

Talisman Battery and Power House



Location: Karangahake Gorge Historic Walkway, Karangahake

Heritage Status

Historic Places Trust Registration Number:

Historic Places Trust Category:

HDC Heritage Category: A - Heritage Feature. National or Outstanding Regional Significance

Other: Recorded archaeological site (T13/286)

Physical Description: The remains of the Talisman battery are located on the true right bank of the Waitawheta Gorge, on a steep reforested slope, at the eastern end of the footbridge over the Waitawheta River on the Karangahake Historic Walkway.

The extensive battery remains are obscured amongst the forest. There are substantial structural features and remnants of machinery over the six original working levels. Structures include four ore-roasting pits, the engine housing, adits, the battery floor littered with shoes and dies, part of a jaw crusher, a water diversion tunnel and a 36 inch pipeline with a turbine shaft, concrete settling tanks and massive concrete and masonry structural remains. The remains of a wooden diversion dam on the Waitawheta are still visible when the river is low.

The remains of the Talisman powerhouse and the later Talisman-Dubbo battery are located on the true left bank of the Ohinemuri River just below its confluence with the Waitawheta River and at the western end of the footbridge over the Waitawheta River on the Karangahake Historic Walkway.

District Plan Schedule

Number: **HAU179**

Heritage Category: **A**

Heritage Type:

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

Date Period:

1881-1910

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



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The powerhouse remains consist of steel stanchions and concrete footings which supported the machinery and walls of a building over an area of about 30 x 20 metres.

Other known names: Dubbo Battery

Notable features:

Style:

Materials: Concrete and reinforced steel, machinery parts

Date of Construction: 1901

History: The original Talisman claim comprised of 30 acres of ground through which a short rich reef was traced. In 1894, 280 tons of quartz was extracted and processed through the NZ Crown Mines plant. The results of this induced the proprietors to erect a 10 stamp battery with a cyanide plant similar to that erected by the neighbouring Woodstock Company. The mill was defective and little ore was crushed. In 1895-6, the claims of both the Woodstock and Talisman were taken over by the NZ Talisman Gold Mining Company who remodelled and expanded the original plant. In 1897, the company amalgamated with the Talisman Extended Co. to form Talisman Consolidated Ltd.

Talisman Consolidated Ltd erected a new mill of 50 stampers and commenced crushing from 1901 with great success. The mine reached a peak in 1914, just as the Crown Mine was winding up. By 1918, however, the reef was practically exhausted and the company finally wound up in 1920.

The Talisman Mine Powerhouse was a substantial building that housed Babcock and Wilcox boilers fitted with chain-gate mechanical stokers. Dams on the Ohinemuri and Waitawheta Rivers supplied waterpower. An 1800ft long pipeline from the dam on the Ohinemuri River fed a 320hp pelton wheel, which drove two big compressors. The Waitawheta dam fed a 100hp Victor turbine which drove the lighting dynamos. It was the second largest mine in terms of production in the Ohinemuri Goldfield and the third most productive in the country.

The Talisman mine closed in 1920 and the plant was sold and building dismantled leaving the site bare. Following the closure of both the Talisman and Crown Mines during the first World War, smaller ventures continued until the late 1920s. A rise in the price of gold and high unemployment levels led to the formation of the Talisman-Dubbo Gold Mining Company in 1929. It intended to focus mining operations on the untouched portion of the Maria Reef near the top of the mountain. The first ore was treated at the Golden Dawn Battery at Owharoa. As other levels were put in, the company decided to invest in the construction of its own battery. The Talisman-Dubbo Gold Mining Company took over the old Talisman power house site and worked on

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building its battery in 1937. It began crushing ore in June 1938. By this time, much of the ore had already been mined from the upper levels. The company went into liquidation and dismantled the battery in 1940. The machinery went to Fiji and the tanks to the Miranda manganese mines and to Puhipuhi in Northland.

Architect:

Designer:

Builder:

Engineer:

History of changes:

Condition: Ruin

Integrity: Substantially altered

Current Uses: Historic Walkway

Former Uses: Mine Batteries and Power House

Registered owner: Department of Conservation

Legal Description: Sec 105 Blk 1 Aroha SD (Kaimai Mamaku State Forest)

Reference Source: Ritchie, N. (1990) *A Survey of Historic Mining Sites in the Thames and Ohinemuri Areas of the Hauraki Goldfield*. Department of Conservation.

Associated Pictures: