

# List Entry Record

List Number: 9869

Site Reference: R26/415



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND  
POUHERE TAONGA

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Name:                         | World War Two Fuel Tank Blast Wall                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |           |         |
| Other Names:                  | Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Year From | Year To |
|                               | United States Marines fuel bunker                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |           |         |
|                               | AR17 (Aviation Reserve 17)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |           |         |
|                               | AR17 Bulk Fuel Storage Site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |           |         |
|                               | Paekākāriki Fuel Containment Structure                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |           |         |
|                               | Brick Fuel Containment Tank                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |           |         |
|                               | Petrol Storage Tank                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |           |         |
|                               | Paekākāriki Fuel Tank                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |           |         |
|                               | Splinter-proof Wall                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |           |         |
|                               | Fuel Storage Tank                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |           |         |
| Location:                     | Te Puka Stream, State Highway 59, PAEKĀKĀRIKI                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |           |         |
| List Entry Legal Description: | Lot 1 DP 368307 (RT 277518), Wellington Land District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |           |         |
| Local Authority:              | Kapiti Coast District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |           |         |
| Summary:                      | <p>Summary</p> <p>The World War Two Fuel Tank Blast Wall, built in 1942-43 for the associated US Marines camps at Paekākāriki, has outstanding historical significance as a demonstration of New Zealand's role in the allied response to the Pacific War against Japan. It is a rare surviving structure to represent the transformation of New Zealand localities such as Kapiti when they accommodated the US Marines and defence activity. As an authentic example among only three blast walls confirmed to survive, its architectural and technological values show the skill and co-operation of the builders in meeting the defence demands of a top-secret programme in a pressured timeframe. The structure is within the important ancestral landscape of Wainui, significant to mana whenua Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki of Ngāti Toa, with shared interests extending to Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai. Its heritage values are enhanced by its location amidst a historical landscape of the former Kapiti camps, marked by the ongoing commemorative activities of the community.</p> <p>At the start of the nineteenth century Kapiti was inhabited by Rangitāne, Muaūpoko, and Ngāti Apa, who had intermarried with Ngāti Ira people. From 1822 successive waves of hapū and whanau from Kawhia and Taranaki moved to the region, led by Ngāti Toa chief Te Rauparaha who valued Kapiti's strategic location for trading with the European whalers who were beginning to frequent Cook Strait. Conflicts between the migrant and incumbent groups resulted in tribal boundaries being redrawn and Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai and Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga became mana whenua along the Kapiti Coast. European colonisation, and the sale of the Wainui Block in 1859, reduced Māori lands near Paekākāriki to a number of reserves for settlement and cultivations; these were further reduced by subdivision, sale, and seizure by the Crown for public works. Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki have maintained ahikā at Wainui. By the twentieth century the subject land was owned and farmed by Harold Smith, whose brothers had adjoining farms.</p> <p>The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 brought the threat of invasion sharply into focus for New Zealand. New Zealand joined Britain and the United States in declaring war on Japan, and New Zealand began hosting US Marines (USMC) in a mutually beneficial arrangement: New Zealand was a strategic staging and supply post for the US Military's operations in the Pacific, while the Marines strengthened our defences. Three large camps were built at</p> |           |         |

# List Entry Record

List Number: 9869

Site Reference: R26/415



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND  
POUHERE TAONGA

the north of Paekākāriki to accommodate 15,000 servicemen, swelling the small seaside village between June 1942-November 1943. The Public Works Department was also ordered to build a network of camouflaged Aviation Reserve fuel depots around the country, to service planned US air bases. Each bolted steel fuel tank was to be encircled by a splinter-proof blast wall to limit damage from explosions.

Aviation Reserve 17 at Paekākāriki was started in May 1942 in a valley near the camps. The Public Works department excavated a former meander of the Te Puka Stream and built the blast wall foundations. The 10-metre-high x 18-metre diameter circular brickwork was completed by Love Construction Co. between February and April 1943. USMC Engineers welded and laid 670 metres of fuel pipeline between the tank and a railway siding, and road filling points suggest the installation was uniquely for holding US motor spirits instead of aviation fuel. A bolted 350,000-gallon tank was sent from the USA, but the tank panels were in poor condition and needed preparatory treatment.

However, before the tank could be assembled, all further construction was cancelled on 29 April 1943 due to changing strategic priorities. The PWD resisted orders to return the site to its original state. The suggested reuse of the installation as a water reservoir ultimately came to nothing and it was left in situ. In 2012 the farm was taken by the Crown and the Transmission Gully Motorway built near to the blast wall, which was identified for heritage conservation as part of the project.

**List Entry Status:** Listed

**List Entry Type:** Historic Place Category 1

**List Number:** 9869

**Date Entered:** 29 June 2023

**Extent of List Entry:** Extent includes part of the land described as Lot 1 DP 368307 (RT 277518), Wellington Land District and the structure known as World War Two Fuel Tank Blast Wall thereon, including a curtilage of 5 metres around the circular structure and extending approximately 20 metres west towards the edge of the farm track near Te Puka Stream, to encompass the outer sump and its outlet pipe, and the approximately 10 metres of remnant fuel pipeline visible north of the outer sump in the track embankment.  
(Refer to map in Appendix 1 of the List entry report for further information).

**Chattels** There are no chattels included in this List entry.

**District Plan Listing:** District Plan SCHEDULED in Kāpiti Coast District Plan, Operative 30 June 2021, B87 'Petrol Storage Tank' in SCHED7 Schedule of Historic Heritage.

**NZAA Site Number:** R26/415

**Maori Interest:** General Interest

**Heritage NZ Office:** Central Regional Office

**Other Information:**



A fully referenced copy of the Listing report is available upon request from the Central Regional Office of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

Disclaimer

Please note that entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero identifies only the heritage values of the property concerned, and should not be construed as advice on the state of the property, or as a comment of its soundness or safety, including in regard to earthquake risk, safety in the event of fire, or insanitary conditions.

Archaeological sites are protected by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, regardless of whether they are entered on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero or not. Archaeological sites include 'places associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there may be evidence relating to the history of New Zealand'. This List entry report should not be read as a statement on whether or not the archaeological provisions of the Act apply to the property (s) concerned. Please contact your local Heritage New Zealand office for archaeological advice.

General Nature of Wahi Tapu:

Section 66(1) & 66(3)  
Assessment:

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Section 66(1) | Aesthetic     |
| Section 66(1) | Technological |
| Section 66(1) | Social        |
| Section 66(1) | Cultural      |
| Section 66(1) | Architectural |
| Section 66(1) | Historical    |
| Section 66(2) | a             |
| Section 66(2) | b             |
| Section 66(2) | d             |
| Section 66(2) | e             |
| Section 66(2) | f             |
| Section 66(2) | g             |
| Section 66(2) | j             |
| Section 66(2) | k             |

Section 66(1) Detail:

Historical Significance or Value  
The structure has historical values as a surviving remnant of the mutual aid agreement between New Zealand and the United States in World War Two, which resulted in the small seaside of village of Paekākāriki being touched by the international theatre of war as it hosted three large camps for 15,000 US Marines. Constructed by the Public Works Department as part of a network of enhanced military infrastructure, the structure demonstrates New Zealand's response to the threat of Japanese invasion.



## Aesthetic Significance or Value

The Fuel Tank Blast Wall at Paekākāriki has aesthetic values as an industrial 'ruin' hidden in a bush-clad environment. The now-quiet location contrasts with its history, the structure evocative of a busy past when Paekākāriki was temporarily transformed by the thousands of US Marines stationed there. The purely functional design has taken on an awe-inspiring quality due to its scale and setting, and ability to be appreciated from within the structure. The high walls holding back the hills and trees but open to the sky, combined with the unusual acoustics of the large circular space, create a slightly surreal environment.

## Architectural Significance or Value

The structure has architectural significance as a reflection of the methods and materials employed by the Public Works Department and Love Construction Co. to quickly meet the requirements of the New Zealand-United States defence network in 1942. It is representative of the string of Aviation Reserves across the country, with 15 sharing the PWD's design for the splinter-proof brick wall protecting the fuel tanks. Comparison between the three surviving known blast walls (Paekākāriki, Bankside and Ormond) shows the Paekākāriki structure is intact and in good condition, a testament to Love Construction Co's skills.

## Social Significance or Value

The Brick Fuel Containment Structure has social significance as a valued part of the Kapiti community's heritage, as demonstrated by its conservation requirement in the Transmission Gully motorway consent, protection in the District Plan heritage schedule and feature in exhibitions at the Paekākāriki Station Museum and Kapiti US Marines Trust website. The district's ongoing connection to its World War Two history is regularly demonstrated by commemorative events and development of interpretation signage and memorials.

## Cultural Significance or Value

The structure is located in a landscape of cultural and historical importance to Māori, being situated on the lower slopes of Wainui maunga beside Te Puka Stream, amidst a landscape of former pā, kāinga, mahinga kai, tracks, urupā, tauranga waka and recorded archaeological pit and midden sites that are the ancestral tapuwae (footprints) of the tangata whenua. Te Puka Stream and Wainui remain important to mana whenua kaitiaki Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki of Ngāti Toa, and also to Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai.

## Section 66(3) Detail:

This place was assessed against the Section 66(3) criteria and found to qualify under the following criteria: a, b, d, e, f, g, j, k. The assessment concludes that this place should be listed as a Category 1 historic place.

### (a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history

The impact of World War Two reverberated throughout New Zealand and continues to be a major event in New Zealand history. The Fuel Tank Blast Wall has special significance as a direct reflection of the major effort of co-operation between the United States and New Zealand during the Pacific War. Its construction was prioritised in a top-secret programme to boost fuel reserves. The cancellation of its construction before completion reflects the turning points in the Pacific War as Japanese aggression was countered. The Fuel Tank Blast Wall is a rare surviving structure to represent the transformation of New Zealand localities such as Kapiti when they accommodated the US Marines and defence activity.

### (b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history



The Fuel Tank Blast Wall has significance as a demonstration of the value New Zealand places on its role in the global community. It is a physical testament to a time of international collaboration and co-operation under the highest stakes. The World War Two Fuel Tank Blast Wall has value for its association with the Public Works Department who employed a major effort to meet the terms of the United States-New Zealand Mutual Aid Agreement, and the Love Construction Co. Both construction agencies have contributed considerably to New Zealand's built heritage landscape.

(d) The importance of the place to tangata whenua

The structure is within the important ancestral landscape of Wainui, significant to mana whenua iwi Ngāti Toa Rangatira and Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki hapū, with shared interests extending to Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai. The World War Two Fuel Tank Blast Wall is located in the foothills of the ancestral maunga Wainui and Pouawha, and in the valley that was the route taken by Te Rangihaeata when he led his people to safety in 1846 – the gifting of the name Te Ara Nui o Te Rangihaeata demonstrates the great significance of the place to Ngāti Toa Rangatira. The Fuel Tank Wall is also located in an area used for cultivations prior to the land being taken by the Crown, and in the valley of Te Puka Stream which is a tributary to the Wainui Stream. The awa is culturally significant for its lifegiving role in protecting and enhancing the mauri of te taiao (the environment), as a habitat for highly valued mahinga kai species of fish, and for supporting the growth of rongoā plants. The landscape is therefore important to the aspirations and rights of ahikā, papakāinga and kaitiakitanga of mana whenua and tangata whenua.

(e) The community association with, or public esteem for the place

The community's esteem for Kapiti's World War Two history, including the Fuel Tank Blast Wall, is strongly demonstrated by the formation of the Kapiti US Marines Trust who are active in their promotion of the area's heritage features, and the inclusion of the Fuel Tank structure in Paekākāriki Station Museum displays. Kapiti Coast District Council consider the Blast Tank Wall's significance to be worthy of protection in the district plan, and the structure was identified for conservation by the Board of Inquiry for the Transmission Gully motorway. Veterans of the US Marines and representatives of the US Government regularly attend Memorial Day commemorations and events to demonstrate their ongoing connection to the location and its heritage.

(f) The potential of the place for public education

The Fuel Tank Blast Wall has potential as a place to educate the public about New Zealand's collaboration with the United States in World War Two to counter Japanese aggression in the Pacific. The construction of secret defences such as this is a little-known aspect of the war effort. Although not currently accessible to the public, if safe access was secured following the resolution of the Transmission Gully project the site is highly able to be appreciated and used by the public for recreation and education, especially if in conjunction with the former Perkins Farm buildings. The Fuel Tank is a natural candidate for addition to the network of heritage trails and interpretation signage in the nearby Queen Elizabeth and Whareroa Farm parks.

(g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place

The Fuel Tank Blast wall remains authentic to its original design and construction, with high integrity as an intact, representative example of its type. It retains its original form, scale and materials, including remnants of the fuel pipeline, valves and sumps, and has been little, if at all, modified since construction was halted. The good condition of the brick wall, which has no obvious signs of cracking despite the pressure from the enclosing hills, demonstrates the quality workmanship. It is considered to be the most authentic surviving example of its type.

(j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places

The World War Two Fuel Tank Blast Wall at Paekākāriki has special significance as one of only three confirmed surviving brick blast walls from the network of former Aviation Reserves in New Zealand, with two others possibly

# List Entry Record

List Number: 9869

Site Reference: R26/415



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND  
POUHERE TAONGA

still in existence. Amongst the 17 planned AR installations the Paekākāriki example is unusual in that it appears to be the only one built for holding motor spirits for use by the US Marines at the three large camps nearby, instead of aviation fuel. It is also highly authentic and the only example found that has never been even partially filled in, allowing full appreciation of its scale and construction technique.

(k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

The Fuel Tank Blast Wall's heritage values are enhanced by its location within a historical landscape containing Kapiti's only other remaining US Marines building - the Rail Air Goods Shed at Paekākāriki Railway Station - and the network of heritage trails, interpretation and memorials at the adjacent former campsites, now publicly accessible in Queen Elizabeth Park and Whareroa Farm Park. These assist with understanding and appreciation of the former Aviation Reserve (AR17) structure.

## Summary of Significance or Values

The Fuel Tank Blast Wall has outstanding heritage significance as a rare surviving structure representing the transformation of New Zealand localities such as Kapiti when they accommodated the US Marines and defence activity. It has special historical significance as a direct demonstration of New Zealand's collaboration with the United States to defend the Pacific from Japanese military aggression. As one of only three confirmed surviving blast walls its physical values show the skill and co-operation of the builders in meeting the defence demands of this top-secret programme in a short timeframe. It sits within the important ancestral landscape of Wainui, significant to mana whenua Ngāti Haumia ki Paekākāriki, and also to Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai. Its heritage values are enhanced by its location amidst a historical landscape of the former Kapiti camps and their infrastructure, and the ongoing commemorative activities of the community are evidence of its social esteem.

## Statement of Wahi Tapu: