



October 19, 2018

**Amanda Cox  
Manager of Parks  
GWRC  
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Kia Ora Amanda

**Re: Formal handover of ownership of our WWII US Marines Hut in Queen Elizabeth Park**

On behalf of the Kapiti US Marines Trust, it's my pleasure to confirm we have completed the restoration of our WWII US Marines Hut and installed it in the US Marines Heritage Zone in Queen Elizabeth Park.

We now write to:

- 1) Present our final report on the project - along with relevant historic and technical documents.
- 2) Formally request GWRC to take over the ownership of the building and subsidiary assets listing them in your Asset Register for on-going maintenance and including them in your insurance schedule, and
- 3) Request you to save this report in your archives.

We would now like to enter into a formal process with the Council to ensure the handover of the building and other related matters are taken care of.

**Description of the asset**

- The Hut is located at the northern end of the US Marines Heritage zone, formally designated by GWRC in existing QEP planning documents. The zone was designed as part of the GWRC park planning process by Steve Dunn from Boffa Miskell on October 21, 2015 ([Correspondence Boffa Miskell](#)).
- It includes an accessibility ramp, an interior display and exterior signage.

- The accessibility ramp sits underneath the front viewing window, for the benefit of visitors, particularly the elderly, disabled and children.
- The exterior signage sits alongside the hut and tells the story of its restoration and the wider historic context of the construction and installation of Marine's infrastructure in the camps during WWII. ([Marines' Hut Pictures Fig. 32](#))
- Exterior signage also provides context for the exhibition of heritage items inside the hut. The exhibition is illuminated by automated stage lighting triggered by a sensor when people look through the exterior windows. Using cell phones, they can also scan a QR code which links them to an on-line display of the items on our website: ([Hut Props Photos](#)).

Note: we are asking you to assume ownership of the building, including the signage and the accessibility ramp and excluding the interior display.

### Restoration history

- Between them, the three camps (Mackay, Russell and Paekakariki) covered a total floor space of over 2 million square feet, including 2,728 buildings, 1,590 huts and 3,401 tents ([Marine Camps](#)).
- The Trust has always been interested in the establishment of the World War II Marine camps in and around Paekakariki and from its inception had its sights set on the restoration of one or more Marines huts, from which we could tell the story of how the camps and the associated infrastructure were built.
- We were aware that a number of huts and other buildings (circa 1942) from the old camps were still in existence on farms and other properties around the district and looked at a number with a view to restoration. Examples shown in our picture story were in Ames Street Paekakariki, in Arawa Street (Raumati) and Queen Elizabeth Park. However, after 70+ years none of them were in sufficiently good condition to convince the Trust that restoration was worthwhile ([Marines' Hut Pictures Fig. 5-7](#)).
- In 2014, Paekakariki residents Sarah Brown and Grant Cunliffe donated a Raumati bach built from two former US Marine Huts, to the Trust. ([Marines' Hut Pictures Fig. 8](#)). It was originally built on the Tiromoana Road site in 1950, by W. Tester of 52 Waterloo Road Lower Hutt. ([Copy of Hutt City Council Drainage Consents](#))
- The Trust is not certain which of the Camps the two huts came from. However, we do know it was one of many built in a massive infrastructure project, led by James Fletcher. This saw local camps built in and around Paekakariki in just seven weeks - prior to the Marines' arrival in 1942 ([Copy of Fletchers document on establishing the camps](#)).

- Built on concrete and totara piles with Tasmanian oak framing and an aluminium sheet roof, the bach was built by joining two former Marines' Huts together. It was barely modified in its 65 year life - until the Trust took ownership in 2014.
- In 2015 the Trust engaged heritage architect, Chris Cochran as consultant architect for the project. He used original plans for a 2.4m x 4.5m four-man hut from Archives New Zealand to develop new plans that guided the re-construction undertaken by Kapiti MenzShed team - led by Dave Porter. ([Marines' Hut Pictures Fig. 4](#))
- The Trust, engaged the Kapiti MenzShed to deconstruct the building, saving heritage timber and parts - for the reconstruction of a new four-man hut. Trust Historian Anthony Dreaver was the Project Manager ([Hut Sign Acknowledgment](#)).
- A Technical Report on the restored building shows the materials used (recycled/ heritage and new material) as well details on roofing, paint colours etc. ([Technical Report](#)).
- Timber from the demolition was taken from Tiromoana Rd. to the Rangihiroa St. headquarters of the Menzshed, where a majority of the construction took place - using old and new materials. ([Marines' Hut Pictures Fig. 10-12](#))
- On May 11, 2017, with help from Higgins and M2PP, the hut was loaded onto a transporter at the MenzShed HQ and moved down the Expressway to begin its new life in Queen Elizabeth Park. ([Marines' Hut Pictures Fig. 23-25](#))
- Over the next three weeks, the hut was secured to its foundations, final finishing and painting was completed, electricity connected and the interior display installed with the help of Story Inc. ([Marines' Hut Pictures Fig. 41](#))
- Shortly after arriving in the park the Hut was blessed by Ngati Toa Kaumatua Taku Parai. A small gathering of KUSMT Trustees and Park staff were witness to this very moving event.
- After the Memorial Day Service on May 29 2017 it was opened by former Trust Chair Jenny Rowan and Chair of the Greater Wellington Regional Council, Chris Laidlaw ([Marines' Hut Pictures Fig. 32-35](#), [Memorial Day 2017 Speech by Jenny Rowan and John Palm – Speech Notes](#))

## **Formal Request for GWRC Ownership**

As indicated earlier, The Kapiti US Marines Trust (KUSMT) is now making a formal request for GWRC to assume ownership of the Hut, register it on your Asset Register and schedule future maintenance accordingly. We also ask you to include it in your insurance cover.

Our estimate, of the value of the building is \$100,000 - this includes: the gift of the original dwelling, heritage research and advice, building materials, electrical installation, associated signage, transportation to the site and volunteer labour from KUSMT and the MenzShed. We can provide a more formal breakdown of finances; however, we are keen to get your advice on this matter and are happy to discuss it further with your insurance assessor.

Once ownership of the building is passed over to GWRC, KUSMT would:

- 1) Expect to maintain guardianship of the interior display, maintaining and cleaning it when necessary.
- 2) Continue existing activities hosting visitors at the Marines Memorial and the Hut.

As noted, we have documented most of the significant items in the display on our website and the public can find out more by clicking on the QR code from their smart-phones.

We have also engaged two environmental heritage volunteers (Fran Parkin and Graham Stuart) to check on all our signage across QEP and Whareroa Farm every 6-8 weeks, cleaning where necessary and reporting any significant damage.

Finally, the Trust is grateful for the on-going support, encouragement and advice we have received from the Park's Team. We value and enjoy our relationship with you and feel proud of the work we have done together to enhance knowledge of, and interest in US Marines Heritage in Queen Elizabeth Park.

Once the report is completed we expect to circulate it to: our Patrons former U.S. Ambassador Bill and Gail McCormick, the US Embassy in Wellington, the Kapiti Coast District Council, the Porirua City Council, the Fletchers Archive, the Wellington Community Trust, the Ministry of Culture & Heritage, Heritage New Zealand, Tiromoana Road bach owners, Kapiti MenzShed, Heritage Architect Chris Cochran, Story Inc. and any other stakeholders who may be interested. If you have other ideas of people or organisations who should be included, we'd be pleased to hear from you.

We look forward to hearing from you on these matters as soon as possible.  
Nga mihinui

**Allison Webber**  
**Executive/Secretary**  
**Kapiti US Marines Trust**  
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