

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME Coast Defence/Artillery Battery

ADDRESS Bridge Road, Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(HNZPT)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. No. 6 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 7761 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 27 DP 578

VALUATION NUMBER 2493012500B

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1942-43

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Public Works Department, engineers; PWD, Timaru
Combined Builders No. 1 Group and Petrie
Construction, builders

STYLE Military vernacular

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Two gun emplacements, a battery observation post (BOP) and magazine/munitions store. Emplacements and BOP are flat-roofed structures with open sides on eastern/seaward elevation. Colchester type gun emplacements have a key-shaped footprint and a small magazine at the rear of the open gun shelter. Magazine built at some distance from the emplacements, in the vicinity of the former military camp site.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Reinforced concrete.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Decommissioned (1945). Addition of water tank to northern gun emplacement (c.1980?).

SETTING

The coastal defence structures are located on the coastal margin forming the north-eastern boundary of the Smithfield Freezing Works site. Buildings associated with the works are located to the south and west of the defence structures. Dashing Rocks and the mouth of the Taitarakihi Creek are to the south of the site, Washdyke Lagoon is to the north. Caroline Bay and the Port of Timaru are further to the south. The extent of setting is limited to the environs of the defence structures, rather than the subject land parcel as a whole. This is consistent with the Heritage NZPT list entry's map of extent, although it follows the site boundary to the north and east for greater clarity.

HISTORY

Coastal defence has long been the primary focus of the fortifications and observation posts built in New Zealand in response to the threat of foreign invasion. Some land on the site of the Smithfield freezing works was appropriated by the army for military purposes in May 1942 and the battery was 'complete and functional' by February 1943 (HNZPT report p. 9). It was staffed by members of the 85th Heavy Coastal Battery who camped on the site. A total of 19 defence buildings were erected in all and upwards of 48 people were accommodated at the site during the war. The camp was disestablished in August 1944 and in February 1945 the site was decommissioned with the removal of guns and ammunition. The concrete structures were preserved, however, so that they would be available for any future use.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Timaru coast defence battery has historic significance for its association with both the national defensive strategy implemented by central government during World War II and the actions taken to protect Timaru from possible Japanese invasion.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Timaru coast defence battery has cultural significance as a place of community identity and for its potential to increase an understanding of the district's preparedness for foreign invasion during World War II.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Timaru coast defence battery has aesthetic significance as a group of utilitarian structures that retain evidence of their manufacture and use. The Public Works Department used standardised plans for its battery structures, largely following British precedent.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The Timaru coast defence battery has technological significance for its reinforced concrete construction, which was overseen by PWD district engineer TG Beck, who was based in Christchurch.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Timaru coast defence battery has contextual value as a group of historic features on the Smithfield Freezing Works site.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the coast defence battery post-dates 1900, any potential archaeological values of the site would likely relate to its earlier use and development, including by the freezing works since 1883.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Timaru coast defence/artillery battery has overall heritage significance to Timaru and the district as a whole. The defence battery has historical significance for its association with New Zealand's preparedness during World War II and cultural significance as a valued place of community identity. The Timaru coast defence battery has aesthetic significance as a group of vernacular military structures and technological significance for their reinforced concrete construction. The Timaru coast defence battery has contextual value as a group of historic features on the coast north of Timaru and in relation to the Smithfield Freezing Works. The Timaru coastal defence battery site may have archaeological values in relation to the pre-1900 development of the freezing works.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

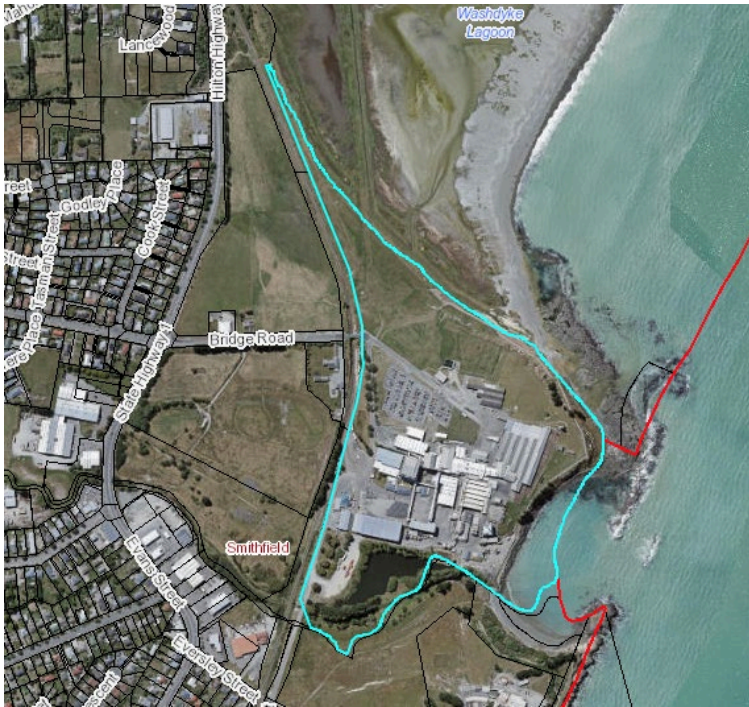
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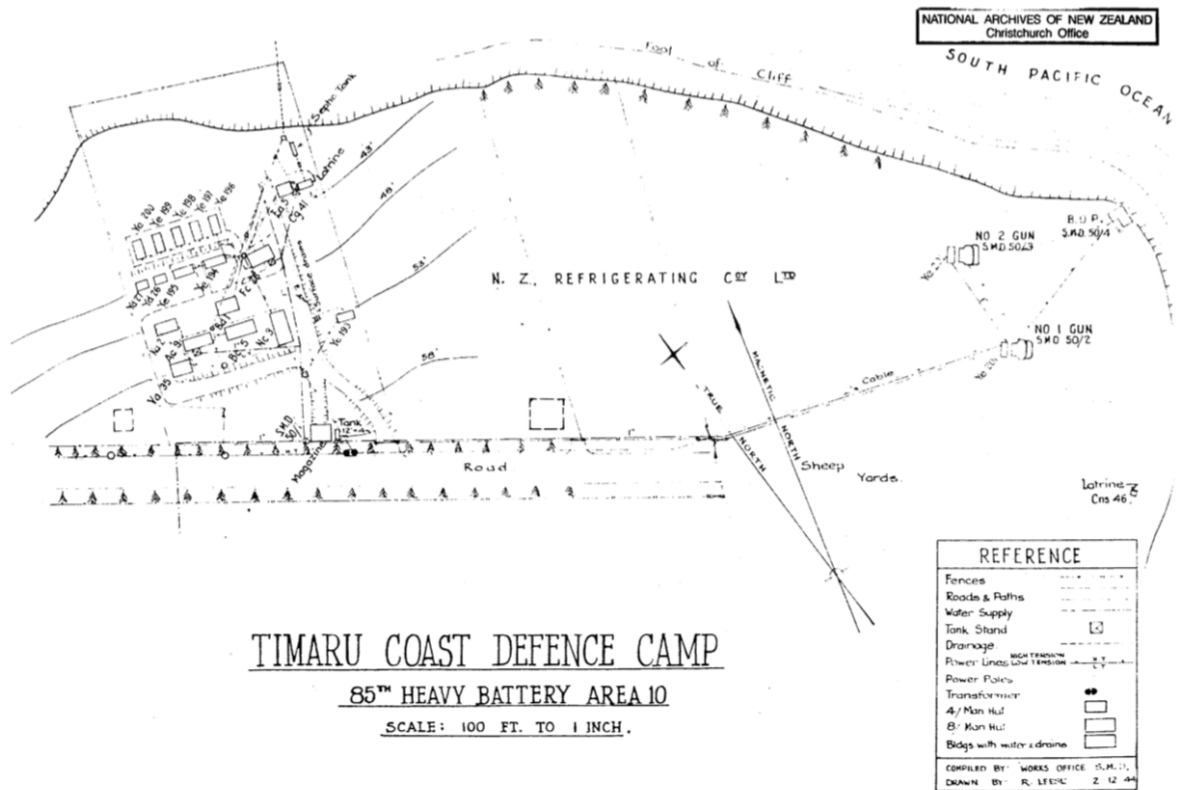
- *Timaru Herald* 31 January 2009 (available online).
- *Press* 17 June 1941, p. 6; 4 October 1941, p. 3; 9 February 1943, p. 1; 9 November 1943, p. 4; 5 September 1945, p. 3.
- Peter Cooke *Defending New Zealand: ramparts on the sea 1840-1950s* Wellington, 2002.
- Archives New Zealand.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7761>
- [http://www.defaultlogic.com/learn?s=Coastal%20fortifications of New Zealand](http://www.defaultlogic.com/learn?s=Coastal%20fortifications%20of%20New%20Zealand)



Extent of setting, Bridge Road, Smithfield, Timaru.



Land parcel as a whole.



Map of camp, HNZPT Registration report 2008, p. 25.