

GREY DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former WWII BOP [battery observation post]

ADDRESS Sturge Street, Cobden Hill, Cobden

PHOTOGRAPH



(WCRC, 2023)

TTPP PLAN ITEM No. HHxx **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** N/A

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Parcel 3702264

GDC FILE NUMBER [paper road]

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION c.1942

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Public Works Department, engineers

STYLE Military vernacular

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey flat-roofed structure with L-shaped footprint and open sides on western/seaward elevations.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Reinforced concrete, timber.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Decommissioned (1945).

SETTING

The former BOP is located on an elevated site on Cobden Hill overlooking the entrance to the Māwheranui / Grey River mouth. The former gun emplacement with which the BOP was associated is situated to the south-west, closer to the terminus of Sturge Street. The extent of setting is the land parcel on which the emplacement is located.

HISTORY

Coastal defence has long been the primary focus of the fortifications and observation posts built in New Zealand in response to the threat of foreign invasion. In response to the 'Russian scare' of the late 19th century a naval gun and, later, a cannon were stationed at Greymouth, the latter was sold for scrap in 1947. In 1942 a gun emplacement and BOP [battery observation post] were built on Cobden Hill; the former housed a 5" American naval gun and the site staffed by 32 members of the Home Guard. The site was decommissioned in September 1945, with the gun removed but the structures retained in case of future need. The gun emplacement was later converted into a house, but the BOP remains largely intact and is now the featured attraction on a local walk.

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cobden's former WWII BOP has historic significance for its association with both the national defensive strategy implemented by central government during World War II and the actions taken to protect Greymouth from possible Japanese invasion.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cobden's former WWII BOP has cultural significance as a place of community identity and for its potential to increase an understanding of the district's preparedness for foreign invasion during World War II.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Cobden's former WWII BOP has aesthetic value as a utilitarian structure designed by the Public Works Department following the conventions of the day.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Cobden's former WWII BOP has technological value for its reinforced concrete construction.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cobden's former WWII BOP has contextual significance as a well-known historic feature that can be accessed via a public walkway.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

The site of the former WWII BOP may have archaeological value arising from its historic use and development.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Cobden's former WWII battery observation post [BOP] has overall heritage significance to Cobden and Grey District. The former WWII BOP has historical significance for its association with New Zealand's preparedness during World War II and cultural significance as a valued place of community identity. Cobden's former WWII BOP has aesthetic value as a utilitarian military structure and technological value for its reinforced concrete construction. Cobden's former WWII BOP has contextual significance as a well-known historic feature that can be accessed via a public walkway. The site may have archaeological value related to its historic use and development.

REFERENCES

- *Greymouth Evening Star* 8 November 1947, p. 2; 6 May 1949, p. 8; 26 December 1950, p. 1.
- *Press* 5 September 1945, p. 3.

- Peter Cooke *Defending New Zealand: ramparts on the sea 1840-1950s* Wellington, 2002.
- Archives New Zealand.
- West Coast Recollect.
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coastal_fortifications_of_New_Zealand
- <https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/7761/Timaru%20Coast%20Defence%20Battery>

REPORT COMPLETED

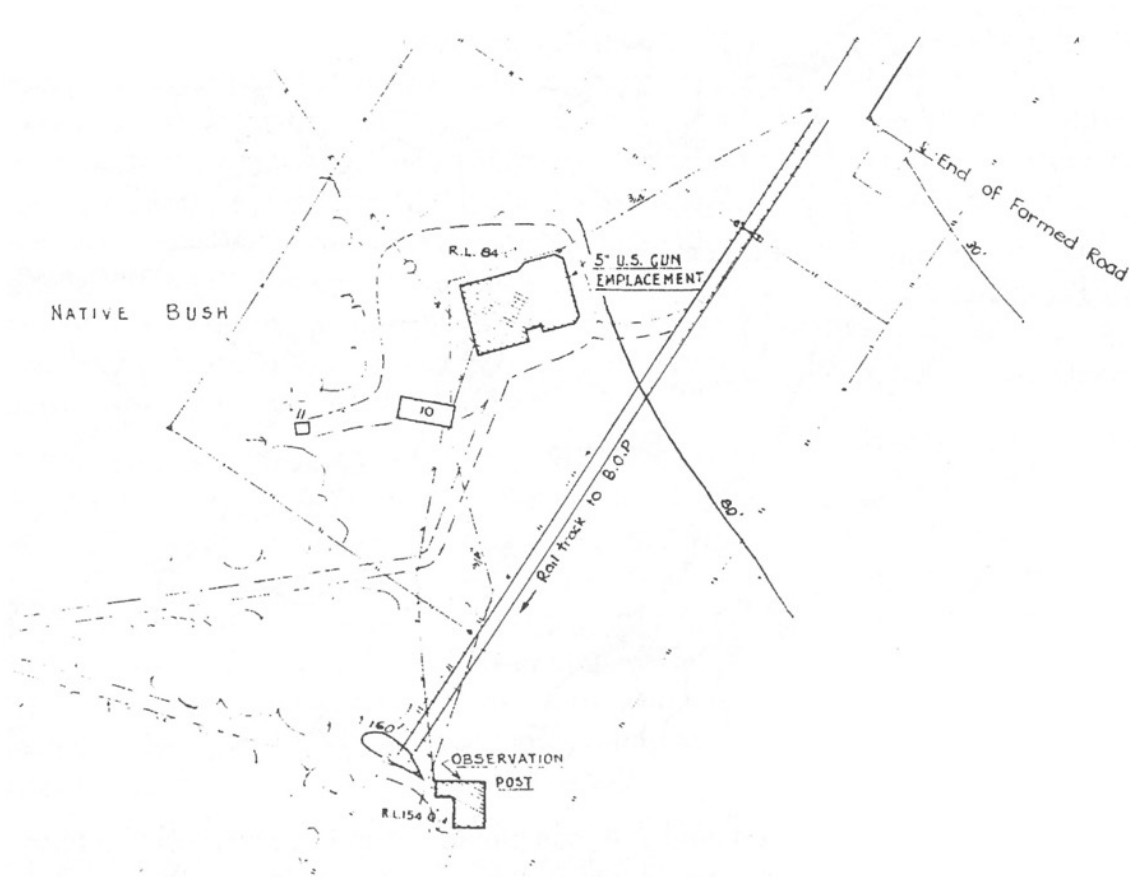
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AUTHOR

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Extent of setting.



Plan of the Cobden WWII defensive site with BOP accessed via a tramway from the end of Sturge Street and the gun emplacement lower down the hill. Archives NZ.