

Blockhouse & Stockade – Upper Hutt



(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection Recollect Upper Hutt Blockhouse Bruce Bold collection)

The Blockhouse is situated on part Section No 94. Access to the blockhouse was once from Fortune Lane but is now from Fortune Lane off McHardie Street.

In April 1845 the settlers of the Upper River Hutt were petitioning for the building of a stockade.

08 April 1845

[Received 08 April 1845]

The Superintendent Southern District NZ

We the undersigned the upper most settlers of the River Hutt beg to enforce upon your Honour & upon your considerations the expediency of preserving the valuable crops in possession of individuals residing on this River their only means of support. In order to obtain this object it would be necessary to erect some safe building within about four miles from the Bridge which the inhabitants to the number of 20 males I would engage to defend with their wives and families.

Our chief object on addressing your Honour is to obtain your sanction and cooperation in this work especially regarding arms. We your petitioners owing to the distance by which we are separated from any other body of settlers. We consider that without this assistance we would be either ruined or murdered but with your sincere aid we hope effectually not only to defend our houses, wives and property from the capacity of the Natives but through these means we may prevent much of the pillage and loss of life in this valley. Among our community there is a person who has served in the British Army who is capable of drilling others. We beg to remain most respectfully.

Yours most obedient servant [24 signatures]

P H Gowary [sic]

Magnus Manson junior

Albert G Shout

Robert Fairweather wife & 5 children

John Bryce three children

Charles Mabey wife & 4 children

John Sutherland wife & 2 children

Robert Manson

Samuel Burrell wife & 5 children
John Liverton
John Reid wife & child
Thomas Bryce
William Sunnox wife & 6 children
John Smith
Abraham Harris wife and six children
John Ronald

George Clatchie [sic]
Charles Collis wife & 3 children
John Giles wife
James McKellop
Charles Mudgway wife & 1 child
Thomas Hughes wife & four children
James Manson
Jobe Mabey

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington agency ACFP 8217 NM8 3 1845/163 Thomas Harper & others 08 April 1845 That an additional Block House be erected at the "Hutt")

By April 1846 the Military were reducing their presence in the Valley so gave orders for the potatoes and crops to be destroyed above Taita (Upper Hutt).

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington ACFP 8217 NM8 9/ 1846/226 His Excellency the Governor 21 April 1846 giving directions to have crops in the Upper Hutt destroyed previous to reducing the militia)

1846 – The letter was faint and hard to read
21 April 1846 (220)

His Excellency

Giving directions to have the crops in the Upper Hutt destroyed previous to reducing the Militia
Major Richmond

Prepare the Hutt Militia is disbanded or reduced to the number of twenty men – It would be proper that the potatoes and crops now growing in the Upper Hutt above Taita, should be removed or destroyed - would you give orders for the immediate and complete execution of these service.

G Grey - 21 April 1846 [Acted upon signed]

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington ACFP 8217 NM8 9/ 1846/226 His Excellency the Governor 21 April 1846 giving directions to have crops in the Upper Hutt destroyed previous to reducing the militia 3 letters but very faint)

The local settlers were requesting that the Militia cease destroying the crops of the Natives.

The details below were attached to the same correspondence above.

21 April 1846 (225)

His Excellency

Directing that the accepted tenders for the Bridge in the Hutt be forward to Auckland
Major Richmond

Plans, estimates, and copies of the accepted tender for the bridge in the Hutt must be forwarded tender to Auckland without delay

G Grey - 21 April 1846

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington ACFP 8217 NM8 9/ 1846/226 His Excellency the Governor 21 April 1846 giving directions to have crops in the Upper Hutt destroyed previous to reducing the militia 3 letters but very faint)

18 April 1860

Militia Office Wellington 13 April 1860

Sir

With regard to the complaint received from Wellington by his Excellency regarding the inconvenience Militia men have been put to being taken away from their homes. I have the honour to inform you that immediately after the Ballot I placed all the militia men at the Hutt into one Company & left them within one district. I also offered to be the same for the other County Districts as soon as they were sufficiently strong to form into a Company. In the mean time I have given several of them I leave & have tried at every possible way to make the duties as little _ to them as possible.

I have the honour to be Sir your obedient Servant

W Rawson Trafford Major Comd. W. Militia

Captain Balwearie Deputy Adjutant General Auckland

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington agency AAYS 8668 AD50 1/ca DAG1860/85 Major Trafford 13 April 1860 Separate Company formed at Hutt District)

24 June 1860

Wellington 24th June 1860

At a Meeting of the Bench of Magistrates this day held for the purpose of considering the propriety of suggesting measures for the defence of the inhabitants of the Upper Hutt it was proposed by A Ludlam Esquire JP Seconded by R Barton Esquire JP and carried unanimously. That in the opinion of the Bench of Magistrates the population in the Upper Hutt are in a very unprotected state and that it is highly necessary that a Stockade should be built without delay for the protection of the district.

B A Tisard Esquire Chairman of the Branch.

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington AAYS 8708 AD100 2/dz MB1861/32 order large file MB1861/506)

A request for tender to build a Blockhouse and Stockade in Upper Hutt was advertised and six [6] tenders were received.

1. C R Carter of Wellington for £745.0.0.
2. H B & E J Ellerm of River Hutt for £530.0.0
3. Edward Morgan of Upper Hutt for £489.0.0.
4. Alfred Keys, Henry Meagar & Thomas Wrigley of the Hutt £621.19.6.
5. Robert Price & John Ransom of Hutt £1,659.0.0.
6. William Taylor Hutt Road £725.0.0.

Upper Hutt 29 June 1860

Sir

I will undertake to erect the Block House and Stockade at the Hutt in accordance with the Plans and Specifications for the Sum of four Hundred and Eighty nine pounds 489.0.0.

I am Sir Your Obedient Servant

Edward Morgan Upper Hutt

Major Trafford

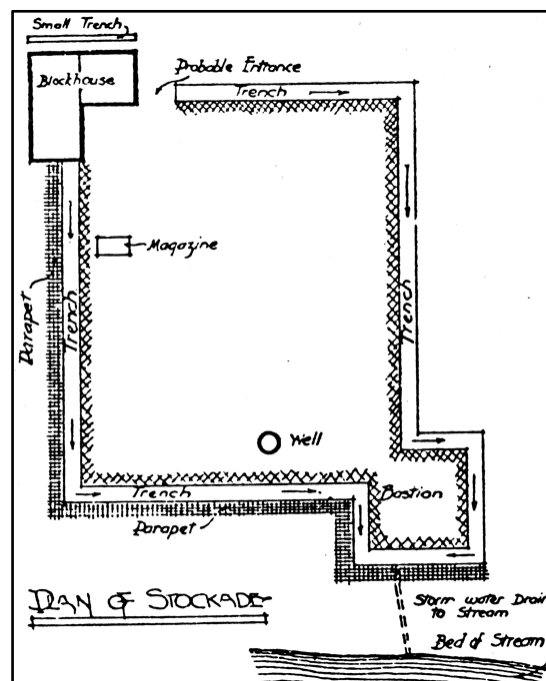
(Reference Archives NZ Wellington AAYS 8708 AD100 2/dz MB1861/32 order large file MB1861/506)

The Hutt 02 July 1860

We the undersigned do agree to erect a Stockade at the Hutt according to Plans and Specifications as shown at the Hutt for the Sum of Six Hundred and Twenty One Pounds Nineteen Shillings and six pence

Signed Alfred Keys – Henry Meager – Thomas Wrigley

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington AAYS 8708 AD100 2/dz MB1861/32 order large file MB1861/506)



(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection Blockhouse plans 1985 08 27 1)

Hutt Road 02 July 1860

Tender for the erection of Stockade and Blockhouse and the Magazine and Flagstaff the stockade to be erected with a trench according to the given Plan and Specification to be erected in the Hutt Valley in the Province of Wellington. The whole of the works to be executed within the time specified three months for the Sum of 725 pounds Sterling.

William Taylor builder and Contractor Hutt Road

Seven Hundred and Twenty five pounds

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington AAYS 8708 AD100 2/dz MB1861/32 order large file MB1861/506)



(Reference Archives NZ Wellington UH Section 94 IMG_3951)

Wellington Independent newspaper 20 July 1860

Upper Hutt - [from our own correspondent] 18 July 1860 - On Thursday evening, the 12th instant a public meeting was held at Mr McHardie's, the Highland Home, Upper Hutt, to take into consideration the necessity of forming a Volunteer Rifle Corps. The meeting was very fully attended, and upon Mr Morgan being called to the chair, and explaining the object of the meeting, it was proposed by Mr Griffin, that it was highly essential and necessary for the inhabitants of this district to form themselves into a Volunteer Rifle Corps. The proposition was seconded by Mr Player, who stated his motive for seconding the resolution was from facts which had come under his own knowledge and sight and he considered when above 200 armed natives were seen going through the different districts fully equipped and ready for an attack, he considered it high time the settlers should at least be ready for a resistance. He had himself seen, as many of the meeting had, natives returning from the Wairarapa carrying openly thirty double-barrel guns, with their belts and cartridge boxes containing twelve and eighteen rounds of ball cartridge, two barrels of gunpowder, near fifteen tomahawks, with other reserve of fire-arms, &c. And the parading of these arms was not all. There were many settlers present who could

tell the meeting of their insulting manners and language, used by the natives during the last few days. He, the speaker, would advise the meeting to take only such steps as would be perfectly justifiable, and endeavour to follow the instructions of the Government, but he considered under existing circumstances it would be wilfully shutting our eyes to a danger which is evidently most glaring. He would make no mention of reports which were daily reaching the settlers of the Maori's intentions, or quote any of the observations which many of the meeting had heard from some of the out-settlers, but he would merely state to them there was not a fire-arm in the possession of any settler from the Hutt to the Wairarapa, but was kept constantly loaded, and every available weapon of defence ready for instant use. He was sorry to say there appeared but little probability of the Government offering any aid, or in fact taking any notice of the existing crisis. Whether the Government have the will and not the power, or have the power and not the will, he was not prepared to say but he was sure that it was high time some steps were taken, if not by the Government by themselves, and he did not consider any steps they could take would be more legal and more in unison with the views of the Government than by adopting the resolution proposed, and he trusted the meeting would support it in earnest, and sign their names at once to be forwarded to Major Trafford for immediate enrolment. The resolution being put to the meeting, and carried unanimously, the list was laid upon the table, and received within a few minutes 34 signatures (and within 24 hours it had received 80). The meeting then elected their committee to carry out the object for which they were called together, and from them a deputation was chosen to wait upon Major Trafford when the meeting adjourned to the 16th instant. On Monday evening, the adjourned meeting held as heretofore at Mr John McHardie's, was very numerously attended, there being from 60 to 80 present, and by far the largest meeting that has taken place in the district, and after receiving the report of the deputation who had waited upon Major Trafford, whom the deputation stated had received them with every kindness and respect, at the same time expressing his (the Major's) satisfaction at the sense of the meeting, and perfectly coinciding with their views of its necessity. He gave them all the information they required, and promised to aid them as far as laid in his power; and further stated, the Hutt was a most important position, and required as much defence as any part of the district of Wellington, and in case of an attack it would have to be defended, and the ground disputed inch by inch. And with regard to arms and ammunition, the members of the corps should be supplied as soon as he was in a position to do so. The report of Major Trafford gave general satisfaction to the meeting, Mr McHardie dissented, and asked the chairman to scratch his name from the list, which he did. The whole of the meeting was then challenged by the Chairman to do the same if they wished, but not another followed the example of Mr McHardie, three signatures being added to the list after his withdrawal. The only thing now being required is the swearing in of the members, and the supply of arms, and the Committee trust the Major will be enabled to come or send some authorised person to the Upper Hutt and swear them in as soon as possible. It was also voted at the same meeting that application should be made for the erection of a Stockade, and the committee for the Volunteer Rifle Corps were elected, with instructions to take such steps as they may think necessary for its accomplishment.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 20 July 1860 page 3)

Wellington Independent newspaper 07 August 1860

Upper Hutt - [From our own Correspondent] - Upper Hutt 04 August 1860 - I have so far sent you all the particulars of the management of the Committee of the what was to be the Volunteer Rifle Corps, and now send you the great finale. At the last public meeting it was decided the Secretary of the proposed corps was to wait upon every individual member and after acquainting them of the time and place to meet Major Trafford, to be sworn in, the Secretary was to communicate with the Major upon the subject. Accordingly, on Saturday, the 28th of July, a letter was posted to the Commander-in-Chief requesting his attendance according to his (the Major's) instructions on a certain day and a particular hour to swear the members in. The day and time was communicated to the Major, half past 2 o'clock on Saturday pm, the 04th of August. The day came and the hour arrived, not so the Major, two hours elapsed and no appearance. Application was made to the Secretary, to know if he could throw any light upon the mystery, the only information he could give was the copy of the letter he had forwarded according to instructions, and as he had received no communication to the contrary, believed the Major would most decidedly arrive. However, such was not the case, and after the man waiting upwards of two hours they dispersed, and in what humour I leave the public to guess.

I have since waited upon the Secretary who informs me a letter written by the direction of Major Trafford, reached the Upper Hutt seven hours after the time of meeting, and did not reach his hands (and only then by accident) until 24 hours after. The letter was dated the 3rd but it was the 4th when it reached the Hutt, and the 5th when it reached its destination and its purport appears to be to the following effect. That the members could not be sworn in for the Hutt district in consequence of no proclamation having yet appeared to make it legal, and the swearing in would have to take place again on the arrival of the proper authorities from Auckland. Regretting at the same time he could not give earlier notice of the fact, as he was not previously aware of it himself. So much for Government aid and assistance. The contents of the letter, I must say rather puzzles me, and still more so the Secretary, he being one of the deputation, who waited upon the Major at the commencement of the affair, and the Major distinctly told the deputation there was no district for the Hutt, and the Corps must be sworn in for the Wellington district, which fact was brought before the meeting, and all consenting to serve accordingly. How the Major can now state, he has only just known the fact which he personally stated to the deputation. I cannot say, I am not his judge, neither do I wish to throw blame on any one, but I cannot think his conduct has been quite as it should be. In the first place the deputation pressed him to wait upon the meeting on the Monday following the Saturday they waited upon him and he promised he would endeavour to come himself if he was well enough (he was ill in bed when the deputation saw him) if not, he would try and send someone in his place. This was not carried out, he then makes an offer to come up and swear the corps in himself and for hours after the appointed time nothing is heard of him or any one authorised by him, leaving all interested in the affair in a perfect state of stupid darkness. The afternoon was wet, cold, and wretched, but most of the members living the road up did not leave their houses in consequence of not seeing any one pass likely to swear them in. Also all who were living in the neighbourhood of the place of swearing, acted upon the same wise principle, consequently the number who appeared at the rendezvous, appeared but small but a full corps was ready to be enrolled but I fear are not now disposed to be played the fool with a second time. The Government have in this instance lost the assistance of from 80 to 90 men at a point fully acknowledged by the best authorities as a most important one.

On Thursday evening the 2nd instant the above locality was visited by the Rev W Scott, who delivered a lecture at the new store of Mr Plimmer, to a very respectable audience, the subject being "two Ways and two Ends". The lecture of the Rev Gentleman appears to have given great satisfaction, and well it may as it was very kind and feelingly delivered, he portraying the good and evil ways in exceedingly pleasing and effective language, dwelling very impressively on the evil ways of intemperance, Sabbath-breaking, blasphemy, &c., contrasting those evils, with the good being accomplished by such men as the Earl of Shaftesbury, and many other labourers in the good way's, and bringing the death bed of an infidel in contrast with that of a young Christian whose death bed he had lately attended. The lecture was highly appreciated, and I believe he has promised to give another at no distant period.

On Friday evening, the 3rd instant, a supper and ball was held at Mr Brown's the Criterion Hotel, Upper Hutt. Mine host provided an excellent spread and kept his company, who were very numerous, well supplied during the night with tea, coffee, cakes, &c. He appeared perfectly happy at the patronage he was receiving from his friends, and his friends appeared to perfectly appreciate his entertainment and attention.

(To the Editor of the Wellington Independent)

Sir, - I have just discovered I have been subjected by the people of the Upper Hutt to a grand gull. I scarcely know whether the people of the above neighbourhood consider themselves clever at such pranks, or that I am remarkably green but as I must acknowledge myself to have been gulled, I think it nothing but fair the trick should be made sufficiently plain to the public, as to prevent others being played upon in a similar way. I must first apprise you I was invited to a public meeting for the purpose of forming a Volunteer Rifle Corps, which meeting I attended and signed my name as one among eighty-six, taking it for granted I was to help defend the neighbourhood in case of a native rising and to show how naturally the game was kept up we were asked again and again if any wished to withdraw their signatures from the list. One or more did so, I suppose that the trick may not appear too plain and eventually on Saturday afternoon, at 2 o'clock, the 4th of August, was fixed for the swearing in and forming the corps, the place of meeting being Mr Plimmer's new store, the most central that could be found. Accordingly, at the

appointed hour, I repaired to the place of meeting, and to my amazement found about fifteen others had been as cleanly deceived as myself, and had it not been for the prevailing sickness one or two others would have been there. You may imagine my surprise at finding only fifteen instead of eighty six, and upon enquiring I found the majority of the others were quietly enjoying the sport they were having at our expense. Now, Mr Editor, let me ask the public and the Government is it right that in these times tricks should be played with such subjects. Cannot the Government interfere and prevent those really serious in the matter, being made fools of, or is every part of the colony to be subjected to the idle pastime of such a set of - certainly not men, children would be too lenient a name for them in fact I cannot find one, so will leave the public to give it to them. I must confess my disgust was so great at the discovery that I had but little patience for anything, but I have since discovered there is a spouting bung in the neighbourhood whose flowing streams of eloquence, poured into the mouths of his pot valiant heroes, have effectually stolen the drains and filled their craniums with foggy effusions, certainly such nicks could not emanate from persons having one grain of brains. That it has been a trick is quits patent from Major Trafford's non-appearance or any one deputed by him. I have also been given to understand the magistrates have applied to the Governor for a stockade for this neighbourhood. Surely these people do not purpose a similar trick upon the Governor and have chosen the magistrates as their tools. Yet I am disposed to think it must be so for should there be one erected, who in the name of fortune is to defend it? Only fancy what could fifteen or seventeen men do towards holding a stockade filled with women and children, for I am quite sure the pot variants would all run away and like monkeys - grin at the mischief they had created? If the Government are disposed to grant a stockade to this prank playing place, I sincerely trust it will not be begun until they can find (I fear a difficult task) at least fifty man willing seriously to defend it. I remain your obedient servant, LANCET.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 07 August 1860 page 3)

Wellington Independent newspaper 21, 24, 28 August 1860

Engineer's Office Lower Hutt 18th August 1860 – Sealed Tenders in Duplicate will be received at this office until Wednesday at noon of the 5th September next for the erection of A Stockade and Blockhouse. At the Upper Hutt on McHardy's clearing according to plans and specifications, No 1 and 2. - Further particulars may be obtained upon application to Corporal Tapp, Royal Engineers at this office. - Persons may tender for either plan No 1 or No 2 or both. - The lowest Tender will not necessarily be accepted.

W Rawson Trafford Major Commanding Wellington Militia and Volunteers.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 21 August 1860 page 2)

Wellington Independent newspaper 24 August 1860

Upper Hutt Stockade – On Saturday the 18th instant the Government official staff visited the above neighbourhood for the selection of a suitable site for the erection of a Stockade as a place of refuge for settlers of the district, in case a necessity should arise and after carefully viewing the line from the Gorges to the Mungaroa their decision was the centre or as near the centre as could most suitable for the purpose but before deciding upon any spot the officials had an interview with Mr Isaac Plimmer and Mr Player and enquired if the inhabitants had fixed upon any place which they thought suitable for its erection. A spot was pointed out and visited but it being considered too near the bush which was close to the road on the opposite side and a better clearing being observed a few chains in its rear that was decided upon as suitable and the most central that could be chosen being as near as possible between the Gorges and the Mungaroa. The owner of the land being sent for the price of an acre was named and meeting with approval of the officials it was at once decided upon and will be surveyed the early part of next week and no doubt the stockade will be in the course of erection with very little delay. The site chosen has been entirely for the consideration of the inhabitants and as far as military position &c., are concerned has all been waived for the convenience of the settlers in the district. Major W Rawson Trafford who was one of the officials trusts there will be no difficulty (after the defence and safety of the women and children) in getting volunteers from those who have a stake in the district for its defence and as soon as he was armed with authority to swear in Volunteers he would take care the inhabitants should be made aware of it.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 24 August 1860 page 5)

Mr William Taylor's tender of £725 was accepted

Wellington Independent newspaper 04 September 1860

A stockade is about to be erected at the Upper Hutt and the one now erecting in Lower Hutt is rapidly progressing.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 04 September 1860 page 3)

Wellington Independent newspaper 05 October 1860

The Upper Hutt stockade is also progressing and the Lower Hutt Stockade is rapidly completing. The Rifle Corps in these Districts are becoming efficient.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 05 October 1860 page 5)

Schedule of Expenses regarding Stockade 1860 - 1861

Colonial Secretary – Sub Treasurer Wellington

Schedule of Incidental Expenses &c., which require approval December 1860

War Expenses & Militia [only transcribed part of schedule]

- W Taylor on a/c Upper Hutt Stockade – November & December £400.0.0 - voucher 584 & 585
- Turnbull for Stove for Upper Hutt Stockade – 06 December (1860) – £8.10s 0d – voucher 594
- R Stewart supplying materials & fittings Stove to Upper Hutt Stockade – 11 December (1860) – 14.10s.0d – voucher 599
- N Levine purchase of Site for Upper Hutt Stockade – 13 November (1860) – £20 – voucher 608

Notes at the end of schedule and over the page - £20 has been paid for the site for a Stockade at the Upper Hutt & £250 for a site in the Lower Hutt & Papers respecting the purchase of sites for Stockades at the Lower Hutt and the Upper Hutt to be attached for the information of the auditor 11 July 1861

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington AAYS 8708 AD100 2/dz MB1861/32 order large file MB1861/506)

Colonist newspaper 13 August 1861

Defence of the Province – The settlers of the Upper Hutt District have declared that they and their property are at present in a most forlorn condition. The stockade which had been erected there at considerable expense may any day be taken by the Maoris being un-garrisoned and unproved with either arms or ammunition. They urge upon the Governor before involving the country in a war to put their district in a state of defence.

(Reference Papers past website Colonist newspaper 13 August 1861 page 4)

William Taylor completed building the Blockhouse by December 1860. The Blockhouse was then occupied by 34 volunteers of the local Militia from December 1860 to May 1861.

Bishop House Wellington - 18 October 1861

Sir

Having understood from some of the Civil Military authorities of the Province that there was no apparent need just now of the Stockade at the Upper Hutt for its original purpose, I wish to be informed whether the General Government would let me rent it for the purpose of a school and Devine service, as I am sending a Clergyman to reside up there to minister to the English and Natives of the Valley of course, whenever the military were wanted for its original uses ,I would give it up immediately, and I would make arrangements with the present occupant so as not to inconvenience them. If the General Government would allow me to rent it, I should wish to know in which terms.

I have the honour to be Sir you're obedient Servant
C J Wellington - To Colonel Secretary

Bishops House Wellington - 21 October 1861

Sir

I wrote almost a duplicate of this letter by way of Napier last week but hearing it may not be forwarded quickly from that Port I venture to repeat what I then said – It was to this effect that having understood from the Civil and Military authorities of this Province that there was not much apparent likelihood of the Stockade at the Upper Hutt being wanted for its original purpose I wish to be informed whether the General Government would allow me to rent it for a School House and place of Devine worship as I am sending a Clergyman to reside there after Christmas to minister to the Natives of the Valley & to the English of that locality of course I would engage to vacate it whenever it may be wanted for its original purpose and I would make arrangements with the present occupant to live in some portion of it and keep it in good order – If the Government can accept my wished I would be glad to know what the rent would be per annum?

I have the honour to be Sir your obedient Servant [signed] C J Wellington
The Hon'ble The Colonial Secretary

Superintendent Office - Wellington 23 October 1861

Sir

I have the honour to enclose a letter from the Bishop of Wellington in which his Lordship offers to rent the Stockade in the Upper Hutt, intending to use it as a School House and place of worship.

As I trust there is very little prospect of its ever being required for the purpose for what it was erected I have great pleasure in recommending that his Lordships application should be granted.

I have the Honour to be Sir your most obedient Servant
I E Featherston – Superintendent - Honourable Colonial Secretary

Wellington Independent newspaper 29 October 1861

Signs of the Times – No better illustration of the different of the feeling existing between the two cares now and this time last year can perhaps be given than in the fact that the Bishop of Wellington has recently applied to the Auckland authorities to rent temporarily the Upper Hutt Stockade for the purpose of a School and place of Divine Worship.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 29 October 1861 page 5)

Wellington Independent newspaper 08 November 1861

We have had no intelligence from Auckland for a month and locally the most significant “sign of the times” is the reported application of the Bishop of Wellington for the hire of the Upper Hutt Stockade for temporary church and school purposes his Lordship expecting a clergyman shortly from England to supply that locality. The stockade was it will be remembered built last year as a protection to the settlers should they have to abandon their homes.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 08 November 1861 page 4)

The Anglican Minister James Edward HERRING and his wife Margaret arrived in the Valley in December 1861 to administer to members of the Anglican congregation. There was no Anglican Church in Upper Hutt at the time and it was not until 1863 that St John's Church was built.

Otago Daily Times newspaper 03 March 1862

A few months since the use of the stockade erected during the Taranaki troubles at the Upper Hutt was granted for church and school purposes now the Lower Hutt stockade had been applied for the use of the common school there and will no doubt be granted.

(Reference Papers past website Otago Daily Times newspaper 03 March 1862 page 2)

Wellington Independent newspaper 16, 18, 21 July 1863

Militia Notice – By virtue and in exercise of the power and authority for this purpose vested in me I John Dwyer Major the Officer Commanding in the Wellington Militia District do hereby fix and appoint the times and places hereunder written to be the times and places for the training and exercise of the first and second class of the Militia of the Wellington District. –

Upper Hutt 1st August at non - Stockade

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 16 July 1863 page 2)

Wellington Independent newspaper 01, 04, 06 August 1863

Military District Order – The Officers of the Militia of this district are posted to Companies as follows – Upper Hutt Company – Captain James Cruickshank – Lieutenant Pierce Cotter – Ensign Richard Barton junior.

Militia Notice – Hutt Battalion – No 3 Company – Captain Crookshank [sic Cruickshank], Wednesday and Thursday from 2 to 1 o'clock pm at Upper Hutt Stockade.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 01 August 1863 page 2)

Captain Cruickshank served in the 2nd Battalion of the Wellington Militia 11 June 1863. When the Fernground Rifle Volunteers were established Captain Cruickshank enrolled with the Corps 01st September 1870 and remained with the Corps until 31st March 1873. The Fernground Rifle Volunteers was disbanded on 28 May 1873.

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington LS69 9 460 page 6 of 10)

Otago Daily Times & Otago Witness newspaper 03, 07 August 1863

Yesterday the King natives in the Upper Hutt, had a meeting, at which there were a good many strange natives, and friendly natives are now inquiring as to their safety in the event of a disturbance. What was said or done at the Hutt meeting is not known. A pakeha Maori was there to tell us, but they did not let him know much. That the natives should do something now, so harmonises with all we have been led to expect, that we are prepared to listen to every unfavourable report with more or less of belief. Yesterday and to-day the beach has been on the eve of a panic. A publican at the Upper Hutt, named McHardie, is currently reported to have been warned but as it was at the same time said that others on the "West Coast had been warned off also, and which I know to be contrary to fact, the best thing I can do is to ignore them all so far as your readers are concerned.

(Reference Papers past website Otago Daily Times newspaper 03 August 1863 page 5)

Lyttleton Times newspaper 19 August 1863

Information was brought into town early on Monday morning by special messenger from Mr Bedwell of the Wairarapa enclosing copy of a letter he had received from Manehera stating that a Maori war party would attack the Upper Hutt on Monday. The messenger Mr Bedwell's Nephew only occupied a few hours in the performance of the journey. In consequences of this information the Hutt militia and volunteers assembles under arms.

(Reference Papers past website Lyttleton Times newspaper 19 August 1863 page 5)

Otago Daily Times newspaper 18 September 1863

Soon after daybreak the Lower Hutt Militia began voluntarily to muster and Captain Beetham of the Taita called out his company not knowing for what other purpose the letter could have been sent him. The volunteers were also called out and the Upper Hutt settlers warned of the probability of the Maori's making their appearance during the day.

(Reference Paper past website Otago Daily Times newspaper 18 September 1863 page 9)

Wellington Independent newspaper 03, 06 February 1866

Election Notice –Polling Place – Upper Hutt - The Stockade

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 03 February 1866 page 2/4)

Information records that the Blockhouse was used as a police house and court house between 1868 and 1876.

David Lyster joined the Police Force in 1859 [registration number 2] and six months later in 1860 took charge of the new Police Station in Upper Hutt. He moved his wife Ann and family into the blockhouse where some of their children were born. Their children were William born 1861, Clara born 1862, Elizabeth born 1864 and David born 1865. David's wife Ann died in 1871. At the time David was residing on 28 acres of land on section 91 in Upper Hutt. This was on the other side of the road from section 94 where the Blockhouse was situated. By 1881 David had left the Upper Hutt district and was stationed at Porirua where he married (widow) Louisa Caroline Hellen who was the proprietor of the Pahautanui Hotel. By 1890 David was a Constable at Petone and retired in 1896 after 37 years of service. David died on 30 April 1896 and Louisa on 17 September 1896 and they were both buried at the Pahautanui cemetery Porirua.

23 November 1868 - Memo for Mr Richmond

The Stockade in the Upper Hutt near Barton's Estate be put in repair.

The Stockade in the Lower Hutt is now used as a school room. It has been renewed of gravel taken out of the walls which should be explained

G W Stafford 23.11.1968

(Draft letter to Mr Ludlam accordingly. The Government think that when ready the Volunteers should supply a guard of ten men to each stockade.

Ask Mr Ludlam to advise J C Richmond - 23 November 1868

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington AAYS 8638 AD1 77/ah CS 1868/4196 refer and order [with CD1869/614] S Fagan Chairman School Committee 14 January 1869 requests discharge for 10 for purchase of Hutt Stockade also enclosed is correspondence regarding the Upper Hutt Stockade)

24 November 1868 - Draft letter to Captain Ludlam 24/11/68

Sir

Under instructions from the Hon J C Richmond in the absence of the Defence Minister I have the honour to request you will be good enough to undertake the arrangements for enrolling & arming the militia in the Upper & Lower Hutt. The times & places you may best upon you will communicate to Col Reader in order that they may be published.

I am further ___ to direct an examination of the Upper Hutt stockade near Barton's and arrange for it to be placed in efficient repair without delay. [letter then covers Lower Hutt stockade]

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington AAYS 8638 AD1 77/ah CS 1868/4196 refer and order [with CD1869/614] S Fagan Chairman School Committee 14 January 1869 requests discharge for 10 for purchase of Hutt Stockade also enclosed is correspondence regarding the Upper Hutt Stockade)

1868 to 1869 – [8] Letters and memos requesting the purchase of the Lower Hutt stockade so that the building (used as a School for 4 years) could be relocated to a safer situation due to continual flooding of the river near the stockade. A report was done on condition of the Lower and Upper Hutt stockade.

23rd January 1869 - Hutt Major Ludlam

With bill from J N W Peterson £30 work done at Upper Hutt Stockade

Sir

I have the honour to forward you enclosed an Account from John N W Peterson for work done at the Upper Hutt Stockade also a voucher in duplicate for the amount.

I have examined the work and found it done properly.

I have the honour to be Sir yours most obedient Servant

A Ludlam Major - Commissioner Hutt District

The Hon The Defence Minister Wellington - [A/c £30 placed in N 273 Schedule 27/1/69]

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington AAYS 8638 AD1 76/if CD1869/544 Major Ludlam 23 January 1869 with bill from J N W Peterson £30 for work done at Upper Hutt stockade)

11 May 1869

Return of Blockhouses Upper Hutt & Lower Hutt – Major Ludlam 12 May

Upper Hutt

Description of work viz. Blockhouse, Redoubt or Stockade = *Blockhouse and Stockade*

Number of men capable of holding = (blank)

Materials used in construction = *Wood, heart of Totara, Walls filled in with Gravel*

Where situated = *near village Upper Hutt*

Owner of site on which standing = *General Government*

When erected = *1862*

At whose cost erected = *General Government*

Original Costs = *£700 & £30*

Remarks = *in very good order of repair. The sum of £30 having been expended in putting both stockade and Blockhouse in repair in 1869*

(Comment) Memo – *The original cost I think is correct the account information can be obtained at the Treasury*

Signed A Ludlam Major – Commissioner Hutt District

Note - there are also full details regarding the Lower Hutt Blockhouse

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington RAD1 co CD1869/2921 Major Ludlam Hutt 12 May 1869 Return of blockhouses Upper and Lower Hutt years 1869)

Evening Post newspaper 08, 10, 11, 13, 22 May & 08, 10 June 1869

Elections – The following places are polling places for the election of Superintendent for the Province of Wellington – At the Hutt – Upper Hutt – The Stockade

(Reference papers past website Evening Post newspaper 08 May 1869 page 3)

Wellington Independent newspaper 17 June 1869

The Hutt Nominations – The polling is fixed to take place on Friday at the Mechanics Institute Lower Hutt and at the Stockade Upper Hutt.

A public meeting will be held in the Upper Hutt at the Highland Home Hotel [Quinn's Post] tonight at 7 o'clock when the different candidates will again address the electors.

(Reference Papers past website Wellington Independent newspaper 17 June 1869 page 2)

Evening Post newspaper 22, 23, 25, 26 October 1869

By virtue and exercise of the powers and authority for this purpose vested in me I Henry Elmhirst Reader the Officer Commanding the Wellington Militia District do hereby fix and appoint the time and place for the training and exercise of the several classes and companies of the Militia in the said Wellington Militia District which have been called under the hand of his Excellency the Governor bearing date the 7th instant - Upper Hutt Companies at 2 pm on the first Tuesday in each month at the Stockade Upper Hutt

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 22 October 1869 page 3)

Evening Post newspaper 14 September 1870

For some time past the formation of a Volunteer Company has been in contemplation in the Upper Hutt, and it was generally understood that the last monthly drill day of Militia Tuesday, the 5th instant would have witnessed initiative measures, but the inclemency of the weather, postponed (according to understood usage) any meeting on the day in question. Since then, however, circulars, numerous posted, and bearing the signature of Jas. Cruickshank, Captain of Militia in this district, announced that members of that force were ordered to meet at the Highland Home Hotel at two o'clock on Tuesday last, to receive arrears of pay, after which those who intended to identify themselves with the volunteer movement would proceed to the stockade, and after delivering their arms and being sworn in, be enrolled, and receive new rides. This was done on Tuesday last. The following officers, in addition to four sergeants, were eventually elected Captain, James Cruickshank, Lieut. Henry Burt, Ensign, Frank Smedley Searancke. The company bears the name of "The Fern Ground Volunteer Company."

(Reference Paper past website Evening Post newspaper 14 September 1870 page 2)

Evening Post newspaper 03, 04, 05, 10 January 1871

The following Polling Places for the Electoral District of the Hutt – The Stockade Upper Hutt

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 03 January 1871 page 2)

Evening Post newspaper 29, 30, 31 March & 01, 04, 05 April 1871

The following Polling Places for the Electoral District of the Province of Wellington – The Stockade Upper Hutt

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 29 March 1871 page 3)

Evening Post newspaper 05 April 1872

The following Polling Places for the Electoral District of the Province of Wellington – The Stockade Upper Hutt

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 05 April 1872)

Evening Post newspaper 16 January 1873

The following Polling Places for the Electoral District of the Province of Wellington – The Stockade Upper Hutt

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 16 January 1863 page 3)

10 April 1879 Constable Lyster report on Stockade Upper Hutt

Police Station - Upper Hutt - 07th April 1879

Constable Lyster Report for the Information by the Superintendent that between Saturday night and Sunday morning last that the South east Wall of the Government Stockade at the Upper Hutt was blown down on examination the studs were completely rotten resting on the frame work near the Ground the Police have the keys of this place and in charge of it.

David Lyster - Constable

W H James Esq - Supt of Police - Wellington

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington ACIS 17627 P1 91 1879/956 Superintendent Shearman Wellington 10 April 1879 Forwards report from Constable Lyster stating that the Government Stockade Upper Hutt was blown down on Saturday night 5th instant)

Notes written on cover of the above correspondence state "It has not been used by the Police".

Inspector Shearman Wellington received 12 September 1881 subject Recommends that Constable Lyster who is about to marry Mrs Hellen late of the Pauatahanui Hotel be transferred from the district and replaced by another man.

(Reference Archives NZ Wellington 1881 ACIS 17627 P1 142/ 1881/2447)

Evening Post newspaper 13 August 1889

Hutt County Council – A letter was read from the Crown Lands Department relative to the application of the Council that the 'Stockade' at the Upper Hutt should be handed over to the Council. The Department informed the Council that unless special legislation was effected in the direction indicated the reserve could not be placed under the control of the Council. On the motion of Councillor Barton it was decided to again ask the Government to give the control of the server to the Council.

(Reference Paper past website Evening Post newspaper 13 August 1889 page 3)

Evening Post newspaper 10 September 1889

The Land Department wrote approving of the proposition of the Council that the County Council should have control of "the Stockade" at the Upper Hutt.

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 101 September 1889)

Evening Post newspaper 07 January 1890

Tenders Hutt County Council Office Wellington 07th January 1890

Tenders addressed to the Chairman of the Hutt County Council will be received up to noon of Monday the 13th instant from persons willing to Lease for a term of fourteen years the property at the Upper Hutt known as the Old Stockade. Conditions of lease and all particulars can be obtained at this office

By order HY Damant - Inspector of Roads

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 07 January 1890)

Evening Post newspaper 11 February 1890

The tender of Mr J G Kearney for leasing the Upper Hutt Stockade and lands at 35s per annum was accepted.

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 11 February 1890)

Evening Post newspaper 18 April 1890

There was extensive settlement and a great deal of Court work from the Upper Hutt. [other details]. The same deputation waited upon the Postmaster General and asked that a telephone be established at the Upper Hutt and that the "Old Stockade" used successively as a stockade, post office and lately as a Courthouse. [other details]. The deputation also asked that the now unoccupied stockade might be used as a courthouse. [other details]. Messrs Brown and Cruickshank thought the stockade would be more central.

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 18 April 1890)

Evening Post newspaper 14 August 1900

Hutt County Council – It was decided to apply to the Government for the right to lease the old stockade at Upper Hutt for a further term of 21 years.

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 14 August 1900)

Evening Post newspaper 28 April 1906

The Old Stockade at Trentham – To the Editor

Sir – Having occasion to visit the Upper Hutt recently I could not but notice with regret how this memento of bygone days is allowed to fall into decay. Surely such an interesting relic of the disturbed times in the early days of the colony deserves a better fate than to be made the home for poultry and pigs. With the present great influx of strangers and sightseers there is no doubt that this old landmark with its history would be visited by a great many besides being an interesting object lesson for our young people. At present not one in a thousand visiting the Upper Hutt knows that there is such a place. I hope that our energetic Tourist Department will see its way now that attention has been called to the district to take the necessary action – I am etc., - Old Colonist Hutt 26th April 1906

(Reference Papers past website Evening Post newspaper 28 April 1906)

Evening Post newspaper 26 January 1937

Upper Hutt Blockhouse – In reply to "Chev's" inquiry concerning the blockhouse at Upper Hutt W Toomath (Lower Hutt) supplies the particulars which are culled from transactions of the "New Zealand Institute", volume LIII pp 14-28 Old Redoubts (Full details to be transcribed)

(Reference Papers Past website Evening Post newspaper 26 January 1937)

Blockhouse Upper Hutt 1913 – 1973 set of records

This set of records is valuable for anyone doing research on the Upper Hutt Blockhouse. At the back of this very large set of correspondence is a photograph taken in 1913 with Stewart MENZIES standing next to the blockhouse along with a letter from Mr Menzies

Silverstream 28 August 1913 - Private Secretary to his Excellency

I got a friend of mine to take a photo of the Upper Hutt Stockade that was built for the settlers in the early trouble. I am standing by the magazine the large building is the stockade the place is used to keep hay in. It belongs to the Government the Breast works are down you might get it recurred. The reason I sent to his Excellency take a great interest in the old trouble. I heard him speak of them as the Veterans social at Gibbons Rooms. I think this is the only one in the Wellington District

I remain - Stewart Menzies Veteran – Silverstream

(Received and reply from the Hon Minister of Defence dated 08 September 1913)

08 September 1913 letter of reply from W F Massey to Stewart Menzies

DETAILS: This was the beginning of a very large set of correspondence covering 60 years which resulted in the preservation of the Blockhouse. At the end of 2014 there was an open day at the blockhouse which I attended.

Thank you Stewart Menzies for your wonderful letter which was situated on Section No 94 Block 1 Rimutaka SD. There is map on the file which shows Fortune land leading right up to the blockhouse.

Blockhouse - 1853



On 28 March 1953 the Blockhouse was handed over to the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides as a new headquarters. The Committee who restored the Blockhouse were Mr & Mrs G de Stefano, Mrs Enid Bell, Mr Hopkirk, Arthur Bryant and Mrs Jean Burton.

(Reference Upper Hutt City Library Heritage collection 1953 Blockhouse P2-603-1506)

Mr Smith

Two blockhouses were built at the Hutt about 1862 when raids from Wairarapa were feared. One still stands near Wallaceville Station which seems to have served as a refuge. Mr Barton of Trentham could give you some information about it. Jim Cruickshank remembers being taken to it in a bullock dray in 1862. It had a stockade around it. The other was not far from Hutt Bridge left bank. Corporal Tapp of Royal Engineers supervised erection of these places. Double walls filled with gravel

Yours Elsdon Best

(not dated but between correspondence dated 28 April 1914 – 30 September 1914)

- Copy of an advertisement in the NZ Spectator and Cooks Strait Guardian of 05 September 1860

Engineers Office Lower Hutt 18 August 1860

Sealed Tenders in Duplicate will be received at this office until Wednesday at noon of the 5th September next for the erection of Stockade and Blockhouse at the Upper Hutt on McHardy's clearing according to plans and specifications Nos 1 and 2. Further particulars can be obtained upon application to Corporal Tapp, Royal Engineers at this office. Persons may tender for either plan No 1 or No 2 or both. The lowest tender will not necessarily be accepted on.

W Rawson Trafford Commanding Wellington Militia and Volunteers

- There is correspondence talking about destroying the blockhouse and in 1915 the owner of the land was the Crown leased to James Kearney a Dairy Farmer.
- There is a large report with maps, history and photo of the Block house dated around 1915

- There is another flurry of correspondence in 1926 – Dominion newspaper 17 October 1927 official handing over of building to Upper Hutt Borough Council including photo
- Evening Post newspaper articles some are 20 May 1948 but there are numerous others articles in the file plus drawings of the proposed restoration
- Used by Boy Scouts and Girl Guides then to Education Department for the building of Heretaunga College
- 1955 land used around the block house for Heretaunga College and Railway housing (McHardy Street) and for a scouts building
- Last correspondence dated 07 November 1973

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington ABWN W5021 7610 Box 820 744 1 Wellington Land District Upper Hutt Blockhouse 1913-1973)

Blockhouse Upper Hutt Photograph

(Reference Archives New Zealand Wellington ABKK 2444 W4358 472/2 Pub22)

Between 1945-1950 Augustine Rangatira (Gus) DOLAN was the farm manager on the Main Road farm which surrounded the blockhouse. His wife was Freda and their daughter was Aileen Glense DOLAN who married Mr ELLIOTT.

Blockhouse information in folder at Golders Cottage

NZ Historical Places Trust Building field record form

Name - Blockhouse

Locality - In the grounds of Heretaunga College

Access - McHardy Street Wallaceville Upper Hutt New Zealand

Reason for significance - The Upper Hutt Blockhouse was erected on 1860 as a precautionary provision of shelter for white settlers who feared an attack by the local Maoris. No attack ever eventuated and over the years the building remained as a symbol of the European way of handling / protecting themselves as they gradually took over all the Maori land.

Owner – The Crown with New Zealand Historical Places Trust as agent

Occupier – Scout Association of New Zealand and the Round Table Upper Hutt

Description – North American type Blockhouse made of totara and Matai timber with iron roof

Architect – Colonial T R MOULD who also designed one at Lower Hutt

Builder – W Taylor cost £725

Construction - Tenders 05 September 1860 Finished 04 December 1860

Owners– Blockhouse renovated in 1926-1927 and the windows that were added when the building was used as a police station were removed and replaced by long slits.

Associated buildings - Originally the building was surrounded by a stockade and fortification as well as a magazine (i.e. a small building 8 x 4 x 7 high) none of which remain today.

History – In July 1860 a Mr McHardie held a meeting at his “Highland Home” to form a volunteer rifle brigade as protection against local armed natives. Thirty four men joined up and applied for the erection of a stockade. The site chosen for the stockade was one of McHardie’s paddocks for which he was paid £20. The building was completed by the end of December 1860 however it seems the building was never needed for its intended purpose and in 1861 the Militia left. In 1867-1868 it was used as police house, courthouse and residence by the 1884 it was again derelict. By 1913 it was being used as a hayshed and it was not till 1927 that the blockhouse was extensively repaired. In 1953 the New Zealand Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Association took possession and it have been used by them ever since.

Conservation Department publication [viewed 01 June 1994]

Old Redoubts of the Wellington District

Plane of Stockade & Blockhouse at Wallaceville Upper Hutt Wellington

[Images – Ground floor plan of Blockhouse]

[Images - Plan layout of Stockade showing trenches, well, magazine & bastion]

New Zealand Archaeological Association - Conservation Department [viewed 01 June 1994]
Redoubt / Blockhouse

NZAA metric site number = 146

Grid Easting 2682200 Northing 6006500

Site – Right of way off McHardy Street leads to Reserve which is adjacent to the grounds of the Heretaunga College

State of site – Blockhouse is in reasonable condition but earthworks were levelled in around 1954

Description of site – Built in 1860-1861 Described in Best E (1921) "Old redoubts, blockhouses and stockades of the Wellington District", Trans.N.Z. Inst. 53:14-28.

The earthworks have been levelled and are now barely recognisable. They show quite well at time due to different grass growth.

Earthworks show well in 1951 air photos

Owner – Crown Land control of New Zealand Historical Places Trust part Section 723 Hutt District Rimutaka S.D. Gazette 1980:2269, 2702

Aerial photograph – SN570 C/42 (1951) Clearly

Historical Places publication December 1985 page 3

A Restoration Problem

The Upper Hutt Blockhouse, a little known relic of our colonial past and the last surviving timber blockhouse in the country, may be heading for brighter times. Plans are afoot to reconstruct the 1861 building in a defended enclosure but reconstruction plans have been stuck because the original plans cannot be found and there are no known early photographs.

"We have a broad idea of what the stockade was like because it would have been similar to British military buildings in other colonies where there was plenty of timber, such as North America, but it is the fine details we need and for that we must have a picture or an accurate description" says Ian Wards, Chairman of the Wellington Regional Committee for the Historic Places Trust. The Trust, which cares for the historic reserve, is interested in hearing from anyone who may have old pictures of the blockhouse, reminiscences, or any other information, to facilitate accurate reconstruction.

The blockhouse, or fort, dates back to the early 1860s when Wellington residence were afraid of attack by hostile Maori. It was built at the limit of European settlement to house the local militia and as refuge for the local population.

After the threat of war receded the blockhouse housed a policeman and his family until about 1880. By 1914 it was a hayshed. In 1926 the building was extensively repaired with the intention of turning it into a museum. This attempt apparently failed and early etchings and work sketches of the building were destroyed by vandals. The Upper Hutt Borough Council took control of the building in 192, but long years of neglect followed. In 1953 however the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides were given use of the building. The blockhouse was repaired, the first floor windows reinstated and the outside creosoted. Some years later the Round Tables organisation began meeting on the upper floor while the scouts continued to use downstairs. The extensive bank and trench system, gradually levelled over the years, was finally filled in in 1969.

The blockhouse is now flanked by the Heretaunga college gymnasium a carpark. However when explanatory display panels are in place and the stockade possibly reconstructed, visitors will be able to recapture something of the 1860s. "The display will describe the military and social situation of the time, from both the Maori and Pakeha point of view," says Ian Wards.

If you have any photographs, water colours or drawings in the attic, or know of stories, with any other information about the blockhouse, please get in touch with Mr David Luke, Historical Places Trust, Private Bag, Wellington.

Alexander Turnbull Library - Evening Post Library publication 10 November 1936

Blockhouse at Upper Hutt

A notice of motion that the blockhouse should be placed under the care of the Boy Scouts was moved by Councillor W Greig at the meeting of the Upper Hutt Borough Council last evening. The Mayor (Mr A J McCurdy) explained that the council were the trustees of the building. The Scout Master could not be supervising the Scouts all the time and they could not be allowed to use a historical building like that unless an adult was present. The chairman of the reserves

committee (Councillor F.P. Keys) explained that the full repairs to the blockhouse would be costly but partial repairs had been carried out. The building had to be locked for a greater part of the time and was now in better condition. Arrangements could not be made for satisfactory supervision but Councillor J Blewman was doing his best under the circumstances. Councillor J S Baskett suggested that the Automobile Association should take over the control of the building. It was decided to have the signboard painted and an indication given that the key to the building could be obtained from Mr Blewman.

Evening Post newspaper Wednesday 21 August 1985

[Image with caption – This picture of the oldest wooden fort in New Zealand was taken in the 1900s in Heretaunga. Notice the firing slits cut into the walls for warding off attacks. Photograph courtesy of The Turnbull Library.]

Plans to rebuild fort's stockade

Once the bastion of colonial defence in Upper Hutt, the oldest wooden fort in New Zealand is about to have its original stockade rebuilt.

Known as the Blockhouse, the fort was built in 1861 to protect white colonists from hostile Maori tribes.

Round Table members who use the Blockhouse by Heretaunga College plan to rebuild, but do not have the original plans.

Trust

A New Zealand Historical Places Trust spokesman Mr Ian Wards, said the trust would be interested in hearing from anyone who has old photographs of the Blockhouse or any information so it can be built accurately.

The fort was used to house local militia and as a refuge for the colonists in times of danger, he said.

Trench

Built from totara and matai the Blockhouse had double walls filled with gravel to make them bullet-proof and "Wild West" style loopholes or firing slits in the walls.

The fort was surrounded by an extensive bank and trench system which was later filled in, and its own well, firing platform and gunpowder storeroom within the stockade.

It was never used to defend the settlement and the only casualty was a soldier shot by accident by the local militia during target practice.

Until 1880 the fort was used to house one of the first policemen in Upper Hutt and his family and also saw service as a courthouse.

Museum

In 1926 the "Post" described it as a "low class doss-house" where hay was used for bedding and where someone had lit fire to the window frames.

Late that year it was extensively repaired to use as a museum. This plan failed and vandals destroyed early etchings and plans of the building.

From 1927 the fort was neglected and rundown under the control of the Upper Hutt Borough Council.

Finally, the Boy Scout and Girl Guide associations started to repair the building in 1953 and they replaced the windows and preserved the outside timber.

The Historical Places Trust would like to hear from anyone who could help with the reconstruction of the stockade. Telephone Mr David Luke 724-341

Blockhouse miscellaneous information to be actioned

1922 Journal of the Early Settlers and Historical Association for details published about the stockade and early Upper Hutt and the Brown family.
