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# The Stone Sarjeant Architecture, Materiality and Colonisation in Pukenuamu Queens Park Whanganui

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## Abstract

*This paper posits that the introduction of architecture and technology to Pukenuamu/Queens park Whanganui, Aotearoa was intentionally used to support the colonial project. Looking at introduced technology in Pukenuamu's history, from the initial harvest and utilization of riparian forest and raupo to a stoic white Oamaru stone urban materiality we see a centering of european building methodologies and a deliberate erasure of tikanga māori architectural knowledge. Today a milieu of institutional structures exercise a nuanced colonial authority over the Pukenuamu urban realm and those who inhabit it. The paper compares Pukenuamu Queens Park's architectures through a Kaupapa Māori and colonial theoretical framework. The paper observes Pukenuamu's architectures chronologically and analyzes how the strategic intentions of colonialism were achieved through architectural materiality. Reflecting on these strategies, the paper asks for further investigations into architectural materiality as a colonial tool to identify possible strategies of resistance.*

## Introduction

“I will retreat no further.”<sup>1</sup>-Haimoana Hiroti at the battle of Moutoa island, 14 May 1864

Pukenamu Queens Park is the urban centre of the city of Whanganui. It hosts a collection of institutional buildings and monuments from the International style War Memorial Hall to the neoclassical Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua. This paper argues the architectural fabric constructed over history within this site supports the colonising of Whanganui. Colonialism in Aotearoa has significantly influenced the urban realm “New Zealand’s urban centres have been dominated by European values and this is represented in the built form.”<sup>2</sup> The site echoes a development paradigm from other urban locales, such as Pukeahu Mt Cook in Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington. A summary of this development pattern includes the following succession of typologies; a Pa occupation; a military stockade; a rational gridded town plan and an institutional building such as an Art Gallery or Museum. Pukenamu/Queens Park, prior to its beautification, hosts a rogue squatter community, named “The Rookery”<sup>3</sup> The Sarjeant Gallery is currently the centre of this urban condition. The Sarjeant “has 'pride of place'” *and* “exalted position”<sup>4</sup> within the park. Pukenamu Queens Park and the architecture it contains, and has contained in the past, are a ripe strata to interrogate the architectural colonisation of urban space.

“In our post-colonial societies (cities on stolen land, cities to which those from the former colonies have migrated), the politics of space and bodies cannot be untangled from the racial and gendered hierarchies, exclusions, and violence.”<sup>5</sup>

The military infrastructure of the Rutland Stockade with its elevated position and Musket peephole windows<sup>6</sup> enabling military activity against the local Iwi, can be understood as an architectural colonisation. The paper posits that materiality is critical colonising tool. From the re-representation of European institutional buildings superimposed onto the settler frontier, through to the gaze of a military citadel across the landscape these architectures are influential “transmitters in the cultural system.”<sup>8</sup> Architecture and its materiality have power in establishing a Colony. The paper argues the architecture of the each stage of the Pukenamu Queens Park’s development is subservient to the colonial agenda.

The paper presages Pukenamu's buildings with a overview of Kaupapa Māori and Colonial theory as they pertain to the efficacy of architectural space over people. Starting with a discussion of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's comparisons of Māori versus Colonial conceptions of space the paper moves to Edward Gibbon Wakefield's theories of colonisation. The paper will then explore how these theories manifest in the site's architectures across time - making a case for the architectural colonisation of the Pukenamu/Queens Park. This paper does not intended to be a comprehensive historical survey of the park's development but instead focuses on certain architectures for the sake of specificness and brevity. The narrative covers Pukenamu Pa and Paikatore, the early settler occupation, the Rutland Stockade, the town of Petre and the Moutoa Memorial, the Native Land Court, the Rookery and the beautification of Queens Park and finally the Sarjeant Gallery. The paper then discusses how colonial power is manifested in a contemporary context. The paper concludes with a summary of these operative strategies and asks for further investigation into how to engage with colonial architectural power.

### **Te Ao Māori and colonial conceptions of space**

In analysing the architectures of Pukenamu/Queens Par the paper starts with the epistemological position that the Te Ao Māori is a valid framework of knowledge that does not "reject or exclude Pakeha culture."<sup>9</sup> To begin in a kaupapa Māori theoretical space we start with a conception of the world as the space created between Papatūānuku and Rangi with the trickster Maui pulling Te Ika a Māui (Maui's fish)<sup>10</sup> out of the sea to create the North Island. Whanganui was formed as a result of the battle of the Maunga (Mountains). Mt Taranaki having failed to best Tongariro ran to the sea<sup>11</sup> carving the Whanganui river and filling it with his tears after losing the hand of the lovely Pihanga. Pukenamu sits close to the rivermouth of the Whanganui river in the crook of the last turn Taranaki made before he journeyed north. Within Te Ao Māori there is a deep understanding that Tangata Whenua trace a whakapapa back to Papatuanuku. There is a famous Whanganui Whakatauki<sup>12</sup>(proverb) that demonstrates "that the self is an environment and conversely that the environment is a self."<sup>13</sup> Māori and the Whenua are deeply interconnected.

E rere kau mai te awa nui nei  
 Mai i te kāhui maunga ki Tangaroa  
 Ko au te awa

Ko te awa ko au.

The river flows

From the mountains to the sea

I am the river

The river is me.<sup>14</sup>

Within western architectural practice a Euclidean spatial sensibility is pervasive. “For centuries space sensory perception and imagination have been linked to the concept of three-dimensional geometry of Euclidean space, this thus being the dominant thinking process.”<sup>15</sup> This western Euclidean space is but one way in an array of cultural perspectives through which to understand architectural space. Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes a colonial conception of space as an

“...involved processes of marking, defining and controlling space. There is a very specific spatial vocabulary of colonialism which can be assembled around three concepts: (1) the line, (2) the centre, and (3) the outside.”<sup>16</sup>



Sarjeant Art Gallery, circa 1919. Photographer unidentified. Sarjeant Art Gallery, Wanganui. Ref: PAColl-5800-13. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. [/records/22805407](#)

Within Pukenuamu Queens Park manifestations of the line, the centre and the outside organize the site spatially and socially. The park is highly axial with the processional Veterans Steps bifurcating the site. The stairs conclude at the Sarjeant Gallery at the apex of the park. This processional path is one of Smith's dividing lines. Pukenuamu hill is consistently occupied by an architecture that manifests the dominant social power in the city at the time. Some of these architectures appropriate stylistic authenticity from other architectures. The Sarjeant Gallery is a neoclassical building which co-opts the "authority, authenticity and longevity of the classical greek architecture."<sup>17</sup> Another system of dividing lines employed in the colonising of Whanganui and Aotearoa was surveying. Surveying is a means of abstracting the land and creating new definitions of place and space. This was key in the transformation and domestication of the natural environment.<sup>18</sup> This documentation and making abstract the land was informed by the notion of *Terra Nullius* an assumption the land was 'empty' and not being utilized to its fullest economic potential.

When we compare a Kaupapa Māori framework to the colonial theory we see a divergence in values. These contrasting perspectives iterate across the architectures of the site. These new european architectures and technology were not necessarily opposed by Māori. "European innovations were fitted into a vigorous and adaptive culture; those which suited it flourished, and those that did not were ignored or neglected."<sup>19</sup> Initially Putiki Iwi encouraged occupation in Whanganui out of "out of enlightened self-interest"<sup>20</sup> for the mutual benefit of both Pakeha and Māori and to increase access to european goods. It is easy to understand why Pukenuamu Queens Park is a site of conflict as it is a place where a Kaupapa Māori notion of the integrated land and self meets an enlightenment model stipulating an empty landscape full of resources to be leveraged by an institutional technology and architecture.

### **Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the colonial spatial agenda**

To understand the colonial mindset a productive starting point is to investigate those who had agency within the colonial process. Edward Gibbon Wakefield and his son Edward Jerningham Wakefield are strong agents within the colonisation of Whanganui and their activities are useful to analyze as they demonstrate some key tenets of colonialism. "The driving force in Edward Gibbon Wakefield's life was his appetite for power and influence."<sup>21</sup> Wakefield Gibbon had left England after being jailed for deceiving teenage girls from wealthy families into marriage in

order to fund his political ambitions not once, but twice.<sup>22</sup> The second time Wakefield was incarcerated he read widely on the "classical economists, the utilitarians, and on social questions."<sup>23</sup> Wakefield also spent time in Australia and Canada observing and learning from emerging colonies. He further developed these ideas in a series of articles and a treatise called "A view of the art of colonisation"<sup>24</sup> which documented Wakefield's views on how the built environment in a colonized settlement should operate. Wakefield's remains visible in our urban environment nationally through the naming of streets and spaces. Wakefield colonisation theory is surmised in the following dream-like quote of the landscape yet to be colonised.

"He finds that colonizing consists of making all sorts of things not yet in existence. He beholds either nothing but a wilderness, or the first settlers engaged in making roads and bridges, houses and gardens, farms, mills, a dock, a lighthouse, a courthouse, a prison, a school-house, and a church. If he goes to a colony already established, still the further construction of civilized society is the sight that meets his eyes in every direction."

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The Decolonizing Art and Architecture Residency (DAAR) defines a colonizing architecture as a part of "the existing dominant structure - financial, military and legal - conceived for the benefit of a single group"<sup>26</sup> The establishment of buildings in a landscape supported the growth of a developing community of settlers. This in turn facilitated the introduction of technology, materials and new architectures that could increase economic benefit from the land.

"For over 200 years writers . . . have persistently painted this picture of the poor benighted savage reeling under Western impact . . . in these studies there lurks the assumption of European cultural and technological superiority. The islanders are thus explicitly or implicitly inferior."<sup>27</sup>

Architecture within western canon is often utilized as a means of legitimising institutions with "buildings themselves expressing authority in the way they are used or made. In other words, authority, such as it was, lay in human endeavour."<sup>28</sup> Within Pukenua Queens Park there are a number of institutional buildings. There are two libraries, the Alexandra Research Library and the Wanganui Public Library, the Whanganui Regional Museum, the War Memorial Hall and the Queens Park school demolished in 1977. Museums and libraries as archivers and

authenticators of history have a difficult relationship with indigenous peoples. There is “a history of schooling as a tool of colonization, as a mechanism of assimilation, as a process of indoctrination in colonial Christian belief systems as an instrument of domestication of Indigenous Peoples globally.”<sup>29</sup> The site also accommodates the Native Land Court an institution responsible for a vast and systematic alienation of Mana Whenua from their land.

### **Māori occupation of Pukenamu pre-1840**

Pukenamu hill was occupied, prior to the first settlement, by two pa; Pukenamu - a fighting pa that prior to the first arrival of the Wakefields, narrowly avoided attack from a Ngapuhi Taua War Party consisting of Te Roroa warriors lead by Tu Whare.<sup>30</sup> The other Pa was Paikatore, a trading location and also the point of arrival for Edward Jerningham Wakefield. Paikatore was also the site where the Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed with members of the Whanganui Iwi. Pukenamu viewed over the rivermouth, a gateway to the upper river. Putiki Iwi were vulnerable from Waka Taua War Canoe attacks from Ngati Toa Rangatira in the south, Taranaki tribes in the north and the various upper river Iwi. In 1929 Putiki Iwi suffered a massive attack from Te Rauparaha as vengeance for the prior killing of a Ngati Raukawa chief. Over 400 people were killed. Given Putiki's precarity Iwi leaders perceived colonisation as a means of providing protection for their people and to also assist in accessing european resources and technology.

### **Early settlers 1840 - 1846**



Smith, William Mein, 1799-1869. [Smith, William Mein] 1799-1869 :The town of Petre on the Wanganui River in September 1841. Day & Haghe. [London, Smith, Elder 1845]. Ref: PUBL-0011-05. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22872042

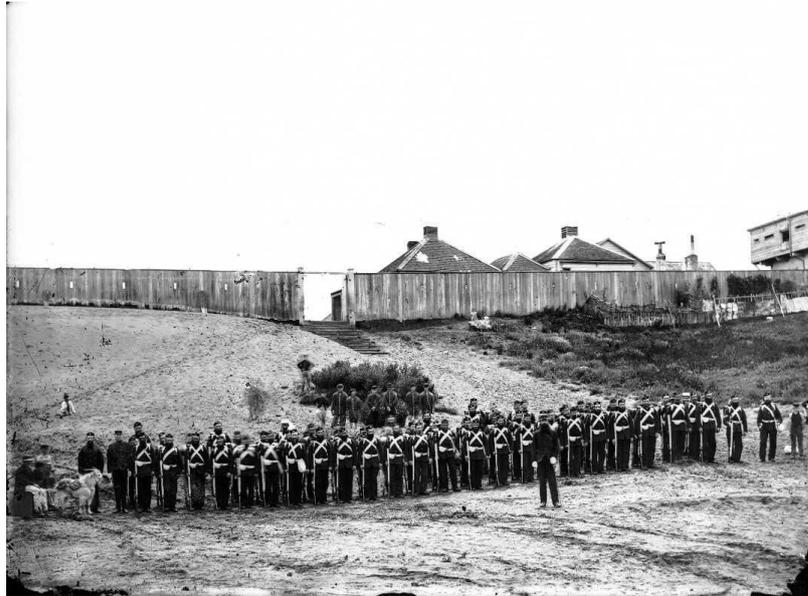
The initial impetus for the first settlement in Whanganui was an oversubscription of sections in the Wellington region. This demand for land prompted Edward Jerningham Wakefield to travel north to negotiate the sale.<sup>31</sup> On May 19th 1840 the schooner *Surprise* entered the Whanganui rivermouth with Jerningham Wakefield and a Māori interpreter named Kuru. Nine days later 700 Māori had massed at Pakaitore. This group included chiefs who wished to sign contracts to sell their lands, as they understood such a transaction to mean within Māori notions of custodianship. Twenty-three chiefs signed the document, but as “Māori titles to land depended upon occupancy, conquest, and use”<sup>32</sup> rather than an abstract notion of legal ownership, they did not completely understand the sale. The exchange of the blankets and muskets amongst other amenity items resulted in a riot as those present tried to secure their share of the payment. Two days later Wakefield returned to Pakaitore and was presented with a gift of 30 pigs and 10 tonnes of potatoes, in accordance with a customary tradition of reciprocity called *homai te homai* or *a gift for a gift*. This was an indication that the Iwi leaders had not fully understood the transaction that they had just concluded with Wakefield. Wakefield traded a few blankets at the time to ensure it would be perceived as a transaction. The first formal group of thirteen settlers arrived from Wellington on the Schooner *Elizabeth* on February 27th 1841

landing at Pakaitore. This purchase of the land was never completely accepted by the local Māori.

“Long before the payment arrived for the land, being handed over at last in 1848, the surveyors had moved in and the settlers had preferred their claims; as a result the initial anxiety of the local Māori population to obtain some of the newcomers for their areas changed to discontent.”<sup>33</sup>

The first settlers lived in fear of imminent attack for the next six years.<sup>34</sup> They lived in small Raupo huts and had limited resources at their disposal. The upper river chief of Ngati-Haua-te-Rangi, Hemi Topine Te Mamaku had promised that the Pakeha settlers of the Whanganui settlement would be under his protection provided that there were no soldiers stationed in the settlement. Te Mamaku asserted “that their argument was with the government and its soldiers and not with the local settlers.”<sup>35</sup> Settler accommodation was initially made from Raupo procured from and constructed by local Māori. Indeed one of the most notable events of Whanganui’s early colonial conflict, the Gilfillan Massacre, was initiated over a disagreement of the price for one of these Raupo buildings.<sup>36</sup> This incident also occurred “The same month the [Rutland] stockade was completed.”<sup>37</sup> These settler houses with a Raupo cladding were not simply accommodation but colonial institutions, such as the “Police Office and Police Magistrate’s”<sup>38</sup> office. The establishment of these colonial institutions aligns with Wakefield’s vision of a landscape occupied with colonial social infrastructure.

### **The Rutland stockade 1846 - 1870**



Soldiers from the 18th Royal Irish Regiment at Rutland Stockade, Wanganui. Ref: 1/1-000095-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/23101538

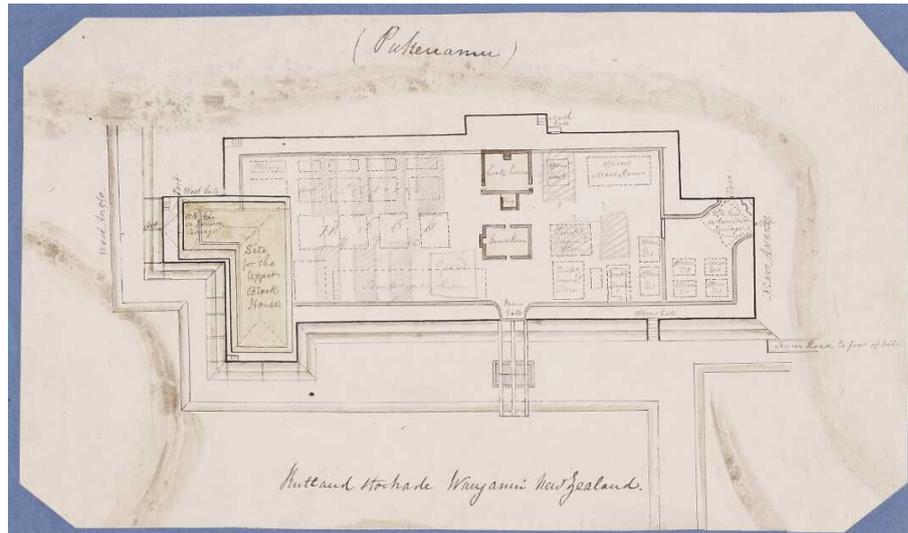
The Rutland Stockade was the largest of all the stockades constructed in the New Zealand Wars. As a colonizing architecture the stockade was a deliberate institutional infrastructure supporting the military occupation of Whanganui. On December 13th 1846, on the instruction of Governor George Grey, the 58th Rutlandshire Regiment arrived on the Frigate *H.M.S. Calliope* at the Whanganui settlement. The Regiment commenced the construction of the Rutland Stockade. Hoani Wiremu Hipango a local chief assisted in providing timber for the stockade. The first action of the Regiment was the “felling of riparian forest – an act of provocation to the river itself.”<sup>39</sup> The stockade was also constructed in part from corrugated iron<sup>40</sup> - a European material introduction. The Stockade was completed on the 1st April 1847. By 1846 the Regiment occupied the hill and continued to do so until 1870. From 1872 the site was used as a civil prison<sup>41</sup> and although partially demolished the site was occupied by a squatter community, discussed in the next section on *The Rookery*. In 1882 the stockade was demolished in an “attempt to move on from a difficult and complex colonial past”<sup>42</sup> and the area reclaimed for public use. Although it was demolished the Rutland Stockade maintains a presence in Whanganui through a commemorative boulder, the name of a local pub - The Rutland Arms, the timber in the Russlevalle homestead,<sup>43</sup> the prison in Maria Place, now the Whanganui Resource Recovery Centre,<sup>44</sup> a Totara House in Bell Street, the furniture in the Masonic Lodge on Bell Street, fencing posts around the city, the brick edging to the path to the cenotaph at the top of

Pukenamu Hill,<sup>45</sup> and a number of brick chimneys.<sup>46</sup> These locations all either reference or are comprised of material from the stockade. The stockade was a panoptic fulcrum in the landscape and dominated over that which it gazed over. The Rutland Stockade also overlapped the current location of the Sarjeant Gallery.<sup>47</sup>



Hamley, Joseph Osbertus, 1820-1911. Hamley, Joseph Osbertus, 1820-1911 :Wanganui, showing blockhouses from the sandhills. [16 January 1865]. Ref: E-047-q-039. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22323722

In March 1928 it was suggested that there was enough timber from the remaining Rutland stockade gaol on the site to recreate and re-represent the Stockade as a wooden model to be displayed in the Whanganui Regional Museum.<sup>48</sup> It is clear that even after the demolition of the building there is a clear desire by members of the Whanganui community for the continued presence of this colonising structure to be archived permanently within the architectures of the park. At the time the demolition of the Stockade in the was met with “the disgust of patriotic colonists.”<sup>49</sup> The hostility in response to the demolition of the stockade is telling of the values of the complainants. This desire for the continued presence of a colonial military structure could be interpreted as “a manifestation of colonial or class guilt and an attempt at preparing oneself for some act of future revenge.”<sup>50</sup>



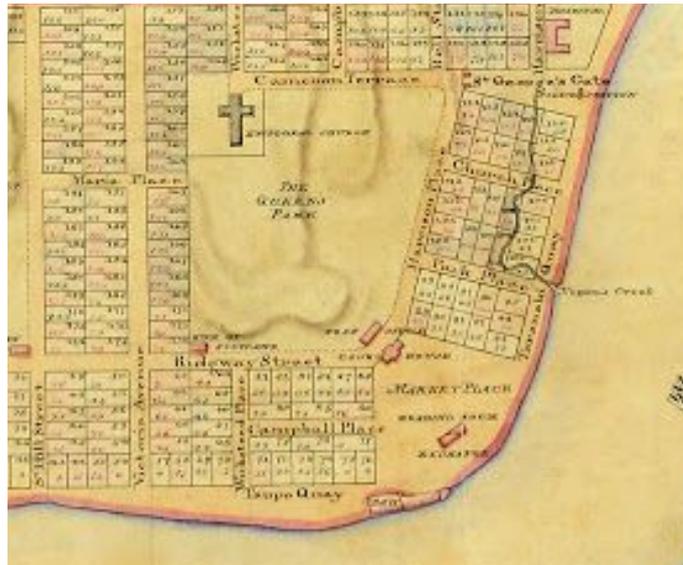
Artist unknown : (Pukemamu) Rutland Stockade, Wanganui, New Zealand [1847]. Ref: E-952-f-117.

Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/31986034

"It remains to be seen whether any changes to the interpretation [of the stockade]... will emerge, to honour and remember all of those involved, not just the imperial and colonial troops."<sup>51</sup>

The Rutland Stockade is manifested in the urban realm as a colonising force "Maori prompted it's construction, helped build it, were held prisoner within it, and some remain interred on its site."<sup>52</sup> The township became more established under the protection of the Rutland Stockade. In 1843 Anglican missionary Richard Taylor recorded 3,240 Maori living in the Whanganui River valley and 205 Settlers.<sup>53</sup>

### **Petre and memorialisation 1840 - 1880**



Detail 66/21713 - Plan of the Town of Petre in the District of Wanganui [Whanganui] - Sections, blocks, boundary - scales 10 inches:1 inch, 30 links:1 inch - R. D. Park, P. S. New Zealand Company. Date: 1850. Archives reference: AAFV 997 Box 132 WT7. Material from Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga. [archway.archives.govt.nz/ViewFullItem.do?code=22824368](http://archway.archives.govt.nz/ViewFullItem.do?code=22824368)

The town planning and the erection of memorials to the site was also used as a colonising tool. The town plan was designed in 1850. It showed an imagined colonial future with the institutions alluded to in Wakefields theories, a marketplace, a church, a hospital, a bank exchange and a reading room. The land is shown compartmentalized into sections of a viable size, divided by Smith's surveying lines for the emerging settler market. This creation of a new town is understood within colonial thought as a "year zero"<sup>54</sup> where the new Pākehā urban history commences. However we can see from the prior sections that "cities have always been indigenous places."<sup>55</sup> In a number of cities in Aotearoa these plans were often designed in Europe with little to no knowledge of the physical realities of the site. We can see this in the urban plans of places like Christchurch and Martinborough where a Union Jack is imprinted onto the centre of the city. Whanganui was originally named Petre by the New Zealand Company "as a compliment to Lord Petre, one of its directors."<sup>56</sup> Naming is a semiotic battle upon "over who should have the right to conceptually frame the area."<sup>57</sup> Within this site the settlers also began situate discrete signifying objects to support the colonising narrative. Pukenui Queens park is saturated with memorials. The site also possesses Aotearoa's first war memorial - the Moutua Memorial. This weeping woman sculpted in white marble is representative of an inaccurate settler interpretation of history.



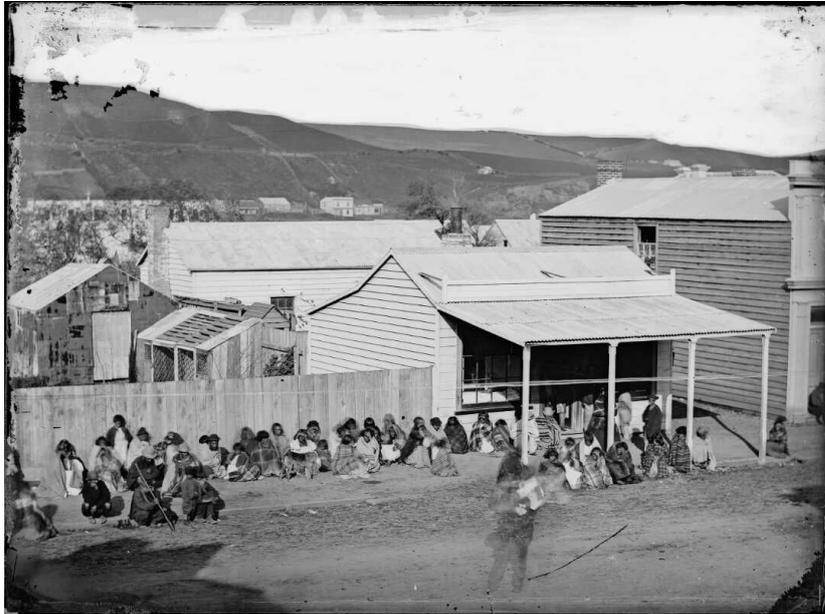
Street view of Rutland's stockade, memorial statue, the court house and the Albion Hotel, Wanganui district. Ref: 1/1-000051-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22666128

“The memorial reflected the gratitude of Pākehā, especially in Whanganui town, that the battle had saved them from attack. Other memorials to the New Zealand wars were erected in the first two decades of the 20th century. There was a desire to recognise earlier military service on behalf of the British Empire, as a salutary example for a generation that was expected to fight in the First World War.”<sup>58</sup>

The battle of Moutoa Island on the 14 May 1864 was between Whanganui Iwi and an invading Pai Marie Taua/War Party from the north. The Hauhau's, fueled by a hybridized Māori and Christian theology sought to attack the Whanganui settlement. The Whanganui Iwi fought to ensure their Hauhau opponents did not enter their lands without permission and thus uphold their Mana as Kaitiaki of their lands. This battle was about upholding the Mana of Whanganui Iwi. This memorial dedication is inscribed "In defense of law and order against fanaticism and Barbarism." This falsely frames the actions of Whanganui Iwi around settlers having a moral right to occupation and therefore being worthy of protection from their Māori neighbours - defenders of 'law and order'. The Memorial co-opts a battle that was not motivated by a desire to defend the new settler community. The Memorial was unveiled on 26 December 1865 and

has been in place for over 150 years. The town plan and the permanent stone sculptures legitimize the colonial narrative.

### Native Land Court 1922 - 2018



Group of people sitting outside a shop in the Wanganui area, possibly waiting for a land court hearing.

Taken by William James Harding, ca 1860s.

The Whanganui city centre contains New Zealand's only purpose built Native land court still in physical existence. The Native Land Court nationally and systemically alienated the majority of lands from Māori across Aotearoa. In Whanganui this purpose built court building is actively protected by the dominant heritage powers. The Native Land Court legal modus operandi was to move Māori lands from collective ownership, in line with Māori values, to a limited number of individual titles through the means of a legal technology. This made it easier to convey in private title at a later date. A buyer would then only have to negotiate with a limited shortlist of owners. The Land Court process held appeal for Māori because it gave them an opportunity to assert Mana over a certain area of land through recognition from this court. This would give them a stronger holding over the land than other members of their Iwi. Ligation around the land would require Māori to visit - often from great distances - the court in Whanganui to attend a hearing that might be delayed or not even occur. Visiting delegates would have to cover their own legal defence costs and living expenses during this period. "Before the mid-eighties there was no

attempt to hold Court sittings in Māori villages”<sup>59</sup> often Māori would have to stay for weeks only to eventually lose possession of their lands as a result of settling inflated debts incurred by local shopkeepers and hoteliers, whilst awaiting a hearing. The requirement of Māori to visit the court rather than the court travelling to Māori, or indeed an intermediary location alludes to Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s colonial centre. Visiting Māori were also vulnerable to disease, poor local living conditions and alcohol, often with tragic outcomes;

“I was perfectly astonished at hearing that a subject of conversation at each hapu I visited was the number of natives dying in consequence of attendance at the Native Land Court at Wanganui.”<sup>60</sup>

Recently a local technical college attempted to demolish the Native Land Court building for new educational facilities. The building is “a symbol of oppression that needed to be demolished so that the site could be reclaimed for Māori.”<sup>61</sup> This proposal was met with resistance<sup>62</sup> and was eventually heard at the Environment Court. The case was ruled in the favour of retention of the Native Land Court on the basis of its heritage value. “Non-western cultures tend to be marginalised in current conceptions of architectural heritage.”<sup>63</sup> The court remains, much like the other architectures of Pukenui Queens Park a robust and permanent reminder of the colonial impact in the built environment of Whanganui.

### **The Rookery 1870 - 1880**

The Rookery was a squatter community in Pukenui Queens Park that emerged after the disestablishment of the Rutland stockade. The people that lived in the Rookery were “settlers without means.”<sup>64</sup> Some occupied the existing Married Mens Quarters and others built Raupo shacks. Raupo housing was used for hundreds of years in the area and was occupied by settlers on arrival to Whanganui. The Raupo Ordinance Act 1842, Aotearoa's first building legislation, was passed to discourage the construction of raupo houses through taxation of existing Raupo buildings.

“Raupo buildings did not become a permanent feature of colonial New Zealand’s built environment and were, from the outset, a benchmark against which the material

prosperity, development, and growth of the colony could be measured as they faded from the scene.”<sup>65</sup>

Legislative technology was used to erase a Tikanga construction methodology from the site. The Rookery was by all accounts “a place of ill repute”<sup>66</sup> and did not fit within the mould of the idealised settler demographic. It was named after a similar slum-like area in London. In 1872 the newly established borough council decided to demolish the Rookery and “burned [the Rookery Buildings] down to clear them out.”<sup>67</sup> After this exodus some squatters returned, growing to a sum of thirty dwellings until the council intervened and decided in 1880 to “level and beautify the area.”<sup>68</sup> Architecture wasn’t constructed in the Rookery to colonise, rather it was erased as it was not representative of the dominant social group controlling the urban centre of Whanganui.

### The Sarjeant Te Whare o Rehua



View of the Sarjeant Gallery from the Pukenuu Queens park Forecourt - Author's own image.

The Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua currently occupies the central high point of Pukenuu Queens park. This building colonises the park and is the central structure that consolidates all the power of the architectures before it. In 1917 following a bequest from Henry Sarjeant, a local farmer, a competition was held for the design of the Art Gallery. The winning design was by a young architect Donald Hosie working under Anscombe Associates. It is one of New Zealand's finest examples of neoclassical architecture and is recognised as a Category One historic place.

When understood through Linda Tuhiwai Smith's notions of colonial space it has a strong centre in its cruciform plan. It also has strong axial lines that extend out into the park beyond. Its prominence on the hill was zealously protected by one of its form directors;

“Cohen's confidence extended to his vigorous protection of the sarjeant gallery's strong architectural and sculptural form emerging from a green hill, to the extent that (according to oral tradition), he would, in the dead of night, root out trees that had been planted anywhere near the sight lines to and from this cultural icon of the city.”<sup>69</sup>

The Sarjeant is also an institutional building indicative of a society that has progressed through significant development in the eyes of Gibbon Wakefield's colonial process. An Art Gallery is an infrastructure of high culture. The Sarjeant is clad in Oamaru stone. There are numerous examples of neoclassical Oamaru stone buildings in Aotearoa. Erik Olssen discussing Oamaru's main street observed “the oamaru leaders celebrated, in glossy white limestone, the triumph of the pioneers and the certainty of progress through capitalism.”<sup>70</sup> This white materiality indicated the dominance, longevity and power of the colonising culture. This building continues to exert the colonial forces of its predecessors.

### **Conclusion 1917 - 2018**

This paper has sought to explore the colonising methods of architecture and materiality in Pukenuku Queens Park. The paper establishes Colonial and Kaupapa theory from which to analyze Pukenuku's architecture. From the initial arrival and establishment of European institutional infrastructure in a Raupo skin, to the construction of the Rutland Stockade of native timber gazing over the Landscape - Pukenuku Queens Park's architecture has colonial power. The Petre gridded town plan and the proliferation of permanent stone war memorials sought to legitimize dominant colonising narrative. The Native Land Court systemically alienated Iwi from their land and the building continues to be protected to this day. The Rookery and its eventual demolition demonstrates the erasure of architectures that did not align with Whanganui's core colonising values. The Sarjeant Gallery is the current penultimate structure of this ongoing process. It contains the accrued power of these architectures and exudes itself across the urban realm. The architectures of the site, across time, have colonised the Pukenuku hill.

“Modern Maori architecture is much more concerned with biculturalism, being able to express Maori cultural values alongside those of Pakeha in a socially acceptable manner. It is as though the conflict between cultures is something of the past, and that architecture has no place reflecting this because it is about the present and future.”<sup>71</sup>

We live in a time when architectural practice largely does not meaningfully express Te Ao Māori and as such Kaupapa Māori in architecture is largely ornamental. There is a need for further research understanding the urban power of colonising structures to better understand how this influence might be mitigated.

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