

The Auckland Fire Brigade 1874-2024 Project

The 2000s (2000-2009)

This decade can be allocated the new title of “Station Location”. AW Bruce’s ‘London Model’ of a two-appliance strike force concept introduced in the early 1970s had outlived its usefulness. Statistics showed that 94% of fires were being extinguished by the first appliance with one hose reel (High Pressure delivery). Region Manager Paul McGill supported the development of the ‘Station Location Project’ in Auckland to find the best location for fire stations for the future. A well-established software tool called TransCAD was used as the basis of the plan. It was an integrated Geographic Information System (GIS) designed primarily for the management and analysis of transportation data.

An extensive validation and updating process took place since the three mapping systems provided were full of errors and omissions. Additional information was added to the model like average road speeds, historic fire call response times, road speeds and times. Eight road types were selected to reflect the difference between urban fire service and rural fire service (Country Fire Service in Victoria had selected 13 road categories). These selected were:

- Motorway
- Major Urban Route
- Major Urban Feeder
- Minor Urban Route
- Minor Urban Feeder
- Suburban Link
- Suburban Street
- Environmental Controlled Street

Operational Planning Officer Bas Cuthbert attended many workshops to ensure that the data was accurate and reflected the situation in each district. Times were calculated from Fire Incident Reporting Data (FIRS) for 1998 using first responding data. In 1999 the NZFS adopted Auckland's Station location process, and integrated it into a Resource Management model. Bas was seconded to NHQ and then sent to Boston to fully train in the use of Transcad at their Headquarters. He modified and ran the software until it gave useful and accurate locations for stations based on a 5-minute response time in 90% of incidents. Human input was added to the different scenarios run and the results became the template for capital works for the next 20 years.

The first run of the model suggested that Auckland central and Auckland East require only 8 stations between them as opposed to the existing 12. However, this would have required a very large number of stations moves and was not considered to be feasible. It was recognised that downtown Auckland is not going to provide a site for a new fire station and therefore the existing Regional Headquarters/City Fire Station site was fixed in its current location. The final run of the model suggested 10 stations with relatively few station moves. On the North Shore, Albany station was fixed because of projected residential and industrial growth. In Wellington for example, Thorndon was fixed for strategic reasons, and Kilbirnie’s location was retained because of training facilities. These decisions altered the final optimum locations of stations elsewhere in the cities.

The following table shows the results of prime locations to meet the 5-minute travel time in 90% of all incidents.

Station	Location	Land Purchase or New Build	Year	Cost
Onehunga	408 Queen St	Rebuild	February 2003	\$1,459,667
Papatoetoe	15A Lambie Drive	New Site and Build	Occupied December 2003	\$2,330,000
Manurewa	Great South Rd & Woodside Rd	New site and Build	Occupied December 2003	\$1,400,000
Mt Roskill	1169 Dominion Rd	New Site and Build	June 2005 (Land) 2009 Rebuild	\$4,900,000
Takapuna	83 Wairau Rd	Land purchase	2008 2013 (New Build)	
Te Atatu	299 Te Atatu Rd	Land purchase	2005 (Built 2011)	
Grey Lynn	134 Williamson Ave	Land purchase	2008 2016 (New station)	
Remuera	287 Remuera Rd	Rebuilt on site	2005	\$1,700,000
Henderson	Don Buck Rd, near Glen Rd	Land purchase	2004	

For some reason, about 2007, NHQ scrapped the entire model, and contracted an outside organisation to produce something entirely new. We are not sure whether the model was implemented.

A National Fleet Strategy was published in 2003 requiring each region to have a strategy of how the fleet was going to be managed. The Auckland Fleet Strategy was produced to support this. Once again, the bureaucrats in Wellington saw the allocation of appliances and reliefs as being comparable with a two-station provincial brigade model using fire calls and kilometres travelled. Fortunately brigade management were able to argue that Auckland was quite different to two station provincial brigades and the collective whole and an efficient cascading process needed to be considered. Things like pumping hours and back-to-back calls all contributed to maintenance costs.

October 2000, Glen Eden VFB disbanded, lack of staff numbers, some Volunteers went to Titirangi VFB. Appliance and equipment transferred to new Mahurangi East [Snells Beach]. Formed December 1947 by Glen Eden Town Board, at first operated from a private garage, first Station was at rear of Glen Eden picture theatre [now Playhouse] Valley [now Glendale] Road. In 1989 incorporated with Auckland Brigade and staffed with paid Firefighters.

Late 2000, new two bay volunteer station at 464 Scenic Drive, near Quinns Road, Waiatarua [rebuilt on same site]. Vehicles crash into station at irregular intervals, don't take corner going south!!

In 2001. remaining few staff from newish CST [Community Safety Team] 56 hour, three shift system started to be integrated into 42 hour, four watch system [D1]. The later was the longstanding and predominate watch system.

In 2001 a new large one floor facilities block constructed along eastern boundary of the Auckland Training Centre, Mt Wellington. Equipment stores, ablutions, BA servicing.

May 2001, Mike Hall appointed NZFS Chief Executive - National Commander. Mike was a Regional Commander in Queensland Fire Service, based in Brisbane. Started in Manchester Fire Service, England. Quickly reached one Contract Agreement with NZPF Union, consolidated computer programmes, developed fleet, Christchurch earthquakes. December 2011 Hall retired. Mike died together with student pilot in Mike's own light aircraft which crashed in Tararua Ranges on September 29 2019. Mike was a flying instructor.

June 2001, Mahurangi [East], a new brigade, Station No98, outstation of Warkworth, began operating from a private garage at Snells Beach.

September 11 2001, 08:46 and 09:03. Tuesday, two passenger jet planes flown by terrorists into two World Trade Centre 110 floor towers, Manhattan, New York. Buildings collapsed, 2,192 civilians died, 343 New York City Fire Department firefighters and 71 law enforcement officers killed. Of the people still in the towers when they collapsed, only 20 pulled out alive. Over the first three hours, 121 engine companies, 62 ladder companies and other Officers deployed, many off duty Firefighters self-responded. Eighty-two appliances and other vehicles damaged beyond repair. More than 230 FDNY members have since died of World Trade Centre related illnesses.

2001, International Year of the Volunteer [IYV] medal issued to all volunteer staff nationally. In 2011, 10th anniversary of IYV medal, a ten plus medal issued to serving volunteers 2011. Those awarded IYV medal in 2001 awarded a bar, signifying further ten years' service.

February 2003, Onehunga, new two bay, one level station 22, 408 Queen Street [rebuilt on old site] occupied. Crew relocated to temporary buildings in Ellerslie Station yard during build. Cost \$1,459,667. Major remedial work in 2015 to fix roof water leaks, crew temporarily relocated to 85 Onehunga Mall, south of Nielson Street.

May 2003, Senior Constable Theresa McCabe moved into an office at the Glen Eden Fire Station. A similar arrangement existed at Titirangi.

During May and June 2003 all underground fuel tanks, diesel and petrol, removed from City, Takapuna, Avondale, Mt Wellington, Otahuhu, and Manukau. Ongoing environmental concerns. Arrangements made with Mini Fuels Mobile Tankers to provide fuel during long duration incidents or emergencies.

October 2003, new station location plan, response time based, published. New sites identified for Papatoetoe [Manukau] built 2003, Manurewa built 2003, Mt Roskill built 2009, Te Atatu built 2011, Takapuna built 2013, Grey Lynn [Ponsonby] built 2016, East Coast Bays built 2021 and Henderson yet to be built. Replaced early 1970's planning to combine selected stations, Allan [AW] Bruce's London based two pumps 'strike force' plan. Mt Albert and Mt Eden site was Balmoral Road built March 1974. Avondale and Pt Chevalier site was Avondale, rebuilt July 1985. Remuera and St Heliers site was St John's Road, three properties, east side, near Gerrard Way. Onehunga and Mt Roskill site was three properties, Mt Albert Road, south side, near Erson Avenue, Royal Oak. Last two never built, quicker arrival of first pump more important than two arriving later, about 94% fires extinguished with one high pressure delivery or less.

December 2003, new Papatoetoe [34] station occupied at 15A Lambie Drive, Wiri. Three double bays, two floors, included Manukau [now Counties Manukau] District Headquarters upstairs. SSO Pump Rescue Tender and Snorkel moved from Manukau Station, Kerrs Road and Great South Road which closed. Also occupied same day was new Manurewa Station, corner Great South Road and Woodside Road. Closed same day was 'old' Papatoetoe Station, St George Street and Mahon Place.

Saturday, July 24 2004 officially opened, as was new Manurewa. Cost \$2.33M. All three old Fire Stations still standing 2022.

December 2003, Manurewa [30], a new two bay, one floor station on a new site, corner Great South Road and Woodside Road occupied. Crew and pump came from 'old' Papatoetoe Station, St George Street and Mahon Place which closed. Also occupied same day was 'new' Papatoetoe [35] station in Lambie Drive, Wiri. July 24 2004 officially opened same day as new Papatoetoe. Cost \$1.4M.

2003, Auckland USAR [Urban Search and Rescue] Task Force Three formed, training started. Equipment stored in part of old Stores area on ground floor, Region Building with access to cart dock.

January 19 2004, Monday, Auckland Fire Stations became collection points for Halon 1211 BCF [Bromochlorodifluoromethane] fire extinguishers. Its advantages as a fire extinguishing agent were that it was clean, lower toxicity than others such as CTC [carbon tetrachloride] and was usable on electrical equipment. Disadvantage it was a ozone depleting substance. Collection was coordinated by John Fraser, Fire Protection Association New Zealand, the BCF shipped to Australia and destroyed at very high temperature. Replaced mostly with CO2 extinguishers. Halon 1301 was recycled to Air NZ for cleaning and reused in aircraft fire extinguisher systems.

April 2004, site purchased for new Henderson station in Don Buck Road, near Glen Road, Ranui. Later sold, new site purchased in Swanson Road, near Lincoln Road. No building activity as of October 2023.

July 2004, new dark blue, short sleeve [no long sleeve] work shirt introduced. They clearly differentiated Firefighters from Police which had been a problem. Dark blue tie also introduced.

In 2005 site purchased for new station at 299 Te Atatu Road, just south of the north west motorway. New station opened in 2011.

In 2005 site purchased for new station at 1169 Dominion Road [used to Extension], Hillsborough. New Mt Roskill station occupied June 8 2009.

May 6 2005, Friday, one bay, two floor station on old site, 287 Remuera Road, near Armadale Road, Remuera occupied. Only front appliance room access, vehicle access down east side to yard, no hose/drill tower. Cost \$1.7M. Architect Maunsell Ltd, builder Gibson O'Connor. Crew relocated to Headquarters, Pitt Street during construction, a day base set up AEPB, Remuera Road and Nuffield Street. Third Fire Station on this site, fourth in Remuera, first opened 1913, second August 1916 and third July 1928.

April 2008, Tippett Nursery site at 134 Williamson Avenue corner Northland Street, Grey Lynn purchased. May 2, 2016, Grey Lynn [26], new two double bay, two floor station occupied, replaced Ponsonby, corner Ponsonby Road and Lincoln Street. The new site gave better coverage, especially to Pt Chevalier, part of Station's first pump area.

June 2008, new Takapuna site purchased for new station at 83 Wairau Road, opposite Archers Rd. New site provided better coverage, except to Devonport. New two double bay station opened in 2013. Through 2006 and 2007 the preferred site was on Wairau Road but Pak'n'Save planning approval delays for the next-door site affected proposed Station.

June 8 2009, Monday, new one bay, one floor station [62], 1169 Dominion Road, Mt Roskill, occupied. Total cost \$4.9M, station designed by Strategic Architecture, built by Ebert Construction. Mt Roskill crew moved from Mt Albert Road, old station sold, converted into private home. New site

provides equidistant response coverage between Avondale, Balmoral and Onehunga. Friday, September 11 2009 [9-11], officially opened by Prime Minister John Key. About 150 members of NZPFU protested during the formal opening for a pay rise.

November 19 2009, Thursday, Waiau Pa Fire Force incorporated into NZFS, an auxiliary of Counties Manukau Fire Area. Two bay, one floor station, 460 Clarks Beach Road, Waiau Pa.

Once again, my grateful thanks to Cliff Mears for his dedication to recording important facts, dates, costs etc that has made my job so much easier. A thank you also to Bas Cuthbert who refreshed my memory of the Station Location Project, and providing valuable information.

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