

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE AREA RECORD FORM

HERITAGE AREA NAME Caroline Bay

ADDRESS 1 Virtue Avenue, Maori Hill, Timaru

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Part Lot 1 DP 22231

VALUATION NUMBER 2500084200A

LOCATION

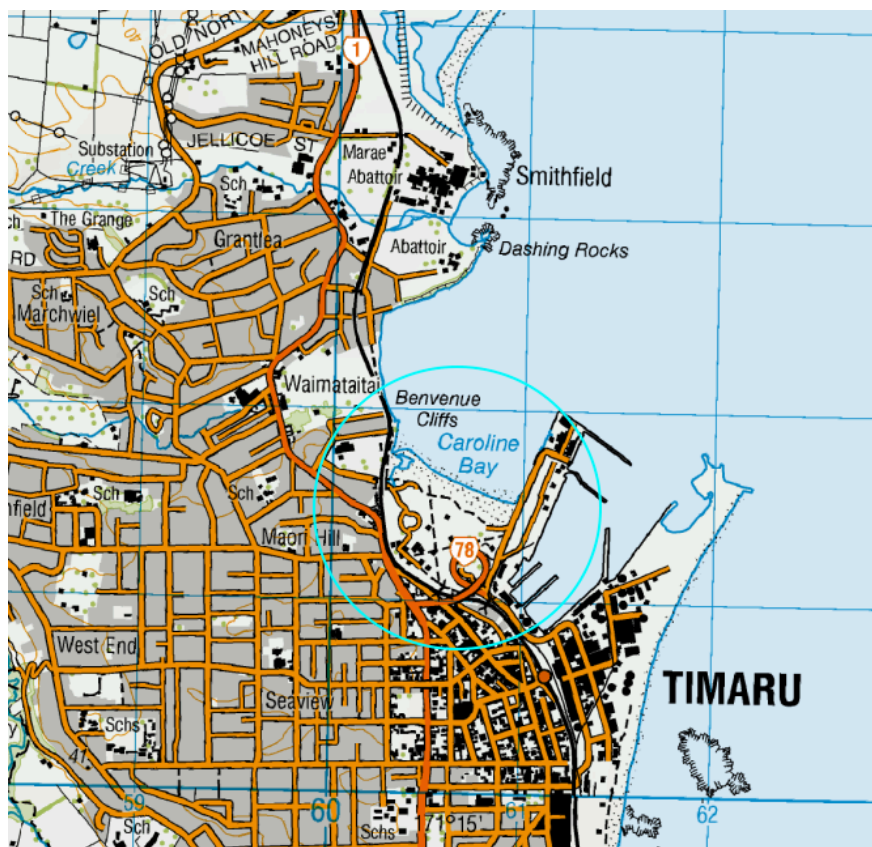


Figure 1: NZ Topo Map.

OVERVIEW

This historic heritage area is comprised of a single parcel of land extending on a north-west to south-east axis along the coastal margin beneath the Bay Hill. Caroline Bay refers to both the geographic coastal feature and the recreation reserve that developed at its edge; the historic heritage area represents the development of the latter prior to the construction of the Port Loop Road in 1971-72.

The site of an historic whaling station (1839-41), the bay has been bordered by railway line since 1876 and is a part of the town's commercial fishing history (1880s). Caroline Bay was shaped by the harbour works of the late 19th century and the scene of defensive works during World War II. Above all, as it developed through the 20th century, Caroline Bay became Timaru district's premier seaside resort destination – 'the Riviera of New Zealand' (*Press* 12 July 1928, p. 13). The historic heritage area contains multiple built heritage features, including two representative buildings scheduled on the district plan (Caroline Bay Tearooms & Caroline Bay Soundshell), and what is reputed to be the longest war memorial in the country.

The proposed historic heritage area encompasses two scheduled buildings (tearooms and soundshell, ODP ID #s 13 & 14) and two significant trees (ribbonwood and silver birch, ODP ID #s 28 & 29). The tearooms and memorial wall were listed as Category 2 historic places by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga in 2019 (list #s 9077 & 9072).



Figure 2: *Face of Peace* sculpture by Margaret Windhausen (2008) with access stairs at rear.
A McEwan.

SETTING & DISTINCTIVE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Caroline Bay is a 28.6-hectare seaside recreation reserve lying to the north of the Timaru town centre. It is bounded by Port Loop Road and Marine Parade in the east, The Bay Hill in the south and Evans Street in the west. The South Island Main Trunk railway line borders the inland portion of the site, which is set below the level of the adjacent roading network and built environment.
- The reserve's grassed, open space areas are generally to the north-east, closer to the bay, its sandy beach and dunes. Principal pathways running on a north-south and slightly off-centre east-west axis meet at a circular fountain. Secondary paths provide access to a formal rose garden, recreational buildings, memorial features and public artworks.
- Pedestrian access from The Bay Hill is via a large piazza near the intersection with Stafford Street, a smaller overbridge to the north and an underpass near the intersection with Wai-Iti Road. Vehicle access is via Virtue Avenue, at the north-west corner of the site, and Marine Parade to the east.

HISTORY

European use and development of Caroline Bay commenced in the summer of 1839-40 when the Weller Brothers of Otago established a whaling station at the mouth of the Wai-iti Creek. At that location the coast enjoyed some protection against storms. The shallow bay was reportedly already known as Caroline, possibly named for a whaling ship that worked along the coast in

the mid-1830s (see 'Historic Names' below). Apart from the shelter it provided, Caroline Bay was attractive to whalers because fresh water was available in sheltered valleys and the cliff-tops were good locations from which to look out for whales swimming offshore. At the time the Wellers established their station they purchased land from two Ngai Tahu chiefs, Tuhawaiki and Korako; the Land Claim Commissioners appointed after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi did not make any grant based on the Wellers' claims.



Figure 3: Walter Mantell 'Whaling station at Timaru', 1848. E-333-006, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

The Wellers' workers caught whales and rendered the blubber down into oil in try pots for two seasons. They were preparing for a third season when the company failed. The Caroline Bay station, and a short-lived one at Mutumutu, were quickly abandoned but the whalers' huts were later used as shelter by the early European visitors passing along the coast in the 1840s (see below).

A try pot mounted near the Wai-Iti Road underpass providing access to the bay records that the pot was used by the Weller brothers' men 'near this spot' in 1839-40. The try pot was framed by whale rib bones in the 1930s, but these are no longer extant.



Figure 4: Caroline Bay try pot, c.1839?. Dr A McEwan.

Following the colonial settlement of Timaru, Caroline Bay became the site of early commercial sea fishing using hand trawling in the 1880s. At the same time harbour works were being undertaken to create the modern port of Timaru. After the southern breakwater had been built sand, which was carried past the seaward end of the breakwater, began to shoal the harbour. To prevent this, the harbour board began building the north mole in 1888, using large rocks from its quarry at Gleniti. The first phase of Timaru's port formation ended in 1890 with the

completion of the north mole, which did what it was intended to do, preventing the sand which was carried past the southern breakwater from drifting back into the harbour. Instead the sand began to accumulate on the northern side of the north mole. This was the start of the formation of the beach at Caroline Bay.

By the first decade of the 20th century the beach at Caroline Bay extended sufficiently far out into the sea for Timaru people to realise the town had a future as a holiday resort. By the middle of the 20th century Caroline Bay had a broad sandy beach and an impressive number of buildings and facilities intended to allow the people of the town and visitors to Timaru to enjoy the bay in many different ways. Older people alive at mid-century could still remember the sea breaking on stones immediately below the cliffs.



Figure 5: William Ferrier 'Crowd on the beach at Caroline Bay, Timaru', c.1890? [early 20th C]. PAColl-4746-02, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

After the beach began to form control of it was vested initially in the harbour board. As the beach became increasingly popular for picnics and bathing, the harbour board leased the beach under various arrangements to the borough council. This allowed the council to undertake its first work to improve and beautify the bay. In 1902 the borough secured a long-term lease to the foreshore from the north side of the harbour to the Waimataitai lagoon and promptly raised a loan for further improvements. It was not until 1955, however, that the city council secured formal control of the beach. Even then, the harbour board had the power to resume land for harbour works, which allowed it to build the Port Loop Road on the southern side of Caroline Bay in the early 1970s.

When bathing first began at Caroline Bay the issue of 'mixed' (male and female) bathing generated some controversy in the town. 'Bathing machines' (huts on wheels in which bathers could change and which could be wheeled into the sea for bathers to enter the water) were used for a period to preserve the modesty of their users. The controversy over mixed bathing was relatively short-lived, however, and the bathing machines soon fell out of use.

Work to 'improve' Caroline Bay began in the late 1890s. In 1897 a tree-planting picnic was organised by the mayor of Timaru, J. Grandi, after a public meeting had been held to discuss how the town should mark Queen Victoria's 'record reign'. In the same year sections of the cliff behind the bay were lowered and cut back. Voluntary efforts to 'beautify' the bay followed in the first decade of the 20th century.



Figure 6: Caroline Bay, Timaru, c. 1910s. 1/1-008909-G, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

The borough council worked to improve the bay by planting lawns, forming paths and erecting various amenity buildings. A band rotunda opened in December 1904, the bay's first tearooms was built in the following year, and a drinking fountain donated by a local firm, F Palliser and Sons, was erected in the winter of 1906. Local enthusiasm for developing the recreational potential of the bay was also the catalyst for the formation of the Caroline Bay Association in 1911 to run carnivals and carry on the work of improvement.

A piazza was constructed in 1912. In the same year there were initial improvements in the vicinity of the Benvenue Cliffs. The following year saw bathing sheds and a concert pavilion built, tennis courts laid and improvements on the Bay Hill overlooking the bay itself. The tearooms were extended in 1907 and 1913. Two years later, in 1915, the first children's playground on the bay was built and heated saltwater baths, which remained until 1968, were opened.



Figure 7: Caroline Bay shelter, seating and gardens, c.1914. 1/1-009808-G, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

RH Rhodes of 'Bluecliffs' left a bequest of £2000 to the Timaru Borough Council to fund improvements to Caroline Bay; a sundial in his memory was erected overlooking the bay in late 1919. It was relocated to beside the paddling pool in c.2006.

In April 1923 the pavilion on Caroline Bay burned down. The Bay Hall opened on the same site on 8 December 1923; it was presented by the Caroline Bay Association, which was described on the plaque in the hall as a group of public-spirited voluntary workers. By the time the plaque was installed the association had spent £34,000 on improvements at Caroline Bay, given £8,000 to the World War I patriotic fund and a further £2,000 to other deserving causes. The Bay Hall, improved and extended in subsequent years, hosted local social functions as well as events associated with the summer carnivals.



Figure 8: 'Crowds to greet Edward, Prince of Wales, Caroline Bay, Timaru, New Zealand', 1920. PAColl-0362-18, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

In 1929 roads and pathways on the Bay were sealed, a memorial seawall was erected and a larger area of lawn was laid. The memorial wall, which commemorated all the major battles of World War I, originally divided the sandy beach from the land on which there were lawns, gardens and paths; it is now many metres back from where the beach begins.

The tearooms, having been extended several times by 1920, were largely rebuilt in 1931, although parts of the old building were retained. The new tearooms, designed by Victor Panton and Messrs Turnbull and Rule working as 'associated architects', were in the same Arts and Crafts style as the Bay Hall.

As the Depression waned the 1904 band rotunda was replaced by a soundshell in 1936. The reserve's first aviary was built just before the outbreak of World War II.

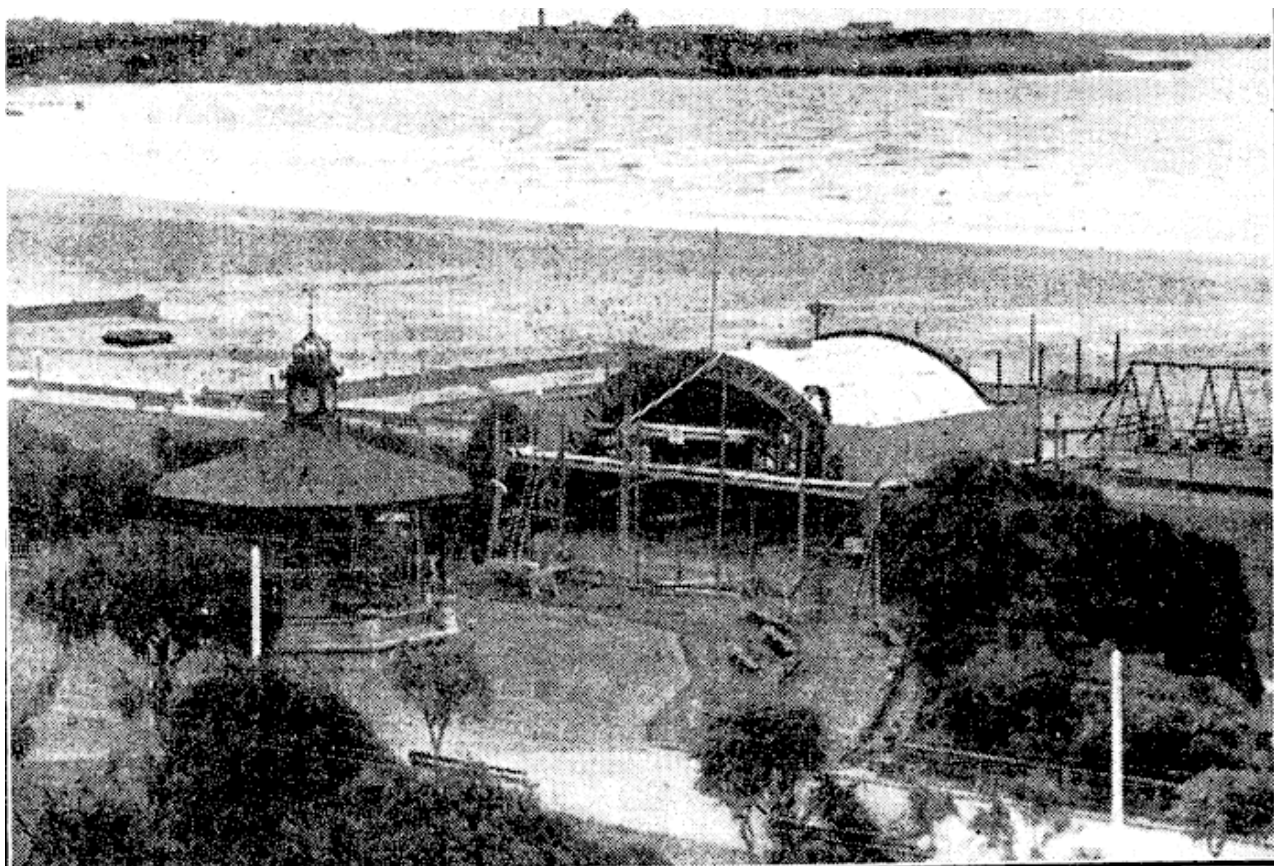


Figure 9: 'Band Sound Shell at Timaru' with band rotunda still in situ. *Press* 19 November 1936, p. 16. PapersPast.

While the improvements before World War II made the bay an attractive place for leisure and recreational pursuits, reaching the bay from the town was not easy. There were only two natural breaks in the cliffs, one at the foot of Wai-iti Road and the other at the foot of Strathallan Street. Access to the bay in the early years was via an underpass below the railway line at the foot of Wai-iti Road and by a footbridge that led from The Terrace over the railway line and down to the bay. The footbridge was finished, except for painting, in October 1886. On the bay side, this footbridge was originally connected to a clay bank. After the bank was cut away wooden steps led down from the end of the bridge to the bay. The bridge was closed in 1982 to allow for changes to the railway tracks to make shunting easier. Public subscriptions were raised to replace it and six months after the old wooden bridge was demolished a new bridge was opened on the site.

By 1930, the bay was 'Timaru's most inviting pleasure ground' and 'the rendezvous of many thousands of people particularly during the warmer months of the year'. By that time there were 'bright gardens, well-grown shrubberies, neatly kept lawns and rustic fences' behind the beach which added to the bay's appeal. The buildings and facilities by that time included the Bay Hall, the tearooms, the soundshell, hot and cold seawater baths, the tennis pavilion, six asphalt tennis courts, bathing sheds and a caretaker's cottage. The municipal authorities supplied hot water and milk free to picnic parties. A shop on the northern breakwater, accessible from the sand, was patronised by those using the beach for picnics, bathing and other leisure activities.



THE HOLIDAY SEASON IN THE SOUTH ISLAND: CAROLINE BAY ATTRACTS LARGE CROWDS OF VISITORS DURING THE NEW YEAR'S DAY CARNIVAL AT TIMARU.
 1. A glimpse of the crowd round the side-shows. 2. The race for girls under 16 years of age. 3. Some of the bench races. 4. During the sand-modelling contest. 5. A general view of the large crowd listening to a concert.
 —Green and Black.

Figure 10: 'The Holiday Season in the South Island: Caroline Bay attracts large crowds of visitors during the New Year's Day Carnival at Timaru' *Auckland Weekly News* 13 January 1932, p. 41. AWNS-1932011304101, Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections.

During World War II barbed wire was strung across the beach at Caroline Bay and concrete pillboxes were installed in the central business district to block the passage of any Japanese troops who managed to land; these were later dumped on Caroline Bay. The pillboxes were last reported as being visible at the northern end of the bay around 2010, subsequently becoming buried in sand and silt or obscured by discoloured water.

Caroline Bay was a focus for civic events, as well as for local and regional holidaymakers. For example, when Timaru was proclaimed the country's 10th city on 11 November 1948 an official ceremony was held in the bay on 16 November and a commemorative totara tree planted near the band rotunda.

The carnivals organised over each Christmas/New Year period continued to be popular through the 1950s and 1960s. Excursion trains from Christchurch, which had run between the wars, resumed after the end of World War II and brought people to Timaru from other parts of Canterbury for the carnivals.

To keep up with the bay's summertime popularity the Bay Hall was extended in the 1950s. In 1957 new seating in front of the soundshell, designed by Victor Panton and presented by the Caroline Bay Association, was built on the site of the piazza constructed in 1912. A skating rink was built in 1963 but moved in 1972. The 1960s also saw the bathing sheds replaced, a paddling pool built (1964) and a community centre constructed (1969). In the 1980s the old aviary was demolished and a new one built on a different site. A mini-golf course was laid out in the same decade. A barbecue followed in 1990 and an entertainment centre in 1992. In the first year of the new millennium petanque courts were laid.

Improvements at Caroline Bay continued through the last decades of the 20th century, although the annual carnivals waned in popularity in the 1970s and 1980s. The provision of car parking on Caroline Bay helped the bay retain its popularity but could not completely counteract the

other attractions and activities that private cars made more accessible. Although the carnivals were no longer on the scale of years past, a new building to provide places for stall holders and the operators of side shows was erected.

Access to the bay from the town was enhanced with the construction of a piazza and descending stairs and elevator from the top of Bay Hill. The piazza, designed by John Achari of Urban Design Consultants, was opened by the mayor, Wynne Raymond, in September 1997. The Trevor Griffiths Rose Garden, designed by Christchurch architect Sir Miles Warren, was opened by the Governor-General, Dame Sylvia Cartwright, in December 2001.

As the beach continued to extend seawards, the area available for lawns, gardens and facilities grew. By the early 21st century two intersecting axial paths had been formed to bring coherence to the reserve. The low dunes between the sandy beach and the developed area of the bay were planted with native pingao and the area available for parking, accessed by the Port Loop Road and under the viaduct at the northern end of the Bay, was greatly increased. As beautification and development continued in the first decade of the 21st century, the aviary was again relocated and rebuilt. In January 2020 the 109th Caroline Bay Carnival was held.



Figure 11: 1935 NZ Railways publicity poster with Caroline Bay in background. Eph-E-TOURISM-1935-01, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

HISTORIC NAMES

The origin of the name Caroline Bay is not settled. While it is commonly thought that the bay was named for a whaling ship working along the South Canterbury coastline in the mid-1830s, Mayor Craigie stated in January 1907 that he was firmly of the view that the bay was named after Caroline of Brunswick (1768-1821), the wife of George IV. Craigie based his views on a survey plan drawn up in the late 1840s by the party aboard the *Acheron*; it may be that the ship was also named for Queen Caroline.

The Palliser drinking fountain was gifted by Francis Palliser (1853-1934), a local builder resident in Timaru since 1880.

The Trevor Griffiths Rose Garden was named for a noted local rose grower, breeder and author (1928-2010).

The Makary Fountain installed in 2006 is named for its donors, Albert and Maha Makary, who also donated the fountain in the Trevor Griffiths Rose Garden.



Figure 12: Entry to Trevor Griffiths Rose Garden. A McEwan.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Caroline Bay has high historical and social significance for its association with the colonial development of Timaru, from whaling station to busy port and seaside resort town, and as a demonstration of the continuous use and development of the area since the late 19th century as a focal point for the town and district's recreational activities. The area's association with the Caroline Bay Association is particularly notable as a demonstration of civic philanthropy and service in action. An exhibition held over the summer of 2010-11 at the South Canterbury Museum showcased the historic importance of Caroline Bay to Timaru history.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Caroline Bay has cultural value as a site of community identity, esteem and historic continuity since the late 19th century. Various features in the area, especially the memorial wall, have commemorative values relating to former residents and the service of local people in armed conflicts around the world. The sundial at the centre of the memorial wall lists the names of all New Zealand awardees of the Victoria Cross during World War I.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Caroline Bay has architectural and aesthetic significance for the architecturally-designed buildings and structures that are associated with a number of prominent local architects and which use a common palette of design elements to create a varied but generally unified urban reserve. Public artworks in the reserve are notable for their association with the artists who created them and the contribution they make to the overall aesthetic experience of visitors to Caroline Bay.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Caroline Bay has technological and craftsmanship significance for the materials and methods used in the realisation of a diverse range of buildings, memorials, artworks and structures. The use of Timaru bluestone in the tearooms, railway underpass and adjacent shelter is particularly notable.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Caroline Bay has high contextual significance as one of the defining environmental features of the township of Timaru. Natural and constructed features have been added to the reserve as the beach has grown, although the removal, redevelopment or relocation of some elements means that there is not a clearly defined chronological sequence of structures from the inland boundary of the reserve out to the dunes. Caroline Bay is nationally recognised as a seaside landscape and is an integral component of the Timaru town centre.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the recreation ground at Caroline Bay was formed from the late 19th century as a result of sand shoaling and development of the neighbouring port, the presence of pre-1900 archaeological evidence in the historic heritage area is likely to be limited. Evidence pertaining to the development of the South Island Main trunk railway line may have survived along the southern boundary of the bay; World War II defensive structures lie beneath the sand dunes beyond the perimeter of the historic area. The area has scientific value due to its potential to provide further information about the recreation reserve's use and development

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Caroline Bay has high overall historic heritage significance to the Timaru district. The historic heritage area has high historical and social value as a recreation reserve developed by the local council and the Caroline Bay Association and cultural value as a place of community esteem, identity and commemoration. Caroline Bay has architectural and aesthetic significance for its architecturally-designed buildings, public artworks and memorial structures and technological and craftsmanship significance for the materials and methods of construction used in its built heritage features. Caroline Bay has high contextual significance as a nationally recognised seaside landscape that is an integral part of the Timaru town centre. Archaeological values are likely to be limited due to the post-1890 development of the reserve; the area has scientific value due to its potential to provide further information about the area's use and development.

EXTENT OF SCHEDULING



Figure 13: Caroline Bay Historic Heritage Area (outlined in turquoise).

REFERENCES

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- <http://sundials.co/~timaru.htm>
- <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~nzlscant/fountains.htm>

* See also heritage reports and research files for Caroline Bay Tearooms and Soundshell.



Figure 14: Caroline Bay site map. Dr A McEwan.

Historic heritage features



Figure 15: Whaling try pot and railway underpass, late 1830s [?] and c.1875.



Figure 16: Tearooms ([1905/1907/1913/1920] 1931; FW Marchant (1905), Walter Panton & Son (1913 & 1931), Harold Broadhead (1920), and Turnbull and Rule (1931), architects; Messrs Stoddart & Mitchell, builders (1931).



Figure 17: Tearooms in c.1907. South Canterbury Museum.



Figure 18: F Palliser & Sons drinking fountain, 1905. Dr A McEwan.



Figure 19: RH Rhodes memorial sun dial, 1919. Relocated to paddling pool area in c.2006; Samuel McBride, stonemason.



Figure 20: Bay Hall (1923/1930 + 1955). Dr J Wilson.



Figure 21: Sundial at centre of memorial wall (1929) with modern interpretation plinths (2009); Vulcan Foundry (plaques), James Stuart (sundial). Dr A McEwan.



Figure 22: Shelter, featuring British Houses of Parliament stone, post-World War II. Dr A McEwan.



Figure 23: Soundshell (1936; Victor Panton, architect; W Hayes, builder) and stadium seating (1957; GS Powell, consulting engineer; Hayes & Porter Ltd, contractors). Dr A McEwan.

Maps



Figure 24: Detail from 1887 map showing breakwater and wharf, with lighthouse in Le Cren Terrace, before the formation of the Caroline Bay recreation reserve. South Canterbury Museum.



Figure 25: Detail from 1926 map showing development of Caroline Bay to date. South Canterbury Museum.

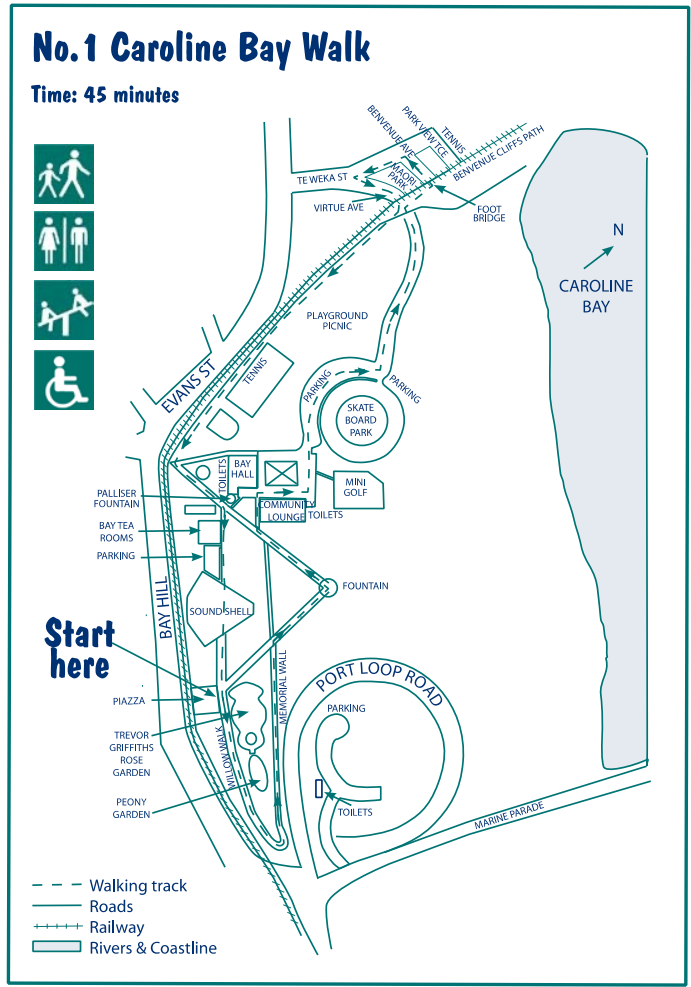


Figure 26: TDC Caroline Bay Walk; available online.



Figure 27: TDC Built Heritage Google Map. Brown pins mark structures of historic significance and/or interest; 14 pins are located within the heritage area. Accessed 1 January 2020.