

473 ALBANY HIGHWAY, ALBANY: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Prepared for Albany Estates Limited



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INTRODUCTION

Project Background

Albany Estates Limited intends to redevelop part of the former Massey University Oteha Rohe Campus at 473 Albany Highway, Albany (Figure 1–Figure 3) as a large residential precinct with a new street network and public open space (draft Albany Estates Masterplan). The property is bounded by the Albany Highway to the north and west, the Oteha Stream and an esplanade reserve to the east and suburban housing to the south. It comprises 13.7ha and its legal description is Sec 1 SO 456618.

An archaeological assessment was commissioned by Boffa Miskell on behalf of Albany Estates Limited to establish whether future development is likely to impact on archaeological values. This report has been prepared to support an application for a Private Plan Change under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and to identify any requirements under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (HNZPTA). Recommendations are made in accordance with statutory requirements.

Methodology

The New Zealand Archaeological Association's (NZAA) site record database (ArchSite), Auckland Council's Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI), Auckland Unitary Plan Operative in Part (AUP OP) and the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (Heritage NZ) New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero were searched to determine whether any archaeological or other historic heritage sites had been recorded on or in the immediate vicinity of the property. Literature and archaeological reports relevant to the area were consulted (see Bibliography). Early survey plans were checked for information relating to past use of the property. Aerial photography was also examined to establish past modification to the area.

A visual inspection of the property was conducted on 21 February 2020. The ground surface was examined for evidence of former occupation (in the form of shell midden, depressions, terracing or other unusual formations within the landscape, or indications of 19th century European settlement remains). Exposed and disturbed soils were examined where encountered for evidence of earlier modification, and an understanding of the local stratigraphy. Particular attention was paid to the area close to the Oteha Stream, with subsurface testing with a probe and spade carried out along its contour to determine whether buried archaeological deposits could be identified or establish the nature of possible archaeological features. Photographs were taken to record the survey area and its immediate surrounds.

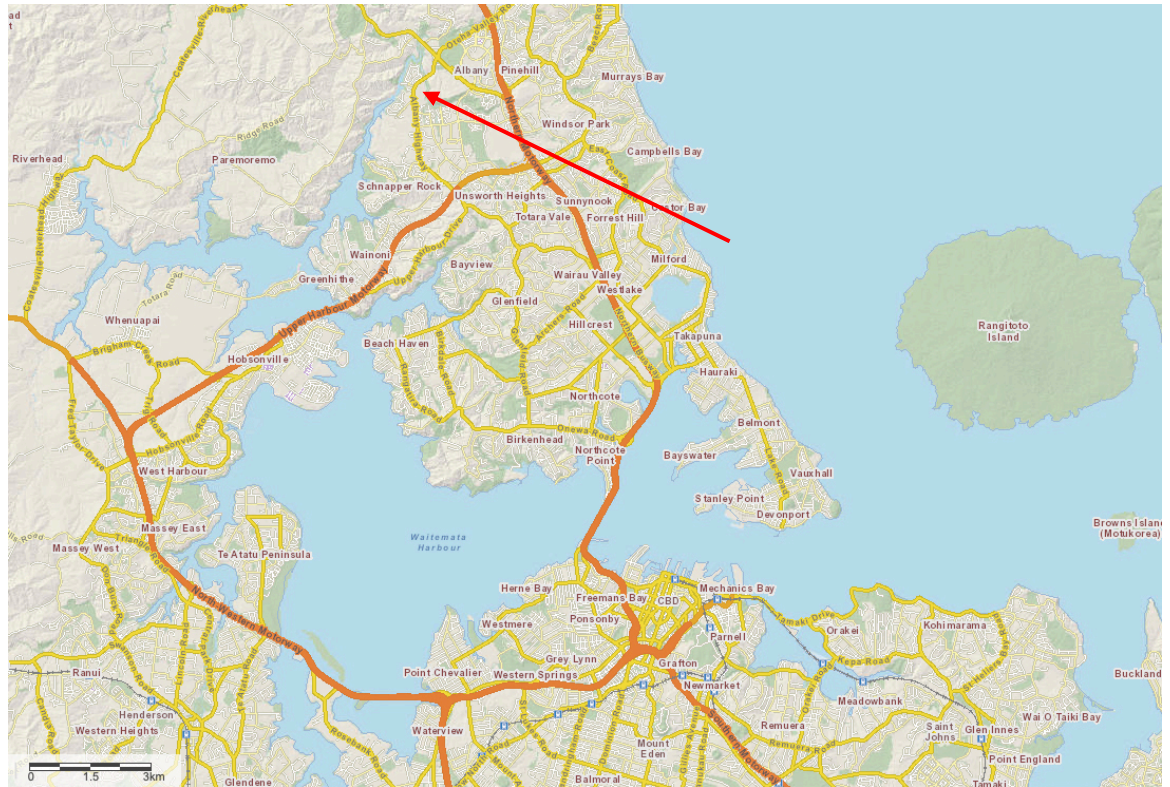


Figure 1. General location of the proposed development

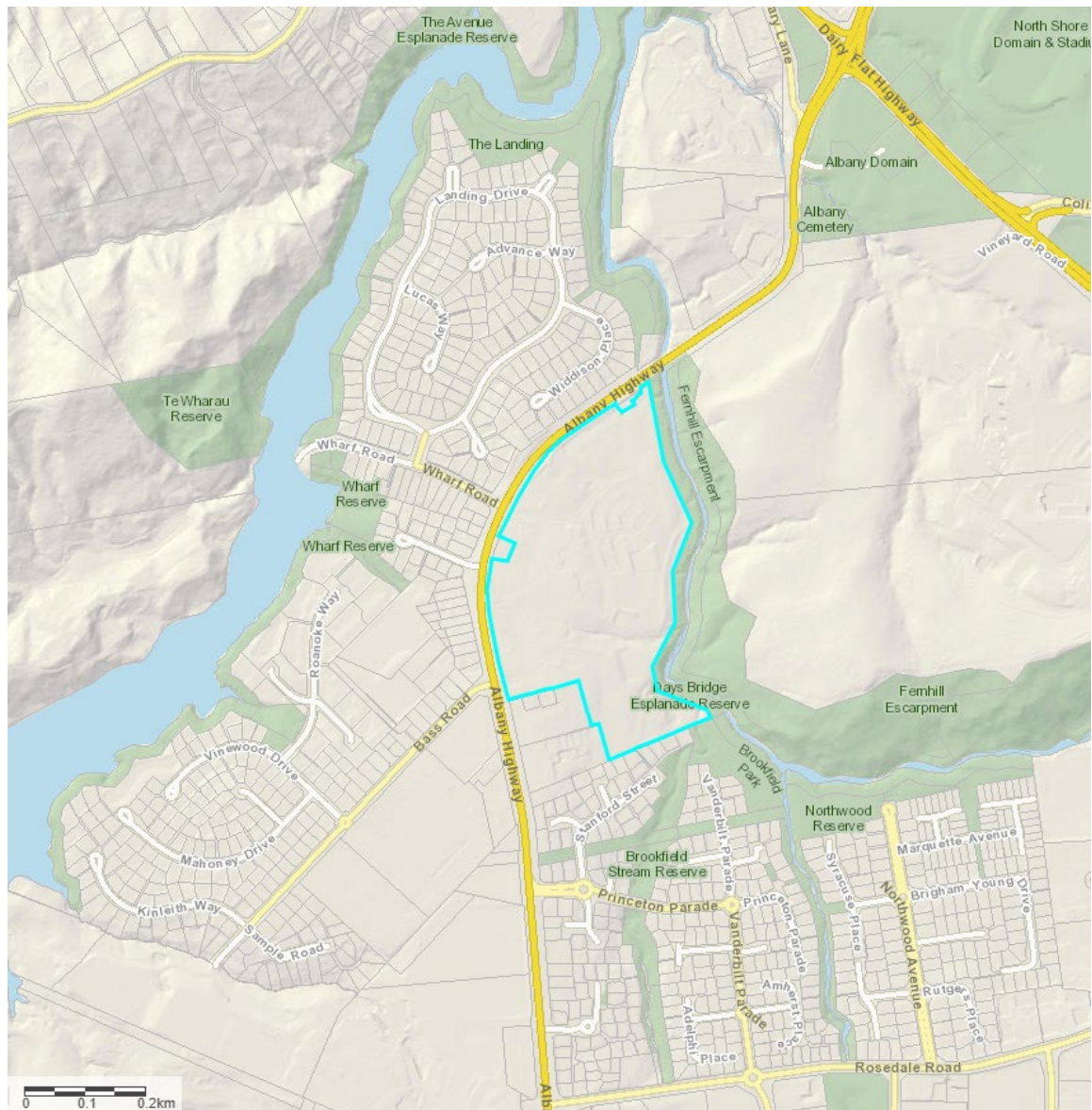


Figure 2. Location map showing property boundaries (source: Auckland Council Geomaps)



Figure 3. Aerial view of property, 2017 (source: Auckland Council Geomaps)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND¹

Maori Settlement

Records associated with land sales and archaeological information indicate that Maori settlement in the general area was focused on the upper reaches of the Waitemata Harbour around Hellyers (Oruamo) and Okahukura (Lucas) Creeks, particularly around the entrance to these creeks. As is evidenced by the numerous occupation sites along Lucas Creek, stretching as far upstream as the township of Albany, the creek edge would have been attractive for settlement with its easy access to the harbour, its plentiful coastal and marine resources and its access to the resources of the interior. This would also have been the case along branches of the estuary. These settlements were occupied permanently, with fluctuations in use of the area associated with seasonal gathering of available resources by groups coming from the wider Tamaki isthmus region (Clough 1995; Clough and Shakles 2012). Prior to the arrival of Europeans Okahukura Creek was an important access route from the Waitemata Harbour and thence through Oteha Valley and the Lonely Track Ridge to the east coast.

The abundance of midden sites clustered along the edges of tidal waterways and the Waitemata Harbour underscore the importance of marine resources to Maori populations. Lawlor (1994) notes that the podsolised clay and silt soils of the area would have made horticulture difficult due to poor drainage. Defended settlements (Pa) are located in areas that provide natural defence, as well as affording views of coasts and waterways.

European Settlement

The Crown Purchase of the Mahurangi and Omaha Blocks in 1841 consisted predominantly of land east of the main ridge from Pakiri down to and including the North Shore. Some of the Albany area would have been included in this purchase, but the bulk of the remaining area was acquired under private and other Crown purchases concluded by the mid-1840s. From 1853 the land was further divided through Crown Grants under the provisions of the Waste Lands Act 1853 (King 1984). The written records associated with these transactions, in conjunction with fragmentary traditional histories, give some indication of previous Maori settlement and land use within the area, as noted above.

In the early European period Okahuhura (Lucas) Creek was a centre for the timber industry and, as in earlier times, formed an important access route before good roads were formed (Rickard 1986). The considerable volume of timber extracted from the area suggests that much of the land was extensively forested prior to the arrival of Europeans (King 1984). The area also attracted gum diggers, indicating that the region once carried primary forest.

In general throughout the Albany area, from the time of European contact there is a definable sequence of events with large scale land clearance, removal of commercial timber and extensive gum digging followed by farming settlers who spent a good deal of time filling in the land and rendering it suitable for pasture and other agricultural uses such as market gardening and orchards. It is likely that many of these activities, particularly gum digging and logging, would have modified much of the area to the extent that most evidence of its earlier history has been eliminated (Clough 1995; Clough and Shakles 2012). More

¹ Summarised from Clough 1995, Clough and Shakles 2012.

recently there has been extensive subdivision and urban development in the Albany and Greenhithe areas which have further modified the area.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There are numerous recorded archaeological sites along Lucas Creek, the majority on the eastern side of the creek. However, there is only one recorded archaeological site (R10/1307) in close proximity to the project area (Figure 3). This is a midden site on the west bank of the Oteha Stream, north of Albany Highway, described on the site record as a scattered and disturbed deposit of fragmented shell, located at E1751332 N5933588.

A further 15 archaeological sites are recorded within a 1km radius of the project area. Most recorded archaeological sites are clustered around Lucas (Okahukura) Creek to the west, and the majority of these sites are marine shell midden.

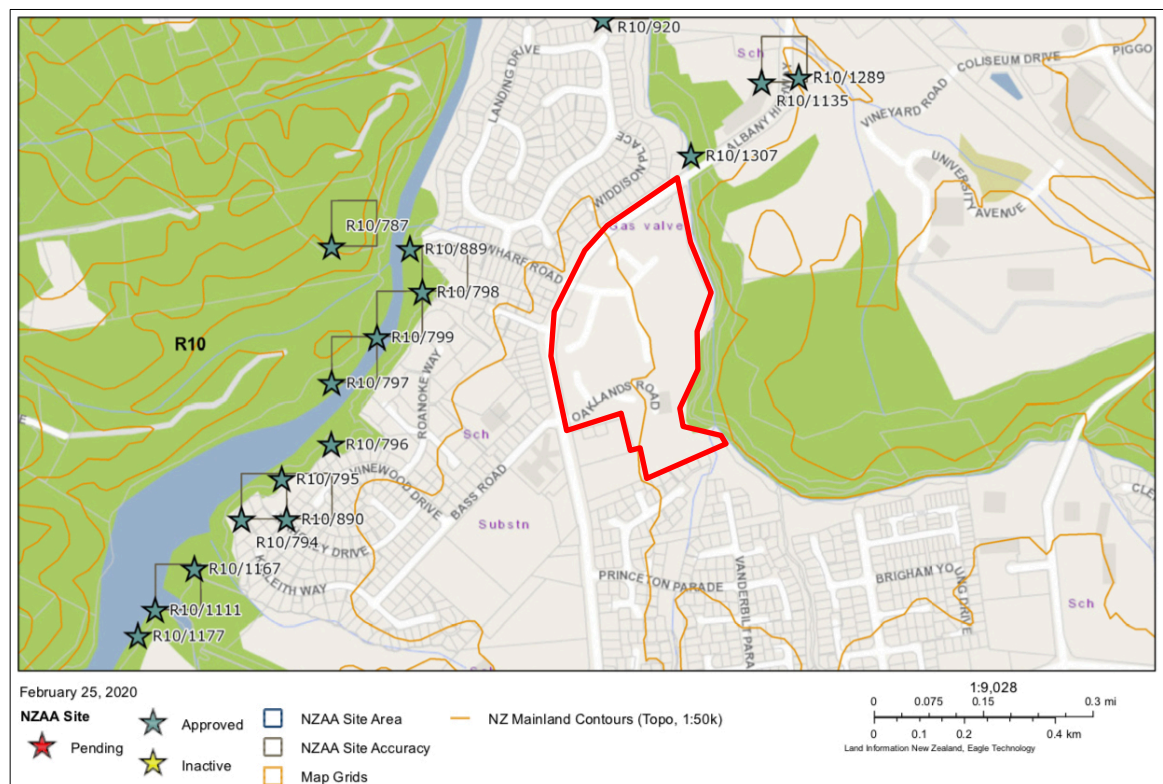


Figure 4. Recorded sites near the project area (outlined in red) (source: NZAA ArchSite)

HISTORICAL SURVEY

Information from Early Maps and Plans

Early survey plans were reviewed but provided little information on the property that might indicate the presence of archaeological sites. However, one early but undated plan showing the ownership of land blocks in the upper harbour area identifies the owner of the property as 'Helyer' (Figure 5). This is likely to have been the Helyer after whom Hellyer's Creek was named, or a member of the same family. Hellyer's Creek is named Hilyer's Creek on the plan, and the spelling of names on early plans and title deeds was often variable.



Figure 5. Detail from Roll 41/1 (undated) showing early land ownership in the Lucas Creek area, with the project area (arrow) owned by Helyer (source: Quickmap)

Information from Early Aerials

Inspection of early aerial photographs shows that the project area was used as farmland and for orchards during the 1940s (Figure 6). Some small farm buildings can also be observed. Mixed use of the area for farming and orchard activities continued through to 1988, at which time all orchards had been removed and the area appears to have returned to pasture. (Figure 7–Figure 8). By the late 1990s a number of Massey University campus buildings had been constructed (Figure 9), with additional buildings added subsequently (compare Figure 3).



Figure 6. 1940 aerial photograph of the project area (circled in red). Source: RetroLens



Figure 7. 1970 aerial photograph of the project area (circled in red). Note intensified areas of orchard activity. Source: RetroLens



Figure 8. 1988 aerial photograph of the project area (circled in red). Source: RetroLens



Figure 9. 1999 aerial photo (source: Auckland Council Geomaps)

FIELD ASSESSMENT

Field Survey Results

A field survey was conducted for this assessment on 21 February 2020. The subject property is bordered by Albany Highway to the west and north, and the Oteha Stream and Days Bridge Esplanade Reserve to the east. The property is surrounded by suburban residential development, save for the esplanade reserve to the east, which is covered in regenerating native bush.

Currently the property contains a number of sealed accessways, carparks and prefabricated buildings associated with Massey University located over the western part of the property. The eastern part of the property comprises grassland which slopes gently towards the Oteha Stream and largely follows the contours of the waterway.

Survey conditions were clear and visibility was good. Ground surfaces were very dry. Survey of the project area was carried out by foot and involved walking all parts of the property, visual scanning and probing and spade tests in the grassed area near the Oteha Stream.

In general, the property displayed substantial landscape modification. In addition to the campus facilities, all ground surfaces in the eastern area were smooth and appeared designed to enhance the outlook towards the Oteha Stream (Figure 10–Figure 12). Additionally, a number of modifications had been made in order to facilitate drainage of water, and these were clearly visible during the course of the survey (Figure 13–Figure 14).

Five test pits were opened along the contour of the Oteha Stream (Figure 15). The first, TP1, was located on a gradual slope at the southern end of the project area at coordinates E1751317 N5932977 \pm 1m. TP1 was opened to a depth of 12cm (Figure 16). A thin 3cm topsoil was encountered, overlaying 9cm of light brown silt with black PVC inclusions. The base of TP1 consisted of a compact yellow and brown mottled clay with no inclusions.

TP2 was located slightly north from TP1 at coordinates E1751321 N5933064 \pm 1m and opened to a depth of 9cm (Figure 17). TP2 displayed the same characteristics as TP1, a thin topsoil layer capping a layer of brown silt, and a base of mottled clay. Black PVC inclusions were also present in TP2.

TP3 was located halfway along the eastern project boundary at coordinates E1751342 N5933180 \pm 1m and was opened to a depth of 16cm (Figure 18). As with previous test pits, TP3 displayed a thin topsoil layer overlaying brown silt and a base of mottled clay. Black PVC inclusions were also present.

TP4 was located north of TP3 adjacent to the contours of Oteha Stream. TP4 was located at coordinates E17513 N5933312 \pm 1m and was opened to a depth of 10cm (Figure 19). The characteristics of TP4 were consistent with all previous test pits.

TP5 was located at the extreme northern end of the project area at coordinates E1751305 N5933465 \pm 1m. TP5 was opened to a depth of 15cm (Figure 20). In contrast to all previous test pits, TP5 displayed a thicker topsoil layer (5cm) and a light brown silt with clumpy clay and rock inclusions. A compact clay was observed at the base of TP5.

No archaeological evidence was observed across the property or in any of the test pits (most of which included broken down PVC indicative of construction/landscaping work) and it was concluded that the property had been modified to the extent that no subsurface archaeological remains are likely to be present.



Figure 10. View south along Oteha Stream/esplanade reserve (at extreme left of image), with one of the campus buildings at right. Note extensive landscape modification



Figure 11. View north along Oteha Stream/esplanade reserve (at extreme right of image) with campus buildings at far left. Note extensive landscape modification



Figure 12. View north along the Oteha Stream/esplanade reserve (to extreme right of image), with campus buildings at far left. Note extensive landscape modification



Figure 13. View south with campus buildings in the distance and evidence of landscape modifications to assist with drainage in foreground



Figure 14. Another example of landscape modifications to assist with drainage, looking south



Figure 15. Location of test pits



Figure 16. Close up of TP1



Figure 17. Close up of TP2



Figure 18. Close up of TP3



Figure 19. Close up of TP4



Figure 20. Close up of TP5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Results

No archaeological sites have previously been recorded within the project area and no evidence of archaeological material was identified during the survey for this assessment. The project area is a substantially modified landscape which includes roads, carparks and prefabricated buildings, while the grassed area in the eastern part of the property has been extensively landscaped and contoured. Given the extent of the landscape modification and the nature of the underlying substrates observed within test pits, it is unlikely this area contains any subsurface archaeological remains.

Maori Cultural Values

This is an assessment of effects on archaeological values and does not include an assessment of effects on Maori cultural values. Such assessments should only be made by the tangata whenua. Maori cultural concerns may encompass a wider range of values than those associated with archaeological sites. The historical association of the general area with the tangata whenua is evident from the recorded sites, traditional histories and known Maori place names. The field assessment was carried out in the presence of Ringi Brown (Ngati Manuhiri) and Gabriel Kirkwood (Ngati Whatua) who did not express any archaeological concerns.

Survey Limitations

It should be noted that archaeological survey techniques (based on visual inspection and minor sub-surface testing) cannot necessarily identify all sub-surface archaeological features, or detect wahi tapu and other sites of traditional significance to Maori, especially where these have no physical remains.

Archaeological Value and Significance

While there are numerous archaeological sites located in the wider Albany area, these are mostly clustered along Lucas Creek to the west. The project area has no known archaeological value or significance as no sites have been identified on the property.

Effects of Future Development

Future development of the property will have no known effects on any archaeological or other historic heritage sites.

In any area where archaeological sites have been recorded in the general vicinity it is possible that unrecorded subsurface remains may be exposed during development. While it is considered unlikely in this situation due to extensive landscape modification, the possibility is provided for under the AUP OP Accidental Discovery Rule (E12.6.1).

Archaeological features and 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.

Resource Management Act 1991 Requirements

Section 6 of the 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 provisions of the RMA. The Auckland Unitary Plan Operative in Part 2016 (AUP OP) is relevant to the proposed activity.

There are no scheduled historic heritage sites located on the property. This assessment has established that the proposed activity will have no effect on any known archaeological remains and has little potential to affect unrecorded subsurface remains.

However, if suspected archaeological remains are exposed during future development works, the Accidental Discovery Rule (E12.6.1) set out in the AUP OP must be complied with. Under the Accidental Discovery Rule 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 Rule would no longer apply in respect to archaeological sites if an Authority from Heritage NZ was in place.

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 Requirements

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),² –

(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

² Under Section 42(3) an Authority is not required to permit work on a pre-1900 building unless the building is to be demolished.

(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)³

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.

An archaeological authority will not be required for future development of the property as no known sites will be affected, and it is unlikely that any undetected sites are present. However, should any sites be exposed during development the provisions of the HNZPTA must be complied with.

Conclusions

No archaeological sites had previously been recorded on the property and none were identified as a result of the site survey. Due to the level of landscape modification the likelihood of encountering any unrecorded archaeological features during future development of the property is considered to be low, and any works could be carried out under the provisions of the AUP OP Accidental Discovery Rule (E12.6.1).

³ Under Section 43(1) a place post-dating 1900 (including the site of a wreck that occurred after 1900) that could provide 'significant evidence relating to the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand' can be declared by Heritage NZ to be an archaeological site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There should be no constraints on the future development of the property on archaeological grounds, since no archaeological sites are known to be present and it is considered unlikely that any will be exposed during development.
- If subsurface archaeological evidence should be unearthed during future development (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).

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