

## **The Cambridge Star Redoubt - Cambridge New Zealand**

**Robert J. McQueen**

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## Overview

This booklet is a brief summary of what has been discovered about the Cambridge Star Redoubt<sup>1</sup>, which was constructed in 1864, and was the start of the town of Cambridge<sup>2</sup>, New Zealand. A redoubt is a British military fortification common in the 1860s in New Zealand, consisting of earthworks with an outer ditch and an inner parapet, rectangular or square in shape, and range in size from 30 to 90 metre sides.

## Historical background

The New Zealand Wars spanned the period between 1843 and 1881, and include 14 campaigns, some between Māori and the Crown, and some between Māori groups<sup>3</sup>. One of those campaigns was the Waikato campaign, between 1863 and 1864. The background to the establishment of a British military presence in Cambridge began in the 1850s with Wiremu Tamihana<sup>4</sup> working to establish a Waikato King movement, with a main purpose to establish law and order. Te Wherowhero was installed as Māori king in 1859. He died in 1860, and was succeeded by his son Tāwhiao, who reigned as Māori king for the next 34 years. Tāwhiao was a pacifist, and discouraged fighting between Māori and the settlers and colonial government. But not all factions of Māori aligned to the emerging leadership structures at times, and there were groups that challenged the rule of law and the land administration of the colonial government of the day.

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<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as the ‘Ten Star Redoubt’ in some documents and references

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge,\\_New\\_Zealand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge,_New_Zealand)

<sup>3</sup> Prickett (2016) p 2.

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiremu\\_Tamihana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiremu_Tamihana)

British Imperial troops had been building up in New Zealand from the 1860s, initially to respond to the conflicts in Taranaki. Many of these British troops came to New Zealand from India. Works were also underway at that time to build, and then improve the Great South Road from Auckland to the Queen's Redoubt<sup>5</sup> in Pokeno, as a metalled all weather supply road for logistics and supply support into the area south of Auckland.

In 1861 Governor Browne accused the Waikato tribes of violating the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>6</sup>, and suspected they were planning to attack Auckland. When fighting broke out again in Taranaki in 1863, the then Governor Grey issued a proclamation requiring Māori to submit to Queen Victoria, and without waiting for a response, ordered General Cameron and British Imperial troops to invade the Waikato territories. The conquest of those territories proceeded.

Cameron's invasion of the Waikato<sup>7</sup> occurred from 1863-1864, beginning at the Queen's Redoubt at Pokeno and the crossing of the Mangatawhiri Stream on July 12, 1863, then considered the northern boundary of the Waikato tribes. About 12,000 British troops<sup>8</sup> were ultimately involved. Active hostilities effectively finished nine months later in April 1864 at the southernmost point of the movement of the British troops, Kihikihi. Most of the major engagements of the 1863-1864 Waikato war took place along that route from Pokeno to Kihikihi, with the decisive final

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<sup>5</sup> Barton and Ritchie (2021)

<sup>6</sup> Wikipedia Treaty of Waitangi

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Waitangi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Waitangi)

<sup>7</sup> Wikipedia: Invasion of the Waikato

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion\\_of\\_the\\_Waikato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_the_Waikato)

<sup>8</sup> Barton & Ritchie (2021) p 212



battle against Rewi Maniapoto finishing on April 2, 1864, with the abandonment of Orakau<sup>9</sup>.

After retreating from the defeat at Pāterangi in February, Tamihana moved back to Maungatautari and worked at fortifying Te Tiki o te Ihingarangi near Cambridge, which became known subsequently as Pukekura, and after that as the Crow's Nest. The battle at Gate Pa in Tauranga on April 29 1864 drew some of Tamihana's allies back home to defend their own lands. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the Waikato Militia arrived at Pukerimu, and on the 30<sup>th</sup>, the combined force of Imperial and Colonial troops under General Cameron set out for Te Tiki. They found that Te Tiki had been abandoned the night before by Tamihana, and a major battle was avoided. Te Tiki was then occupied by the Militia. But the lands surrounding Pukerimu and Te Tiki were still inhabited by hostile Māori.

## **The Waikato Militia**

The Militia had been formed in March of 1863, and was intended to motivate soldier-settlers to serve as soldiers, and then take up and farm land grants near the frontier. The term of service was three years, but once land was allocated to them, the soldiers were removed from the pay roster, and only required to attend monthly musters until the end of their three-year commitment. In July 1864, Cambridge was selected as the site of a frontier camp and redoubt, and the base for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the Waikato Militia<sup>10</sup>. The incentive for men to join the Militia was the promise of land grants by ballot at the end of their service.

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<sup>9</sup> Recently O-Rakau

<sup>10</sup> Beer and Gascoigne (1975) page 56.

## Camp Cambridge

The Cambridge camp location was selected on July 13, 1864 by Thomas Russell<sup>11</sup>. (Colonial Defence Minister), with the advice of Maj General T.G. Galloway (Commander, Colonial Forces) and Major Charles Heaphy V.C. (Chief Surveyor). The camp was located on both sides of the river, on several terraces up from the river on both sides, near to the landing established on the east side of the river just below the Karapiro stream. Lt Col Lyon consolidated the original ten companies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Waikato Militia Regiment into eight, and a few days after the confrontation at Te Tiki, on August 11<sup>th</sup> moved his headquarters from Pukerimu to the left (west) side of the river across from the Cambridge landing.

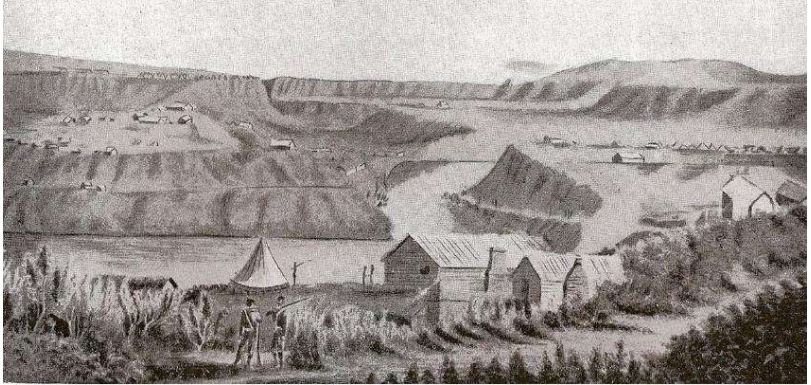
The name Cambridge has two suggested origins<sup>12</sup>. One was that the confluence of the Karapiro Stream with the Waikato River reminded Russell of the Cam River in England. The second was that it was named after the Duke of Cambridge, the then head of the British Army.

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<sup>11</sup> Russell could be considered the ‘father’ of the town of Cambridge, as he designated the location of Camp Cambridge and the Cambridge Star Redoubt. Beer and Gascoigne (1975) p 56

<sup>12</sup> Waikato Independent (1924)

Work was immediately begun in August 1864 on the selected Redoubt site, which was to be built on the upper terrace of the right (eastern) bank of the river. The Redoubt site on the upper



*Figure 1. Von Tempsky's 1864 sketch from Leamington side. Redoubt is on the extreme upper left on the top level. Image: Cambridge Museum CM4084*

terrace covered an area of thirteen acres of land, and overlooked the Karapiro Stream and commanded a view of the Maungakawa Range and Maungatautari. The Redoubt itself was of significant size, comprising  $2\frac{1}{4}$  acres enclosed by earthworks of a ditch and parapet, shaped as a square of 100-yard sides, with extra points on each side of the square, making it an eight-pointed shape.

The location of Camp Cambridge was of strategic importance, being the uppermost navigable landing site on the Waikato River. The town was envisioned as equal parts on both sides of the Waikato River. Cambridge West (now called Leamington) was on the left bank (facing downstream), and Cambridge East on the right bank.

The Redoubt fortifications were designed for 1000 men, and were the base for 800 men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Waikato Militia initially, but this fell to 400 by 1865, and was down to zero by 1867. And the

replacement Armed Constabulary started in 1867 with 70 men, rose temporarily to 200, then was down to zero by the time it was disbanded in 1877. The subsequent replacement was the NZ Constabulary, who carried only a handful of constables in Cambridge from 1877.

The military fortification established at Cambridge was never attacked, and by the time it was completed in 1864 and manned by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the Waikato Militia, the fighting and battles of the Waikato war were effectively over. However, there were still concerns about attacks by small groups of Māori on settlers, and caution was the order of the day.

On May 27 1865 Tamihana laid down his taiaha to General Carey in Tamahere, symbolically ending the war against the Waikato tribes. He subsequently maintained communication with Governor Grey, but died in 1866. Tamihana's surrender (he called it a mutual laying down of arms) was one of the factors which led the government to think that the war in the Waikato with Māori was more or less over, and this resulted in the thought that a reduced military presence in Cambridge was now feasible.

In 1867, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the Waikato Militia was disbanded, and the men were released to actively live on and farm the town and farm sections they had been balloted in 1865. Privates in the militia were to receive<sup>13</sup> in the ballot a one-acre section in the town of Cambridge, and a 50-acre farm section outside of Cambridge. Higher ranks received more land, from 60 acres for corporals, 100 acres for staff sergeants, and up to 400 acres for field officers. However, the farm sections allocated were often swampland or uneconomic to drain or break in with the machinery of the day. Many of the soldiers allocated farm

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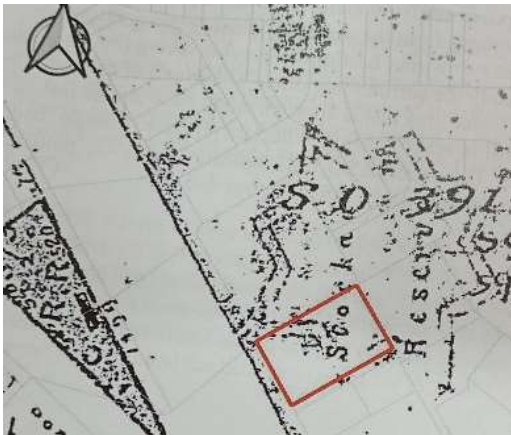
<sup>13</sup> Newall (1920)

sections sold them for nominal prices, and left for other opportunities, such as the Coromandel goldfields.

While the Cambridge Star Redoubt was never at the centre of the battles of the 1863-1864 war, it had a role to play as a post-war military frontier outpost and symbol of strength of the Colonial Government, establishing a crown presence near the frontier (Autaki) between the confiscated Waikato lands to the north and the Māori occupied land to the south. The Militia troops stationed at the Redoubt from 1864-1867 made a major contribution to the construction of roads and other infrastructure in and around Cambridge, and with their promised section grants, some of them stayed and went on to become productive citizens of the new town.

## The location of the Star Redoubt

The location of the Redoubt was in the triangle bordered by



present-day Victoria, Duke, and Fort streets in Cambridge. Within that area, the Redoubt was constructed. The actual structure was an eight-pointed star, or more like a square with 100-yard sides, with points in the middle of each side.

*Figure 2. Sketch of Star Redoubt on survey map.  
Original source: LINZ, HNC SO 1387-C-1*

The Redoubt enclosed an area of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  acres.

One side of the square ran parallel to Victoria St., with the point on that side touching the street boundary, where the present Museum (old Court House) stands today (red rectangle is the

Courthouse section on Figure 2<sup>14</sup>). Sometimes called The Ten Star Redoubt, ‘ten’ referred to the original ten companies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the Waikato Militia who were based in Cambridge.

## The construction of the earthworks of the Cambridge Star Redoubt

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the Waikato Militia were the first occupants of the Redoubt site from August 11, 1864. It is likely the construction of the earthworks for the Redoubt started immediately after their arrival. It is possible that the excavation of the ditch and formation of the parapet may have been done in iterations, with an initial earthworks structure hand dug by the militiamen quickly within a week or two as an initial defensive fortification, and the ditch deepened and the parapet height raised in subsequent rounds over the following weeks and months.

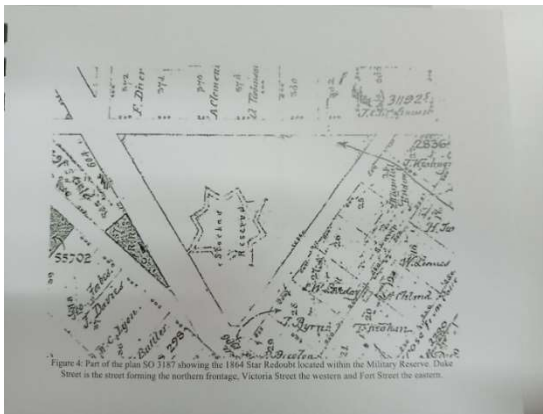


Figure 3. Sketch of Star Redoubt on SO3187. Original source LINZ HNC SO 1387-C-1)

The Redoubt was formed in the shape of an eight-pointed star, or more precisely, a square with an extra point on each of the four sides. Figure 3<sup>15</sup> shows a sketch of the Redoubt on top of SO3187 survey drawing. For scale,

the lots (27, 28) on Fort St have a street frontage of 250 feet, which seem slightly

<sup>14</sup> Gainsford (2021)

<sup>15</sup> From Gumbley & Keith (2010) p 6.

shorter than the sides of the square of the redoubt sketch, implying a length of the Redoubt sides of perhaps 300 feet, or 100 yards.

The best contemporary account of the Redoubt was given in a Daily Southern Cross<sup>16</sup> item in 1865.

eastern bank, and are hard at work in completing the Star Redoubt.

This redoubt, when finished, will be a very safe stronghold. It covers two and a quarter acres of ground; is formed in the shape of a star; its ditch will be about twelve feet deep, fourteen feet across; the walls, fourteen feet high, with a double parapet inside. In the interior will be the officers' quarters (finished and occupied); the mess quarters, say fifteen, when finished—about four are now so and occupied. When the whole is complete it could contain one thousand men, and present a most serious obstacle, even to the assault of European troops with all the paraphernalia of war.

I much regret to say that a man was found hanging from a tree, about a week ago, by a party of the

From that account, the earthen parapet walls, when completed, were 14 feet (4.2 metres) high surrounded by a ditch 12 feet deep (3.6 metres),<sup>17</sup> and enclosed an area of 2 ¼ acres, or 98,010 square feet.

The 2010 investigations<sup>18</sup> by Gumbley reported they found “*The ditch was 2.8 m wide, 3 m deep and the sides were steeply sloped*” The depth found in the excavations is slightly smaller than what was reported in the above article in 1865.

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<sup>16</sup> Daily Southern Cross (1865)

<sup>17</sup> <https://cambridgemuseum.org.nz/camp-cambridge-cambridge-began-1864>

<sup>18</sup> Gumbley and Sian (2010)

The “2 ¼ acres” reported in the article would imply a square of 100-yard (300 feet or 90 m) sides. This is similar to the dimensions of the Queen’s Redoubt built a year earlier at Pokeno<sup>19</sup>, which had similar 100-yard-long walls, but a smaller ditch 8 feet deep, 8 feet wide, and a lower parapet rising 8 feet above ground level.

A 300-foot square would contain 90,000 square feet, or with the addition of the extra points on each of the four sides, would be close to the 98,010 square feet represented by 2 ¼ acres. The area enclosed by the 100 by 100-yard walls would be about the same as two rugby pitches side by side.

Other than the information of the shape and location of the Cambridge Star Redoubt on those survey drawings, it is not clear exactly what the earthworks fortifications were like in Cambridge, but the most likely assumption, if it was constructed like similar designs of the day, was that there was an outside ditch, and inside that, an earthen parapet, constructed from the soil excavated from the ditch. The parapets were often constructed with layers of fern stalks alternated with trampled dirt, so that the almost perpendicular outer sides retained their shape for at least a couple of years<sup>20</sup>. With 800 Militia available for labour, the main earthworks (ditch and parapet) were probably dug and completed within few weeks. According to one unsubstantiated report, a blockhouse was built in the southeast corner<sup>21</sup> of the Cambridge Redoubt.

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<sup>19</sup> Barton & Ritchie (2021) p 31

<sup>20</sup> Barton & Ritchie (2021) p 117

<sup>21</sup> Beer and Gascoigne (1975) page 63



Redoubt earthworks were designed to be quickly constructed by

field troops in frontier positions. They were much quicker to erect than stockades<sup>22</sup>. Inside the 2 ¼ acre area enclosed by the ditch and parapet, the men would initially be housed in bell tents, with 12 soldiers to a tent. If the garrison remained for longer than

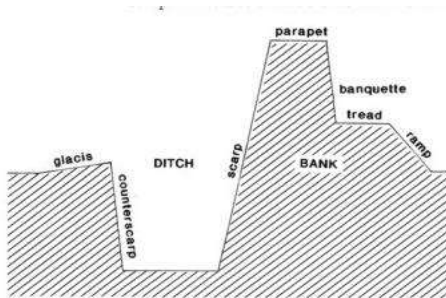


Figure 4. Redoubt wall cross section (from Prickett 2016)

a year or two, wooden barracks might be erected to replace the tents.

The size of the Cambridge Star Redoubt was calculated to hold accommodations for the eight companies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Waikato Militia Regiment. Each company of the day would comprise around 100 men, including an officer and non-commissioned sergeants and corporals, so the earthworks were capable of holding around 800 soldiers in a defensive alignment. These large ditch and parapet constructions could hold a large number of soldiers, but along with that, it also took a large number of soldiers to man the 400 lineal metres of parapets in time of attack.

After the Redoubt earthworks and buildings were completed, the Militia was put to work on roadworks in the town and district, and Duke St was developed to become the main thoroughfare from the wharves on the river up to the Redoubt, as well as the growing number of hotels and shops in the town. Barracks St is not shown in the 1878 survey of the town.

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<sup>22</sup> Prickett (2016) page 5

## What the earthworks looked like

No historic photographs or sketches of the Cambridge Star Redoubt are believed to exist. The Pirongia Redoubt, the most well-preserved fortification of that era, still exists, and is worth a visit to see what a redoubt structure looked like.

There is some mention<sup>23</sup> of a “*double parapet*” on the Cambridge Star Redoubt. In addition to the unusual star shape, having a double parapet would be equally unusual for redoubt construction in New Zealand. This feature, if it was present, likely meant a stepped parapet inside of a ditch. The first step would be an earthen parapet, with a firing bench immediately behind it. A second step, behind and above the first, would likely be five or so feet higher, to allow a second line of rifles to fire over the heads of the first line just below them.

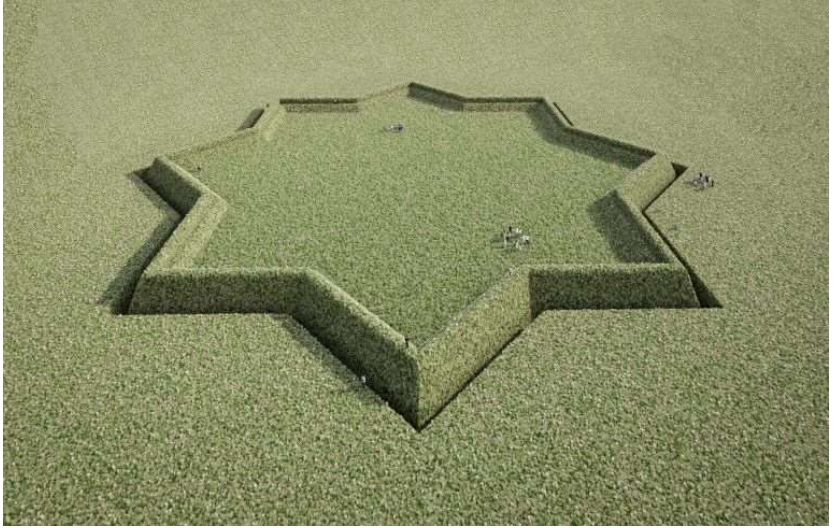
A 3D rendering of what the Cambridge Star Redoubt original 1864 earthworks (a single parapet) may have resembled was undertaken by Frank Tian<sup>24</sup> and Aaron Guerin of LAD Architecture in Cambridge, and the resulting images are presented below.

The first 3D image (Figure 5) is an angled overhead view. Note the small images of people inside and outside to give scale. The Redoubt was designed to hold 1000 soldiers. The sides of the square (with points in the middle of each side) were 100 yards (90 metres) long.

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<sup>23</sup> Daily Southern Cross (1865)

<sup>24</sup> Tian (2024)



*Figure 5. Visualisation of Star Redoubt. Source: Frank Tian*

The second image (Figure 6) shows a closeup view of the ditch and parapet from outside the redoubt, again with images of people to give scale. The walls of the redoubt in this image have been rendered in short grass, which might have been typical of how the redoubt looked in its day.



Figure 6. Visualisation of the Star Redoubt ditch and palisade. Source: Frank Tian

## The structures within the span of the original earthworks

Tenders were called in 1864 for huts, stabling for 50 horses, a cooking shed, a smith's shed, a forage store and loose box<sup>25</sup>, but is unclear how many of these were erected.

In 1865, it was reported the officer's quarters and four (of a planned 15) mess quarters were in place<sup>26</sup>.

A report in 1869 listed three officers' quarters, 54 feet by 18 feet, and six other huts for men, horses, cooking and the hospital of various sizes<sup>27</sup>. This report also listed a “*redoubt earthwork*” capable of holding 150 men had been erected on land owned by

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<sup>25</sup> <https://cambridgemuseum.org.nz/camp-cambridge-cambridge-began-1864>

<sup>26</sup> Daily Southern Cross (1865)

<sup>27</sup> Return of Blockhouses, Redoubts and Stockades in the North Island, 1869. From Gumbley (2010), p 10.

Captain Clare. This may have been the land owned by Captain Clare at the intersection of Duke and Fort St. No listing of the larger Star Redoubt earthwork, capable of holding 1000 men, is reported. And the implication of the listing of only this new earthwork capable of holding 150 men may mean that the former Star Redoubt earthworks had been removed by this time. And 1869 is also the year attributed to the photograph of the Armed Constabulary in front of a palisade, so both the new smaller redoubt earthwork, and the palisade, may have both existed at the same time, but perhaps at different locations on the site.

In 1872-3, a new barracks building was built on, or just behind the location of the present-day museum courthouse, and was used for court hearings.

In 1877, the district headquarters of the Armed Constabulary were moved from Hamilton to Cambridge. In his report<sup>28</sup> in 1878, Lt Col Lyon reported that:

*The headquarters of the district removed from Hamilton to Cambridge last July, the magazine, Government store, gymnasium and three other buildings were brought up and re erected at this station. Two barrack rooms, 30 feet by twenty feet, have been match lined and ceiled and put in proper repair. A cook house 18 feet by 20, has been built. The palisading around the barracks has been taken down, the ends of the poles, which were beginning to decay, sawn off, and the whole re erected. The four acre paddock on which the barracks stand has been re-fenced in which a well 40 feet deep has been sunk, and a pump fixed for station use. The five acre paddock has been ploughed up, harrowed, and resown with grass and clover, the fence has also been renewed.*

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<sup>28</sup> Lyon, Lt Col (1878)

In 1880, tenders were called<sup>29</sup> to modify the former Armed Constabulary gymnasium for courthouse use. It is not known where this building was originally sited in 1877 after its move from Hamilton, whether at the location of the present-day courthouse, or perhaps moved from elsewhere on the Redoubt grounds. In any case, it likely wound up on the site of the present-day courthouse.

By mid-1884, the troop of Armed Constabulary were no longer needed in Cambridge, and all personnel and other smaller moveable buildings were transferred to Kihikihi<sup>30</sup>.

In an 1887 survey drawing<sup>31</sup>, SO4382, three remaining buildings were shown near the Redoubt site, but the earthworks are not indicated, so they likely had been removed by then. Building one, nearest Victoria St was likely the former gymnasium, modified to be the courthouse around 1880. Directly behind that was building two, likely the barracks

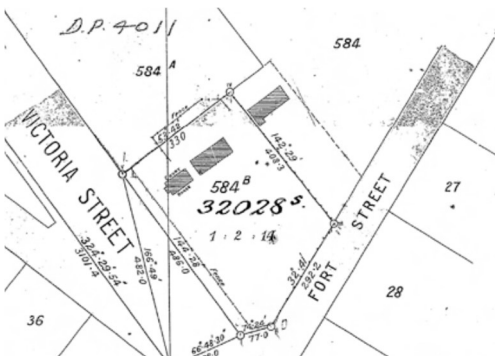


Figure 7. SO4382 locating three existing buildings.

building erected in 1873. And behind that was building three, which was identified in the investigation in 2010<sup>32</sup>, located on or near the footprint of the present-day senior citizen's hall. This

<sup>29</sup> Waikato Times (1880)

<sup>30</sup> From Gumbley (2010) p 6

<sup>31</sup> From Gumbley (2010) p 9

<sup>32</sup> Gumbley (2010)

building may have been one of the original three 54' x 18' officer's quarters listed in the 1869 report mentioned earlier.

Building one, the gymnasium/courthouse building, was likely removed during the construction of the new courthouse in 1909. It appears the footprint of the new 1909 brick courthouse was about the same as the wooden gymnasium/courthouse it replaced. It is not known when building two, the barracks constructed in 1873, or building three, on the site of the senior citizen's hall were removed.

### **Access to the Redoubt**

When the Redoubt was first constructed in 1864, access was reported to be by Barracks Street. There was a cart track from the river landing site near the boat ramp on Dominion St that may have been designated Barracks St, which progressed behind the old scout hall (formerly the site of the military hospital) and up the side of the steep terrace slope to the top, crossing Fort St opposite the St John building, and continuing along the now-alleyway beside the St John ambulance depot, and through to Milicich Place and the likely main entry to the Redoubt. However, Barracks St is also reported as meeting Duke St on its southern side, opposite the Duke of Cambridge hotel, which stood on the northern side of Duke St at its eastern end, around the site of the present-day Challenge station. Barracks St does not appear on the 1865 town survey, so its exact location cannot be determined. It may have been renamed Fort St on that survey.

### **The occupants of the Redoubt**

The recruitment of the four regiments of the **Waikato Militia** soldiers had begun in March 1863, in the goldfields of Otago,

and Sydney and Melbourne, with the promise of a land ballot at the completion of their service.

After formation and training, the 3rd Regiment of the Waikato Militia had originally been dispersed across various locations, but were reformed at Pukerimu in 1864. They were the troops who were the primary constructors of the Star Redoubt beginning in July, 1864. Most of the men living at the Redoubt were housed in conical ‘bell’ tents, 12 men to a tent<sup>33</sup>.

The balloting of the promised military town allotments was a slow affair. The town one-acre sections<sup>34</sup> were drawn on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1865, and the 50-acre farm sections on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Once the farm sections were drawn and assigned to the soldiers, they were struck off the Militia payroll. Their remaining obligation until the end of their three-year enlistment was to attend a monthly muster at the Redoubt in Cambridge.

The Militia was disbanded in 1867, and those former soldiers who remained became the basis of the town’s initial settlers. Many of those soldiers, however, sold their allocated town sections and rural farms for very low prices and moved away to find their fortune elsewhere. The Redoubt was in active use by the Waikato Militia from 1864 until 1867, during the time of the winding down of the conflicts with Māori. About 800 men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Waikato Regiment were stationed there initially in 1864, but the numbers quickly dropped. The balloting of the town sections in January 1865 was to 350 Militia. Once the farm sections were balloted a few months later, and their pay was terminated, some of those men left the Redoubt to live either on their town sections or on their farms. The majority of the men who received sections by ballot did not build on or improve their town or farm sections,

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<sup>33</sup> Prickett (2016) p 6

<sup>34</sup> <https://cambridgemuseum.org.nz/camp-cambridge-cambridge-began-1864>



and sold their sections (and supposedly their attached militia obligations) to incoming settlers and speculators.

The **Armed Constabulary** act was passed in 1867, and the Militia ceased its presence in Cambridge in March. The Armed Constabulary in Cambridge initially consisted of about 70 men, a large reduction from the 800 militia of the initial days after the Star Redoubt's construction, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel William Moule. This was raised to 200 men in 1869, because of the threat of Te Kooti. In April 1870 Lieutenant-Colonel Lyon took command. The main daily activity of the Armed Constabulary was the labour for the construction of roads and other public works in the district. There are unclear reports that during the transition from the Militia to the Armed Constabulary, the old large Redoubt was deemed too large to defend by a smaller force, and the earthworks were levelled, and a new smaller redoubt (or possibly a palisade) was constructed nearer the Fort-Victoria corner.

The **NZ Constabulary** had jurisdiction<sup>35</sup> from 1877-1886. By mid-1884 a full troop of NZ Constabulary Force was no longer required in Cambridge so all movable buildings of the Redoubt and most of the personnel were transferred to Kihikihi. It is probably at this time that the earthworks on the original large Redoubt were levelled.

The **NZ Police** succeeded the Constabulary in 1886. William Brennan was the first constable, and he was based in Cambridge at the Barracks from 1876-1897.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://cambridgemuseum.org.nz/police-1886-1930>

## **The Native Land Court**

Before 1862, native land could not be sold except to the Crown. Following the Native Land Acts of 1862 and 1865, native land could be leased or sold to private people, but only after title had been established. The Native Land Court was established in Auckland in 1864. In 1865, following Tamihana's surrender, it was moved to Hamilton. In 1866 the court sittings were moved from Hamilton to Cambridge, and it held its first sitting on October 15<sup>th</sup> that year in the original barracks in the Redoubt until moving to the new barracks when it was constructed in 1873.

The Native Land Court sessions in Cambridge reached their peak in the 1880s, and by 1888 were effectively finished<sup>36</sup>. Sessions were also held at various other locations, including Taupo and Rotorua. Tenders were called in 1880<sup>37</sup> for alterations to the Armed Constabulary Gymnasium to adapt it to a court house. The presence of the Land Court did much to attract interest in Cambridge, and the ancillary business dealings in Cambridge, including land agents, hotels and goods shopkeepers was brisk during this period. Other kinds of court sessions were also held regularly at the Cambridge courthouse, including criminal and misdemeanour proceedings.

## **The demolishing of the original Redoubt earthworks**

The Redoubt earthworks were substantial, with the original earthen walls 4.2 metres high, and a ditch excavated to 3.6 metres deep.

Exactly when the earthworks of the original Star Redoubt were levelled is not known. The original large Redoubt was a military

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<sup>36</sup> Māori Land Court (2015) pages 25-26.

<sup>37</sup> Waikato Times (1880)

liability when the militia was disbanded in 1865 and replaced with a smaller force of 70 Armed Constabulary.

The earthworks were likely still in place in 1867. An article<sup>38</sup> in the *Daily Southern Cross* reported ‘A ball took place on the evening of the 4th instance in one of the large tents in the Star Redoubt...’. A similar ball report was published in 1868. It would seem the Star Redoubt earthworks were still in place in early 1868.

The barracks building on or just behind the present site of the courthouse was built in 1872, and was one of the locations of the Native Land Court sittings. It is possible the original earthworks were gone before that new barracks was built in 1872. But the demolition of the earthworks of the original Redoubt was probably no later than 1885 to 1887, as that is when most of the old Redoubt buildings were disassembled and moved to Kihikihi. They were certainly gone by the time of the construction of the new courthouse in 1909.

So, the original Cambridge Star Redoubt earthworks may have



Figure 8. Horse drawn grader.

lasted as few as 4 years, from 1864-1868, or as many as 23 years, from 1864-1887. Because the filling in of the ditch from the earthen parapet beside and above it was much easier work than the original digging of the ditch, the deconstruction of the ditch and parapet earthworks

may well have been handled by a small crew of men, perhaps aided by teams of horses pulling a grader blade, similar to the

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<sup>38</sup>*Daily Southern Cross* (1867), 13 February 1867, Page 4).

picture in Figure 8<sup>39</sup>, which would drag the dirt from the top of the parapet and cause it to fall into the ditch beside and below.

## **What replaced the original Star Redoubt?**

With the disbanding of the Militia in 1865, and the replacement of that force of about 800 soldiers with an Armed Constabulary detachment of around 70 men, the large original Redoubt became a military liability, as there were not sufficient men to man the parapets if it was attacked. A smaller defensive structure was needed, suited in size to the reduced force.

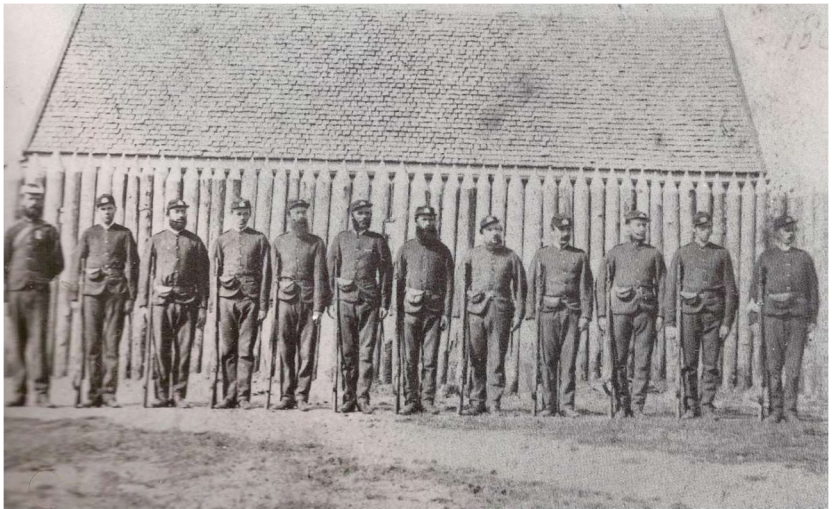
There was at least one, and possibly two replacement fortifications for the original large earthworks of the Star Redoubt. Vennell<sup>40</sup> suggests that the demolishing of the original earthworks may have occurred as early as 1869 when a smaller structure to house 150 men was built to replace it. He suggests this was built on Captain Clare's land on the southern side of Duke St near the intersection with Fort St. Other than Vennell's account, little has been written about this redoubt, if it ever existed.

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<sup>39</sup> Retrieved October 9 2024 from <https://www.oemoffhighway.com/market-analysis/trends/article/21077866/historical-construction-equipment-association-hcea-basic-pull-grader-designs>

<sup>40</sup> Vennell (1982) part 2, page 3

It is more certain a replacement fortification for the original large Star Redoubt, in the form of a palisade, was built for the Militia, which was declining in numbers after 1864, and completely disbanded in 1865. A picture<sup>41</sup> was taken in 1869 of what by then was the Armed Constabulary lined up in front of a wooden stockade or palisade in Cambridge. The likely location of the palisade fortification might have been near the intersection of Fort St and Victoria St, possibly around the Hogan Accountant's building on Victoria St, which was formerly the Police Station.



*Figure 9. Members of the Cambridge Armed Constabulary lined up in front of the stockade wall. Image: Cambridge Museum, CM2958/1/44palisade*

Because wooden palisades took much more work to construct, and the wooden poles for the palisades had to be found, shaped and installed, this picture was of the fortification that was in place in 1869. There was likely no ditch and earthen parapet associated with the design of the 1869 fortifications. No information as to the location of the palisade fortification has been confirmed, but it was common for similar government functions to follow each

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<sup>41</sup> From Gumbley (2010) page 7

other on the same physical location. The location of the subsequent police station (the police house and later Hogan's accounting building) at the southern end of the Fort-Duke-Victoria triangle gives credence to that location being the site of the palisade.

## Buildings subsequently erected on the Redoubt site

After the removal of the original Star redoubt earthworks, the 13 acres of land comprising the original Redoubt site was surveyed



*Figure 10. Overlay of Redoubt location on Cambridge aerial image. Source Grant Nicklin.*

into smaller sections, and a number of mainly community-based buildings were eventually erected. The overlay above was created by Grant Nicklin<sup>42</sup>. The most visible building near the site is the old courthouse built in 1909, used today by the Cambridge Museum. In 1949, what were called the police sections were transferred to the Cambridge Borough Council, which subsequently leased some and sold some to various private and community owners. Along Fort St, the former milk transfer station, the St John ambulance station, the bridge club, and the Castle early childhood centre were built. Behind the Museum, the Senior Citizens Hall and Red Cross Hall, on Milicich Place, are on the former Camp Cambridge land. Along Victoria, the new Police station at the Fort St intersection, Hogans Accountants (originally the police station built in 1954) and Plunket are to the south of the Museum. Along Commerce St, the Stihl shop stands on the former site of the Technical school. The Tyre Traders garage, and the shops of Steen & Morrow and Performance Imports are located on the former site.

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<sup>42</sup> Nicklin, Grant. (2017)

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