

Waihi-Paeroa Gold Extraction Co. Site, Paeroa



Location: Mill Road, Paeroa

Historic Places Trust Registration Number: 7397

Historic Places Trust Category: Category 2 Registered Historic Place

HDC Heritage Category: A – National or Outstanding Regional Significance

Other: Site of international significance

Physical Description: Remains of dredging plant alongside Ohinemuri River including concrete machine housing and roasting kiln tops. Further subsurface remains exist around the area and under the stop bank.

Other known names:

Notable features:

Style:

Materials: Concrete, copper

Date of Construction: 1912

History: In 1903, the Ohinemuri River Syndicate took over a small dredging plant in Waihi and upgraded the factory to better grind tailings retrieved from the Ohinemuri River. Cyanide tanks were installed to process the material in an experimental technique. It proved successful and the cyanide treatment was internationally patented. The tanks were known as Brown-McMicken Tanks (later named *Pachucca* tanks by the Americans). 2000 tons of tailings were

District Plan Schedule

Number: HAU027

Heritage Category: A

Heritage Type:

- Wahi Tapu
- Cultural Landscape
- Building
- Group of Buildings
- Structure
- Monument
- Historic Place
- Archaeological Site
- Other

Date Period:

1911-1940

Significance:

- Archaeological
- Architectural
- Cultural
- Historic
- Scientific
- Technological

Thematic Context

- Maori
- Early Settlement
- Industry
- Extraction
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Transport
- Communication
- Commerce
- Residential
- Social/Cultural
- Civic
- Health
- Educational
- Church/yard
- Other

Historic Heritage Inventory



Waihi-Paeroa Gold Extraction Co. Site, Paeroa

District Plan Schedule

Number: **HAU027**

Heritage Category: **A**

treated by the new process and plans were drawn up to increase the capacity of the plant and build a new one at Paeroa by the end of 1905.

Further funding was not forthcoming and the Company was bought in 1908 by the Waihi Paeroa Gold Extraction Company, under P N Kingswell, Chairman of both this company and Portland Cement Company. The new plant Manager was Robert Mark Aitken. It was rebuilt and new machinery installed at a cost of £16,000. Four tube mills, agitators, concentrators and a new air compressing plant were added. The company was made public in 1910 and the decision was made to build a larger plant in Paeroa. The Waihi plant was wound down in April 1910 and the buildings and machinery were shifted to Mill Road, Paeroa.

The new plant at Mill Road was begun in 1910. Tenders were called for an engineer's cottage and metal for site levelling and road formation purposes. John Chambers & Son tendered for the construction of a boiler house with four Babcock and Wilcox patent water tube boilers and a complete pipe layout. By February 1911, the plant consisted of the main building and the manager's and engineer's houses. The main building was a large structure built from a rimu framework and clad in corrugated iron. The plant employed up to 80 men and at the time was the largest and most modern cyanide milling plant in the world. It had four barge dredges, including an air lift suction dredge and two Priestman dredges. They operated between Wharf Street and the Railway Bridge. The plant was officially opened on January 23rd 1912.

Problems with limited coal supply, low river levels, mechanical breakdowns and low productivity, coupled with the Waihi Miners Strike in 1912 hindered the company and the decision was made to wind down operations in 1918. The heavy machinery was sold to the Woollen Mill Company of Petone in Wellington and the two Priestman dredges were bought by the Public Works Department and transferred to the depot near Puke Wharf.

The site has since been sold to a private farmer and covered over by the 1960s stop banks along the Ohinemuri River. In 1992, some remains were uncovered during earthworks by the Department of Corrections.

Architect:

Designer:

Builder:

Engineer:

History of changes:

Condition: Ruins

Integrity: Substantially intact

Current Uses: Ruin

Former Uses: Mining and Mineral Processing

Historic Heritage Inventory

Waihi-Paeroa Gold Extraction Co. Site, Paeroa

District Plan Schedule

Number: **HAU027**

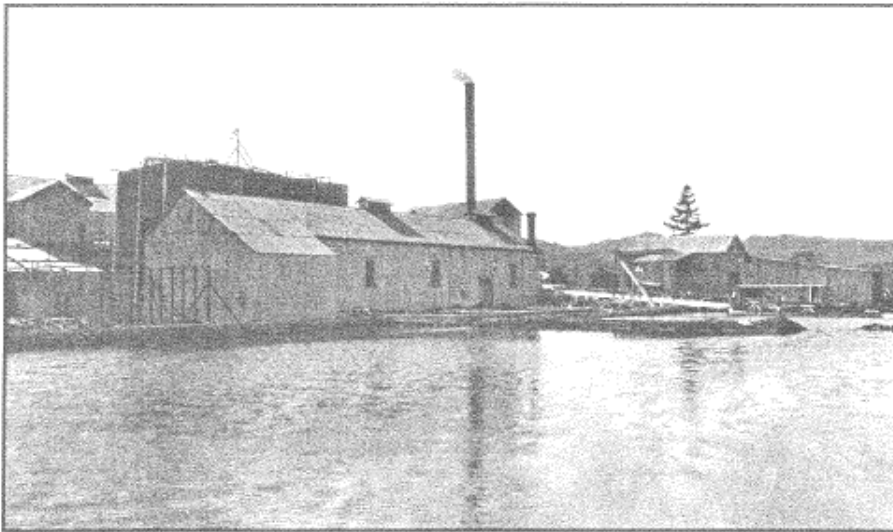
Heritage Category: **A**

Registered owner: Private

Legal Description: Pt Hararahi No.3 & Pakikauowhai A and B Blks XVI Waihou SD

Reference Source: H. Haysom (pers comm.); Townsend, C (2002) *Ohinemuri: River of Gold*. Patricia Townsend, Timaru

Associated Pictures:



Mill Road plant and condenser pond. Auckland Library photo.