

List Entry Record

List Number: 5046

Site Reference: P4017



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

Name: Defiance Hut

Other Names:

Name	Year From	Year To
Franz Josef Glacier Defiance Hut		
Cape Defiance Hut		

Location: Franz Josef Glacier Carpark, FRANZ JOSEF

List Entry Legal Description: Pt Res 1461 (NZ Gazette 1960, p. 416), Westland Land District

Local Authority: Westland District

Summary: Defiance Hut, now located at the Franz Josef Glacier road-end carpark, was originally constructed in 1912-13 to enable greater tourist and mountaineer excursions to Franz Josef Glacier and is the earliest high-level mountain hut remaining in New Zealand. The hut's design became the standard design for mountain huts for approximately 50 years. Now in its fourth location - the most recent re-siting in 2020 bringing it back closer to the glacier it historically relates to - the building's history of relocation is part of its wider story.

Poutini Māori names for the glacier include Te Tai-o-Wawe and Kā Roimata-o-Hinehukatere (the frozen tears of the snow-girl Hinehukatere after the death of her lover, Wawe). Julius von Haast of the Canterbury Provincial Government renamed it Franz Josef Glacier in 1866, after the Austrian emperor of his home country. Adventurers and visitors had admired the beauties of the glacier country, and in the early twentieth century active steps were taken to promote Westland and its Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers as the scenic wonderland of New Zealand. In 1911, the well-known guiding and mountaineering brothers, Jim and Alex (Alec) Graham, purchased the first hotel at Waiho (Waiiau) Gorge at Franz Josef, and this became a base for their mountain guiding business and led to growth of tourism and mountaineering in the area. In response to the Graham brothers' offer to build a hut, the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts made available a sum of £160 for the project and provided sketch plans and specifications. The materials were carried up by hand to the alpine hut's first site, a moraine terrace above Harpers Creek on the west side of the Franz Josef Glacier Valley, at 2,657 feet (809 metres), where the hut commanded excellent views of the main icefall.

Defiance Hut is rectangular in plan, 7.4 metres by 3.9 metres, with the ridge of its gabled roof form running north-east to south-west. The height to the eaves is approximately two metres and approximately 3.5 metres to the ridge. The exterior cladding is vertical corrugated steel, lapped on the gable ends at the level of the eaves, and corrugated steel to the roof. At each end, the roofing material is wrapped down onto the face of the gable walls. A projection on the north-east elevation signifies where the fireplace originally was on the interior. The front or south-east elevation has three timber-framed windows and two door openings, one to each of its two rooms. The interior plan arrangement includes a large room (originally for cooking and sleeping for men) and a smaller room (originally for women). The south-western larger room now has clear glazing in place at the place of its opened exterior door, allowing an additional outside view of that room set out with old equipment. The north-eastern door allows access to the smaller north-east room, and a fenced opening from there provides an additional view into the larger room.

The Defiance Hut extended the available tourist excursion to the glacier. The hut offered night shelter to visitors and mountaineers, enabling them to make ascents of some of the peaks on the western side of the glacier, including Mount Moltke, which became very popular. The Graham brothers' good relationship with Poutini Māori led them, from the 1920s, to employ Joseph Puruti (Fluerty) first as a porter to carry supplies up the ice, including to

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Defiance Hut, and then as an expert glacier climbing guide, where he was particularly well regarded. As the glacier receded and the ice pressure diminished the terrace, Defiance Ridge began to crumble and erode. In December 1936 it was decided to move the hut to the safety of the crest of the Defiance Ridge. The hut was pulled apart and the two tons of material, which had originally been carried to the site by hand, was moved. The hut was re-assembled and remained in constant use until the 1950s when the site was again threatened by erosion and access became a problem. A replacement hut was built at Castle Rocks, 650 metres high up the ridge, in 1974. In 1978 the Defiance Hut was rescued from its precarious position, flown out in sections, and reassembled and restored behind the then Westland National Park Visitors Centre at Franz Josef township to serve as an example of an old-style mountain hut. After a new Visitors Centre was built in circa 2016, the hut's location was no longer deemed appropriate. In 2020 it was shifted again, this time back to a location that is a little closer to its original high-level locations, at the road-end carpark for visitors going to see the Franz Josef Glacier.

List Entry Status:	Listed		
List Entry Type:	Historic Place Category 2		
List Number:	5046		
Date Entered:	21 September 1989		
Extent of List Entry:	Extent includes part of the land described as Pt Res 1461 (NZ Gazette 1960, p. 416), Westland Land District and the building known as Defiance Hut thereon.		
Chattels	There are no chattels included in this list entry.		
District Plan Listing:	Superseded District Plan	SCHEDULED in Westland District Council Operative 1 June 2002. Ref. 6 in Appendix A: Schedule of Historic Places and Trees. [record updated 01 Jun 2002].	
	Proposed District Plan	SCHEDULED in Te Tai o Poutini Proposed Plan (2023), HH113 Defiance Hut, SH6, Franz Josef, Westland, in Schedule One: Historic Heritage Items and Areas and Archaeological Sites -Te Rārangī Tuatahi: Ngā Rawa me ngā Whenua Tuku Iho.	
Maori Interest:	General Interest		
Heritage NZ Office:	Canterbury/West Coast Office		
Protection Mechanism:	Protection Mechanism	Reference	Effective Date
	Scenic Reserve	NZ Gazette 1960, p. 29/03/1960 416)	
Other Information:			

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A fully referenced New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero report is available on request from the Southern Regional Office of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

Disclaimer

Please note that entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero identifies only the heritage values of the property concerned and should not be construed as advice on the state of the property, or as a comment of its soundness or safety, including in regard to earthquake risk, safety in the event of fire, or insanitary conditions.

Archaeological sites are protected by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, regardless of whether they are entered on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero or not. Archaeological sites include 'places associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there may be evidence relating to the history of New Zealand'. This List entry report should not be read as a statement on whether or not the archaeological provisions of the Act apply to the property (s) concerned. Please contact your local Heritage New Zealand office for archaeological advice.

General Nature of Wahi Tapu:

Section 66(1) & 66(3) Assessment:

Section 23(1)	Registered under previous legislation (HPA 1980)
Section 23(2)	Registered under previous legislation (HPA 1980).
Section 66(1)	Aesthetic
Section 66(1)	Architectural
Section 66(1)	Cultural
Section 66(1)	Historical
Section 66(1)	Social
Section 66(3)	a
Section 66(3)	b
Section 66(3)	e
Section 66(3)	f
Section 66(3)	g
Section 66(3)	j

Section 66(1) Detail:

Historical Significance or Value

Defiance Hut has historical significance. It contributes towards our understanding of adventure tourism and mountaineering history and, in particular, mountaineering in South Westland. It is the earliest New Zealand high-level mountain hut still surviving. Its history of relocations tells the story of the ever-changing nature of mountain environments.



Aesthetic Significance or Value

Defiance Hut, set within the road end carpark with a bush and mountainous backdrop, has aesthetic value. With its rustic appearance, enhanced by internal displays that include old mountaineering equipment and a voice-over, the hut's appearance, sounds, smell and feel combine to evoke a sense of place. These qualities are demonstrably valued, as evidenced by earlier efforts of the mountaineer friends' group who helped establish the hut, in its previous relocated position, as a place for visitors to get a sense of the history of glacier tourism at Franz Josef. It is appealing to visitors, some of whom post photographs of the hut on social media. It could be expected that these communities could be expected to experience a sense of loss if these aesthetic qualities were no longer there.

Architectural Significance or Value

The modest Defiance Hut building has architectural significance. It is an example of a simple vernacular building form (rectangular in plan with a gable roof) being adopted to meet very specific logistical requirements. It needed to be transportable since its parts had to be carted by hand for erection in a remote high-altitude location; it needed to be a relatively low maintenance yet robust shelter with cooking and sleeping facilities for mountaineering parties; and it needed to withstand severe environmental conditions, including high wind and snow loadings. With characteristics reflecting development in New Zealand's high and back country huts, its design became the standard for mountain huts for some 50 years.

While some new materials have been introduced as part of the hut's conservation, the building retains a high degree of authenticity.

Cultural Significance or Value

Defiance Hut has cultural value. It demonstrates the way of life of those who stayed in the hut, from 1913 until circa 1959, and its retention and restoration for use as a display reflects how the mountaineering community has continued to value it. It embodies the sense of identity that many New Zealanders derive from the pursuit of high-country outdoor recreation.

Social Significance or Value

Defiance Hut has social value. It contributes towards our understanding of efforts people have made to establish the mountaineering base and climbing tourism. Through activities associated with the hut and climbing, and later its restoration and partial reconstruction, climbing and tramping communities have come together and formed bonds. While no longer functioning as mountain accommodation, it continues as a road-end visitor interpretation experience.

Section 66(3) Detail:

Defiance Hut reflects a historic milestone in the history of New Zealand's backcountry and mountain huts. Though thrice relocated and reassembled, it retains significance in its ability to convey the history, culture and social stories of tramping and mountaineering in South Westland.

This place was assessed against the criteria set out in section 66(3) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and found to qualify as a Category 2 historic place under the following criteria: a, b, e, f, g and j.

(a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history.

Defiance Hut reflects aspects of New Zealand's mountaineering and adventure tourism history. As a building owned built for the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, it fits into the broader concepts of tourism in the outdoors, something for which New Zealand has long been held in high regard. Like other



modest high-altitude huts, in its two locations on Defiance Ridge it provided a base for climbing expeditions and acted as a refuge in the harsh mountain environment. Its history of relocation also reflects the tendency and capacity of shifting small and not-so-small buildings when their original location no longer suits.

(b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history.

Defiance Hut is associated with notable guides and climbers, such as the Graham brothers who erected, stocked and maintained the hut as part of their guiding business, and many other well-known mountaineers used the hut and signed the visitors' book. The hut is closely associated with well-known Māori climbing guide and mountaineer, Joseph Puruti (Fluerty), who, in continuing a family tradition of adventure, achieved a number of first ascents for Māori.

(e) The community association with, or public esteem for the place

The climbing community of Westland's association with the place is demonstrated through their advocacy for having the building conserved when it was removed to Franz Josef township. As an aesthetically pleasing and accessible building in the Westland National Park, it is frequently photographed by tourists.

(f) The potential of the place for public education

The hut was originally a three-hour climb from the Franz Josef township, but in its relocated position at the road-end carpark of the access road for visitors wanting to walk to see the glacier, it is accessible to many. Its layout, displays and interpretive material provides information to visitors about its place in mountaineering history.

(g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place

The design of Defiance Hut has technical value as the progenitor of many huts built subsequently in New Zealand's high country and alpine environments. Methods and materials used in its reassembly remain true to the original structure.

(j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places

Because mountain huts have a relatively short life span, there are few remaining from the pre-World War Two period. Dating from the early period of recreational hut construction, and even though three times relocated, Defiance Hut has rarity value as the earliest high-level mountain hut extant in New Zealand.

Defiance Hut reflects a historic milestone in the history of New Zealand's backcountry and mountain huts. Though thrice relocated and reassembled, it retains significance in its ability to convey the history, culture and social stories of tramping and mountaineering in South Westland.

Statement of Wahi Tapu: