

Fort Buckley

Barnard Street



Summary of heritage significance

- Fort Buckley has architectural value as an example of the types of coastal defences that were constructed in the 1880s in Wellington. The remains of this fort are the most intact of any built in and around Wellington at this time.
- Fort Buckley was the first operational coastal defence site in Wellington and associated with a time of rapid change in armaments and coastal artillery. It is associated with the New Zealand Government, which had been forced to acknowledge that they could not rely upon the British alone for protection and it is a tangible reminder of New Zealand's first step towards independence from the British Crown. More recently Fort Buckley is associated with heritage protection in New Zealand.
- Fort Buckley is held in high public esteem as it is a physical reminder of the response to the first serious threat to New Zealand since colonisation. The fort was the site of a heritage battle in 1989 over the ownership, won by Wellington City Council, which made the area a reserve.

District Plan:	Map 21, reference 55
Legal Description:	Lots 2-4 DP 90893 Pt Sec 3, Harbour District Wellington Land District
Heritage Area:	-
HPT Listed:	Category I, reference 7544
Archaeological Site:	NZAA R27/159
Other Names:	Fort Buckley – Rifle Muzzle Loading Fortification
Key physical dates:	Built: 1885
Architect / Builder:	Major Henry Cautley, Lieutenant Colonel Tudor-Boddam
Former uses:	Defence
Current uses:	Civic facilities – Reserve
Earthquake Prone Status:	Unknown at time of writing

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History¹

During the first Russian Scare (1878) the New Zealand Government had been forced to acknowledge that they could not rely upon the British alone for protection, and an ambitious programme of battery construction in and around the country's main ports ensued. 22 Rifle Muzzle Loading (RML) guns were purchased but not emplaced at this time and spent the next seven years in storage. In 1880, Colonel Scratchley, who had recently returned from Australia, recommended the construction of a system of coastal defences to protect New Zealand ports from a sea-bourne attack.

In 1884, tensions between Britain and Russia escalated, and Major Henry Cautley was commissioned to design fortifications. Initially the emplacements were constructed with great haste, but upon the realisation that the threat had receded, with more leisure. By 1898 Wellington boasted four fortresses, Ballance, Buckley, Gordon, and Kelburne, as well as batteries at the Botanic Gardens, Halswell, and Kau Point.

Fort Buckley was among the first forts on which construction commenced, and was the first to be completed. It was the first fort capable of defending the Capital in the event of a naval attack. It was designed to support the larger Fort Kelburne at Ngauranga, and the battery circular gun emplacements designed to hold the 64 pr Rifle Muzzle Loading Guns ordered by the New Zealand Government during the first 'Russian Scare' in 1878.

In 1886 the pits, which were initially constructed in timber and protected from bombardment with earth, were upgraded to concrete. By the early 1890s the 64 pr guns were outdated and the battery was not used in operations from 1893. It was then relegated to use as a drill and training centre until 1904 when it was officially decommissioned. By 1909 its guns had been removed for display in Palmerston North Park. The fort was used again during World War Two when an anti aircraft battery was installed. Following the Second World War the fort became surplus and fell into disrepair. In 1989 the fort became the focus of a battle of a different kind, between Land Information New Zealand and the Wellington City Council vied for ownership of the land. The battle was eventually won by the Wellington City Council in 2001, and Fort Buckley was designated as a recreation reserve managed by the Highland Park Progressive Association.

Fort Buckley is of national significance and an important part of New Zealand's coastal defence history. It is a part of a network of coastal defences erected during the late nineteenth century. It is a representative and rare remaining example of the type of gun emplacement constructed to house the 64pr RML guns, the purchase of which in 1879 marked the beginning of New Zealand's response to the defence of its coastline.

1.2 Timeline of modifications (original plans cannot be accessed)

1879-1885 Original construction

¹ Rebecca O'Brien, '*Fort Buckley – Barnard Street*', (New Zealand Historic Places Trust registration report 2004), accessed 22 November 2013, <http://www.historic.org.nz/TheRegister/RegisterSearch/RegisterResults.aspx?RID=7544>

1.3 Ownership history

Ministry of Defence
Wellington City Council

1.4 Occupation history

Not assessed

1.5 Architect

Cautley, Henry - Architect²

Henry Cautley served in the Corps of Royal Engineers of the British Army. From 1876 he was an instructor in fortification at the Royal Military College, Woolwich, England. Cautley came to New Zealand in 1883 to advise on coastal defences of the four major ports; Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Port Chalmers. He prepared plans for the fortifications of these ports before leaving New Zealand in 1885. He was posted to Belfast in 1888. He was succeeded as engineer in charge of defence works and harbour fortifications for New Zealand by E.M. Tudor Boddam who had trained at the Royal Military College, Woolwich, and served in the Royal Artillery before being posted to Australia where he was involved with the development of fortifications in Tasmania. While he had no formal training in engineering, Boddam possessed a good knowledge of military engineering and was a diligent and industrious draughtsman. Boddam held this position until 1888 when he returned to Australia.

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The remains of Fort Buckley are in good intact condition and remain relatively unaltered. Based on the standard design developed by Major Cautley to house two 64 pr RML guns, the layout at Fort Buckley was also used at Fort Resolution in Auckland and the Channel Battery in Dunedin. The gun pits at Fort Buckley are finely finished and its two gun loading galleries feature three shell recesses with arched tops, and ringbolts set into the parapet above each.

2.2 Materials

- Concrete
- Timber
- Brick

2.3 Setting

Fort Buckley is located on a steep cliff overlooking Wellington's inner harbour on reserve land owned by Wellington City Council. Access to the fort is by a tack next to 162 Barnard Street, Highland Park. Presently the gun emplacements are still in place and in relatively good condition.

² Historic Places Trust, 'Henry Cautley', *Professional Biographies*, accessed 22 November 2013, <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Cautley,+Henry>

3.0 Sources

Historic Places Trust. 'Henry Cautley', *Professional Biographies*. Accessed 22 November 2013,
<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Cautley,+Henry>

O'Brien, Rebecca. 'Fort Buckley – Barnard Street.' New Zealand Historic Places Trust registration report 2004. Accessed 22 November 2013,
<http://www.historic.org.nz/TheRegister/RegisterSearch/RegisterResults.aspx?RID=7544>

4.0 Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance

Cultural heritage values

Aesthetic Value:

Architectural: Does the item have architectural or artistic value for characteristics that may include its design, style, era, form, scale, materials, colour, texture, patina of age, quality of space, craftsmanship, smells, and sounds?

Fort Buckley has architectural value as an example of the types of coastal defences that were constructed in the 1880s in Wellington. The remains of this fort are the most intact of any built in and around Wellington at this time.

Townscape: Does the item have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?

Group: Is the item part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use?

Fort Buckley is one of a group of forts constructed in the 1880s as part of a coastal defence network. By 1898 Wellington boasted four fortresses, Ballance, Buckley, Gordon, and Kelburne, as well as batteries at the Botanic Gardens, Halswell, and Kau Point.

Historic Value:

Association: Is the item associated with an important person, group, or organisation?

Fort Buckley is primarily associated with the New Zealand Government, the early Defence forces, and its designers Major Henry Cautley and Lieutenant Colonel Tudor-Boddam.

Association: Is the item associated with an important historic event, theme, pattern, phase, or activity?

Fort Buckley was the first operational coastal defence site in Wellington and associated with a time of rapid change in armaments and coastal artillery. It is associated with the New Zealand Government, which had been forced to acknowledge that they could not rely upon the British alone for protection and it is a tangible reminder of New Zealand's first step towards independence from the British Crown. More recently Fort Buckley is associated with heritage protection in New Zealand.

Scientific Value:

Archaeological: Does the item have archaeological value for its ability to provide scientific information about past human activity?

Fort Buckley is a known archaeological site – NZAA R27/159.

Educational: Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?

Fort Buckley has considerable educational potential; it is the least altered of the original 'Russian Scare' fortresses, and has the potential to provide insight into early coastal defences.

Technological: *Does the item have technological value for its innovative or important construction methods or use of materials?*

There is technical value in the remains of Fort Buckley, particularly the gun emplacements constructed to house the 64pr RML guns. Surviving elements of its original construction such as the collapsed magazine and passageways are also of value.

Social Value:

Public esteem: *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

Fort Buckley is held in high public esteem as it is a physical reminder of the response to the first serious threat to New Zealand since colonisation. The fort was the site of a heritage battle in 1989 over the ownership, which was won by Wellington City Council, which made the area a reserve.

Symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual: *Does the item have symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual or other cultural value for the community who has used and continues to use it?*

Identity/Sense of place/Continuity:

*Is the item a focus of community, regional, or national identity?
Does the item contribute to sense of place or continuity?*

Fort Buckley is a focus of community, regional, and national identity and is a highly significant site. Constructed by the New Zealand Government in response to the 'Russian Scare' and as an acknowledgement that the British could not be relied upon for protection, it is the among the first movement towards a more independent New Zealand.

Sentiment/Connection: *Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?*

Level of cultural heritage significance

Rare: *Is the item rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?*

Representative: *Is the item a good example of the class it represents?*

Fort Buckley is the most intact example of the military installations and is an excellent representative of the coastal fortifications that were constructed in the later 1870s-1880s.

Authentic: *Does the item have authenticity or integrity because it retains significant fabric from the time of its construction or from later periods when important additions or modifications were carried out?*

Fort Buckley retains a high level of authenticity and integrity and is the most intact example of a coastal fortification found in Wellington. It has authenticity of materials, design, craftsmanship, and setting.

Local/Regional/National/International

Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

Fort Buckley is of national significance as a part of New Zealand's early post-colonial coastal defence history. It is part of a nationwide landscape of coastal defences designed to address the threat of war and as a response to the realisation that acknowledgement that the British could not be relied upon for protection, so is associated with early nation building in New Zealand. It has high levels of architectural, group, historic, archaeological, educational, technical, and social values, as well as being associated with the military for over 100 years. The majority of the site is intact and retains some now rare features.

5.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory		
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

Background research

Insert any relevant background information into this section. This may include:

- *Additional plans, such as those for alterations*
- *Chunks of text from other sources such as Cyclopedia of NZ, Papers Past*
- *Additional images*