

Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Waitara Lock-Up (1911)

Address

Memorial Place, Waitara



Statement of Significance

This building was constructed in 1911 as the Waitara lock-up following the purchase of a new police station site in Parris Street. The building is strongly associated with the theme of law enforcement and incarceration in Waitara during the twentieth century, with the building in use as a lock-up for almost 70 years from 1911 until the late 1970s. The 1911 lock-up was relocated from the Parris Street police station property to its present Memorial Place site in 1984 to be used as a museum and later to form part of a proposed historical village; both concepts reflective of late twentieth-century attitudes towards heritage preservation, public education and tourism. The former 1875 Waitara lock-up has strong contextual value for its close association with its predecessor, the adjacent former 1875 Waitara lock-up, with the building positioned in a publicly accessible location where it contributes positively to the character of the local streetscape. The lock-up is in highly authentic condition, retaining a considerable amount of original interior and exterior fabric.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description	Section 2 Block 85 Town of Waitara West
District Plan Item/ Map No.	
Heritage New Zealand List	Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction	1911
Principal Materials	Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel
Construction Professionals	Arthur Thompson Ford (architect), William Howson (builder)

History

Early History: Waitara's First Lock-up

Early policing work in the Waitara area was undertaken by the Armed Constabulary, with a permanent police station likely established because of its status as an important military post.¹ The first mention of the construction of a lock-up at Waitara is in the Provincial Council's estimated expenditure for 1875, where £50 was set aside for a lock-up at Waitara.² Tenders were subsequently advertised by Deputy Superintendent Arthur Standish during May 1875 for building a lock-up at Waitara.³ It is unclear when the lock-up was completed, however, during January 1876, James Nelson and James Adams pleaded guilty in the Resident Magistrates Court to breaking twelve panes of glass in the Waitara lock-up; both were subsequently being fined £1 15s.⁴



Panorama of Waitara River, circa 1877, [detail showing likely 1875 lock-up on original site (left) with 1875 railway station further right], Williamson & Co. PHO2010-0532, Puke Ariki (PA)

¹ Carr, Margaret. *Policing in the Mountain Shadow: A history of the Taranaki police*. New Plymouth: TNL Print, 1989.

² *Taranaki Herald*, 16 January 1875, page 2

³ *Taranaki Herald*, 26 May 1875, page 1

⁴ *Taranaki Herald*, 8 January 1876, page 2



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During March 1879, the Undersecretary for Crown Lands wrote to the Taranaki Land Board asking for recommendations for possible police station sites at Waitara as the Constabulary Department wished to construct one there.⁵ It was noted that “by some mistake the present police building at Waitara [the lock-up] had been put on a private section”.⁶ The Land Board suggested that part of Block CXVI [116] Town of Raleigh West would be a suitable police station site, and it was subsequently gazetted as a site for a police station in May 1879.⁷ Tenders for the construction of a police station at Waitara were advertised by the Public Works Department during October 1879 and presumably erected soon after.⁸ It seems the extant 1875 lock-up was relocated to the new site at the time of construction, with the new buildings likely comprising a residence, stables and other outbuildings. The 1908 Cyclopaedia of New Zealand described the Waitara police station as “an old building... [with] an office and two cells. There is also a residence for the constable”.⁹

A New Police Station at Waitara

During March 1910, tenders for repairs and alterations to police buildings at Waitara were advertised by the District Engineer Mr G. L. Cook.¹⁰ Despite the contract being let for this work, it was decided later that year to dispose of the Stafford Street property and construct a new police station on another site in the town; £750 was allocated in the 1910-11 Public Works estimates for the purchase of property and construction of a new gaol at Waitara.¹¹ A new police station site comprising lots 3 and 4 of block 107 Waitara West (present 1-3 Parris Street), was purchased from W. Wilkes during December 1910 for £700.¹² However, disposal of the old property was somewhat more complicated as it was gazetted as police reserve, meaning it couldn't be sold without being authorised by an Act of Parliament. Thus, a special provision was included within the *Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act 1910* to enable the sale of the Stafford Street land to multi-national meat processors Thomas Borthwick & Sons for £600.¹³ The capital value of the property at the time of sale was £475, with a police station valued at £275, and outbuildings valued at £100, present on the site.¹⁴

Initially, it seems the old 1875 lock-up was going to be relocated to the new Parris Street police station site. However, during late-January 1911, it was reported by the local works engineer that it was not possible to remove the old lock-up to the new site as Mr Borthwick understood them to be his property.¹⁵ Mr Borthwick offered to sell the lock-up back to the police department for £20, with the cost of removing the lock-up to the new site likely costing another £20.¹⁶ The District Engineer thought it better to build a new lock-up, with the Under-Secretary for Police giving instructions that if Mr Borthwick would not sell the old lock-up for around £5, then estimates should be obtained for new lock-up.¹⁷ With Borthwick unwilling to lower the sale price, a decision was made to construct a new lock-up at the Parris Street

⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 11 March 1879, page 2

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ 'Lands Permanently Reserved', *New Zealand Gazette*, 31 July 1879, Issue 81, p.1054

⁸ *Taranaki Herald*, 6 October 1879, page 2

⁹ Cyclopaedia Company Limited 1908, *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand [Taranaki, Hawke's Bay & Wellington Provincial Districts]*, Cyclopaedia Company Limited, Christchurch, page 140

¹⁰ *Taranaki Herald*, 8 March 1910, page 7

¹¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 16 November 1910, page 2

¹² Waitara Borough Valuation Roll – Numbers 1-1293, circa 1910-1927, Item ID R16778512, Agency AELV, Series 19324, Accession W1175, Record Group V-NPW1175, Box 26, Record 2/70, Archives New Zealand (ANZ).

¹³ Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act 1910

¹⁴ Waitara Borough Valuation Roll – Numbers 1-1293, circa 1910-1927, Item ID R16778512, Agency AELV, Series 19324, Accession W1175, Record Group V-NPW1175, Box 26, Record 2/70, ANZ.

¹⁵ Carr, Margaret. *Policing in the Mountain Shadow: A history of the Taranaki police*. New Plymouth: TNL Print, 1989.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

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property.

Tenders for construction of the new lock-up and also alterations to an extant villa at the new station site (to be used as the police residence) were called during May 1911.¹⁸ The successful tenderer for the work was New Plymouth builder William Howson, it being reported that work was underway by early-July 1911.¹⁹ The lock-up plans survive at Archives New Zealand and are signed by Public Works Department architect Arthur Thomson Ford; they are dated May 1910 and appear to be a standard Public Works Department design used across the North Island.²⁰ A site plan dated April 1911 is also held by Archives New Zealand and shows two extant buildings (the villa and a stable), along with the location of the proposed new lock-up.²¹

The lock-up building consists of three cubicles, the central one being an office which was used up until 1938, when a new station building (the present house at 3 Parris Street) was erected.²² During the 1960s the lock-up was shifted from the rear of the Parris Street property to a position closer to the station building, allowing for the construction of the present house at 3A Parris Street. The cells of the 1911 lock-up were in regular use until the 1970s, after which time they were very rarely used as their wooden construction rendered them a fire risk, with an officer required to be present at all times if used as a holding cell.²³



Detail showing Waitara Police Station site showing residence, stables and lock-up (partially obscured by trees), Radcliffe, Frederick George, 1913, Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 35-R1628.

¹⁸ *Taranaki Herald*, 1 May 1911, page 7

¹⁹ *Taranaki Herald*, 7 July 1911, page 5

²⁰ Waitara Police Station Two-Cell Lock-Up, Arthur Thomson Ford, 1910, Item ID R25349001, Agency ABZK, Series 24411, Accession W5433, Box 21, Record PWD 28777, Part X, ANZ.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Waitara and Inglewood Press*, 20 July 1983, page 1

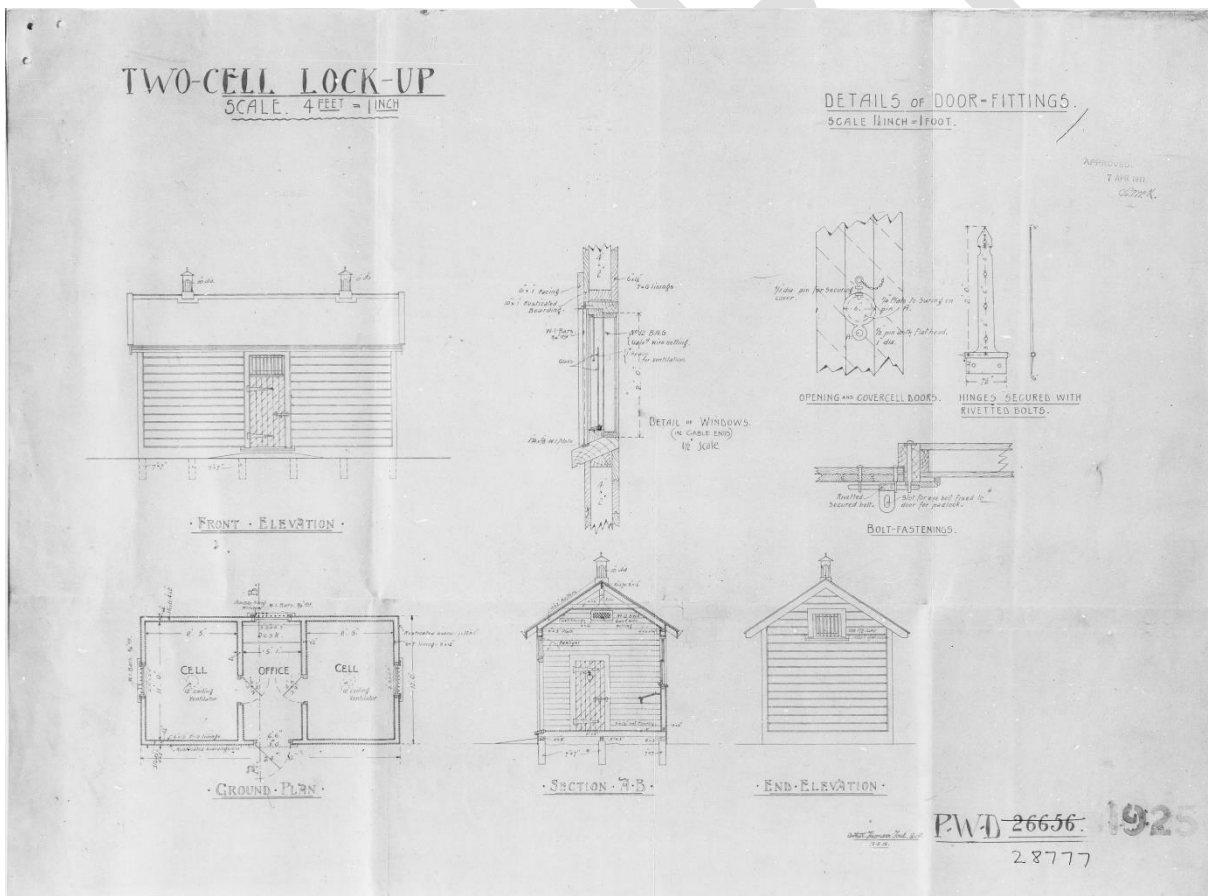
²³ *Ibid.*



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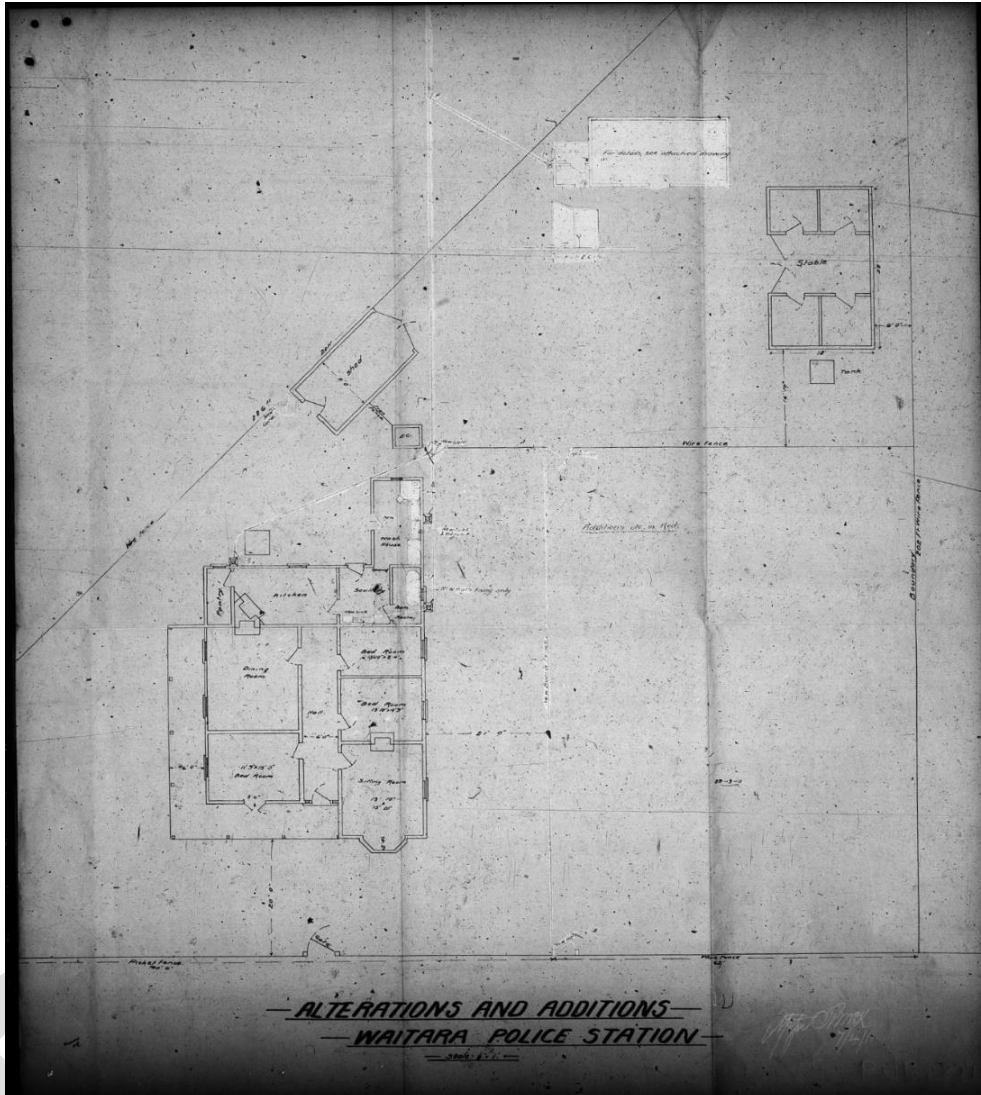


View to the town of Waitara with McLean Street Bridge and Pukekohe Domain to the Waitara river mouth beyond [detail showing rear of police station premises], 22 August 1958. Whites Aviation, Whites Aviation Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, WA-47055-F.



Waitara Police Station Two-Cell Lock-Up, Arthur Thomson Ford, 1910, Item ID R25349001, Agency ABZK, Series 24411, Accession W5433, Box 21, Record PWD 28777, Part X, ANZ.

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Waitara Police Station Two-Cell Lock-Up, Arthur Thomson Ford, 1910, Item ID R25349002, Agency ABZK, Series 24411, Accession W5433, Box 21, Record PWD 28777, Part X, ANZ.

Relocation and Preservation

When the Waitara Police Station was renovated in 1983, the rarely used lock-up (be then in use as a storeroom) was deemed surplus to requirements and offered to the Waitara Historical Society for use as a museum.²⁴ This offer was quickly accepted, and during August 1983 the old lock-up was relocated from the Parris Street police station to a new site in Memorial Place.²⁵ Upon relocation, the lock-up was restored and subsequently opened to the public. In 1984, the Waitara Historical Society was gifted another lock-up, this being Waitara's first lock-up constructed in 1875, and which had for many years been sited on land owned by Borthwick's meatworks.²⁶ However, it wasn't until 1988, following the purchase of Borthwick's Waitara plant by Waitaki NZ, that the 1875 lock-up was actually relocated to Memorial Place to be sited next to the 1911 lock-up.

²⁴ Ibid.

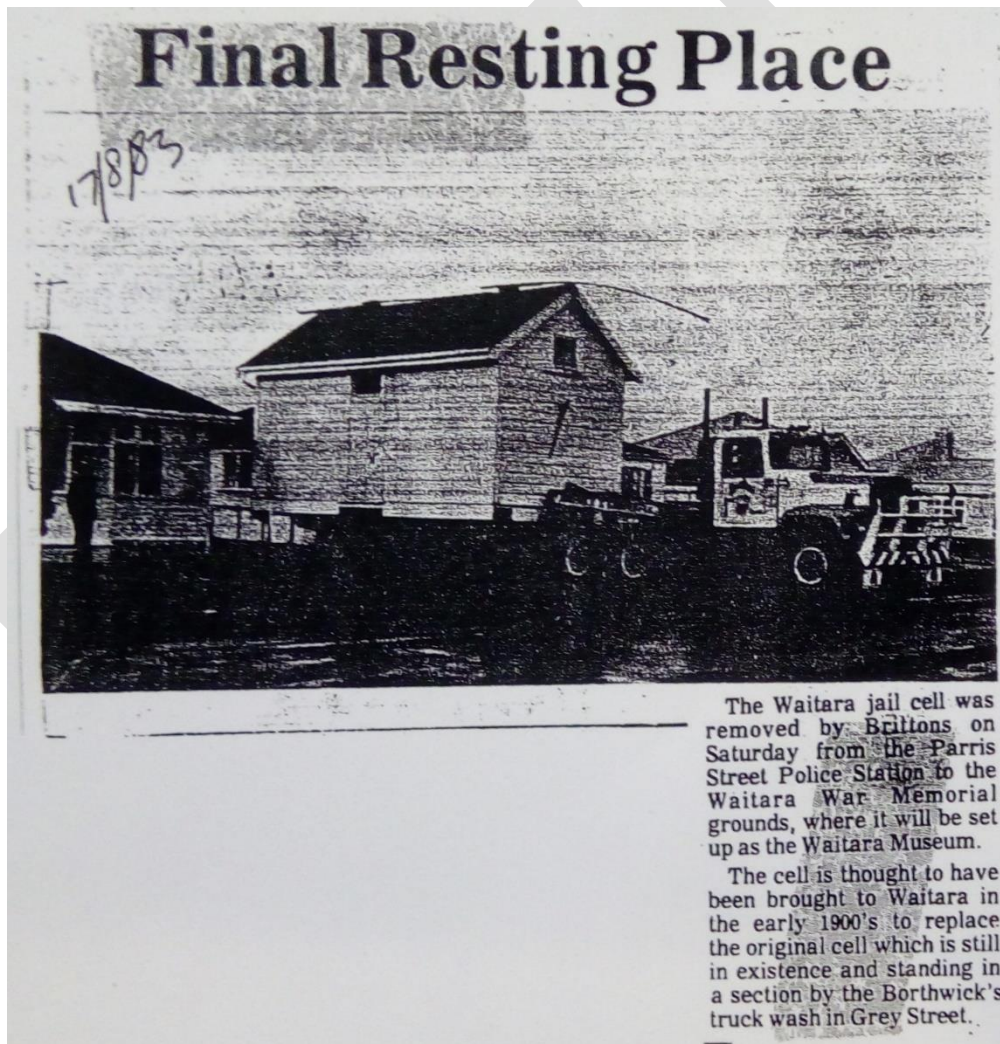
²⁵ *Waitara and Inglewood Press*, 17 August 1983, page 1

²⁶ *Waitara and Inglewood Press*, 5 May 1984, page 1

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It was at the time of the relocation of the 1875 lock-up that a plan was also prepared to establish a historic village in Memorial Place. The establishment of the Waitara Historical Village followed similar trend in other small towns and reflected late twentieth-century attitudes towards heritage preservation, public education and tourism. Although subject to some criticism (mainly from persons associated with Pioneer Village at Stratford who believed there was only room for one historical village in Taranaki), other buildings such as the nineteenth century Rose Cottage and 1960s former Tariki Railway Station were soon acquired and shifted to the Memorial Place site.²⁷

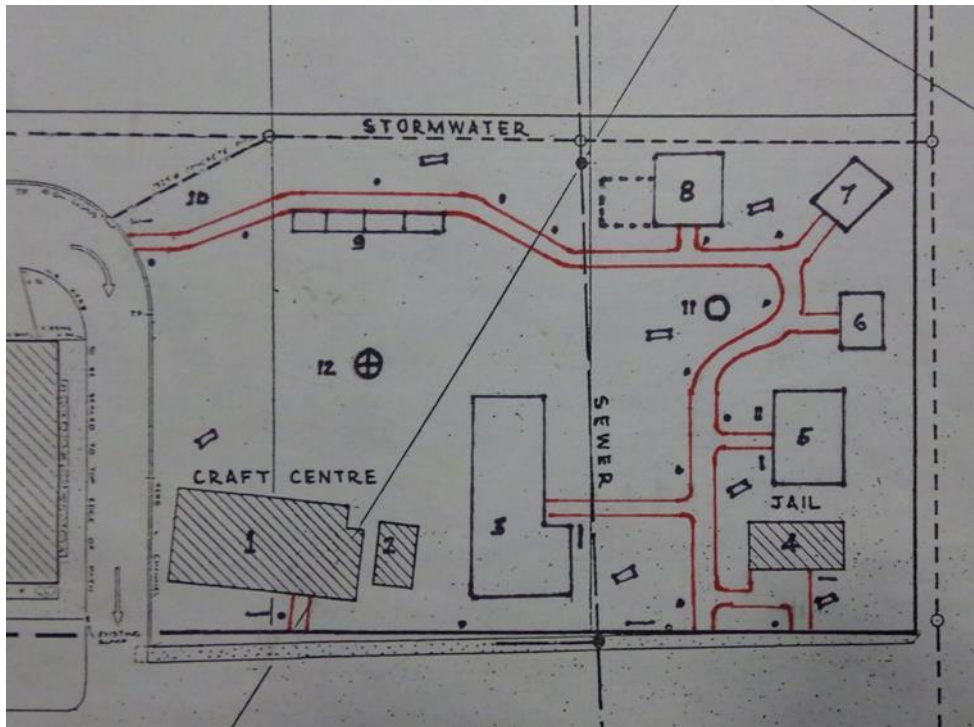
Upon the creation of the New Plymouth District Council in 1989, a lease was granted to the Waitara Memorial Village Trust Inc. for the lease of land in Memorial Place. The Memorial Village Trust was dissolved in 1999, with its assets (buildings and research materials) later transferred to the Waitara Districts History and Families Group Inc., who were granted a \$1 concessional ground lease for the site in 2018. The 1911 lock-up is still occasionally opened for public view, whilst the 1875 lock-up is used for storage.



1911 Lock-up leaving Parris Street police station on back of removal truck, *Waitara and Inglewood Record*, 17 August 1981, page 1

²⁷ *Taranaki Daily News*, 24 June 1988, page 2

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Proposed plan of Waitara Historical Village, from Waitara & Districts Historic Building Action Group. *Waitara Memorial Village Proposal*. Waitara: Waitara and Districts Historic Building Action Group, 1988

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

Description

The 1911 Waitara lock-up is located in the North Taranaki town of Waitara, about 15km northeast of New Plymouth. The building is sited on a portion of NPDC-owned reserve near the intersection of Whittaker Street and Memorial Place which is presently leased to the Waitara Districts History and Families Group Inc. On the northern side of Whittaker Street is Pukekohe Domain, originally the site of the pre-European Pukekohe pa and later Camp Waitara, established during 1860.

The relocated 1875 Waitara lock-up is positioned a few metres west of the 1911 lock-up, whilst Rose Cottage, also relocated, is positioned about 15m to the south; together these buildings form the nucleus of what was to be the Waitara Historic Village. Beyond Rose Cottage is the relocated former Tariki Railway Station (circa 1960s) and the large Waitara Memorial Hall (1959).

The main form of the 1911 Waitara lock-up is a simple gabled utilitarian structure, timber-framed, clad in scalloped profile rusticated weatherboards with a mild corrugated steel roof; the two original roof ventilators have long since been removed. The building follows a similar form to the adjacent 1875 lock-up, although is slightly narrower in width and longer in length. It is readily identifiable as a lock-up and is representative of the types lock-up's constructed in small towns throughout New Zealand during the early decades of the twentieth century.

The main front elevation faces roughly northeast towards Memorial Place. Central to this elevation is a heavy timber entrance door with transom window above. The door is hung on two presumably original steel strap hinges and features a large external bolt lock, mortice lock and modern deadlock. The transom is fitted with a clear-glazed timber hopper window and also vertical steel bars; chicken wire has been installed outside the bars. A timber deck installed at the time of relocation provides both step and ramp access to the entrance door.



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The south-eastern and north-eastern end elevations are treated identically, each incorporating a single glazed casement with external vertical steel bars fitted to the centre of the upper gable end. The rear southwestern elevation incorporates a single central double-hung sash to light the office, again with external steel bars and later chicken wire.

The 1911 Waitara lock-up is one of only two known timber lock-up's of this style to survive within New Plymouth District, the other being the adjacent 1875 Waitara lock-up. The only other known surviving lock-up's within wider Taranaki area is the former Kaponga lock-up (1914), now relocated and restored at Stratford's Pioneer Village, and the HNZ Category 2 former Pungarehu lock-up (circa 1885), adjacent to the former Pungarehu Blockhouse.

Assessment:

Historical	This building was constructed in 1911 as the Waitara lock-up following the purchase of a new police station site in Parris Street. The building is strongly associated with the theme of law enforcement and incarceration in Waitara during the twentieth century, with the building in use as a lock-up for almost 70 years from 1911 until the late 1970s.	✓
Importance to Community	There was a clear and deliberate action taken to relocate and restore the 1911 Waitara lock-up during the 1980s. This was driven at least in part by a clear historical and social value being placed on the building by members of the Waitara community.	✓
Architecture & Construction	The former Waitara lock-up is a good example of an early twentieth century utilitarian building utilising using basic construction materials and techniques from the period.	✓
Setting and Context	The former 1911 Waitara lock-up has strong contextual value for its close association with its predecessor, the adjacent former 1875 Waitara lock-up. Although relocated from its original site, the former 1875 Waitara lock-up remains within Waitara township and is positioned in a publicly accessible location where it contributes positively to the character of the local streetscape.	✓
Archaeology	-	
Representativeness, rarity and integrity	This building is representative of the types lock-up's constructed in small towns throughout Taranaki (and New Zealand) during the early twentieth century. The lock-up is in highly authentic condition, retaining a considerable amount of original interior and exterior fabric.	✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓