

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 691
*RĪPAPA ISLAND/ FORT JERVOIS AND SETTING - 197 CAMP
BAY ROAD, DIAMOND HARBOUR***



PHOTOGRAPH : MARGARET LOVELL-SMITH, 2014

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Historical and social values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular person, group, organisation, institution, event, phase or activity; the continuity and/or change of a phase or activity; social, historical, traditional, economic, political or other patterns.

Rīpapa Island has high historical and social significance for its use as a fortified pā site by Ngāi Tahu, as a quarantine station in the 1870s to 1880s, as a prison for Māori from Parihaka in 1880, as part of the nationwide coastal defence following the 'Russian Scare' of 1885, a detention centre for conscientious objectors in 1913 and then in later years its use by local sea cadets and now its status as a historic reserve under the care of the Department of Conservation.

Rich in kaimoana, Rīpapa was long a place of food gathering, however during the 1820s a Ngāi Tahu chief Taununu built a fortified pā on the island and occupied it until c.1832 when it was sacked during the Kai Huanga feud. Following the devastating attack Rīpapa was abandoned. The island was later commandeered by the Crown and was surveyed by Frederick Strouts in 1872, when he found the remnants of the defensive earthworks. Strouts designed a new quarantine station to replace Camp Bay. Quarantine barracks, a hospital, service buildings, a barrack master's cottage and jetty were built and opened in 1873. It

remained in use for the province until 1885, when most of the barracks were re-erected on Quail Island. For a short time in 1880 the quarantine station housed over 150 of Te Whiti's followers following the start of imprisonments as a result of the Parihaka non-violent resistance.

Following the 'Russian Scare' of 1885, when war between Russia and Britain seemed imminent, it was decided to include Rīpapa Island in the nationwide coastal defence scheme. This was along with gun positions at Erskine Point, Spur Point and Battery Point to provide coverage of the whole of Lyttelton Harbour. Construction of Fort Jervois began in 1886, using unemployed and military labour, and a submarine mining depot was also erected on the island. In 1888 prison labour began to be used, from Lyttelton Gaol. Initially prisoners were transported to and from Rīpapa every day, but in 1889 the mining depot buildings were altered to provide living accommodation for the men who were then housed there for six days each week. At the south end of the island facilities were built to house and handle underwater mines and torpedoes, on the bedrock of the northern end concrete gun pits, ammunition stores and connecting tunnels were built. Living quarters were also built and the island was surrounded with a stone parapet sea wall. The soil removed through the tunnelling was used to cover over the fort. A narrow gauge railway was built to shift the mines to the island's wharf. Two quick firing Nordenfeldt guns and four hydro-pneumatic Armstrong disappearing guns were in place by 1889 and the fort was declared operational in 1895, but it was not until convict labour was abolished in 1913 that work on the fort stopped. The fort is named after Sir William Jervois, military engineer and then Governor of New Zealand, who suggested the placement of sites for the protection of Lyttelton Harbour.

In the 20th century the island was used as a prison on two occasions. In 1913 it became a detention centre for 97 conscientious objectors and in 1918 Count Graf Felix von Luckner was held as a prisoner of war for 109 days on the island. During WWI Fort Jervois was occupied by the No. 4 Company NZ Garrison and the port examination vessel Cygnet operated from the island.

The island was downgraded to a magazine in 1922 and abandoned in 1925 and left under a caretaker. From 1929 to 1936 the island was leased to Rhind and Co whose ferries took visitors to the island. In 1936 it was reinstated as a magazine and during WWII it was manned by members of the Defence Reserve. After the war a contract was let to remove the guns as scrap, but the scrap metal dealer gave up and two guns were left partially intact. From 1947 to 1956 the island was reopened to visitors for visits and picnics while being administered by the Lyttelton Harbour Board. In 1958 the Navy League were appointed to control and manage the island and sea cadets from TS Cornwell used the island for camps and training. There was a bridge connecting the island to the mainland that was lost in the 'Wahine storm' in 1968.

In 1986 Rīpapa Island became a historic reserve and in 1990 it came under the care of the Department of Conservation (DOC). In 1991 Fort Jervois was classified with the Historic Places Trust (now Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga) as a Category A site (now a Category I listed site). In 1998 under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act the island was given Tōpuni status, providing recognition of high Ngāi Tahu significance and ensuring mana whenua values guide the management of the island. In 2002 DOC installed interpretation panels for visitors to the island. Following a period of closure after the Canterbury earthquakes the island was re-opened to visitors and can be visited by private boats or seasonally on the local ferry.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural and spiritual values that demonstrate or are associated with the distinctive characteristics of a way of life, philosophy, tradition, religion, or other belief, including: the symbolic or commemorative value of the place; significance to Tangata Whenua; and/or associations with an identifiable group and esteemed by this group for its cultural values.

Rīpapa Island has high cultural and spiritual significance to mana whenua as a place containing urupā of Ngāi Tahu ancestors. Ngāi Tahu perceive their ancestors as ever present, indicating the continuity between past and present generations and places like Rīpapa retain a focus for whānau traditions. The hapū of Ngāti Wheke, based at Rāpaki, are the guardians of Rīpapa and the island has tapu status. Rīpapa was designated as Tōpuni in the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement with the Crown in 1998, which ensures that Ngāi Tahu values are recognised, acknowledged and respected. As a site of Ngāi Tahu cultural significance the island, including the surrounding reefs, is scheduled as a Wāhi Tapu/Wāhi Taonga in the Christchurch District Plan.

Fort Jervis also has cultural significance as a rare and relatively intact example of the defensive structures built to repel enemy invaders into New Zealand in the 1880s.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular style, period or designer, design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.

Rīpapa Island has high architectural and aesthetic significance for Fort Jervis, a rare example of an 1880's underground fort with four disappearing gun pits connected by tunnels to underground magazines and living quarters. The main entrance to the fort was given a castle like appearance with a wall, constructed of local stone, with battlements and mock cross arrow slits. The wall also contains windows with wooden shutters and horizontal openings.

The fort demonstrates wide use of concrete with concrete used around the windows, the base and the crenulation of the fort wall above ground, while the underground fort was built of concrete and brick and masonry sea walls were constructed around the island which were concreted in. There are also timber outbuildings on the island, with metal roofs and multi-pane timber windows. These were originally for the men's dormitory, kitchen block and latrines and have been further used over time as caretakers' residences, dining rooms, cadets' quarters and similar, depending on which organisation was using the island. The barracks building now houses DOC's interpretation panels about the island.

Preliminary plans were drawn up for the fort by Lieutenant Colonel EM Boddam, who also designed the North Head fort at the mouth of Auckland's Waitemata Harbour. At Rīpapa he was succeeded by Arthur Bell. Construction was supervised by William Wilson, the District Engineer, who was succeeded by Thomas Tillman in 1892.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Technological and craftsmanship values that demonstrate or are associated with: the nature and use of materials, finishes and/or technological or constructional methods which were innovative, or of notable quality for the period.

Rīpapa Island has high technological and craftsmanship significance both for the construction of the fort itself, with hand tools and convict labour and for the engineering

involved in the hydro-pneumatic disappearing guns. Two of the guns remain on the island, virtually complete. The Institute of Professional Engineers have erected a commemorative plaque on Rīpapa Island marking the contribution of engineers to New Zealand's development and have produced their own brochure about the island.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), a landscape, setting, group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of consistency in terms of type, scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detail; recognised landmarks and landscape which are recognised and contribute to the unique identity of the environment.

Rīpapa Island has high contextual significance both for its relationship to Purau Bay, which was one of the oldest Māori settlements on Horomaka Banks Peninsula, and as part of a wider planned defensive system for Lyttelton Harbour in the late 19th century. The other key defences from this time are Battery Point and Erskine Point. The island sits close to the southern shore of Whakaraupō Lyttelton Harbour, off the eastern headland of Purau Bay.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Archaeological or scientific values that demonstrate or are associated with: the potential to provide information through physical or scientific evidence an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values of past events, activities, structures or people.

Rīpapa Island has archaeological significance because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900. Evidence of Māori occupation prior to the use by Europeans is likely to have been impacted by the extensive modification undertaken on the island when Fort Jervis was built.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

Rīpapa Island is of high overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula as a site of high heritage significance to both Māori and Europeans. Rīpapa Island has high historical and social significance for its use as a fortified pā by Ngāi Tahu and the site of a violent attack, as a quarantine station in the 1870s to 1880s, as a prison for Māori from Parihaka in 1880, as part of the nationwide coastal defence following the 'Russian Scare' of 1885, a detention centre for conscientious objectors in 1913 and then in later years its use by local sea cadets and now its status as a historic reserve under the care of the Department of Conservation. The island has high cultural and spiritual significance to mana whenua as a place containing urupā of Ngāi Tahu ancestors. It also has cultural significance as a rare and relatively intact example of the defensive structures built to repel enemy invaders into New Zealand in the 1880s. Rīpapa Island has high architectural and aesthetic significance for Fort Jervis, a rare example of an 1880's underground fort with four disappearing gun pits connected by tunnels to underground magazines and living quarters. It has high technological and craftsmanship significance both for the construction of the fort itself, with hand tools and convict labour and for the engineering involved in the hydro-pneumatic disappearing guns. The island has high contextual significance both for its relationship to Purau Bay, which was one of the oldest Māori settlements on Horomaka Banks Peninsula, and as part of a wider planned defensive system for Whakaraupō Lyttelton Harbour in the

late 19th century. Rīpapa Island has archaeological significance because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site.

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Christchurch City Council, *Heritage File, Fort Jervois, Rīpapa Island, Purau*

Lovell-Smith, Margaret, *Background Information Listed Heritage Place, Purau – Fort Jervois – Rīpapa Island*, 2014

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/historic/by-region/auckland/central-and-south-auckland/north-head-historic-reserve/history-of-the-reserve/>

Kā Huru Manu Ngāi Tahu Atlas, Rīpapa, Rīpapa Pa: [Atlas | Cultural Mapping Project \(kahurumanu.co.nz\)](http://kahurumanu.co.nz)

[HTTPS://WWW.HERITAGE.ORG.NZ/NEWS/STORIES/RIPAPA-A-PLACE-OF-SORROWS](https://www.heritage.org.nz/news/stories/ripapa-a-place-of-sorrows)

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