

6.17 Waitara Historic Cemetery

Description

Location:	McLean Street, between Cracroft Street and Memorial Place, Waitara
Legal description:	Part Block CXVII, Town of Waitara
Size:	0.07 hectares
Reserve status:	Subject to the Reserves Act 1977
Reserve classification:	Local purpose (cemetery) Reserve



Physical description

The cemetery is on flat land, elevated approximately 1.5m above the footpath with a one metre high retaining wall containing the edge of the change in contour. A heritage sign is located at the base of the at the entrance steps, which are centrally located on the street frontage and ascends to the cemetery.

The cemetery has a garden appearance with a narrow sloping garden area above the retaining wall above the street frontage, with native and exotic trees planted throughout the cemetery. A wooden vertical lat fence identifies the rear boundary with a shrub hedge along the western boundary.

A six metre high obelisk memorial is central in the cemetery and one of the five memorials located in the cemetery.

Tangata whenua interests

This reserve is within the tribal rohe and has historic and cultural significance to Te Atiawa Iwi. The cemetery is recorded as a waahi tapu site in the District Plan (683), with Otaraua hapu having mana whenua on the site.

Land status and acquisition history

The land was originally reserved as a site for a cemetery (29 perches) pursuant to the schedule from an Order in Council dated 11 May 1871, with the land taken under the authority of 'The New Zealand Settlements Act 1863' and the 'New Zealand Settlements Amendment and Continuance Act 1865', signed by G. Maurice O'Rorke, Secretary for Crown Lands – gazette notice dated 24 February 1874 (page 169).

In a gazette notice in March 1907 (page 991), Governor Plunket vested the reserve with the Waitara Borough Council, under the Public Reserves Act 1881.

The cemetery was classified as Local purpose (cemetery) subject to the Reserves Act 1977 by gazette notice on July 1982 (page 2435), by the Assistant Commissioner for Crown Lands, R. Lancaster.

History and cultural values

The cemetery is listed in the District Plan as a waahi tapu site and has two monuments listed as heritage items.

Monuments

The cemetery contains the Waitara Land War Memorial, installed in 1915, by the New Zealand Government and is a Category A item (96) in the District Plan.

Waitara Land War Memorial



The memorial is a six metre high black granite obelisk with inscriptions on all four faces. The war memorial commemorates the 40th Regiment, located in an area formerly known as 'bodies in square' to commemorate the men who fell in the attack of Puketakauere Pa, 27 June 1860 and those who fell on the attack on Kairau, 29 December 1860.

The memorial commemorates the names of the fallen soldiers.



In addition to the above image, another face of the obelisk lists those killed at Kairau 29 December 1860:

A. Broome: A.B. of H.M.S. Pelorus
Private M. Lehane 40th Regiment
Private Chinnery

The monument indicates 31 men of the 40th Regiment who were killed at Puketakauere, and one navy man and two privates of the 40th who were killed at Kairua.

The 40th Regiment was known as '40th Regiment of the Line ("Fighting 40th") Somerset Regiment'.

A separate sandstone memorial on the site is thought to have been erected by members of the 40th Regiment. This is the tomb like cenotaph to Lieutenant Charles Francis Brooke of the 40th Regiment. A black granite plaque affixed to the sandstone slab commemorates Lieutenant Brooke and all the men who died in the war of 1860-61, some who are buried in the Waitara Historic Cemetery, and also a reference to Lieutenant Denis Jackson. Lieutenant Jackson who was killed at the No. 3 Redoubt, Kairau, is not buried at the cemetery, his grave being at St Mary's churchyard¹.

¹ Jim d'Ath: from a report to the Department of Internal Affairs in 1989.

Brooke Memorial



A separate South African war memorial is also located on this site.

The Ministry of Culture and Heritage is responsible for the maintenance of two memorials at the cemetery; the six metre high black granite obelisk and the tomb like grave of Lieutenant Brooke's.

Burials

Brooke's body and many of the other 40th Regiment soldiers were not recovered from the Puketakauere battlefield. They were buried by Maori near the battle scene². Other burials are likely to have occurred in the cemetery from inhabitants of the Waitara Camp (Pukekohe Domain), who died of various causes such as disease. There were numerous wooden crosses at the cemetery that are no longer evident.

A letter to the Taranaki Herald of 13 March 1882, complained about the poor condition of the cemetery and the memorials. It provides evidence that the low sandstone cenotaph to Brooke existed in 1882. The only grave epitaphs the writer could distinguish in 1882 were as follows:

ALFRED BROME - Naval Brigade. Who fell mortally wounded, 23rd Dec, 1861, whilst attacking the enemy's rifle pits. Matarikoriko. Aged 22 years.

In Memory of MATT CORBETT, No 10 Company, 65th Regiment, Who fell mortally wounded at the attack of the Waitara Pah, Waitara, 1860. Aged 32.

In memory of LIEUT BROOKE, 40th Regt. Aide-de-camp to General Pratt: ALSO Of the non-commissioned officers and men of the 40th Regiment, who fell bravely performing their duty during 1860 and 1861

² www.ketenewplymouth.peoplesnetworknz.info/war_memorials_taranaki_wars/

LIET JACKSON, Killed in action in front of Huirangi, 23rd January, 1861.

Matthew Corbett was killed at Te Kohia on 17 March 1860, the first action in the Taranaki War. The 1915 obelisk was erected because of deterioration of the sandstone memorials.

Military battle

Two military battles associated with the soldiers memorials in the cemetery, are Puketakauere and Kairua. Puketakauere Pa and its nearby Onukukaitara Pa, are located on a spur above two watercourses and swampy ground covered in flax and toetoe. The two pa were composed of Te Atiawa and reinforcements from the King Country as well as South Taranaki and Wanganui³.

Major Nelson led a force of 350 soldiers from the Waitara Camp (Pukekohe Domain) on June 27 1860. British casualties were 30 killed and 34 wounded, the British defeat increasing confidence of Maori making it dangerous for the hemmed in citizens of New Plymouth to venture beyond the precincts of the town³. About 6 Maori were lost⁴.

Puketakauere & Onukukaitara Pa

Located on farmland north of Pennington Road from the junction with Roma Road.



The building of the redoubt (No. 1) at Kairau was near to the adjacent Maori stronghold known as Matarikoriko. Three men were killed in that operation of building the redoubt and the taking of Matarikoriko – A. Broome of H.M.S. Pelorus, Private M. Lehane, 40th Regiment and Private Chinnery⁴.

³ Jim d'Ath: from a report to the Department of Internal Affairs in 1989.

⁴ www.history.net.nz/war/taranaki-wars/puketakaauere

No. 1 Redoubt Kairau is located near the junction of Waitara Road and Kairau Road East. It is listed as waahi tapu site 477 in the District Plan with a NZ Archaeological Association reference of 142.

Puketakauere Pa is a waahi tapu site (455) in the District Plan, located on farmland north of Pennington Road, Waitara. The pa site has a NZ Archaeological reference of 120 and a NZ Historic Places reference of 6039.

Existing improvements

The retaining wall along the street frontage and steps leading from the street onto the cemetery grounds.

Management and administration

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage maintain a memorial and historic grave at this cemetery.

Management objectives and specific policies

- This cemetery is managed as a closed cemetery with existing memorials, garden and lawn area.
- Council resolved on 20 December 2011 to request to the Minister of Health the closure of this cemetery under section 41 of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964. Closure removes the opportunity for future burials and this would clarify the operational status and preserve the heritage values of this cemetery.
- The cemetery grounds constitute an archaeological site under the Historic Places Act 1993.
- Consultation will be undertaken with the Otaraua hapu if any change in management or development is proposed for this cemetery.