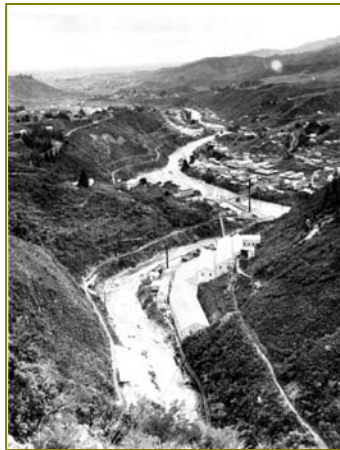




Built: 1901 **Talisman battery, Karangahake**



Talisman Battery showing the original battery building on the left and the new battery building on the right. Photo: Auckland Weekly News 9/8/1901 p.12



Map: Scale 1:50 000

Source: NZMS 260 T13 512 160



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



## Built 1900 **Talisman battery, Karangahake**

**Management:** *VAMS Site Number: 302097*

Hauraki Area Office, Waikato Conservancy, Department of Conservation

**Fabric:** The Talisman battery site is on sloping ground above the true right bank of the Waitawheta River about 200 metres above its confluence with the Ohinemuri River. Extensive physical remains including masonry, concrete walls and footings, remnants of machinery and tanks on six levels are obscured amid tall wilding pines and regenerating native forest. Although overgrown the battery is easily accessible from the Karangahake Reserve and is one of several spectacular historic sites in the lower Waitawheta Gorge.<sup>1</sup>

The battery is a key site in Waikato Conservancy's five year 'Karangahake project' which is currently underway (July 2005). The project includes major work to improve visitor access and public safety and create a spectacular circuit walk in the lower Waitawheta gorge around all the key historic sites – the Talisman battery and kiln, the Woodstock battery, kilns, tramway, drives and underground pumphouse, and the Crown mines stope. The work (on or in the vicinity of the Talisman battery) includes extending an existing historic mining tunnel to create a through-walk, removing wilding pines, laying tram track on the Woodstock tramway, several new staircases & safety barriers, removing slips, improving drainage, providing solar powered lighting and safe access into the underground pumphouse and Woodstock kiln tunnels, as well as provision of 10 new interpretation panels. Remaining machinery will be treated to prevent further decay.

The first stage of this project - upgrading the track around the Talisman battery and along the Woodstock tramway to the Windows tunnels was completed in November 2003.<sup>2</sup> The next stage- the tunnel hole-through, new staircases & portals, and laying track on the Woodstock tramway (to remove the tunnelling and recreate the historic tramway) has just been completed (July 2005).

**History:** The claims were worked with little success prior to 1896 when New Zealand Talisman Gold Mining Company (GMC) took over; having also acquired the neighbouring Woodstock GMC's ground in 1895. New Zealand Talisman immediately commenced vigorous development of the property including driving seven adit levels and upgrading existing plant. In 1897 the company amalgamated with the Talisman Extended GMC to form Talisman Consolidated Ltd. TCL erected a new 50 stamp mill (the bulk of the surviving field remains) which commenced crushing in 1901. TCL's highest production was in 1914 yielding 52,210 tons of ore bullion valued at £263,516. By 1918 ore reserves were practically exhausted. The company was wound up in 1920.<sup>3</sup>

**Fabric Significance:** The spectacular multi-level concrete and masonry ruins of the Talisman battery on their bush-covered hillside offer an outstanding and very accessible recreational and educational experience through the establishment of high standard tracking (well underway) and informative site interpretation. Although most of the machinery has been removed, overall the site integrity is high with lots of remaining structural features including massive ore roasting kilns on the adjacent Woodstock tramway.<sup>4</sup>

Remedial and maintenance specifications were done by N Ritchie, P Carter and A Berntsen in 2001.

**Historic Significance:** The Talisman battery had the 3<sup>rd</sup> greatest output of any quartz mine in New Zealand, after the Martha Mine at Waihi and the Waiuta mine on the West Coast. In terms of its scientific and technological significance the new 50 stamp battery was 'state of the art' when it commenced crushing in 1901. Recorded Archaeological Site T13/286



<sup>1</sup> From Waikato Register, p.57, 6.6.96

<sup>2</sup> Information from HAMS (Historic Asset Management System)

<sup>3</sup> From Waikato Register, p. 57; 6.6.96

<sup>4</sup> Ibid