



ANTARCTIC HERITAGE TRUST
— INSPIRING EXPLORERS —

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

SCOTT'S *DISCOVERY* HUT

HUT POINT, ROSS ISLAND, ANTARCTICA

ASPA 158 — HSM 18 AND 19

SECOND EDITION 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

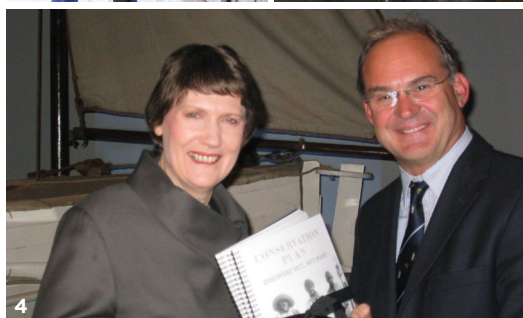
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Antarctic Heritage Trust (AHT) is a New Zealand-based charity with a vision of inspiring explorers. Through its mission to conserve, share and encourage the spirit of exploration, AHT cares for the remarkable expedition bases of early Antarctic explorers including Carsten Borchgrevink, Captain Robert Falcon Scott, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and Sir Edmund Hillary.

It shares the legacy of exploration through outreach programmes and encourages the spirit of exploration through expeditions to engage and inspire a new generation.

AHT was established in 1987 and manages the Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project (RSHRP), the world's largest cold-climate conservation project, which cares for five expedition bases in the Ross Sea region of Antarctica:

- Borchgrevink's Hut, Cape Adare
- Scott's Hut, Hut Point
- Shackleton's Hut, Cape Royds
- Scott's Hut, Cape Evans
- Hillary's Hut, Scott Base



The *Conservation Management Plan (CMP)* for Hut Point sets out the policy framework for the long-term conservation and management of Scott's *Discovery* hut, its associated structures and features, and the surrounding historic cultural landscape. Scott's *Discovery* hut is a Historic Site and Monument (HSM 18) and is protected within Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA) 158, the boundary of which is defined solely by the footprint of the hut itself. Vince's Cross (HSM 19), sited west of the hut, is also discussed within the *CMP*.

This second edition, prepared in 2026, updates the 2004 *Conservation Plan*. It acknowledges the preservation work of early hut caretakers and conservation personnel and reflects nearly four decades of conservation work led by AHT, focussed in the latter two decades via the RSHRP. This *CMP* provides a basis for consistent decision-making as environmental conditions, visitation, and nearby operational activity continue to evolve.

Some of the many people involved in this project since the Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project (RSHRP) was launched in 2002.

1 Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal and Antarctic Heritage Trust Executive Director Nigel Watson. 2002.

2 Conservator Nicola Stewart. 2006.

3 Programme Manager Artefacts Lizzie Meek. 2014.

4 Rt Hon Helen Clark ONZ Prime Minister of New Zealand and Antarctic Heritage Trust Chairman Rob Fenwick launch the *CMP*. 2004.

5 Heritage Carpenter Falcon Scott. 2011-2012.

6 Heritage Carpenter Martin Wenzel. 2011-2012.

7 Heritage Carpenter Gord Macdonald, Programme Manager Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Project Al Fastier, and Heritage Carpenters Torbjorn Prytz, Mark Adams. 2013-2014.

PURPOSE AND CONSERVATION APPROACH

The *CMP* is AHT's principal guidance document for the care of the hut, its setting and its extensive artefact collection. It aligns with Antarctic Treaty System requirements, including the *ASPA 158 Management Plan*, and with recognised international conservation practice. Its evidence-led approach prioritises retention of authentic fabric, least possible intervention, and thorough documentation. The *CMP* is intended to be kept under review, with scheduled regular reviews so that policies and priorities remain responsive to new information and changing risks.



1 Scott's *Discovery* hut after snowfall. 2013–2014.
AHT/JOSIAH WAGENER

SITE CONTEXT AND SETTING

Hut Point is a small ice-free promontory at the end of Hut Point Peninsula on Ross Island in the Ross Sea, situated between the Ross Ice Shelf and McMurdo Sound. The site lies within walking distance of New Zealand's Scott Base and the United States' McMurdo Station, making it unusually accessible in an Antarctic context and subject to regular visitation year-round by station personnel and in the austral summer by controlled tourism operating in the Ross Sea. The place comprises the *Discovery* hut, with the *ASPA* pertaining to the footprint of the hut only, in other words, the adjacent landscape around the hut is not included in the *ASPA*. The local historic setting extends across the end of the point and includes Vince's Cross, remnant historic material in the subsurface soils, as well as spatial relationships, historic original routes and activity areas.



Despite the proximity of modern infrastructure, key views to the west and north, and the broader setting remain closely aligned with early expedition records.

- 1 Scott's *Discovery* hut and Vince's Cross, Hut Point, backdropped by a colourful sky. 2014.
ALASDAIR TURNER
- 2 Elevation view of pointcloud generated from portable laser scan of the hut and environs. 2025.
HERITAGEWORKS

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Discovery hut was erected in early 1902 for the National Antarctic Expedition (1901–1904). Based on a design from Robert Peary's Greenland expedition and prefabricated in Australia, the building was originally designed as a shore party winter quarters but following Scott's decision to moor the ship *Discovery* alongside Hut Point and use the vessel as the expedition's living quarters, the hut served as a base for scientific work, recreation and preparation for sledging journeys during the expedition.

The hut was subsequently reused and adapted by Shackleton's British Antarctic Expedition (1907–1909), Scott's British Antarctic Expedition (1910–1913) and was a significant refuge for the Ross Sea Party of Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition (1914–1917), leaving a layered physical record of occupation, survival and logistical support. The hut and its immediate surrounding landscape were severely impacted by the mid-20th century establishment and expansion of McMurdo Station but crucially protected from the time of the International Geophysical Year 1957–1958 when Rear Admiral George Dufek declared it was to be regarded as a shrine. Since then, there has been a constant and demonstrable progression in recognition of the hut as a memorial and as a place requiring restoration, leading to modern planned specialist conservation.



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- 1 Shackleton, Scott and Wilson at the beginning of the southern journey. QUARTERMAIN COLLECTION, CANTERBURY MUSEUM
- 2 *Discovery* Hut, with *Discovery* at anchor behind. 1902. SKELTON COLLECTION/CANTERBURY MUSEUM
- 3 The beginning of the great southern journey. 1902. SKELTON COLLECTION/CANTERBURY MUSEUM

HERITAGE COMPONENTS: BUILT FABRIC, COLLECTIONS, AND SETTING

The site's principal heritage components comprise the prefabricated timber hut, its in situ collection of approximately 550 historic artefacts, and a small quantity of additional material held off site in the Reserve Collection. Interior elements, including partitions and spaces associated with later occupation and survival use, are integral to the hut's significance. Vince's Cross, located approximately 80 metres from the hut at the tip of Hut Point, is a key associated feature. The surrounding ground surfaces, archaeological deposits, remnant historic features and the broader cultural landscape are likewise treated as integral to the heritage place. While not formally protected within ASPA 158, these elements contribute substantially to understanding the site's historical use, significance and experience.



1 Scott's *Discovery* hut. 2021. ANTARCTICA NEW ZEALAND

2 The *Count of Monte-Cristo* inside *Discovery* hut. 2025. CATHY FINCH PHOTOGRAPHY

3 Inscription carved into Vince's Cross at Hut Point. 2013–2014. AHT/JOSIAH WAGENER

CONDITION ASSESSMENT AND KEY RISKS

The hut and collection are generally stable following the principal conservation programmes undertaken through the RSHRP (2014–2015), supported by subsequent monitoring and maintenance procedures. Survey work in 2024–2025 has improved understanding of site topography, permafrost conditions and patterns of change. Nevertheless, Hut Point faces accelerating risks associated with climate change, including warmer temperatures, increased periods of thaw, increased precipitation, plus stronger and more frequent storm events. These processes are

affecting snow and water movement around and beneath the hut, thawing permafrost, contributing to corrosion and increasing biodeterioration within the buildings and collection. These processes present particular risk in the vicinity of Vince's Cross and along slopes and breaks of slope near the hut, with potential implications for long-term stability.

Increased visitation from nearby stations and from Ross Sea tourism also creates cumulative impacts that require ongoing management. These include wear, inadvertent disturbance of artefacts and archaeological



material, and short-term changes to environmental conditions inside the hut.

1 Hut Point site layout. HERITAGEWORKS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Scott's 1902 *Discovery* hut (ASPA 158, HSM 18), the adjacent Vince's Cross (HSM 19), and the surrounding area at the tip of Hut Point Peninsula—including the site where the *Discovery* was moored—together form a place of exceptional cultural heritage significance. The site survives in sufficiently authentic condition to be an outstanding evocation of the heroic era of Antarctic exploration.

Established as the base for Scott's National Antarctic Expedition, 1901–1904, the site was subsequently occupied by three further heroic era expeditions: Shackleton's British Antarctic Expedition, 1907–1909, aboard *Nimrod*; Scott's British Antarctic Expedition, 1910–1913, aboard *Terra Nova*; and the Ross Sea Party of Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, 1914–1917, associated with *Aurora*. It was designated a protected historic site in 1972.

The site derives particular significance as the first expedition base established on Ross Island. Its position at the southernmost location then accessible by ship, with direct access to the Ross Ice Shelf, made it invaluable to the subsequent expeditions. *Discovery* hut served as the staging post for expeditions that achieved major exploratory firsts to the south, west, and east. At the end of

summer sledging seasons, the hut provided essential refuge for sledging parties waiting months for sea ice to freeze so they could return to larger bases at Cape Evans and Cape Royds.

The site is directly associated with internationally significant achievements in exploration, science, and technology. Scientific outputs and discoveries encompassed geomagnetics, meteorology, geology and biology. The first magnetic observations in the region were made here, and the Cape Crozier winter journey team used it as a staging post for their expedition to collect Emperor penguin embryos, later immortalised in the book *The Worst Journey in the World*. The site is also associated with technological innovation, including the first use of wind power in the Antarctic through *Discovery*'s short-lived windmill generator, and with uniquely local adaptations such as hand-constructed blubber stoves and food tins converted to blubber lamps. Used as a theatre, a workshop, a studio, the hut was a place which fostered creativity and social connection.

Vince's Cross holds significance as a memorial to the first person known to have died in the area, George Vince. The site around the hut holds rich archaeological potential, due to the bulldozing of



historic material away from the hut curtilage and down the slope towards Winter Quarters Bay.

The multi-layered use by heroic era parties has been recognised by successive generations of hut caretakers and conservation practitioners who have worked to protect its heritage values, resulting in formal protection in 1972, which continues to this day.

The hut, artefacts, and archaeological deposits provide evidential value and insight into often-undocumented aspects of the daily lives, technologies, social practices, and adaptation of early Antarctic explorers. As one of only a small number of surviving heroic era expedition huts, the site remains an irreplaceable resource for ongoing historic, archaeological, scientific, and conservation research.

Hut Point also possesses outstanding aesthetic value. Views westward past the

1 Conservator treating biscuit boxes in situ. 2013–2014. AHT/NICOLA STEWART

hut and Vince's Cross across McMurdo Sound and the Transantarctic Mountains create a landscape of exceptional beauty, in stark contrast with the modern McMurdo Station and associated port infrastructure.

The close proximity of McMurdo Station and Scott Base makes Hut Point a popular recreational destination, contributing to its strong communal value for both local Antarctic Programme communities, and for the wider international heritage community. Through expedition journals and publications, photographs, film and artworks, Hut Point remains closely associated with the stories of exploration, discovery and endurance that continue to inspire international interest and support for its protection.

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK AND OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Conservation and management at Hut Point is governed by the Antarctic Treaty System, particularly the management requirements of *ASPA 158 Management Plan*, and the responsibilities associated with the designated Historic Sites and Monuments. The Antarctic environment imposes strict operational

constraints: work is limited to short summer periods; weather frequently disrupts programmes; and whilst there is good proximity to local bases and their logistics routes, the Antarctic setting still limits transport, specialist labour, and materials.

The hut remains an uncontrolled environment because conventional powered environmental systems carry high fire risk, and are impractical to install and maintain. Nor is the site managed as a conventional museum. Conservation decisions must balance practicality, risk, conservation

ethics and permitting requirements. AHT's approach emphasises compatible, like-for-like repair, minimal disturbance to archaeological deposits, controlled access and visitor supervision, and comprehensive recording to support accountability and continuity in decision-making.

CONSERVATION POLICY DIRECTION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The *CMP* recognises that the current phase of stewardship requires adaptive planning and risk-based decision-making. Being cognisant of and responsive towards unexpected weather events, or changes in logistics support are key to providing timely and effective conservation interventions.

This adaptive approach is supported by sustained maintenance, monitoring, and planned retreatment of both building elements and artefacts. Policies prioritise retention of authentic material and evidence across the full period of significance and require any change to be justified by assessed significance and the principle of least intervention. Where repairs are necessary, materials and techniques are selected for compatibility and durability in polar conditions, and new work is identifiable on close inspection without being artificially aged.

The collection is managed as integral to the hut's significance and visitor experience, with ongoing



attention to corrosion, moisture-related risks, and inherently unstable materials. Visitor access is managed through guided entry, strict limits consistent with ASPA requirements, and monitoring to manage cumulative impacts.

The *CMP* identifies future priorities for mitigating the effects of coastal erosion and

permafrost change in the area, with immediate relevance in the proposal for the managed retreat of Vince's Cross due to coastal erosion. Ongoing shoreline and ground changes near the hut will require careful monitoring. Repairs during the RSHRP are relatively new being a little over 10 years old; monitoring and ongoing replacement of previous repair solutions as they reach the end

1 Internal floorboard repair. 2013–2014.
ALASDAIR TURNER

of their service life will form part of annual planning cycles. Collection priorities include mould and dust mitigation and retreating corrosion as it arises.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND REVIEW

Implementation is delivered through an annual cycle of planning, fieldwork, reporting and review, acknowledging the variable constraints of weather, logistics and permitting. Monitoring and documentation are central to management. They include environmental data logging, periodic spatial surveys, condition assessment, and visitor records, supported by AHT's manuals, databases and specialist procedures developed through the RSHRP. Independent technical oversight is maintained for

significant decisions and quality assurance.

The *CMP* has an intended 20-year life with scheduled reviews aligned with the ASPA review cycle. It also recognises that the hut and artefacts have finite lives and that future reviews must address the implications of ongoing change. Effective delivery relies on clear responsibilities among agencies and operators, sustained resourcing for routine maintenance and periodic retreatment, and ongoing support from donors, partners,



sponsors, government agencies, and the wider global community.

1 Heritage Carpenters Dale Perrin and Martin Herrmann undertaking monitoring. 2025–2026.
AHT/ZACK BENNETT

SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF SCOTT'S HUT

The explorer bases of the Ross Sea region hold global significance.

By giving to Antarctic Heritage Trust, you are investing in the ongoing conservation of these important cultural heritage sites so that future generations can learn about Antarctica and its history of exploration and science. Your donation will ensure the stories of Antarctica's legendary explorers continue to inspire people around the globe.

Thank you for playing a part in the future of the historic huts of the Ross Sea region.

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Conservation
Management Plans for
the historic huts of the
Ross Sea region are
available online at

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