

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE STRUCTURE:
TOMAHAWK BATTERY AND GUN EMPLACEMENTS**



Gun emplacements, Google Streetview, September 2019

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX068i - Gun emplacement #1 BX068ii - Gun emplacement #2 BX068iii - Magazine BX068iv - Observation Post
Address:	Gun emplacements #1 & #2 - 1 Domain Avenue/Road Reserve Magazine - 14 Centre Road/Road Reserve Observation Post - 14 Centre Road
Structure Name:	Tomahawk Battery and Gun Emplacements
Located within a Heritage Precinct:	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description:	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record:	Vacant
Condition of Property:	Vacant, unused.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Does not meet criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Further research required to assess under this criterion

RECOMMENDATION:

The structures meet one or more of the significance criteria from in Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope of: Gun emplacements #1 & #2 Magazine building Observation post building.
	External/ancillary elements	
	Internal elements and/or rooms	
	Excluded elements	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Tomahawk Battery and Gun Emplacement has historic significance as a World War Two coastal defence site built in response to Japan's entry into the war. The surviving features include two gun emplacements, the magazine, and an observation post. Part of a national network of coastal defences located at strategic sites, it is a representative example of the smaller defences built during the war.

The Tomahawk Battery and Gun Emplacement are comparable to scheduled heritage structures within Dunedin of a similar history and function. When compared with other scheduled structures, they meet the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Wartime (1939-1945)
Style	Military
Era/Date of Construction	1942
Architect/Designer/Builder	Defence Department
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	World War II Coastal Defence
Primary Construction Materials	[reinforced] Concrete
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Built form, materials, function

Previous site development

This coastal headland has long been in Crown ownership. In the twentieth century it was included in the Tomahawk [Ocean Grove] Domain that runs on the coastal strip between Lawyers Head and the east end of Smaills Beach.

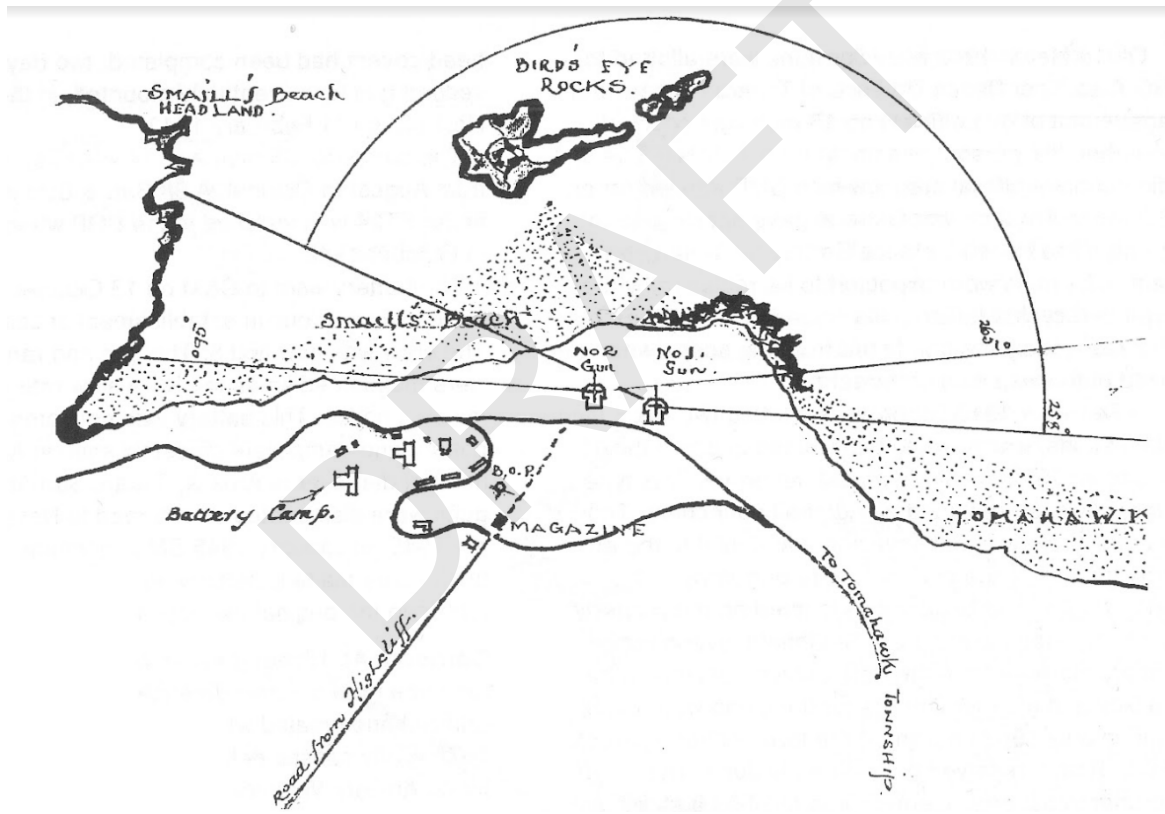
Japan's entry to World War Two on 7 December 1941 shocked New Zealanders. There was a massive mobilisation, with 43,000 men of the Territorial Force on duty by mid-January 1942. Urgent action

followed to throw up defence works at vulnerable points.¹ In Dunedin, coastal defences were established at Tomahawk, on Wharf Street, at Fort Tiaroa, and at Harington Point.

Design and construction

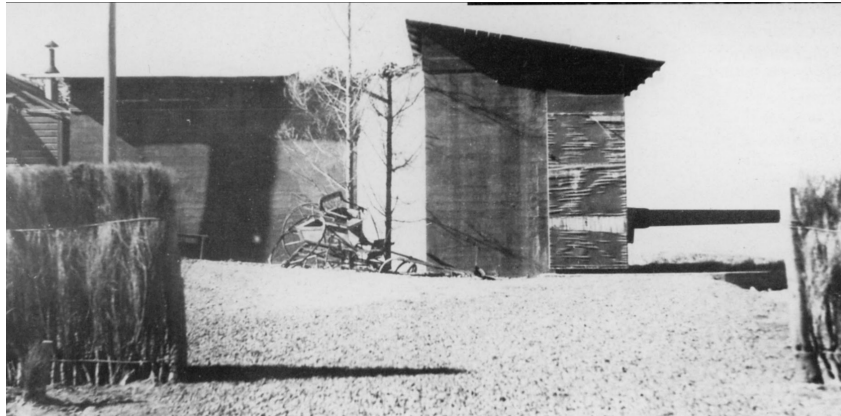
The Tomahawk Coastal Defences were built in 1942. Plans show a battery camp, the battery itself, and associated structures including the powder magazine and the observation post. The two 6-inch Mk-VII guns were installed by September 1942. The Tomahawk Battery, located on the headland, was camouflaged to look like a beach house and shed.

The surviving structures are utilitarian, understood to be built of reinforced concrete. The construction details of this battery have not been confirmed – but other batteries built at this time used standard British War Office plans or were designed by the Public Works Department.² The history of the Timaru battery indicates that standard British War Office plans were used for that battery. The gun emplacements at the Tomahawk Battery were given heavy camouflage and took on the appearance of houses. The photo below is from circa 1943. (Reference: Archives NZ, CH150 3.7 Tiaroa Head Fort Record Book).



¹ Ian McGibbon, 'Second World War - Japan enters the war', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/second-world-war/page-6> (accessed 22 December 2022)

² [Stony Batter Gun Emplacement | Engineering NZ](#), accessed 22 December 2022.



Plan of the Tomahawk Coast Defences (NZ Coastal Defences - Tomahawk Battery Historic Plan (google.com))

In December 1944, one of the guns was removed and sent to Auckland. It was replaced by a similar model from the battery at Bluff. The guns were dismantled in 1945.

Of the World War Two coastal defences in the Dunedin area, three out of the four survive: the Harington Point Battery (1880s and 1940s), the Rerewahine Battery, Fort Tiaroa (1880s and 1940s), and the Tomahawk Battery remain. The Anti-Aircraft Battery on Wharf Street was dismantled.

At Tomahawk, the two gun emplacements, the observation post, and the magazine survive. The gun emplacements are on public land. The observation post and magazine are on private land.³



View of Tomahawk Battery, 15 October 1942. Reference: Survey SN223, Run 513, Photo 35. Sourced from <http://retrolens.nz> and licensed by LINZ. Copyright status: CC-BY 3.0

³ [NZ Coastal Defences - Tomahawk Battery \(google.com\)](http://retrolens.nz) accessed 21 December 2022



View of Tomahawk Battery, 29 March 1947. Reference: Survey SN399, Run S, Photo 64. Sourced from <http://retrolens.nz> and licensed by LINZ. Copyright status: CC-BY 3.0



Tomahawk Battery is on the left of this aerial from 31 March 1955. Reference: St Clair and St Kilda, Dunedin, showing Ocean Grove and Tomahawk Lagoon. Whites Aviation Ltd: Photographs. Ref: WA-37736-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/23524427



View of Tomahawk Battery, 24 February 1958. Reference: Survey SN895, Run 2554, Photo 29. Sourced from <http://retrolens.nz> and licensed by LINZ Copyright status: CC-BY 3.0

Later history and development

The Department of Conservation notes that the advent of air warfare made these forts redundant, and most were decommissioned by the 1950s. Aerial photographs show that the battery camp was largely removed by 1958. The two batteries remain on the headland. The observation post and magazine are located nearby on private land.

Notable people/Themes

WWII

The four extant structures of the Tomahawk Coastal Defences are associated with New Zealand's efforts to establish a national coastal defence strategy during WWII. Further research is required to identify specific people and occupation associated with this battery.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The site demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Tomahawk Coastal Defences were built in response to fear of enemy attack in the wake of Japan's entry into World War II in December 1941. Its construction was part of a national coastal defence strategy, involving both main centres (of which Dunedin was one of four) and minor ports. The Tomahawk site has historical significance as a reminder of a New Zealand's domestic defences during this period.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The site does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

DESIGN

The site demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Tomahawk Coastal Defences (the two gun emplacements, the magazine, and the observation post) have design significance as surviving examples of coastal defence structures.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

Further research is required to assess whether the battery has technological significance due to the concrete construction methodology used.

REFERENCES

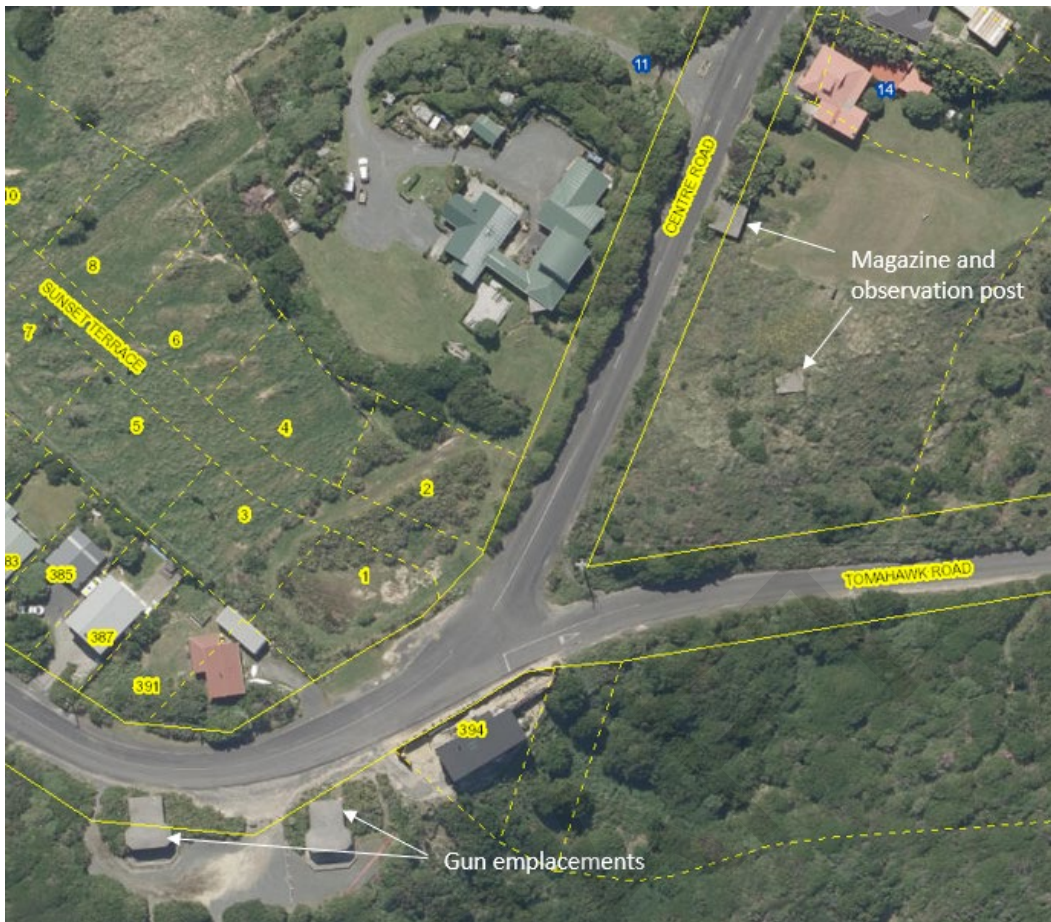
[NZ Coastal Defences - Tomahawk Battery Historic Plan \(google.com\)](#)

[Search the List | Timaru Coast Defence Battery | Heritage New Zealand](#) (accessed 22 December 2022)

Coastal Defences: Tomahawk, Dunedin, R20122250, Years: 1942 – 1952, Box number: 204, Record number: 23/818 (File held at Wellington repository of Archives New Zealand) – not sighted for the assessment.

Date Assessment Completed	4 January 2023	Author	HB
Date Peer Reviewed	6 August 2024	Reviewer	MM
Assessment Updated	7 August 2024		

APPENDIX



Location (Geocortex, accessed 4 January 2022)



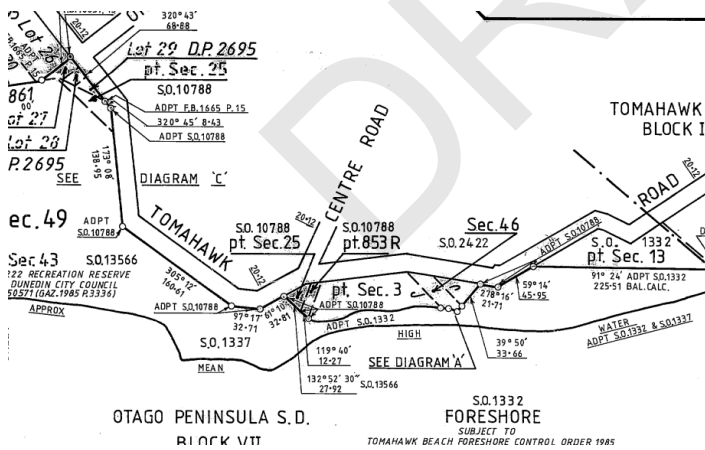
Magazine (Google Streetview, September 2019)

Dunedin Coastal Defence Structures

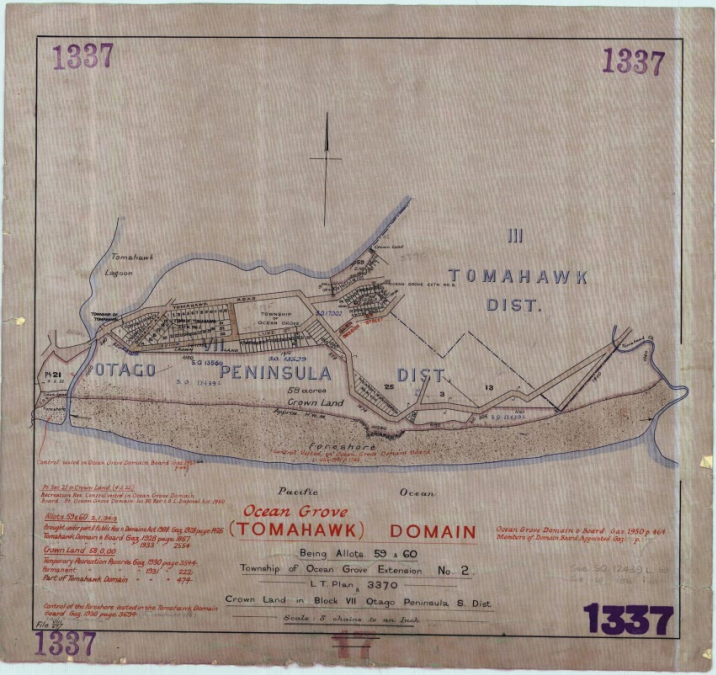
Site	Age	Status
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Anti Aircraft Battery Wharf Street	1940s	Destroyed.
Harrington Point Battery	1880s - 1940s	Intact and accessible by the public.
Lawyers Head Battery	1880s - 1890s	Destroyed.
Ocean Beach Battery (Central Battery)	1880s - 1920s	Destroyed.
Rerewahine Battery	1940s	Intact and accessible by the public. The battery is actually on private land, but guided tours are available.
St Clair Battery (Forbury Head)	1880s - 1900s	Destroyed.
Taiaroa Head (Fort Taiaroa)	1880s - 1940s	Intact, but access is strictly controlled because of the Albatross colony located here. Some areas open, others are not. A 6" disappearing remains here and has been restored to working order and can be visited as part of a guided tour.
Tomahawk Battery	1940s	Intact and mostly accessible by the public. The magazines at the rear of the emplacements have been sealed and are inaccessible. The observation post and the free standing magazine are on private land.

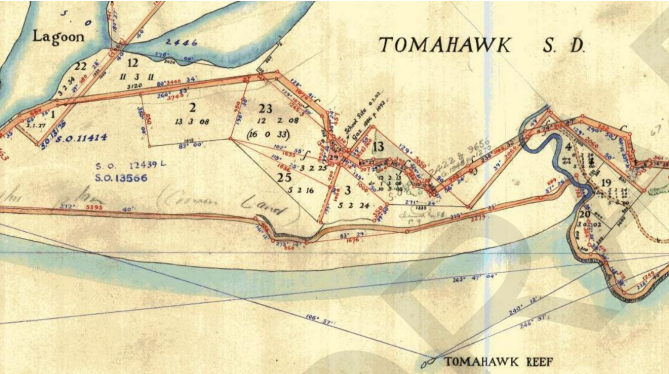
Table copied from ([NZ Coastal Defences - Summary of What Remains \(google.com\)](#) accessed 22 December 2022)



Detail SO 21699 (1986) (Survey of Section 49 and 52)



SO 1337 (Land Information New Zealand)



Detail SO 1332 (1862, Land Information New Zealand)