

Waitangi Treaty Grounds Historical Precinct



Waitangi Treaty House (front).
Andris Apse

SITE LOCATION

Waitangi, Bay of Islands, Northland, New Zealand.

SITE DESCRIPTION

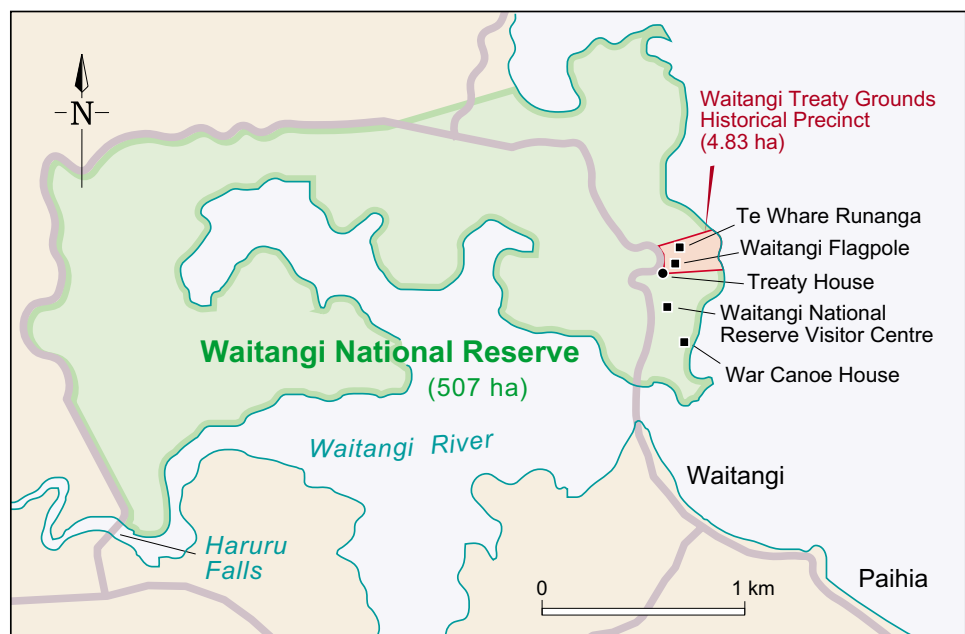
Waitangi is the place where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed on 6 February 1840, and the site of subsequent annual commemorations of the signing.

The Waitangi National Trust Estate comprises 507 hectares, lying between the lower tidal reaches of the Waitangi River and the coastline running north to Wairoa Bay. The Waitangi Treaty Grounds Historical Precinct itself occupies 4.8 hectares within the eastern end of the estate, and includes the Treaty House, the Whare Runanga and the historic flag pole (the Maori waka, Ngatoki Matawharorua is situated close by).

VALUES WHICH MAY JUSTIFY CULTURAL WORLD HERITAGE LISTING

Waitangi is a place which is unique in New Zealand and in the history of British colonisation in the 19th Century. The outstanding historical significance of the site includes:

- The international significance of the **Treaty of Waitangi**
 - The Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document, under which an indigenous Polynesian people (Maori) and settlers from a very different European culture were intended to live together peaceably in the same country, Aotearoa/ New Zealand.
 - The Treaty's uniqueness lies in Britain's determination to enter into a treaty as a matter of deliberate policy, rather than the routine establishment of colonial settlements which had been the norm in the British Empire up until that time.
 - It is a bilingual treaty, which is not found in British treaty-making with any other indigenous peoples before or after Waitangi.

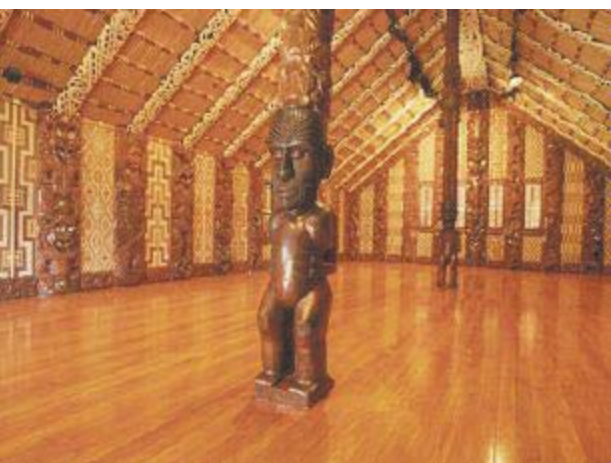




Waka taua on the water off Waitangi National Reserve, as part of Waitangi Day celebrations.
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- It is the only treaty that Maori signed with a foreign nation and remains the foundation of the relationship between Maori, Pakeha, and the Crown to this day. Britain did not replicate this process with indigenous peoples elsewhere.
- Waitangi has become a symbol of nationhood. Over the last 165 years New Zealand has developed a strong sense of a public community in which Maori and Pakeha both participate. The Treaty of Waitangi is a unique document which has had a remarkable influence on New Zealand history.
- **Waitangi National Trust Estate** - The estate itself is unique among New Zealand's diverse reserves protecting our historic and cultural heritage. The Waitangi Estate belongs by statute (Waitangi National Trust Board Act 1932) to all the inhabitants of New Zealand. It is managed by a board made up of representatives of various sections of New Zealand's population. In its governance of the site, the Board seeks to emphasise a sustainable relationship with the environment and the education of visitors as well as a pairing of the two parties to the treaty. The site also has the highest protection, National Reserve, under the Reserves Act 1977.
- **The Treaty House** - The original British Residency erected in 1833-34 for James Busby and his family, a south wing added later and a replacement north wing built in 1933. Most of the Residency was pre-cut in Sydney of Australian hardwood, then shipped to the Bay of Islands and reassembled by code/Roman numerals. It is New Zealand's very earliest pre-cut building.
- **Te Whare Runanga** - Opened during the Treaty of Waitangi Centennial Celebrations in 1940, Te Whare Runanga is a unique meeting house planned to be shared by all Maori tribes, as distinct from the normal tribal meeting house. It contains carvings representing all the major Maori tribal groupings.
- **Waitangi Flagpole** - The flagpole marks the approximate spot where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed on 6 February 1840.
- **Maori Waka (canoe)** - Situated at Hobson's Beach, the waka house shelters the 35 metre-long Ngatoki Matawhaorua. A minimum of 76 paddlers are required to handle it safely on the water. It bears the name of the voyaging waka in which the explorer Kupe visited Aotearoa.
- Over the past 50 years Waitangi has again assumed a national political role, in continuity with that from 1834 to 1840, as a focus for expressions of protest and self-understanding. The increased attention given to the Treaty of Waitangi ensures an inescapable national role for the Waitangi Treaty Grounds Historical Precinct.

Carvings and tukutuku within the Whare Runanga, Waitangi Treaty Grounds Historic Precinct.
Andris Apse



AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY ISSUES

The main historical features of the precinct area have a high degree of integrity and authenticity even though modified over time.

Prior to 1932 the grounds and Treaty House (as it is now known) had fallen into disrepair. However, after the then Governor General, Lord Bledisloe, purchased the house and grounds and the Waitangi National Trust Board was established, the site was progressively rehabilitated and the Treaty House meticulously restored and extended.

During the 1989 restoration project, facilitated by conservation architect Clive Lucas, the 1930's interior restoration materials were removed and all the original 1833 structure uncovered. The House was then refurbished but modern material used in part. The back wall of the original pre-cut house has been left uncovered so that visitors can

appreciate the original building construction methods.