

# **57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road: archaeological assessment**

**report to  
KBS Design Group**

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# 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road: archaeological assessment

## 1 Introduction

KBS Design Group propose to apply to rezone and then develop for townhouses at 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road (Lot 1 DP 455035). A number of pre-European Māori archaeological sites including several middens (R10/1186, R10/1185, R10/1290 and R10/1291) and a pit and adze findspot (R10/239) are recorded at the entrance to Te Wharau Creek 600 m to the west of the property. An archaeological assessment of effects is required in support of resource consent applications to Auckland Council and potential archaeological authority applications to Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT). Abu Hoque of KBS Design Group commissioned this assessment from CFG Heritage Ltd.

### 1.1 Statutory requirements

All archaeological sites, whether recorded or not, are protected by the provisions of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and may not be destroyed, damaged or modified without an authority issued by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT).

An archaeological site is defined in the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act as:

- (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).

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) 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 (Section 6f).

Historic heritage is defined as those natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures, derived from archaeological, architectural, cultural, historic, scientific, or technological qualities.

Historic heritage includes:

- historic sites, structures, places, and areas
- archaeological sites;
- sites of significance to Maori, including wahi tapu;
- surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources (RMA Section 2).

These categories are not mutually exclusive and some archaeological sites may include above ground structures or may also be places that are of significance to Maori.

Where resource consent is required for any activity the assessment of effects is required to address cultural and historic heritage matters.

## 2 Methodology

The New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) Site Recording Scheme (SRS) was searched for records of archaeological sites. The digital library of archaeological reports held by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga was searched for previous works at sites. Old maps and plans held by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) were reached using Quick Map software. The area was checked on the Auckland Council Geomaps server for areas of recorded heritage and recorded archaeological

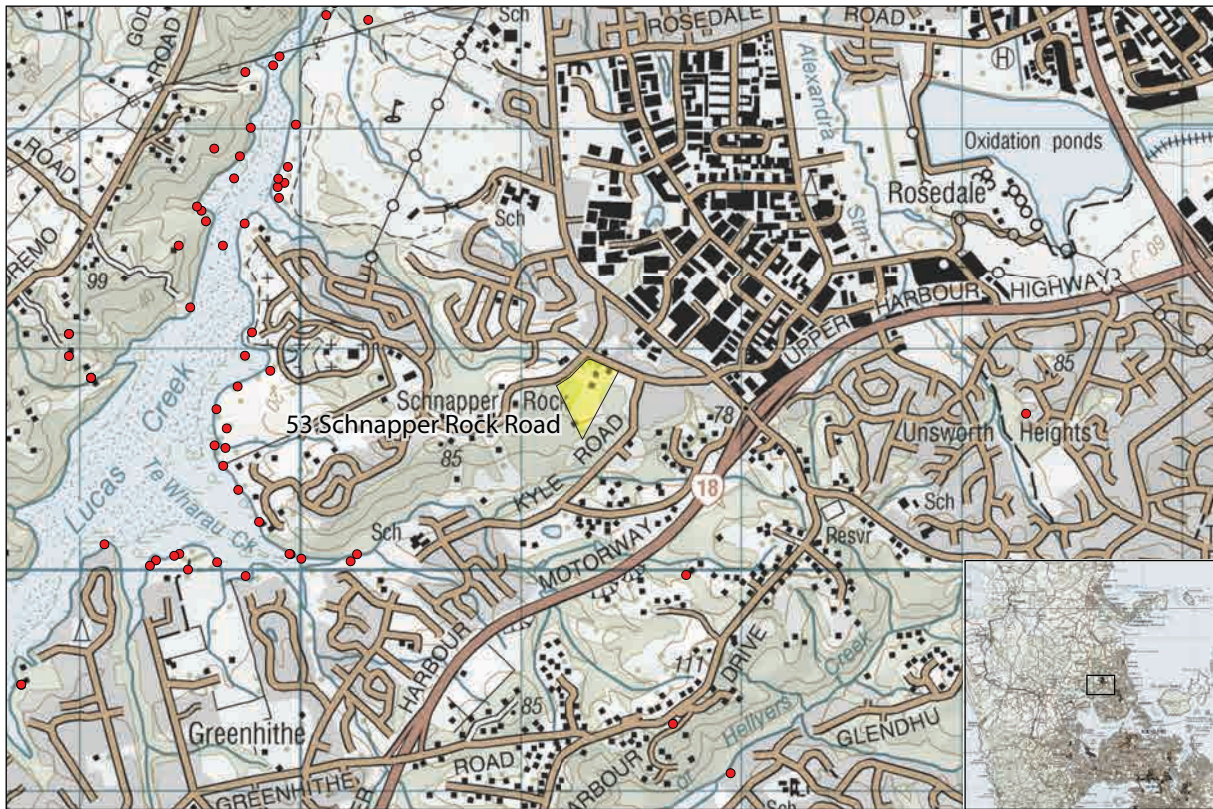


Figure 1. Location of 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity.

surveys, and the Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) was accessed where necessary for more information on these. The HNZPT New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero was accessed for information on listed heritage sites. A site visit was conducted on foot by Ella Ussher of CFG Heritage Ltd on 17 Dec 2020. The entire property was walked over and areas near the streams and original house location were probed using a gum spear to assess whether subsurface archaeological deposits or features remained.

### 3 Background

The proposed areas of works sit on the banks of Te Wharau Creek, a tributary of the larger Ōkahukura / Lucas Creek, which straddles the boundary between the East Coast Bays formation of sandstone and mudstone hills, and the Puketoka clays which sit in the low-lying area to the south of the creek. The Puketoka clays that make up the flat areas within the Oteha Valley are present throughout the Upper Waitematā were not generally suitable for Māori horticulture. The use of both Oruamo / Hellyers Creek and Okahukura / Lucas Creek as inland access routes is well documented with a large number of pre-European archaeological sites located along both of their banks.

#### 3.1 Pre-European Māori

It is not known who first occupied the upper reaches the Waitemata Harbour, but it is likely that several different iwi held sway over time. Te Kawerau have traditional links to the area and Kumeu was occupied by Te Uringutu hapu of Ngati Whatua in 1824 (Smith 1899: 164). The region was probably an important transport corridor from the earliest times. Portages between the Kumeu Stream and Poitotoi (Brigham Creek) or Rangitopuni (Riverhead) allowed canoe access between the Waitemata and Kaipara Harbours (Smith 1899: 206), while walking tracks gave access to the Kaipara hinterland

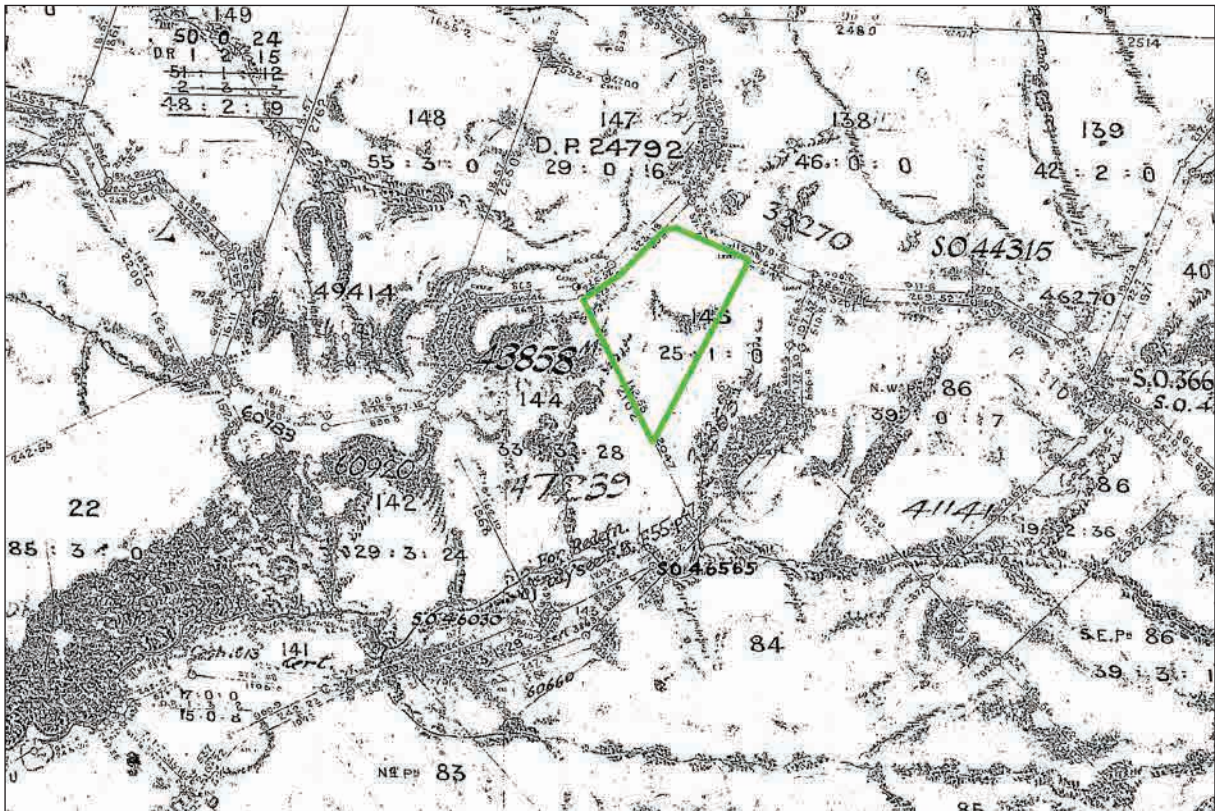


Figure 2. SO 2474 from 1882, showing Allotment 146 Parish of Paremoremo and 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Rd.

and East Coast Bays. The ease of access to this region from both coasts might also have facilitated meetings between iwi, which is apparently reflected in some place names. The traditional name for Riverhead, Rangitopuni, is derived from the presentation of a dog-skin mat (topuni) to the warrior Maki during a peace-making ceremony (Graham 1925: 21). Similarly, Taupaki translates to “a peace making” (Waitangi Tribunal 2006: 343).

### 3.2 Historic settlement in Albany and at 37 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road

The crown purchase of the Mahurangi and Omaha blocks in 1841 covered most of the land from Pakiri to Takapuna, including Albany. This purchase was carried out in haste and took another 13 years to complete due to competing claims and settlements, but this did not stop an influx of European settlers into the area. The Puketoka clays were found to be ideal for clay pipe and brick manufacture in the 19th century and were heavily exploited (Edbrooke 2001). They were also suitable for fruit growing, with apples and grapes being dominant (Lutz and Chan 2011).

Kauri was easily extracted from the hills above Okahukura / Lucas Creek and barged out to the Waitematā to support Auckland’s growing demand for timber. Many settlers claimed large areas of land for exploitation of these resources. Timber felling, along with gum digging represented some of the earliest industry in the area (King 1984). A wharf was set up in Albany for transporting goods in and out of the area, and a small settlement was developed, including a hotel, post office, school and several permanent dwellings. For most of the 19th century, and until the 1950s, most of Albany remained undeveloped with land held in large rural lots either as bush or farm holdings. Following the opening of the Auckland Harbour Bridge in 1959, these larger lots were slowly subdivided for residential and commercial development (Lutz and Chan 2011).

The property now at 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road was included within Claim 1162 by A. Chisholm in OLC 355 from 1846. Later, SO 2474 from 1882 shows the property within Allotment 146 Parish of Paremoremo but no owner is mentioned within this plan. After this point the property does not appear to have been further subdivided until the 1980s. Aerial photographs show a house and outbuildings on the property from at least 1940 until 2015.

### 3.3 *Archaeological background*

A small number of sites connected with the pre-European Māori settlement surrounding Te Wharau creek have been recorded. These include several shell middens, R10/1185 and R10/1186, near the entrance to the creek, and two other middens further upstream recorded by Shakles in 2011, R10/1290 and R10/1291. A storage pit and adze findspot was also recorded on the northern bank of Te Wharau Creek near its entrance by Clarke in 1981, but was unable to be relocated during the NZAA Site Recording Scheme upgrades by Foster in 2003.

Further afield, Packington-Hall recorded several sites in 1995 around Albany linked to the pre-European Māori occupation along the western bank of Lucas Creek. These include three areas of shell midden and fire-cracked rocks within a greyish-buff clayey matrix along the tidal banks (R10/959, R10/960 and R10/961). On the opposite western banks of Lucas Creek, a large area of midden was recorded within the North Shore City Golf Course (recorded as four sites, R10/1112, R10/1172, R10/1173, R10/1174 R10/1175) and another three directly to the north (R10/1177, R10/1111 and R10/1167). There appears to be some duplication of sites in these two locations. Mosen (1995) also recorded at least three areas of shell midden (R10/794, R10/795 and R10/796), while Baquié recorded a further area (R10/890) in 1997 in surveys associated with the Bass Road residential subdivision in Albany. Recently Cruickshank et al. (2020) assessed the proposed removal of a historic homestead, recorded as site R10/1459, at 273 Upper Harbour Drive to the south in Greenhithe.

## 4 **Field visit**

The topography of the property is mostly flat near Schnapper Rock Road but has a moderate downward slope towards the southern boundary. Several waterways and gullies begin within this slope, becoming tributaries of Te Wharau Creek. One of these is protected as a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP). Ground cover outside the SEA was primarily long kikuyu, gorse and blackberry, with some shrubs and larger trees around the boundary and water courses. Wild grapes were also visible within some trees.

Construction work is already underway by Watercare within the designated site in the north-east corner of Lot 1 DP 455035, and there is also a residential development under construction within the neighbouring property at Lot 2 DP 455035. The house and outbuildings visible in aerial photographs from 1940 were demolished in 2015 and since then there has been considerable landscape modification within this area (Figure 3). Some early 20th century material was visible on the surface within this area alongside modern rubbish. Two spade-width test pits were dug near the previous location of the house, and both contained a topsoil to 250mm, above a modified yellow-brown mottled clay with large gravel aggregate that could be from the old driveway (Figure 4). No in situ archaeological deposits or features were observed.

The remainder of the property appeared to be modified by vegetation planting and removal since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A small 5m wide terrace was observed to the east of the southern of the two water courses (Figure 5) but is likely linked to an orchard planted in this location and shelter belt, visible in aerial photographs from 1963 (Figure 6). A modern farm rubbish dump was also noted at the beginning of the northern watercourse (Figure 7).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed within the property boundary.



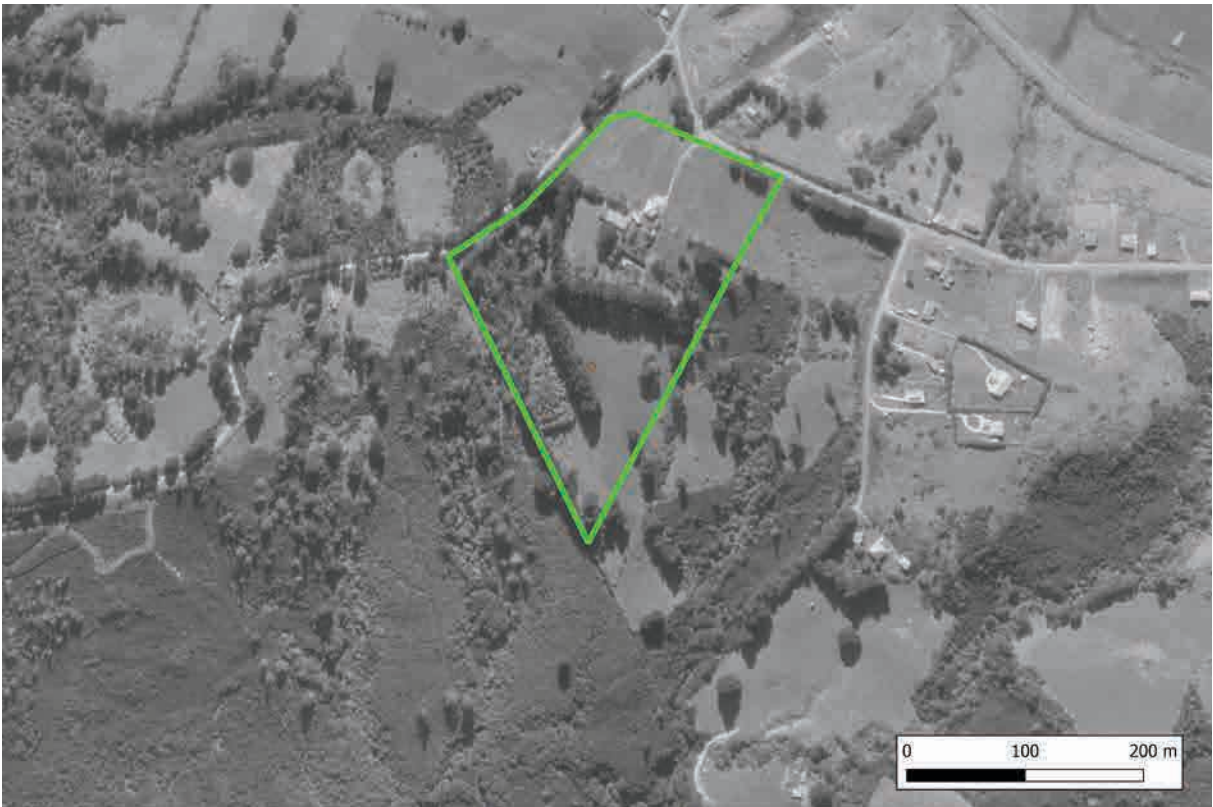
*Figure 3. Location of demolished house and outbuildings near Watercare designated site.*



*Figure 4. Spade-width pit dug near the location of the demolished house.*



*Figure 5. Terrace likely linked to 1960s orchard.*



*Figure 6. Aerial photograph from 1963 showing terrace (brown dot) near orchard and shelter belt.*





*Figure 7. Sloping topography around start of northern watercourse and modern farm rubbish dump.*

## 5 Assessment

The following assessments of values and significance relate only to archaeological values. Other interested parties, in particular mana whenua, may hold different values regarding the proposed development.

No archaeological features or deposits were noted within the property at 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Rd (Lot 1 DP 455035) during background research or a field assessment. There are no archaeological constraints on the proposed development.

## 6 Recommendations

These recommendations are only made based on the archaeological potential that has been outlined above. Any other values associated with special interest groups, including tangata whenua, can only be determined by them. It is recommended that:

- an authority to modify or destroy archaeological sites within the scope of works at 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road (Lot 1 DP 455035) does not need to be applied for from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) under Section 45 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014;
- all works should be undertaken under an Accidental Discovery Protocol; a draft protocol is attached to this report;
- since archaeological research cannot always detect sites of traditional significance to Maori, or wahi tapu, the appropriate tangata whenua authorities should be consulted regarding the possible existence of such sites, and the recommendations in this report.

## References

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- Lutz, H., and T. Chan. 2011. Albany and East Coast Bays. *North Shore Heritage: Thematic Review Report 2*
- Mosen, J. 1995. An archaeological survey of the proposed Bass Road subdivision, Albany. Unpublished Biosearches report prepared for Miramar Developments Ltd.
- Smith, S.P. 1899. Wars of the northern against the southern tribes of New Zealand in the nineteenth century: Part II. *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 8: 141–164.

## Accidental Discovery Protocol

In the event of the accidental or unexpected discovery of archaeological features, including human remains:

1. All work within the vicinity of the discovery should cease immediately.
2. A buffer of at least 5 m should be set up around the discovery and this should be marked on the ground, preferably with pegs and tape, or similar.
3. All machinery and plant should be removed from the buffer zone where this is possible.
4. The site archaeologist, or other qualified archaeologist, should be informed.
  - i. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) should be informed.
  - ii. If the discovery is of Maori origin, the relevant tangata whenua authorities should also be informed. Appropriate protocols (tikanga) should be observed.
  - iii. If the discovery is of human remains, the New Zealand Police should also be informed.
5. The archaeologist should take relevant steps to secure the area of the discovery.
6. The archaeologist will assess the discovery and advise HNZPT and the client on the relevant steps to be taken.
7. Works in the area of the discovery shall not recommence until authorised in writing by the archaeologist in consultation with any identified affected parties or HNZPT.