

1092 Coatesville-Riverhead Road, Riverhead - Proposed Retirement Village Development: Archaeological Assessment

Prepared for Matvin Group



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≡ Origin Archaeology

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Introduction

Matvin Group is proposing the complete re-development of the property at 1092 Coatesville-Riverhead Highway, Riverhead (Figure 1, Figure 2) for a new retirement village complex. The legal description of the property is Lot 2 DP 164590.

An archaeological assessment of the proposed works was commissioned by Matvin Group and The Planning Collective to determine whether the proposed works are likely to impact on archaeological or other historic heritage values. This report has been prepared as part of the required assessment of effects accompanying a resource consent application under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and to identify any requirements under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. Recommendations have been made in accordance with statutory requirements.

Assessment Methodology

As part of the preparation of this report, the CHI and NZAA ArchSite databases were searched for information on archaeological sites recorded within close proximity to the proposed area of works. The Auckland Unitary Plan and the Heritage New Zealand List were consulted to determine if any sites had been scheduled or registered within or close to the proposed works area. Relevant archaeological assessments previously undertaken within the area were also consulted (see Bibliography). Historic survey plans held at Land Information NZ (LINZ) and historic aerial photographs were also consulted to provide information on past activities and land use.

Field survey of the project area was undertaken on 22 September 2021. Much of the area is currently under commercial strawberry plantings or overgrown orchard blocks. As such, only very limited subsurface testing was able to be undertaken. Exposed soils across the block were inspected for any evidence of archaeological deposits or features. Photographs were taken to record the area.

Constraints and Limitations

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in accordance with accepted best practice. No responsibility is taken for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party.

This report has been carried out based on the information available at the time. Due to the timeframes presented, research for the report was undertaken to an extent that enables the heritage values of the proposed area of works to be adequately evaluated, but is potentially not exhaustive.

This report does not represent the views of iwi regarding the significance of the place to them. Cultural significance of the place to iwi can only be assessed by tangata whenua.

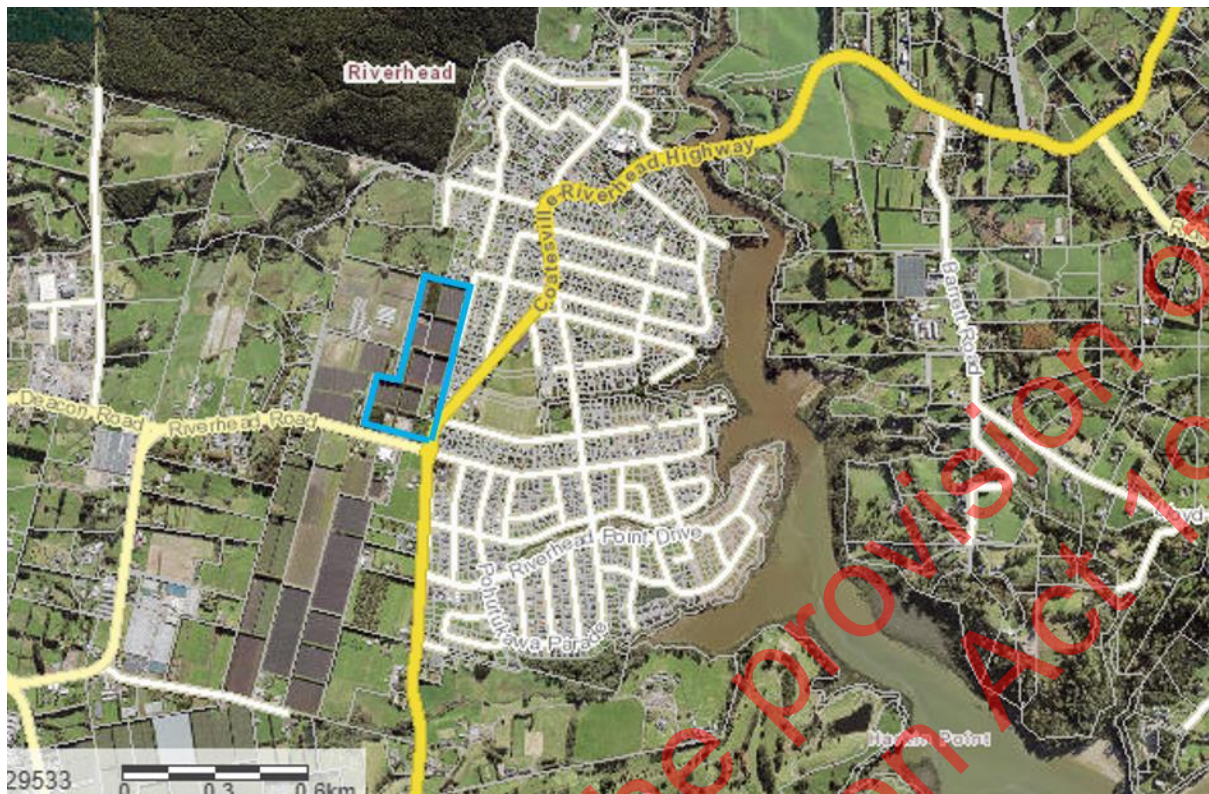


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the subject property (outlined in blue). Source: Auckland Council Geomaps 2021



Figure 2. Proposed Retirement Village – 1092 Coatesville-Riverhead Highway (Gel Architects)

Brief Historical Background¹

Pitoitōi or Riverhead is strategically located near the head of the Waitemata Harbour on the Pitoitōi Inlet, halfway between the Auckland Isthmus and the Kaipara Harbour and was the eastern entrance to the Riverhead-Helensville waka portage between the Waitemata and Kaipara Harbours. Archaeological sites relating to pre-European Māori occupation are focussed around the coastline of the upper Waitemata Harbour. Shell midden sites located along the coast are by far the most common site type as temporary encampments were established while exploiting the rich marine resources of the harbour (Clough & Prince 1999:10; Judge et. al. 2017:9). At Riverhead, these sites are also likely to relate to groups camping as they transited between the Waitemata and Kaipara Harbours via the Riverhead portage. The low lying and poorly drained soils inland would not have been attractive for Māori settlement and use (Tatton 2001:58).

Organised pioneer groups never systematically settled at Riverhead, however timber felling for the much sought after Kauri began as early as 1841 with gum digging comprising the other key early industry due to the areas proximity to Auckland rather than the quality of the gum (Mabbett 1996:111). Flour, paper and timber mills were also established along the river and permanent streams. Madden (1966) identifies twelve gum diggers' camps within the general area, although the closest to the current project area lay some distance to the north within what is now the Riverhead Forest (Figure 3). Madden also identifies a mill and dam to the west of the subject property close to the banks of the Wautaiti Stream (Figure 3).

The Riverhead area to the north and east of the Kaipara portage was included in the vast Mahurangi Block which was acquired by the Crown from Māori in 1841. From 1851 to 1867, the land to the west and south of the portage was also acquired. The land was surveyed into sections and granted to various individuals (Madden 1966:34). Allotments within the new Riverhead Township were put up for auction in February 1863, with the early settlement focussed around the river due to the lack of inland roads.

A review of historic survey plans and aerial photographs shows that the current project area was located just west of the main settlement at Riverhead (Figure 4). The property appears to have remained as a pastoral and later orchard block for perhaps all of the last century (Figure 5-Figure 8).

¹ Adapted from Judge, C., A. Brown & R. Clough 2017

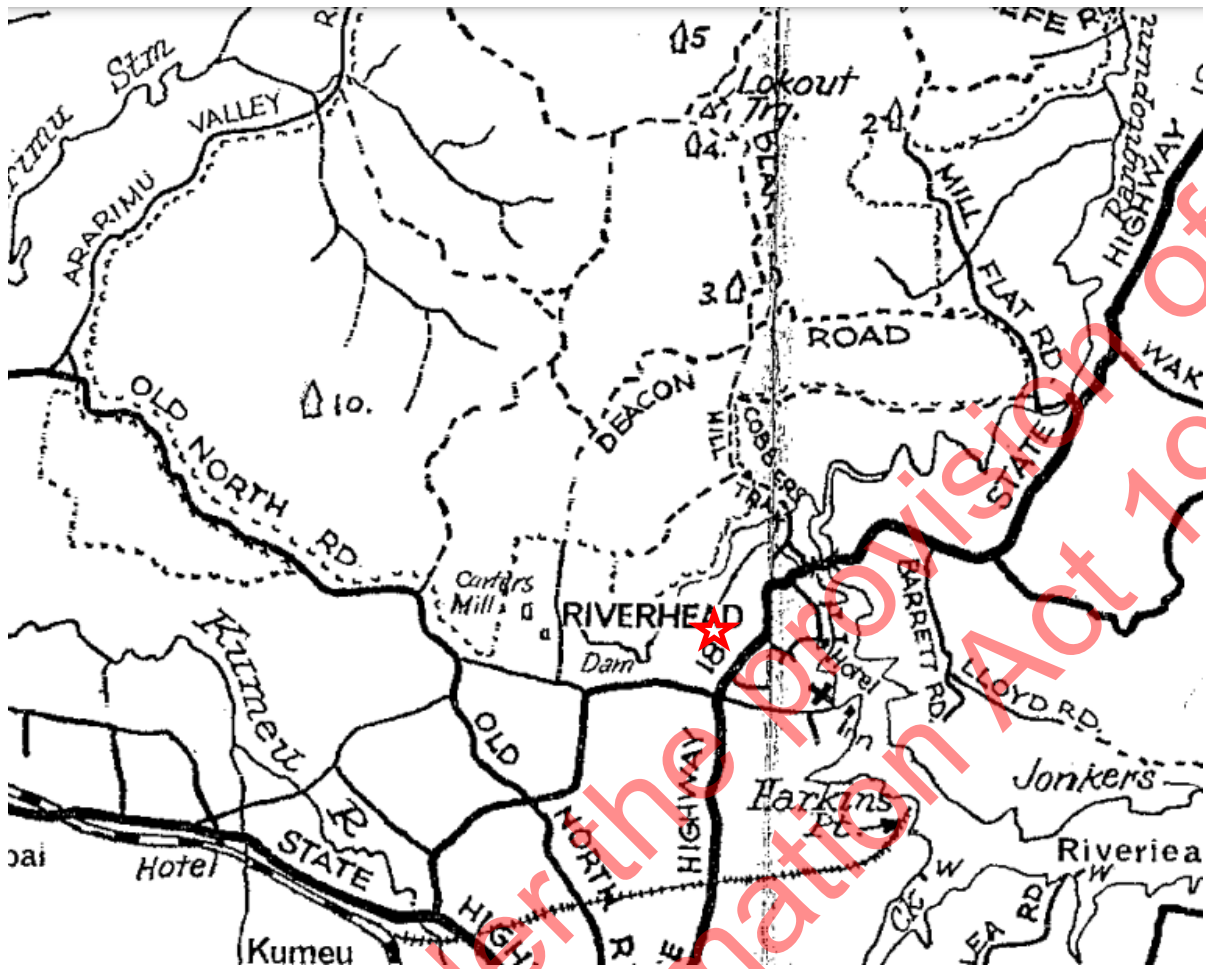


Figure 3. Detail of map from Madden 1966 showing identified historic features at Riverhead, including the locations of identified gum digger's camps (marked with house symbols and numbered). The approximate location of the current project area is marked with a star. Source: Madden 1966



Figure 4. Detail of 1921 survey plan DP 15592 showing the location of the current project area (marked with a star) in relation to the Riverhead Township. Source: Quickmap 2021



Figure 5. Detail of 1940 aerial photograph showing the approximate bounds of the subject property (outlined). Aerial source: Retrolens ref. Crown 143-91-19

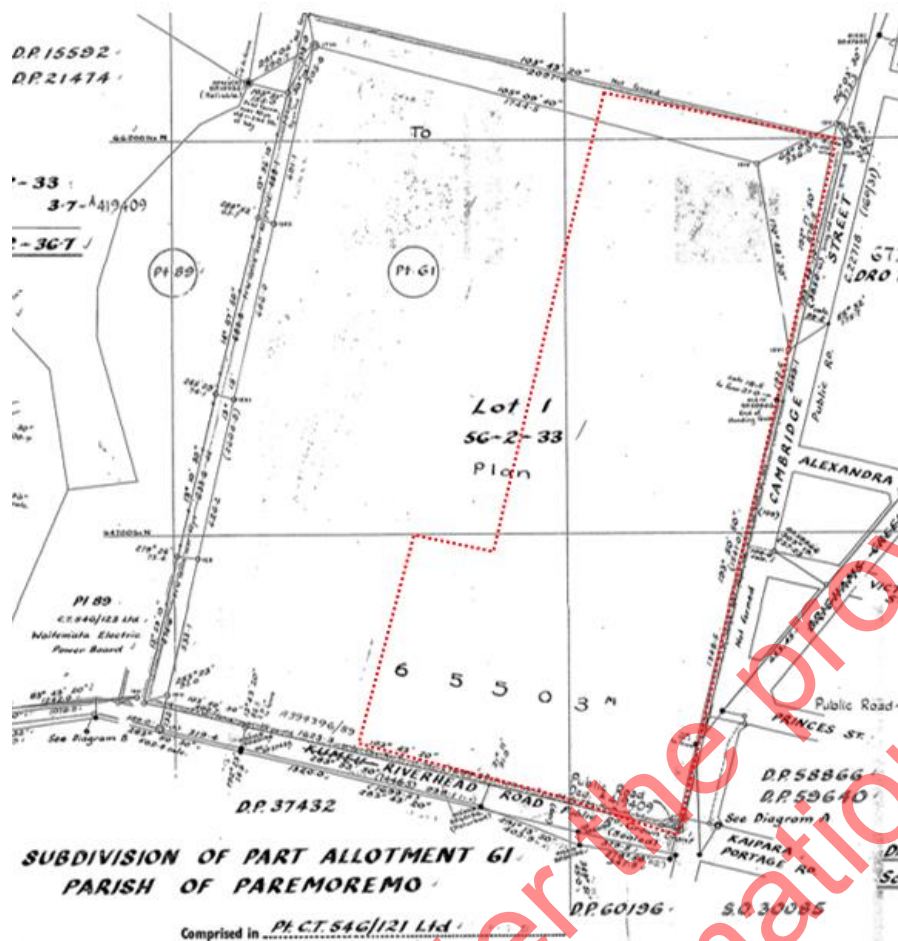


Figure 6. Detail of 1969 survey plan DP 61614 entitled 'Subdivision of Part Allotment 61 Parish of Paremoremo' showing the current project area (approximate boundaries outlined). Plan source: Quickmap 2021



Figure 7. Detail of 1981 aerial photograph showing the current project area (approximate boundaries outlined). Source: Retrolens ref. Crown-5916-A-7



Figure 8. 1996 aerial photograph of the subject property (outlined in blue). Source: Auckland Council Geomaps 2021

Archaeological Background

Previous archaeological survey within the Riverhead area has focussed upon the Riverhead Forest and the Riverhead Flour/Paper Mill (R10/721) located along the western bank of the river. Further sporadic archaeological surveys have been undertaken as part of private land development across the wider area (Foster 1997; Shakles & Clough 2011; Phear & Clough 2012; Shakles et. al. 2013; Ford & Nasoordeen 2013; Judge et. al. 2017; Brown 2018). Assessments for utilities works including the installation of a gas line along the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway (Mosen 1996) and a local reticulation networks, also along the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway (Shakles et al. 2011) have also been undertaken within close proximity to the subject property.

Archaeological sites within the Riverhead area tend to be focussed along the river in areas easily accessible by waka and in later years, by boat (Figure 9). Nineteenth century milling sites were also located along permanent stream alignments, while identified gum diggers camps tend to be focussed within the area that is now the Riverhead Forest.

No archaeological sites have previously been recorded within c.400m of the subject property. The closest recorded sites comprise a 19th century timber mill (R10/1376) located on the northern banks of the Wautaiti Stream, c.440m north of the current project area and multiple sites relating to pre-European Maori settlement and 19th century commerce and industry recorded along the banks of the river and Rangitopuni Stream, between 0.8-1km east of the current project area (Figure 10).



Figure 9. Aerial showing the distribution of recorded archaeological sites (marked with red circles; other heritage sites are marked with blue squares and purple hexagons) within the Riverhead area and in relation to the current project area (outlined in blue). Aerial source: Auckland Council Geomaps 2021



Figure 10. Aerial showing the locations of recorded archaeological (red circles) and other heritage sites (blue squares and purple hexagons) in relation to the subject property (outlined in blue). Aerial source: Auckland Council Geomaps 2021

Physical Landscape

The project area covers an almost 10ha block of land bordered to the south by Riverhead Road, to the east by residential properties along Coatesville-Riverhead Highway and to the north and west by rural or horticultural blocks. The topography of the property slopes very gently to the north and is currently used predominantly for horticulture (strawberries and kiwifruit) with exotic tree shelter belts, a residential dwelling and sheds. The soils of the area comprise Impeded Allophanic Soils. These soils have a hard layer that impedes roots and water and are considered to have low fertility (Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research 2020) which would have been unsuitable for the cultivation of tropical Polynesian crops.

Results of Survey

A field survey of the subject property was undertaken on 22 September 2021. At the time of survey the bulk of the property was planted in strawberry crops, with smaller sections in cultivated bamboo, overgrown kiwifruit and what appeared to be an overgrown orchard (at the far northern end) (Figure 11-Figure 15). The far southern end of the block, around the entrance from Riverhead Road has been quite substantially earth worked (Figure 16) with a block in the south-western corner being in dense exotic tree/shrub cover. Survey conditions were challenging with much of the ground surface being in commercial strawberry plantation, planted on raised plastic covered beds.

An examination of exposed soils and minor subsurface testing across the property did not identify any archaeological remains.



Figure 11. Aerial showing the subject property (outlined in yellow) and current land use of separate blocks (labelled). Aerial source: Auckland Council Geomaps 2021



Figure 12. View looking north-east over strawberry beds



Figure 13. View west over strawberry beds



Figure 14. View looking south down exposed soils along track adjacent to the overgrown kiwifruit orchard



Figure 15. Overgrown orchard (?) at northern end of property



Figure 16. View looking north over earth worked area at southern end of block

Summary and Discussion

Summary

No archaeological sites have previously been recorded within or on the bounds of the project area and no areas of archaeological interest were identified as a result of the background research or field assessment undertaken.

Archaeological Values

Previously recorded archaeological sites within the Riverhead area tend to be located around the banks of the river or permanent natural waterways – none of which are located within the current project area. The project area therefore has no identified archaeological value or significance.

Effects of Proposed Works

No archaeological sites have been identified within the subject property. As such, the current proposed works will have no identified effects on archaeological values.

In any area where archaeological sites have been recorded in the vicinity it is possible that unrecorded subsurface remains may be exposed during development. While it is considered unlikely in this situation, due to the location of the property away from any permanent waterway and the lack of recorded archaeological sites within close proximity, poor survey conditions did not allow for detailed field assessment of the proposal. In the Auckland Region the possibility of archaeological remains being exposed during works is provided for under the AUP OP Accidental Discovery Rule (E12.6.1). Archaeological remains can take the form of burnt and fire cracked stones, charcoal, rubbish heaps, including shell, bone and/or 19th century glass and crockery, ditches, banks, pits, old building foundations, artefacts of Maori and early European origin or human burials.

Legislation and Policy

Resource Management Act 1991

Section 6 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) recognises as matters of national importance: *‘the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga’* (S6(e)); and *‘the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development’* (S6(f)).

All persons exercising functions and powers under the RMA are required under Section 6 to recognise and provide for these matters of national importance when *‘managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources’*. There is a duty to avoid, remedy, or mitigate any adverse effects on the environment arising from an activity (S17), including historic heritage.

Historic heritage is defined (S2) as *‘those natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand’s history and cultures, deriving from any of the following qualities: (i) archaeological; (ii) architectural; (iii) cultural; (iv) historic; (v)*

scientific; (vi) technological'. Historic heritage includes: *'(i) historic sites, structures, places, and areas; (ii) archaeological sites; (iii) sites of significance to Maori, including wahi tapu; (iv) surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources'*.

Regional, district and local plans contain sections that help to identify, protect and manage archaeological and other heritage sites. The plans are prepared under the rules of the RMA. The Auckland Unitary Plan – Operative in Part (2021) is relevant to the project area.

There are no scheduled historic heritage sites located within the project area covered by this assessment. This assessment has established that the proposed works will have no identified effects on recorded archaeological sites, and there is limited potential for previously unrecorded subsurface archaeological remains to be exposed/affected during works. If resource consent is granted, consent conditions relating to archaeological monitoring or protection would therefore not be required. However, if suspected archaeological remains are exposed during development works, the Accidental Discovery Rule (E12.6.1) set out in the AUP OP must be complied with. Under the ADR, works must cease within 20m of the discovery and the Council, Heritage NZ, mana whenua and (in the case of human remains) NZ Police must be informed. The ADR would no longer apply in respect to archaeological sites (pre-1900) if an Authority from Heritage NZ was in place.

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

In addition to any requirements under the RMA, the HNZPTA protects all archaeological sites whether recorded or not, and they may not be damaged or destroyed unless an Authority to modify an archaeological site has been issued by Heritage NZ (Section 42).

An archaeological site is defined by the HNZPTA Section 6 as follows:

‘archaeological site means, subject to section 42(3), –

(a) any place in New Zealand including any building or structure (or part of a building or structure) that –

(i) was associated with human activity that occurred before 1900 or is the site of the wreck of any vessel where the wreck occurred before 1900; and

(ii) provides or may provide, through investigation by archaeological methods, evidence relating to the history of New Zealand; and

(b) includes a site for which a declaration is made under section 43(1)’

Authorities to modify archaeological sites can be applied for either in respect to archaeological sites within a specified area of land (Section 44(a)), or to modify a specific archaeological site where the effects will be no more than minor (Section 44(b)), or for the purpose of conducting a scientific investigation (Section 44(c)). Applications that relate to sites of Maori interest require consultation with (and in the case of scientific investigations the consent of) the appropriate iwi or hapu and are subject to the recommendations of the Maori Heritage Council of Heritage NZ. In addition, an application may be made to carry out an exploratory investigation of any site or locality under Section 56, to confirm the presence, extent and nature of a site or suspected site.

Under Section 65 of the Act, Heritage NZ has the power to list significant historic places and areas, wahi tupuna, wahi tapu and wahi tapu areas on the New Zealand Heritage List. The purpose of listing is to inform members of the public and landowners about the values of significant places and to assist in their protection under the RMA. Heritage NZ would be considered an affected party in relation to any consent application affecting an item on the List.

While no known archaeological sites will be affected by the proposed works, there is some limited potential that unidentified archaeological remains may be exposed during development. To avoid any delays should unidentified subsurface features be exposed by the proposed works, consideration could be given to applying for an authority under Section 44(a) of the HNZPTA to cover all works undertaken for this project, as a precaution. This should be obtained before any earthworks are carried out. The conditions of the authority are likely to include archaeological monitoring of preliminary earthworks, and procedures for recording any archaeological evidence before it is modified or destroyed. This approach would have the advantage of allowing any archaeology uncovered during the development of the property to be dealt with immediately, avoiding delays while an Authority is applied for and processed.

Conclusions

No archaeological sites were identified within the proposed development area. There is considered to be low/limited potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains to be exposed/affected as a result of the current proposed work. If archaeological remains are encountered, the provisions of the Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and the AUP Accidental Discovery Rule must be complied with.

Recommendations

- There should be no constraints on the proposed development on archaeological grounds, as no archaeological sites are known to be present and there is considered to be low/limited potential that any will be exposed as a result of the proposed development.
- If subsurface archaeological evidence should be unearthed during construction (e.g. intact shell midden, hangi, storage pits relating to Maori occupation, or cobbled floors, brick or stone foundation, and rubbish pits relating to 19th century European occupation), or if human remains should be discovered, the Accidental Discovery Rule (section E.12.6.1 of the AUP OP) must be followed. This requires that work ceases within 20m of the discovery and that the Auckland Council, Heritage NZ, Mana Whenua and (in the case of human remains) the NZ Police are notified. The relevant authorities will then determine the actions required.
- If modification of an archaeological site does become necessary, an Authority must be applied for under Section 44(a) of the HNZPTA and granted prior to any further work being carried out that will affect the site. (Note that this is a legal requirement).
- Alternatively, consideration could be given to applying for an Authority in advance of works as a precaution, to minimise delays if archaeological remains are exposed once works are under way.
- Since archaeological survey cannot always detect sites of traditional significance to Maori, such as wah tapu, the tangata whenua should be consulted regarding the possible existence of such sites on the property.

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