



Archaeological Assessment for the Proposed Te Araroa Barging Port, Gisborne District

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Prepared for:

Darren Bentham
Engineering Manager
HEB Construction Ltd

Prepared by:

Andrew Brown and Lynda Walter
InSitu Heritage Ltd.
P O Box 710
WHAKATĀNE 3158

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Statutory Requirements.....	3
3. Scope of Planned Works	3
4. Methodology	4
5. Desk-based Research	5
6. Field Survey	7
7. Summary	10
8. Archaeological Values and Assessment of Effects.....	10
8.1 Assessment of archaeological value.....	10
8.2 Assessment of effects.....	10
9. Advice and Recommendations	11
10. References.....	11

1. Introduction

HEB Construction Ltd have been engaged to project manage a proposal to construct a barging port on land administered by the Te Rimu Trust c. 2 km west of Te Araroa, Gisborne District (Figure 1). The project is currently in the feasibility testing phase where geotechnical, ecological, archaeological and cultural assessments are being carried out to inform further planning and consenting requirements.

The project area is located within a rich archaeological landscape, with sites relating to all periods of Aotearoa/New Zealand's history. No archaeological sites are currently recorded in the project area, however an urupā (Z14/167) is located on the land block immediately to the east. This urupā is referred to as Tarewapia in the draft cultural report for the barging port project, prepared by Darrell Naden in November 2021, but was recently recorded in ArchSite¹ as Te Ara Wapia based on a historic Māori land survey plan.

This report provides advice regarding the potential effects of the planned construction works on archaeological values in the project area. It is concerned with physical evidence of past human activity and is not an assessment of Māori cultural values, which should be sought from mana whenua.

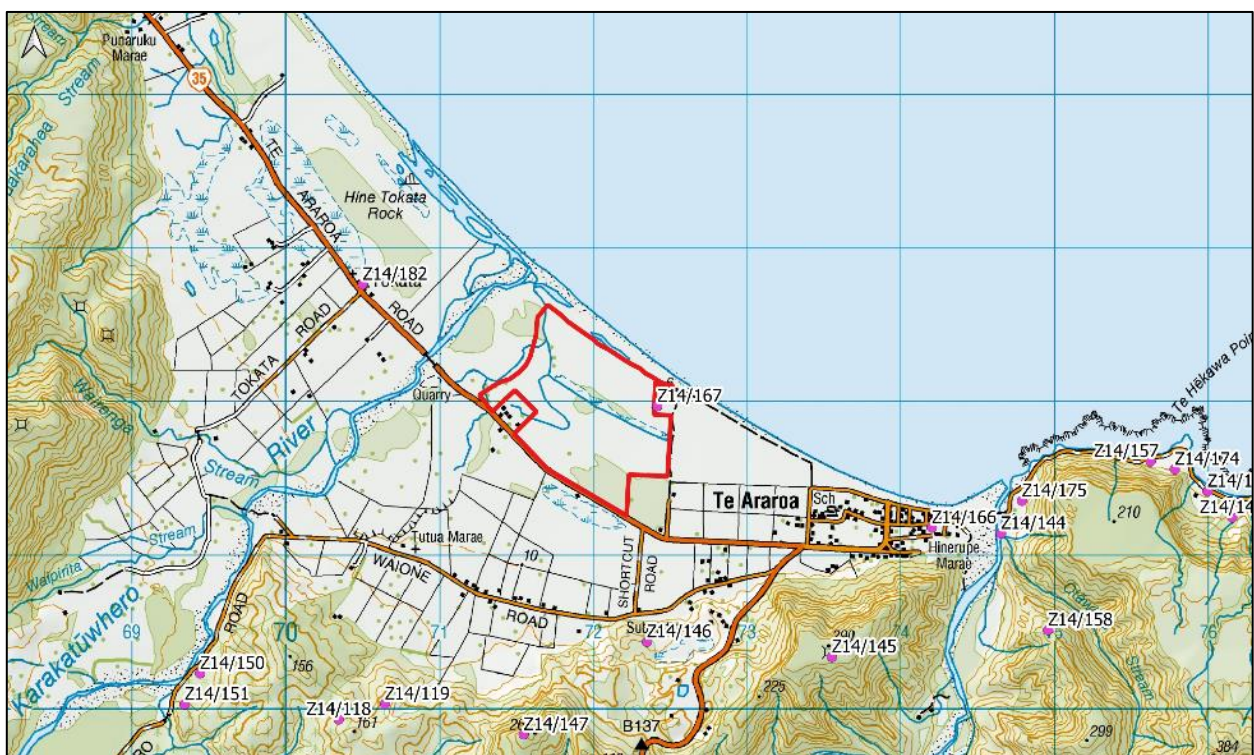


Figure 1 -The location of the project area (red polygon), west of Te Araroa in relation to recorded archaeological sites.

¹ ArchSite is the New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme on-line database.

2. Statutory Requirements

Heritage New Zealand administers the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. The Act makes it unlawful for any person to modify or destroy, or cause to be modified or destroyed, the whole or any part of an archaeological site without the prior authority of Heritage New Zealand. Any work that may affect an archaeological site requires an authority from Heritage New Zealand before commencement.

This process applies regardless of whether the land on which the site is located is designated, or the activity is permitted under the District or Regional Plan or a resource or building consent has been granted. The Act provides for substantial penalties for unauthorised destruction or modification.

An archaeological site is defined in the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 as any place in New Zealand (including buildings, structures or shipwrecks) that was associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there is evidence relating to the history of New Zealand that can be investigated using archaeological methods.

The archaeological authority process applies to all sites that fit the legal definition, regardless of whether:

- The site is recorded in the NZ Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme or recorded on the New Zealand Heritage List
- The site is not recorded and only becomes obvious because of ground disturbance
- The activity is permitted under a district or regional plan, or a resource or building consent has been granted.

The Resource Management Act 1991 requires City, District and Regional Councils to manage the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way that provides for the wellbeing of today's communities while safeguarding the options of future generations. The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development is identified as a matter of national importance. Where resource consent is required for any activity, the assessment of effects is required to address historic heritage.

3. Scope of Planned Works

The current scheme plan for the barging port is shown in Figure 2. Works will involve the construction of two jetties, which will enclose a dredged channel into a newly excavated basin. The basin will provide the area to berth and turn barges. On-shore the barge facility will have loading docks, and associated community structures and landscaping aspects. The barge port will be accessed via a road coming from the main road, west of the barge basin (orange lines, Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Preliminary plans of the proposed barging port.

4. Methodology

Archaeological assessment of the project area involved two phases of investigation: desktop research and field survey.

Desktop research involved an analysis of the archaeological site distribution in the wider region to understand the likely location and type of unrecorded sites in the project area. Historic records and historic ordinance survey maps were consulted, these forms of evidence were found to be a particularly rich source of information. High-quality aerial photographs and LiDAR-based derived models (e.g., hillshade and slope) were used to identify further areas of interest within the study area. These data were compiled in a project GIS and maps were produced that guided field survey.

Field inspection consisted of a pedestrian transect survey of the project area. The survey area takes in an area of coastal boulder dune, which is covered in grasses and low scrub, ground visibility was extremely varied. Where possible, the ground surface was examined for evidence of archaeological sites. In addition, any exposed sections were examined for evidence of buried archaeological features.

5. Desk-based Research

Review of ArchSite shows no recorded archaeological sites in the project area. One site, Z14/167 (urupā) is located on an adjacent land parcel. The majority of recorded sites near Te Araroa are pā sites located on the high ground overlooking the coastal flats. Pā are conspicuous sites and their dominance among recorded sites is indicative of an under-surveyed landscape where many indistinct sites have yet to be recorded.

Historic and modern aerial photographs together with LiDAR-derived models revealed no clear evidence of unrecorded archaeological sites in the project area. LiDAR data was useful in determining the topography of the project area and, by extension, areas more likely to contain archaeological features (Figure 3). In particular, dune ridges either side of the large wetland area. Likewise, historic aerial photographs showed the former river course, which allowed western areas to be excluded from intense survey due to their highly disturbed nature.



Figure 3 – LiDAR derived model of the project area showing high ground (red/yellow) and low ground (blue).

Historic survey plans – particularly ML 1088/2 (1894) – show a number of named places in or near the project area as well as several tracks that converge at an apparent ford at the mouth of the Karakatuwhero River. A number of land blocks, cultivations and settlements are shown to the south and east of the project area, which suggests Māori activity may have been concentrated on this marginally higher ground. However, named places, such as Te pā-o-te-whenua and Tupuni, within the project area are likely to represent settlements or places associated with mahingā kai. The exact location of these named places cannot be accurately determined because the plan has too few surveyed points that overlap with modern cadastral data. However, the general location of these places, in the western extent of the block near the Karakatuwhero River, can be inferred. Some local traditions place Tupuni (perhaps Te Puni pā) within a neighbouring land block. Hal Hovell suggests some settlement was present on the dune ridge immediately north of the major wetland.

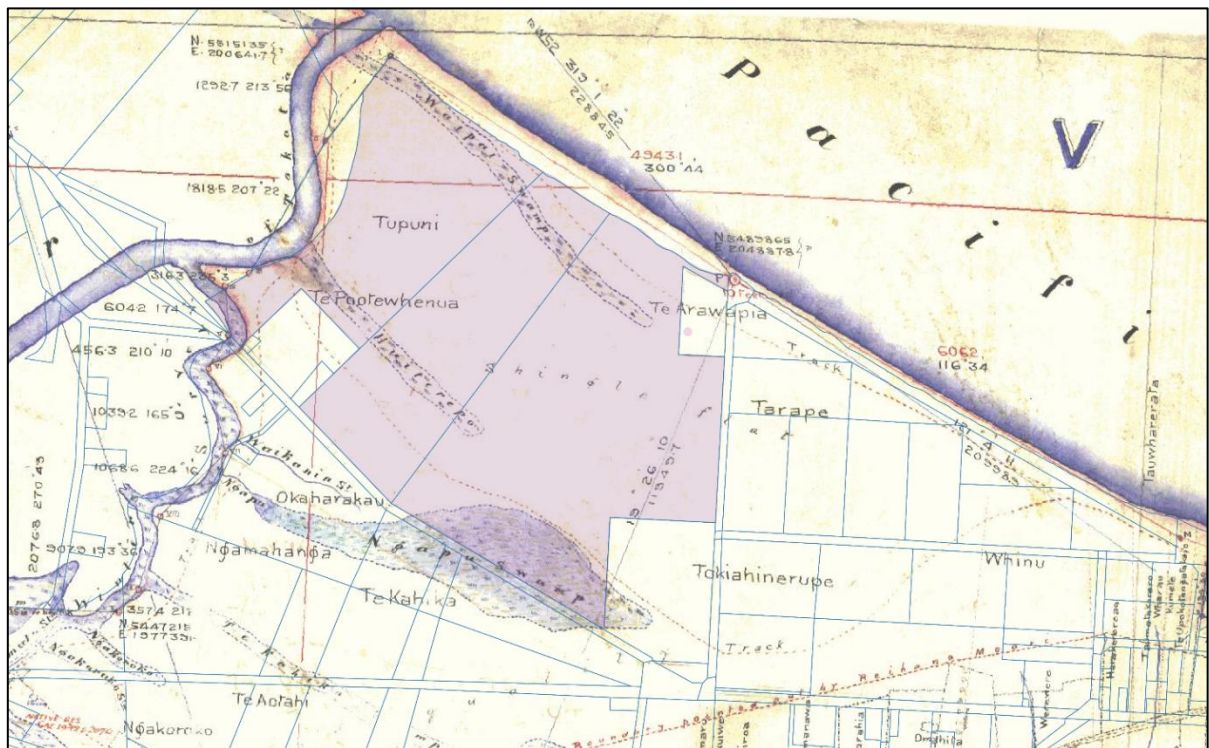


Figure 4 – Survey plan ML1088/2, an 1894 survey plan of the project area (purple polygon).

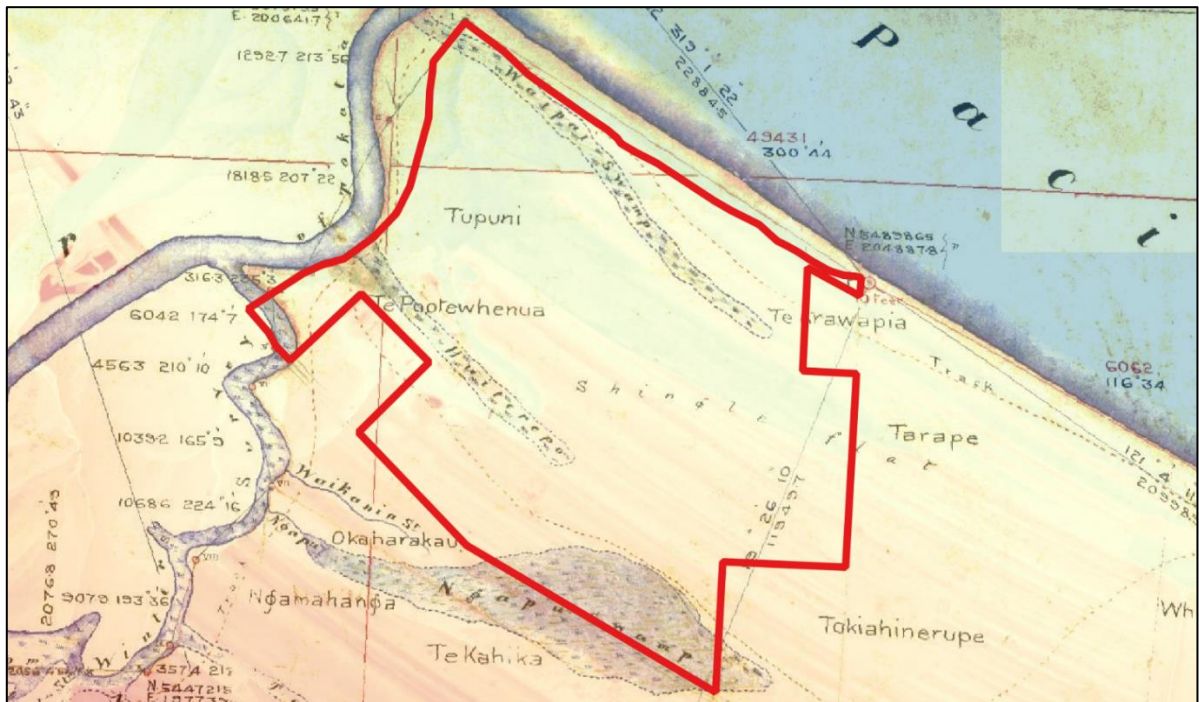


Figure 5 – LiDAR derived DEM overlaid with ML 1088/2.

6. Field Survey

Archaeological field survey was conducted by Dr Andy Brown and Josie Hagan (InSitu Heritage Ltd) on the 30th and 31st of May 2022. The survey was carried out with support from Te Rimu Trustees and with assistance from Christine Paringatai, Hinemaia Dewes, Heni Walker-Paringatai and Maumahara Walker-Paringatai. Local historian Hal Hovell was also consulted about areas of potential archaeological significance.

Archaeological survey was conducted in a series of transects spaced at approximately 15m intervals (Figure 6). Landcover was varied and in some areas, visibility was poor (Figures 7 and 8). No archaeological features or deposits (e.g., midden) were observed during the transect survey. Open ground or cuttings revealed a consistent stratigraphy of c. 50mm of dark sandy topsoil on top of water-rolled shingle.

On the basis of discussions with Hal Hovell, a small-scale test pitting exercise was carried out at a location traditionally associated with settlement (Figures 6 and 9). No archaeological evidence was encountered; all test pits contained the stratigraphy described above.

The area around Te Ara Wapia urupā was inspected for signs of unmarked graves extending west into the project area. No such evidence was observed; however, several grave markers were found to be outside the current fenced extent of the urupā. It is possible that further graves are present outside the fenced area and that they extend into the project area.

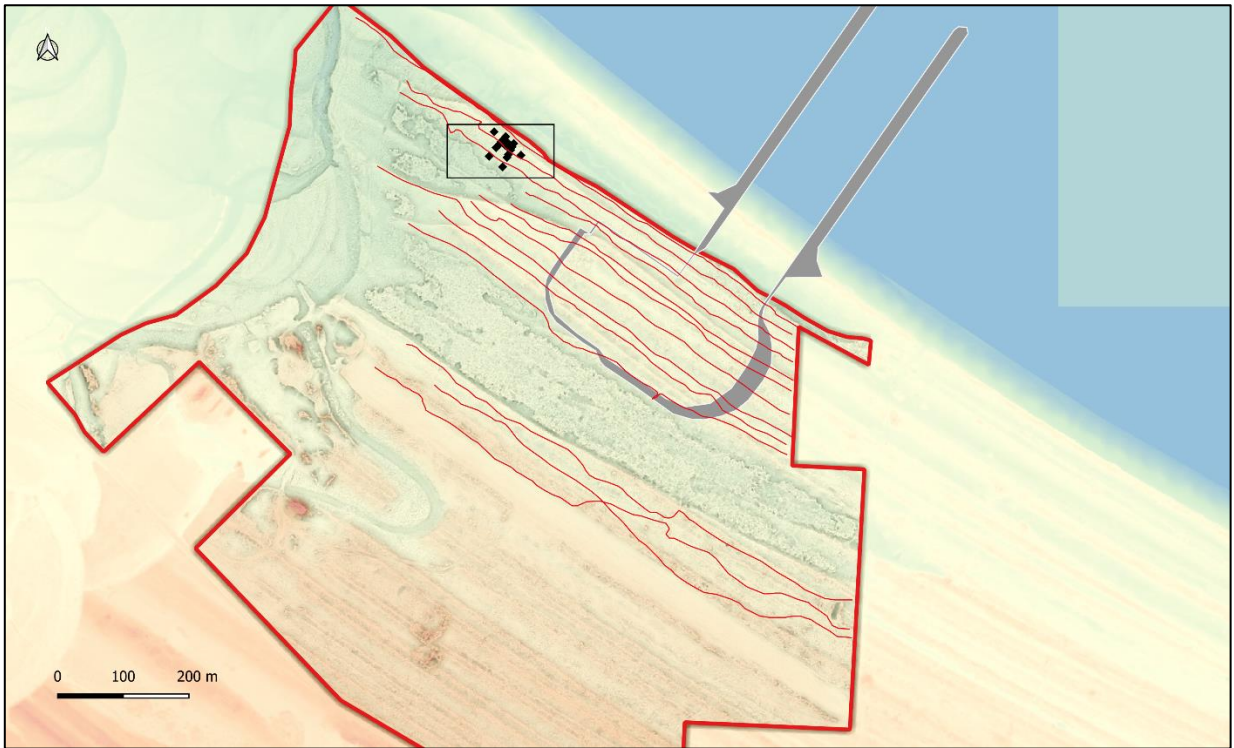


Figure 6 – Survey transects across the project area (red lines), the footprint of the proposed barging port is shown in grey, black rectangle shows the location of Figure 8.



Figure 7 – An example of a section of open high ground in the project area with an area of wetland evident mid-frame.



Figure 8 – An example of denser land cover within the project area. Note the water-rolled shingle rocks in the foreground.



Figure 9 – Distribution of test pits (black squares) in a location noted by Hal Hovell as a potential settlement site.

7. Summary

Desk-based research and field survey did not identify any definitive evidence of archaeological sites in the project area. However, the landscape context and presence of named places associated with past settlement means that the presence of buried archaeological features cannot be ruled out.

8. Archaeological Values and Assessment of Effects

8.1 Assessment of archaeological value

Archaeological values relate to the potential of a place to provide evidence of the history of New Zealand (Gumbley 1995). This potential is framed within the existing body of archaeological knowledge, and current research themes and questions relating to understanding New Zealand's past (Walton 2002).

The Te Araroa area has a rich archaeological record from throughout human history in New Zealand; however, the record near the project area is poorly understood. The barging port area very likely hosts a complex of sites relating to Māori settlement and land use. However, these sites do not have any clear surface expression. Any intact archaeological remains discovered within the project area therefore have the potential to provide significant and previously unavailable information about the history of the Te Araroa area.

Many archaeological sites also possess a range of other heritage values or qualities, in addition to archaeological values. This survey and assessment focused on archaeological values; however, it is noted that, in the case of Z14/167 (which *may* extend into the project area), the site also possesses historic and cultural values. Input from tangata whenua is required to consider Māori heritage values.

8.2 Assessment of effects

There are no recorded archaeological sites in the project area, and no unrecorded sites were found during field survey. However, the evidence for human activity in the historic and traditional record and the tendency for sites in similar landscape contexts to have little surface expression means buried archaeological deposits are possible on the higher ground of the project area. Areas of earth removal (e.g., the barge basin) are likely to have a significant effect on any archaeological features that may be present.

The nearest site Z14/167 (urupā) is on an adjacent property. However, it is important to recognise that the urupā is unlikely to be contained within this surveyed area and there is a high probability of kōiwi tangata (human remains) being present on the Te Rimu Trust property (the project area). The

eastern extent of the proposed barging port is c. 85m away from the urupā, a distance that, to an extent, reduces the risk of encountering kōiwi tangata.

New roads and tracks (Figure 2) are planned in highly disturbed areas or areas where archaeological sites are highly unlikely to be present. Therefore, the potential effects of roading are assessed to be low.

The following recommendations are made to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on archaeological values.

9. Advice and Recommendations

- i. No previously recorded archaeological sites are present within the project area and no unrecorded sites were identified during this assessment.
- ii. Desk-based research indicates there is reasonable cause to suspect that unrecorded archaeological sites are present in the project area.
- iii. Visual inspection of the ground surface was insufficient to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological evidence associated with named places on the early survey plans. Further testing is required to inform the possible impact of the planned barge facility on such sites.
- iv. HEB should consider applying for an exploratory archaeological authority under section 56 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. This will provide the means to pursue an exploratory archaeological excavation with the goal of confirming either the presence or absence of buried archaeological features/deposits in the project area.
- v. It is recommended that HEB engages with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga in a pre-application meeting to discuss the nature and scope of the proposed barge development project. This will ensure that Heritage New Zealand have access to all information required in order to make a determination on the authority application.

10. References

Gumbley, W. 1995. Guidelines for the provision of archaeological information and assessment for authority applications under section 11 or 12 of the Historic Places Act 1993. *Archaeology in New Zealand* 38(2): 100-105.

Walton, T. 2002. Assessing archaeological value. *Archaeology in New Zealand* 45(3):220-236.