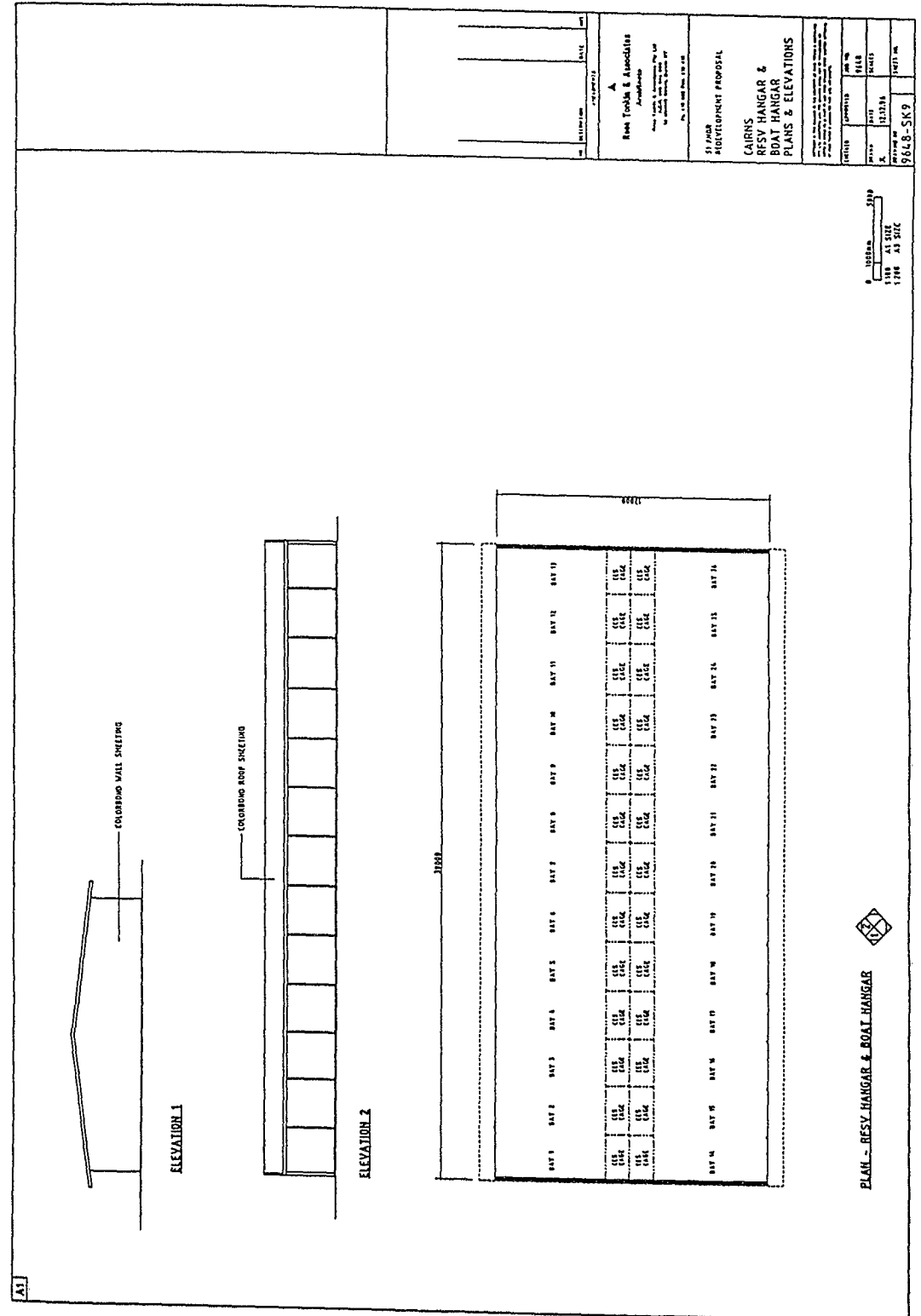
B - 4



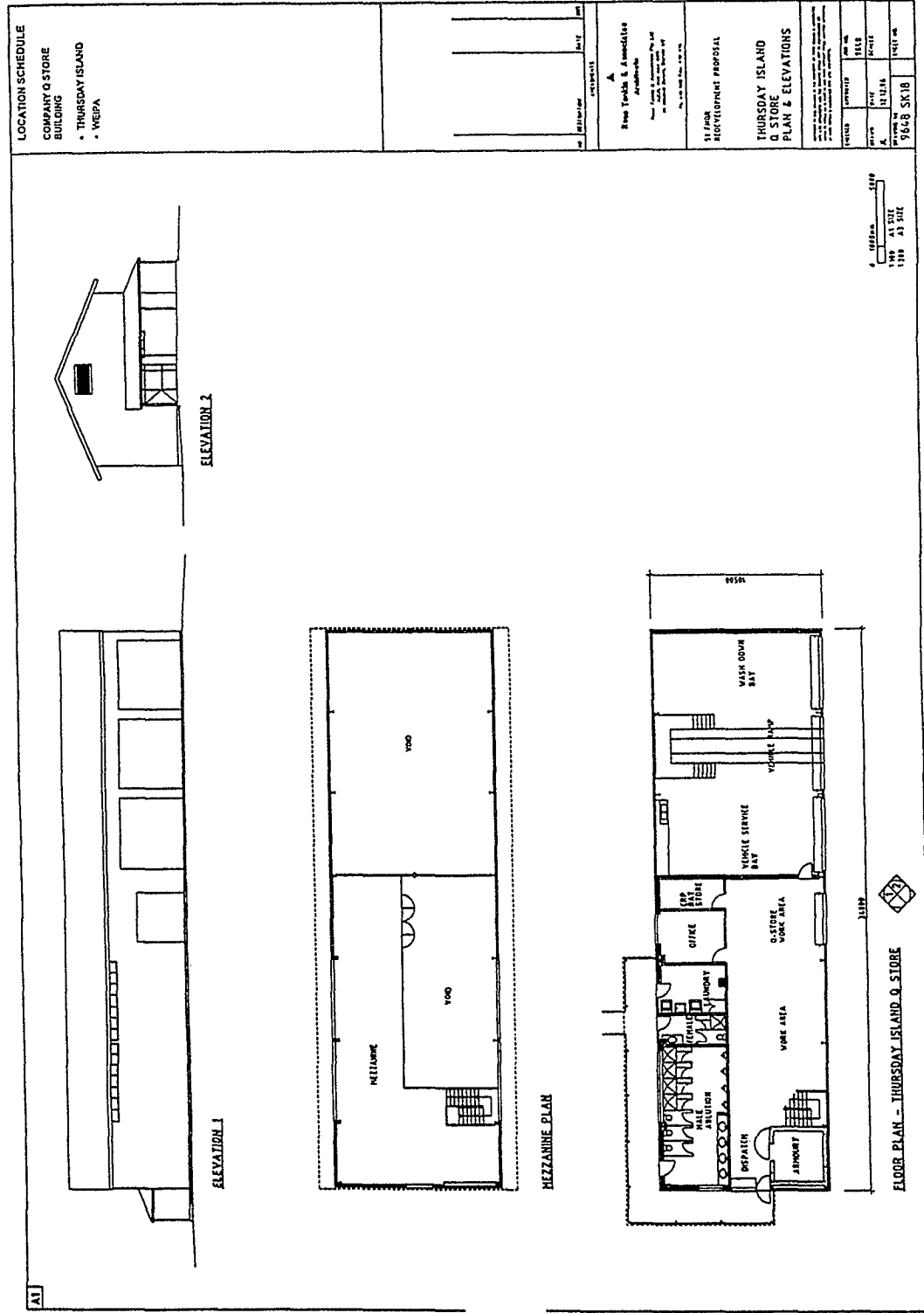
B - 5



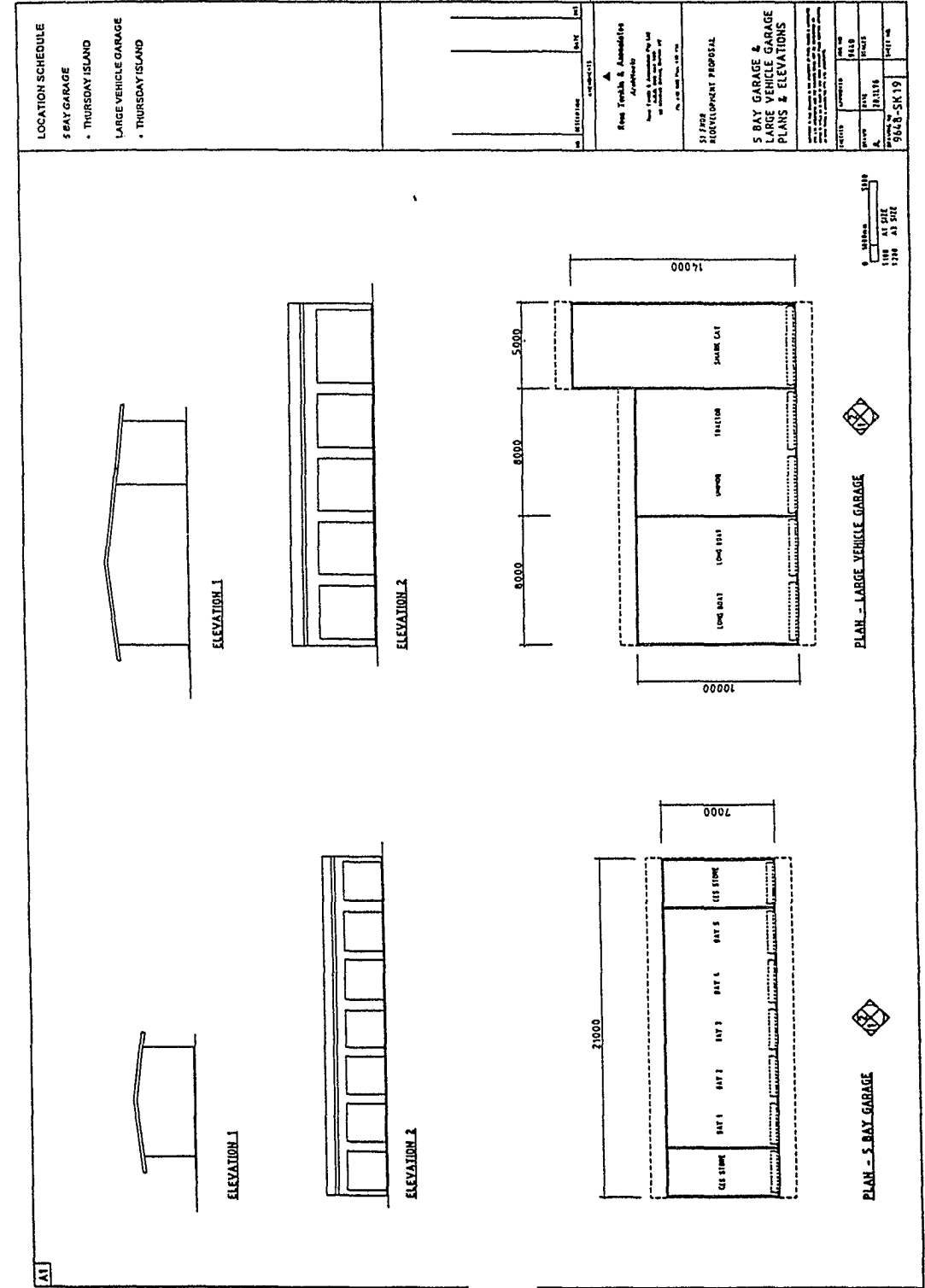
B-8



B-9



B-18



B-19

LOCATION SCHEDULE

ACCOMMODATION

- WEIPA
DINGHY STORES
• BAWAGA

Floor plan of the main building. The plan shows a large central hall with a staircase. To the left of the hall is a 'SINGLE' room, and to the right are two 'HALL' rooms. The building is surrounded by a wall with 'MURTELIA' written on the left and right sides. Dimensions are given as 1800 on the top and bottom, and 6000 on the left side.

FLOOR PLAN - ACCOMMODATION - WEIPA



ELEVATION 2



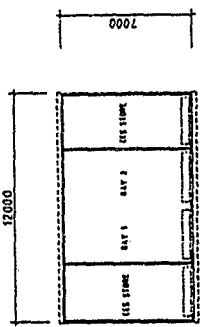
ELEVATION 1



ELEVATION :



ELEVATION 2



PLAN - QINGHY STORE - DAMAGA

SECRET	document	<p>from Trench & Associates Architects</p> <p>Plans for the proposed new building for the Department of Defense, located at the intersection of the 14th and 15th Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.</p> <p>1. The proposed building is a 14-story building, 140 feet high, with a total area of 1,400,000 square feet.</p> <p>2. The building is to be constructed of steel frame with concrete floors and walls.</p> <p>3. The building is to be constructed on a 10-acre site, with a parking lot for 1,000 cars.</p> <p>4. The building is to be constructed on a 10-acre site, with a parking lot for 1,000 cars.</p>
--------	----------	---