

The Rob Roy Hotel

Victoria Park Tunnel INFORMATION

On 10 October 1885 a notice was placed in the New Zealand Herald to inform the public about a new hotel being built:

THE ROB ROY HOTEL

‘IT WILL BE THREE STOREYS IN HEIGHT, including basement, and constructed of brick, the basement storey of blue stone, with concrete foundations. The basement will be 7 feet 6 inches in clear, ground floor 14 feet, and first floor 12 feet 6 inches. It is intended to carry the present culvert right under the hotel and through the allotment, so as to have a perfect drainage system. The basement storey comprises kitchen, pantry scullery, storerooms, beer and coal cellars and servant’s diningrooms. On the ground floor will be a bar (on street corner), three sittingrooms, serving room – latter has lift from basement (sic). A commodious staircase gives access to the first floor. There will be a large sittingroom on the corner with oriel window, and nine bedrooms, bathroom, linen closet, & c. The bar will be handsomely fitted up, and all the rooms on the ground floor have dados. The facade is to be in Italian style, pressed red brick with white stone facings, and the whole of ornamental design. It will be surmounted with a parapet with entablature.’

By the end of January 1886 it had nearly been completed by the contractors Cleghorn.

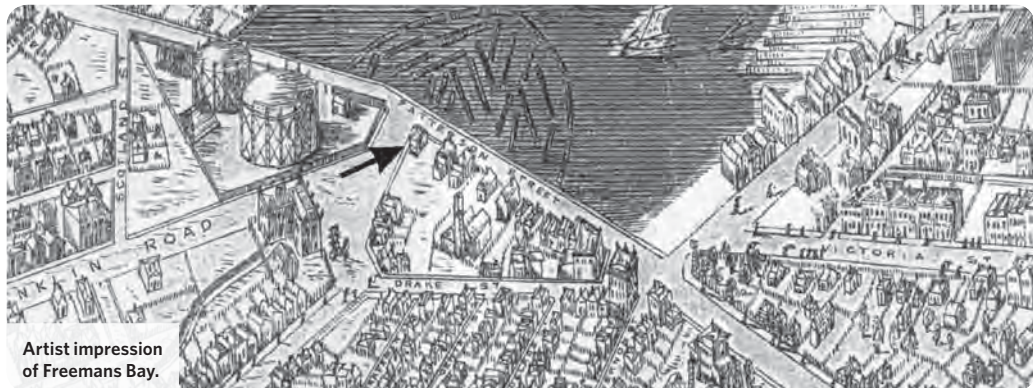
At the time the Rob Roy was built, Freemans Bay was a busy industrial area with ship builders sawmills, a brass and iron foundry, glass works, asphalt works and many coal and lime dealers. Freemans Bay remained a vital port and shipwright area until 1901 when the area was reclaimed using fill material from the Te To headland around St Marys Bay.

The hotel was constructed near the old foreshore of Freemans Bay and was a popular destination for sailors and travellers to Auckland from all over the world. One traveller left behind some clues as to their journey. A French 10 Centime bronze coin, dated to 1910, uncovered in excavations in the coal cellar. This coin would have probably come from a

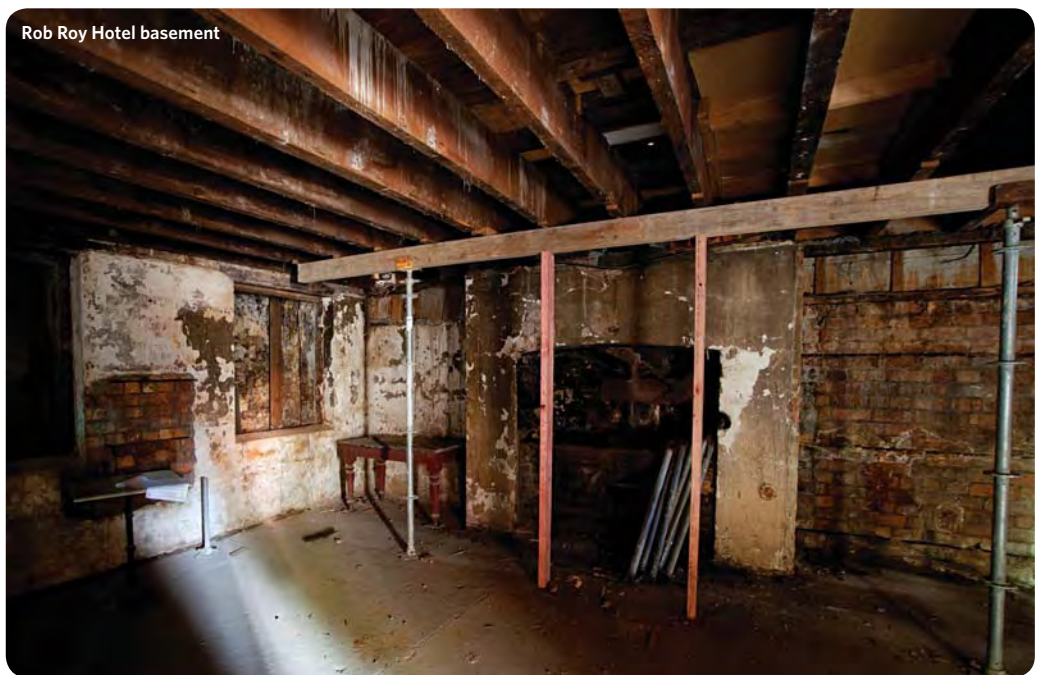
guest visiting from France or French Polynesia who spent time at the hotel in the early 20th century. (For further information see the archaeological finds display).

For over 125 years the Rob Roy has been a major landmark in Freemans Bay. It has been owned by notable Aucklanders, including former Mayor of Auckland John Banks.

The building is now a protected listed building with the Historic Places Trust and forms part of the heritage of Freemans Bay. Other important historic buildings here are the Victoria Park Markets, the Campbell Free Kindergarten and the former Auckland Gas Company.



Artist impression of Freemans Bay.



Relocating the Rob Roy

Now that the buildings next to the Rob Roy Hotel (the Birdcage) have been demolished, Aucklanders are waiting to see exactly how this historic structure will be settled into the new layout of Freemans Bay.

In August 2010 the hotel was relocated 44.7 metres up Franklin Road to make way for the construction of the tunnel’s southern portal. When the tunnel is complete, the building will be moved back down the road to its original site.

The building has been reinforced to keep it secure during the double move. A spin-off from this will be that the building is seismically strengthened for its future redevelopment.

When it is ready to be moved back it will be placed on runway beams just below ground level. Hydraulic arms

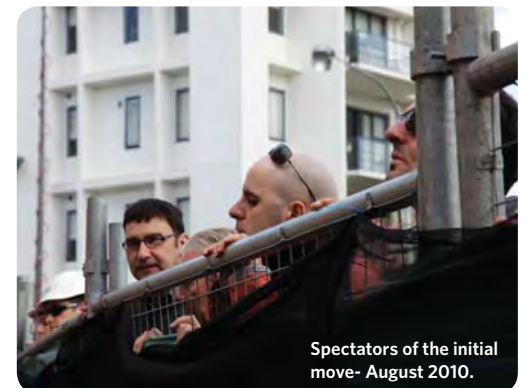
will then push it gently and very slowly along the beams back down the road, where it will be placed on top of the tunnel. The operation is likely to take two days.

The Rob Roy relocation work is being undertaken by the Victoria Park Alliance team with help from Dunning Thornton Consultants, one of New Zealand’s most experienced building moving specialists. The company has previously moved the historic Waihi goldmine pumphouse, the Museum Hotel to make room for Te Papa in Wellington and other heritage buildings in central Wellington to make way for the capital’s inner city bypass.

In its final resting place, the old Rob Roy will become the focal point of a new public plaza. (For further information see the Urban Design and Landscaping display).



Rob Roy Hotel during strengthening works prior to its shift in August 2010.



Spectators of the initial move- August 2010.



The men who moved the Rob Roy.



Rob Roy at Christmas 2010.

