

New home in an old haven

Terry Manson and Dave Pearson are both involved in the redevelopment of the Navy Museum. Here they provide an account of the historic origins of its very appropriate new location

ON TARGET FOR TORPEDO BAY

The Navy Museum has operated out of premises on Spring Street in Devonport since April 1982. Prior to this, it was sited in old naval huts within the naval base for about eight years and there was no public access. It has long since outgrown the Spring Street site, so the forthcoming move to dedicated premises in Torpedo Bay is somewhat overdue.

Planning to redevelop the Navy Museum at Torpedo Bay began ten years ago and is now moving apace. To date, Opus International Consultants Limited have been engaged as the principal Design Consultants for the project. OPUS partnered with Ken Davis of Herriot Melhuish Architects and Dave Pearson of Dave Pearson Heritage Architects Ltd to provide specialist design input. Rick Pearson of Pearson and Associates Architects Limited has also been engaged to design and fit out the interior permanent exhibition spaces. Design of both the new Museum and the exhibitions is proceeding well and it is programmed to have the Museum completed and open by early March 2010.

Torpedo Bay, on the South West of North Head/Maunga a Uika has magnificent sea views across Auckland's Waitemata Harbour to Bastion Point, out to Bean Rock and inwards to downtown Auckland. A significant heritage site, it has many layers of history and relevance to both local history and the naval history of New Zealand. It is hard to imagine a more appropriate location for the new Navy Museum.

A MAORI ANCHORAGE

Choosing an appropriate site for a new museum is not a task to be undertaken lightly. Maori recognised the potential of Torpedo Bay long ago. When the first Maori settlers arrived at the Bay, there was a small stream draining the low lying swamp and a fresh water spring at the head. Kupe, the great Maori navigator, is understood to have landed his canoe here. He named the bay Te Hau Kapua (cloud bank carried along by the wind). About 200 years later (1150AD) another great navigator Toi Te Hautahi, following Kupe's directions, also reached the Bay. His grandson settled at North Head at the Harbour entrance, giving the name Maunga a Uika (Uika's hill). The next significant arrival was the Tainui canoe, part of the great 'seven canoe' fleet and commanded by Chief Hoturoa. The Tainui people are credited with naming the spring 'Takapuna', which later came to refer to the surrounding area. North Head was fortified by the Maori inhabiting the area. However, being difficult to defend and open to siege and attack from sea-going war canoes, Maori seem to have gradually abandoned it as a fort.

EUROPEAN LANDFALL

Later arrivals were also attracted to this safe anchorage. The French explorer Dumont D'Urville was among the first Europeans to set foot on North Head in 1827. Around 1835, the descendants of the Takapuna people came back to the three high points of Mt Victoria, Mt Cambria and North Head. Their food pits and middens are still



Figure 1: The Torpedo Bay Boatshed, looking across the Waitemata Harbour to Auckland City, is being developed as the site of the new Navy Museum. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: NICOLA PAYNE, THE NAVY MUSEUM.



Figure 3: The Torpedo Bay Administration Building (left) and the more solid-looking Old Mine Store in the background – two of the heritage buildings which are features of the museum development. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: NICOLA PAYNE, THE NAVY MUSEUM.

visible on the slopes of North Head. By 1878, George Beddoes established a ship-building yard at the bottom of Te Hau Kapua, now also being called Pilot Bay. Nearly 20 years later, Pilot Bay became the location for a Torpedo Base (today we would describe this as a Mining Base) for the defence of Auckland. Workshops, a jetty, offices and stores were built by the military, and by 1897 the complex had undergone two expansions, including a barracks building built by convict labour and a seawall faced with stone. Plans of the time show what is essentially the present layout.

BUILT TO LAST – EARLY NAVAL HERITAGE

The buildings at the Torpedo Bay mining base were substantial structures. They had to be as defending New Zealand was a serious job. While these buildings do not appear on the New Zealand Historic Places Trust register, they are registered with the Defence Heritage Register. The Connecting-up Shed and Loading Shed are both Category B and the Mine Store and Test Room are registered as Category A. The Connecting-up Shed, dating from 1897, is nearly 36 metres long, 18 metres wide and eight metres high. It has timber-framed walls and a roof structure consisting of a series of steel and timber trusses. The entire building was clad with corrugated iron with natural light being provided by a series of skylights and two small windows in each gable end. Over the years, a number of changes have occurred with lean-to structures and various windows being added. The original external sheathing has been changed and the interior repartitioned.

MONITORING THE MUSEUM'S PROGRESS

The new Navy Museum will open mid 2010. Further information can be found on the museum's website www.navymuseum.mil.nz. To subscribe to the museum's on-line newsletter Te Waka email christine.hodgson@nzdf.mil.nz. For a free subscription to The White Ensign, the Navy Museum's heritage journal email: brian.burford@nzdf.mil.nz



Figure 2: The Submarine Mining Base and general store at Torpedo Bay, 1886. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: AUCKLAND CITY LIBRARIES

The Loading Stores have concrete walls and three sets of doors on opposite sides of the building through which the trolleys loaded with mines passed. Although the building has been altered in later years with partition walls being added, the original structure remains intact. The Mine Store at the base of the cliff consisted of two stores at either side of a test shed. The roof and the walls of the structure are 600 mm thick and built of concrete reinforced with railway lines to withstand enemy bombardments.

The current Shipwright's Shop may have replaced an earlier building in the same location. It has similarities to the military buildings on North Head and probably dates from the 1940s. The building has timber framed walls and a truss roof. The walls are sheathed with weatherboards and the roof is corrugated steel. The former Test Room, later known as the 'Ye Old Chippy Shop', was excavated into the cliff. It is this structure that may have served as the prison for German officer Count Friederich von Luckner whose daring escapes turned him into a rather dashing popular hero, despite his enemy status. The walls appear to be plastered masonry and the roof is concrete, reinforced with railway lines. The front wall has a pair of double hung windows and a single door.

These heritage buildings will form the core of the new museum development.

CREATIVE RE-USE

Planning for the new museum is at a preliminary stage with sketch plans already prepared. The historic buildings are all to be preserved and will become exhibits in their own right, as well as being adapted for new uses as part of the museum complex.

Under the current proposal, the Connecting-up Shed is set to become the main exhibition space with an entry and café in one corner. The building will be reclad with corrugated steel and relined inside. New windows will be provided for the café. The important heritage elements of the building including the roof trusses, the original windows and the surviving railway tracks in the floor, will all be kept.

The Loading Stores area will also be kept and is destined to become a classroom, although the doors through which the mine trolleys passed will be retained. The Shipwright's Building will be refurbished for use as the Museum's administration centre. Elsewhere heritage elements such as the exposed internal roof trusses, the majority of the existing windows and the weatherboard walls will all be preserved. The Mines Store at the foot of the cliff will await restoration at another time. The Test Room, his former prison, will house a permanent exhibit about von Luckner.

SAFE HARBOUR

The Torpedo Bay Boatyard is one of Auckland's most significant historic military sites and the Navy Museum has the potential to become one of Auckland's foremost visitor attractions. The Navy acknowledges and values the history of the Bay in pre-European times, in Auckland's early colonial period and as part of Auckland's military record. It recognises the contribution this rich heritage can add to the new Museum, and the potential of the Museum to enhance the heritage trails in Devonport and complement the historic sites managed by the Department of Conservation.

As the premier museum on Auckland's North Shore, the Navy Museum is set to become the heritage flagship for all North Shore City residents. Its most appropriate waterfront setting in Torpedo Bay has the blessing of the North Shore City Council and will surely appeal to Aucklanders as well as tourists from overseas. The Navy Museum team is excited about the prospects and eager to follow this new course. Roll on, 2010!



Figure 4: The complex of heritage buildings at Torpedo Bay, including the main shed, will form the core of the new development. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: NICOLA PAYNE, THE NAVY MUSEUM.

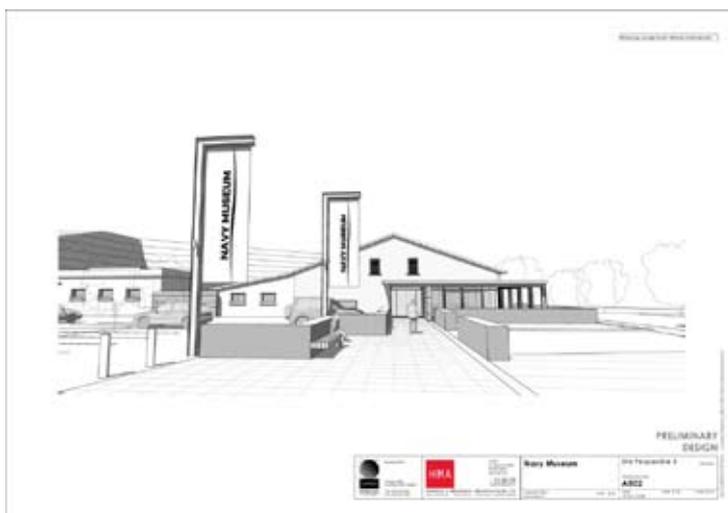


Figure 5: A perspective view of the new Navy Museum. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: THE NAVY MUSEUM.

Theresa Manson has a background in secondary school teaching and librarianship. Her museum career has taken her from social history at MOTAT and art gallery management at Lopdell House to her current position as Public Programmes Manager at the Navy Museum. She also edits *The White Ensign*, the Navy Museum's heritage journal.

Dave Pearson is an architect who has specialised in working with heritage buildings. His award-winning heritage projects include Scandrett's Farm, Henderson; Lakehouse Arts Centre, Takapuna; the Waterworks Building, MOTAT, Auckland; Falls Hotel, Henderson; the Bathhouse, Rotorua; and the Old Auckland Supreme Court. He has prepared the conservation plan for the Torpedo Bay Boatyard and has been consulted about the site from the start of this project.

Caring for New Lynn's crown jewels

Ian Molyneux has been shouldering royal responsibilities acting as registrar on a project to catalogue and care for a comprehensive collection of Crown Lynn ceramics worthy of its own museum.

INTRODUCTION

This article describes the formation of the Portage Ceramics Trust in response to an opportunity that arose to secure a significant Crown Lynn collection for the people of New Zealand. It highlights the value of the collection to New Lynn and West Auckland and discusses the work currently being undertaken to facilitate access to it in the future.

A ROLE FOR HERITAGE AND THE ARTS IN URBAN RENEWAL IN NEW LYNN

New Lynn in Waitakere City is in the middle of an urban renewal programme focussed around the development of a new rail trench that is being sunk deep into the clay alongside Clark Street. It is an historic location for urban change, for it was here, a little over a century ago, that the Gardner brothers bought 48 acres to establish a brick company. This purchase saw the area slowly develop from the, "grim, unpainted, untidy and for much the greater part uncultivated" (Scott, 1979, p. 120) place that they found, to become the heart of an amalgamated local ceramic industry reaching a global market. The growth of what was to become the Amalgamated Brick & Pipe Company, Ltd., and later Crown Lynn Potteries Ltd, brought with it an era of good fortune, changing the face of New Lynn forever.

In 2009, twenty years have passed since the day the Crown Lynn factory closed its doors, and with that the fortunes of the area have changed significantly. All that remains of a once great industry are a few hidden away

pieces of public sculpture, the company headquarters Ceramco House, which narrowly escaped dereliction, and the names on road signs of the families who turned the clay beneath their feet into gold. Clark, Gardner, Crum and the other industrialists, who at first fought over the territory and then joined together under the AMBRICO name, are consigned to the history books and the memories of former employees. However, it is with a sense of renewal and restoration that the Portage Ceramics Trust is working hard to gather important material evidence of the historical significance of the area and contribute a cultural perspective and a heritage resource to its regeneration.

THE PORTAGE CERAMICS TRUST

The Portage Licensing Trust has a role in supporting community projects in West Auckland. This area includes New Lynn and the former Crown Lynn site. Recognising the importance of the area's ceramic legacy to New Zealand, the Portage Licensing Trust established the Portage Ceramic Awards to acknowledge excellence in the field of contemporary ceramic arts, and in 2005, created The Portage Ceramics Trust (PCT). The role of the PCT was to secure one of the most significant Crown Lynn collections yet to be offered for public sale.



Figure 1: Where it all happens – pristine storage for the Portage Ceramics Trust Collection. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: PORTAGE CERAMICS TRUST



Figure 2: **Cataloguing a Crown Lynn cup.** ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: PORTAGE CERAMICS TRUST

The establishment of the PCT was followed by two years of negotiation and fundraising, which culminated in the successful purchase of the collection so that it could be kept in trust for the people of New Zealand.

In order to best care for and provide access to this collection, the Trust put together a board, which included well-respected museum and heritage professionals, thus ensuring a museological approach was central to its future. After years of hard work and fundraising, the beginning of 2008 saw a contract being offered to three museum professionals whose experience included working with industrial and social history collections, archives and working at Crown Lynn as an employee. The PCT team has an ideal mix of skills and experience to catalogue and care for the collection to the best possible standard.

THE COLLECTION

The collection represents the efforts of one local man wanting to take a new direction in his personal life and reshape the environment around him. Collecting became a life changing experience and enabled him to put together one of the most diverse and significant material records relating to the history of Crown Lynn Potteries Ltd in New Zealand.

Many of the objects and archives that make up the collection were excavated or negotiated for in the New Lynn area. Days of digging on the former factory site before its redevelopment unearthed examples of early wares: slip-casting moulds, factory trials and the ceramic 'rubbish' that can help to piece together a potted history

of the development of some of the many products made by the company. The final collection, which includes original design competition artworks, photographs, mouldmakers' record books, factory machinery and a large selection of the everyday wares was built from sources as varied as 'op shops', local auction sales and factory gate negotiations.

THE WORK SO FAR

In January 2008, the first boxes containing objects from the collection were opened in the offices of the Portage Ceramics Trust in New Lynn. A robust methodology for cataloguing the vast collection, which is estimated to consist of over 6000 objects and an archive, was put into place. So began the systematic process of applying best practice in preventative conservation and registration to this collection, which had suffered from many years spent in inappropriate storage and with little documentation.

The need to accurately identify the objects has been of paramount importance to the job of cataloguing the collection. A need to recognise the interests of the many people who are stakeholders in the Crown Lynn story, from former employees to everyone who has ever owned a piece of crockery that left the factory, has empowered the team to search hard for the story behind each of the objects. To do this, a comprehensive network of resources has been employed, including information from the archive in the collection, oral testimony from former employees and the referencing of comparable objects held in other collections and published works on New Zealand's ceramic history. It is hoped that the records



Figure 3: **Wharetana ware canoe bailer, Crown Lynn 1945-1952.** ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: PORTAGE CERAMICS TRUST