

WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME

Potatau Monument

ADDRESS

'Octagon' Reserve, Durham Street, Ngaruawahia

PHOTOGRAPH



[22 March 2017]

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM No.

109

HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY

757 / 1

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Secs 671 & 673; legal road

FILE NUMBERS

1010186 & 1010187

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1895

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER**

James Buchanan, monumental mason

STYLE

Memorial obelisk

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION & SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Obelisk, mounted on stepped base, inscribed with dedicatory text.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Italian Carrara marble and Timaru bluestone.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Removal of paling fence? (date unknown).

SURROUNDINGS, CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEXT & EXTENT OF SCHEDULING

The monument stands on its own designated reserve within a wider setting, known as the Octagon Reserve, which is bounded by Waingaro Road and Eyre and Durham Streets. The memorial is close by the Kingitanga Memorial (2013), which commemorates both King Potatau and King Tawahiao. The Potatau Monument is set against a backdrop of lawn, mature trees and a playground. There are a number of scheduled heritage items in the vicinity, most notably Turangawaewae House in Eyre Street, as well as a number of commemorative structures at the Point. The extent of scheduling encompasses the monument reserve on which the monument is located, as well as the reserve land and landscaped legal road that encircles it, and is consistent with the HNZPT list entry.

- **HISTORY OF SITE/STRUCTURE/PLACE/AREA**

The Potatau Monument was erected at the behest of Prime Minister Richard Seddon on 31 July 1895. It was dedicated to the memory of Poutatau Te Wherowhero and a number of other Waikato chiefs [see below]. Potatau was the first Maori King, serving the Kingitanga from 1858 until his death on 25 June 1860. He was succeeded by his son Tawhiao and thus Waikato Tainui became the kaitiaki of the Kingitanga. The monument is maintained by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage and was listed by Heritage NZPT as a category 1 historic place in 2019.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

As both the development of this site and the erection of the monument pre-date 1900, this place has potential archaeological significance relating to the Maori and colonial use and occupation of the land. The monument stands on the former site of Potatau's tomb.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Potatau Monument has aesthetic significance as a conventional obelisk which was designed and made by Auckland monumental mason, James Buchanan. Buchanan also designed two monuments to commemorate King George of Tonga in 1893. The firm of J & G Buchanan, Monumental Masons, was established in 1863 and had premises in Wellesley Street. Its closure was advertised in 1897/1898 at the time of Buchanan's retirement. At the time of his death in 1937, James Buchanan was hailed as Auckland's first stonemason and the 'Father of Stonemasons in New Zealand' [*Auckland Star* 12 June 1937, p. 12].

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Potatau Monument has high cultural significance as a place of community identity and historic continuity. The memorial has commemorative significance in relation to King Potatau, a number of other Waikato chiefs, and the Kingitanga movement more broadly.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Potatau Monument has high historic significance for its association with King Potatau Te Wherowhero, the first Maori King. The monument also represents the relationship between the government of Premier Richard Seddon and Waikato Maori, which was later embodied in King Mahuta's appointment by Seddon to the Legislative Council.

SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Potatau Monument has scientific value for the potential it offers to provide further information about its design and construction and the chiefs to whom it was dedicated.

TECHNOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Potatau Monument has technological value for its construction methods and materials.

- **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The Potatau Monument has high overall significance to Waikato District. The monument has aesthetic significance as a representative example of the obelisk typology made by a leading Auckland monumental mason, James Buchanan. The Potatau Monument has high cultural significance given its commemorative purpose and the contribution it makes to Ngāruawahia's identity and sense of place. The Potatau Monument has high historic significance for its association with the first Maori King, Potatau Te Wherowhero. It also has scientific and technological value for its research potential and construction methods and materials.

- **RECOMMENDED CATEGORY OF HISTORIC HERITAGE LISTING**

A

REFERENCES

- *New Zealand Herald* 26 September 1864, p. 4; 2 August 1895, p. 6; 20 October 1897, p. 7; 25 June 1898, p. 7.
- *Waikato Times* 13 August 1895 p. 4.
- *Auckland Star* 8 August 1893, p. 5; 1 September 1917, p. 7; 12 June 1937, p. 12.
- *Daily Southern Cross* 14 March 1873, p. 3.
- National Archives.
- Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t88/te-whereo-whereo-potatau>
- <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/757>

REPORT COMPLETED	20 July 2016
AUTHOR	Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services
REPORT UPDATED	3 April 2020
AUTHOR	Dr Ann McEwan
PEER REVIEWED	xx
REVIEWER	xx

MONUMENT TO MAORI CHIEFS AT NGARUAWAHIA.

A MONUMENT of Carrara marble, in the form of an obelisk, 11 feet high, surmounting a Timaru bluestone pedestal, was on July 31 erected in the Octagon, where King Potatau and several other Maori chieftains were originally buried. The obelisk has been erected by the order of the Premier, and bears the following inscriptions—"In memory of Potatau of the Natimabuta, and the chiefs Tawhiao, Ptatone te Maicha, Harepata te Keha Hori Takiwaru, Epiha Te Rangiatahua, Te Eepa Tuiwhatau, Haunui Te Kokoti, Te Huirama, Kakaria Tuiwhatau, Harihoni, None Pihama, Mare, Te Marena Kahawa." At the foot of the pedestal are the words, "Erected under Hon. R. Seddon, Premier, N.Z. May, 1895." The sculptor for the work was Mr. James H. Buchanan, under whose superintendence the obelisk was erected. The whole is to be surrounded by a paling fence, 60 feet by 70 feet.—[Ngaruawhia Correspondent.]

New Zealand Herald 2 August 1895, p. 6.



Extent of scheduling, Potatau Monument, Ngaruawahia.