



Historic Oriental Bay



Ngai Tara established the palisaded kainga Te Waihirere Pā on O-maru-kai-kuru Point Jerningham, overlooking the bays. Te Waihirere was named for the 'gushing waters' that swept over the hilltop while the pā was being constructed.

Now known as Oriental Bay, the area takes its name from the sailing ship *Oriental* that arrived in Wellington in 1840. At that time, it was described as a 'dreary-looking spot' with steep hills and a narrow rocky shore, remote enough to be used for farmland and a quarantine station.

After the 1855 Wairarapa earthquake raised the beach, colonial settlement increased and by the 1880s the area had roading, a temporary light railway carrying fill to the Te Aro harbour reclamation and whalers rendering 'unpleasantly pungent' whale blubber on the shore.

A new century heralded positive changes for Oriental Bay. The Te Aro Baths were built in the early 1900s, the electric tramway to the bottom of Carlton Gore Road was constructed in 1905 and by 1914 the Oriental Bay Tea Kiosk was a popular destination. The bay's iconic Norfolk pines were first planted in 1917, the first band rotunda was relocated to the beach's rocky promontory in 1919 and construction of the sea wall began in 1922. Over the decades loads of sand were brought in to enhance the 'Riviera of the South' - Wellington's seaside playground.

Above

Oriental Bay (c.1906)

Oriental Bay, Wellington, photographed by William Archer Price, 1866-1948: Collection of post card negatives. Ref: 1/2-000513-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/23044987

Left

Oriental Bay's tramway (1910)

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