

Archaeological Assessment

Location: 56 Pohutukawa Place, Bell Block.

Proposed Works: Residential subdivision.

Commissioned by: Roche and Roche Investments.

Author: Ivan Bruce, Archaeological Resource Management, November 2021.



Proposed development location photographed from the south. Image: Ivan Bruce, September 2021.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
33 Scott Street/ Moturoa/ NEW PLYMOUTH
(0274) 888215
itmusbosointeresting@xtra.co.nz

Executive Summary

Roche and Roche Investments Ltd are proposing to develop a 110-lot residential subdivision at 56 Pohutukawa place, Bell Block, New Plymouth (the project). This assessment was undertaken to advise whether the project will affect archaeological sites and to instigate any Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) authority process required in this case.

The project will be situated on a grazing block, under pasture and currently grazed by dry stock and horses. Despite a well-established archaeological and historic record of Māori occupation in the Bell Block area, there are no archival records of 19th Century Māori pa kainga on this property prior to Pakeha ownership and the property currently contains no recorded archaeological sites. No previously unrecorded archaeological sites were noted during an archaeological field survey of the project area. However, as discussed in this report, the potential exists for archaeological evidence to be encountered during earthworks undertaken during the development of this project.

It is recommended that this project is undertaken under a general archaeological authority granted by the HNZPT.

1. Introduction

1.1 This archaeological assessment was undertaken to advise Roche and Roche Investments Ltd on the archaeological and historic record of the project area, and to advise of any likelihood that the development of this project will affect archaeological sites.

1.2 The assessment is based on desktop research and pedestrian survey.

1.3 The affected property appellation is:

Lot 2 DP 521660.

1.4 The project will result in the development of a 110-lot residential subdivision.

1.5 The project will require earthworks for the installation of the culverts; roading; services and amenities.

1.6 The archaeological assessment was conducted specifically to identify and record archaeological evidence.

1.7 While aspects of traditional Māori history relating to the area are discussed in the background section of this report, statements describing the cultural significance of this location to Māori are considered outside the scope of this assessment and the appropriate representatives from the Puketapu and Ngati Tawhirikura Hapus, and Te Kotahitanga O Te Atiawa Taranaki should be contacted for their views in these matters.

1.8 This archaeological assessment was undertaken by Ivan Bruce during September – November 2021. The following report outlines the results.

2. Statutory requirements

2.1 There are two pieces of legislation in New Zealand that control work affecting archaeological sites. These are the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* (HNZPTA) and the *Resource Management Act 1991* (RMA)

2.2 HNZPT administers the HNZPTA. It contains a consent (authority) process for any work affecting archaeological sites, where an archaeological site is defined as:

Any place in New Zealand, including any building or structure (or part of a building or structure), that.

- a. 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

- b. Provides or may provide, through investigation by archaeological methods, evidence relating to the history of New Zealand; and
- c. Includes a site for which a declaration is made under section 43(1).

2.3 Any person who intends conducting work that may modify or destroy an archaeological site, must first obtain an authority from HNZPT. The process applies to sites on land of all tenure including public, private, and designated land. The HNZPTA contains penalties for unauthorised site damage or destruction.

2.4 The archaeological authority process applies to all archaeological sites, regardless of whether:

- The site is recorded in the New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme or included in the Heritage New Zealand List.
- The site only becomes known about because of ground disturbance, and/ or
- The activity is permitted under a district or regional plan, or a resource or building consent has been granted.

2.5 The heritage places assessed in this report are prehistoric and historic archaeological sites as defined under the HNZPTA.

2.6 The protection of archaeological sites and waahi taonga are specifically provided for within the operative New Plymouth District Plan:

“Rules OL81 to OL87 relate to waahi taonga and archaeological sites. The rules state that a land use or subdivision resource consent may be required from the council before carrying out the following activities on, or in close proximity to, a waahi tapu or archaeological site listed in the District Plan.”

2.7 The proposed New Plymouth District plan also identifies heritage buildings and items; heritage character areas; and archaeological sites within the proposed plan. These are contained within the Historic Heritage chapter of the plan. This plan contains objectives, policies, and rules to protect and manage historic heritage and provisions to manage activities that may impact on historic heritage values. All rules relating to historic heritage have had legal effect since the plan was notified on 23 September 2019.



Figure 1: Proposed subdivision as assessed.

3. Physical environment and setting

3.1 Located east of the New Plymouth CBD, between Fitzroy and Bell Block, the project area is accessed via Parklands Ave at the eastern boundary.

3.2 The project area is located on relatively level pasture, situated on the southern edge of the formerly extensive Waipu Lagoon. The area has been ploughed in the past and areas may have been modified by the works associated with the Kingsdown subdivision works (immediately east of the project area on Parklands Ave).

4. Resources and limitations

4.1 This assessment includes a review of the NZAA site recording scheme (Archsite 2021); archival material; land plans; historic literature; and a pedestrian survey of project area.

4.2 The assessment is based on background research and non-invasive field survey. No remote sensing, other than a review of Lidar was undertaken during this assessment. Stratigraphic profiles were observed in erosion faces where present in the field.

5. Project outline - Scope of earthworks

5.1. This project involves the development of a 110-lot residential subdivision with road and constructed house platforms. Earthworks and/or some degree of land modification will take place over the entirety of the area involved.

5.2 Preparatory cut and fill earthworks will be required to create level sections across the site. Earthworks will also be required for the roading and the provision of amenities.

6. Archival record

6.1 To my knowledge, there are no historic accounts; historic images; campaign maps; or land plans which specifically place prehistoric or historic Māori occupation within the project area. However, several pre-European era pa and papakainga are recorded in the immediate vicinity, and the surrounding landscape contains several landmarks with Māori placenames, including the Waipu lagoon. One early plan shows native tracks leading directly to this lagoon (see Figure 2) from the nearby Hoewaka papakainga, indicating that the lagoon was the focus of Māori resource exploitation as late as 1848. Following European settlement in the Bell Block area, Māori remained in occupation and maintained papakainga at nearby Tapuirau, Hoewaka

and Te Oropuriri until at least 1870¹. At least four Māori Urupa (burial grounds) are known to exist within 700m of the project area².

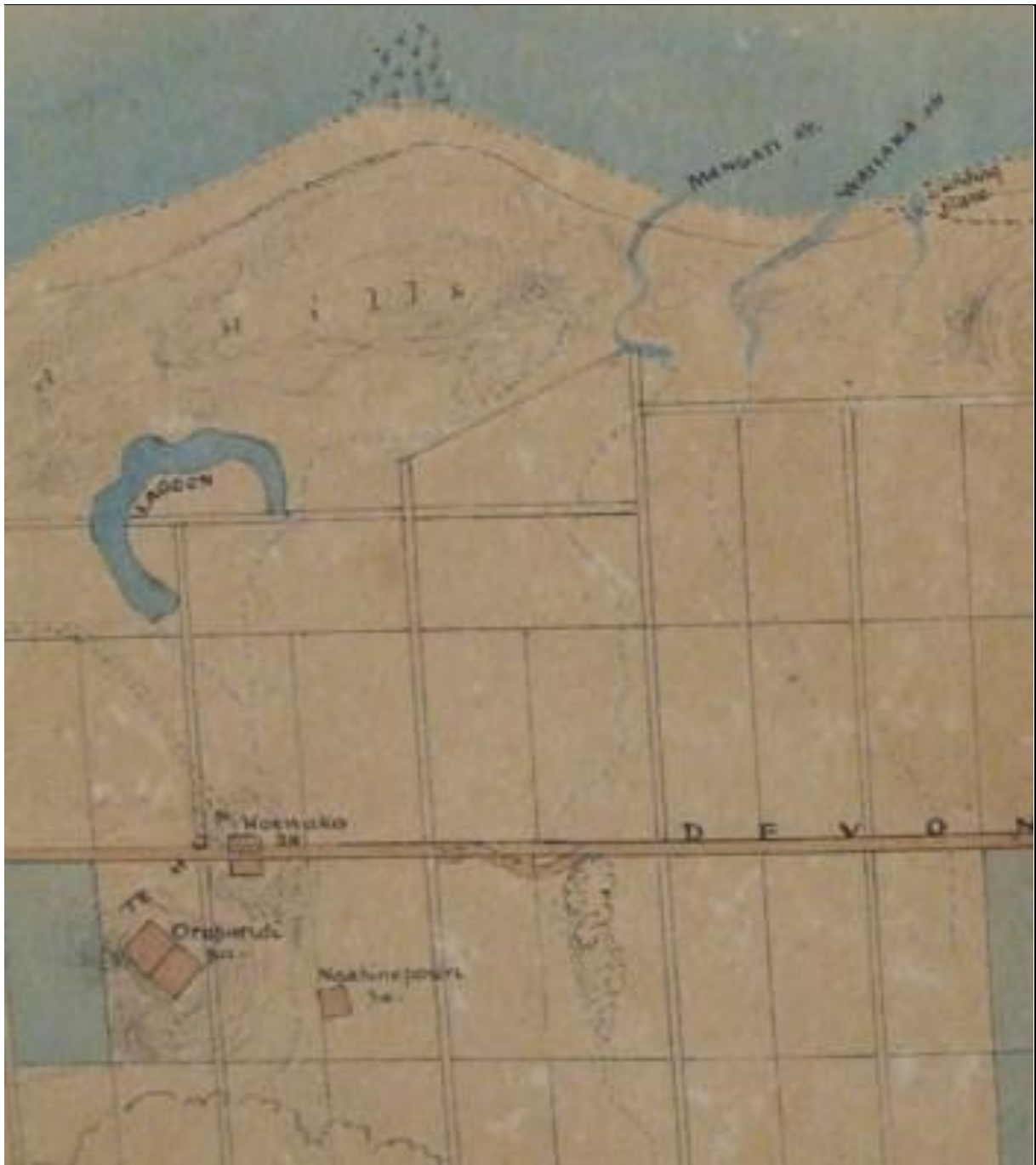


Figure 2: Detail from Wellington Carrington's 1848 plan of New Plymouth. Showing tracks leading from the papakainga of Hoewaka to the Waipu Lagoon.

¹ Holdaway and Gibb. 2006; Pp58.

² Falwasser Urupa Site ID 2654, Broughton Urupa Site ID 750, Tapuirau Site ID 679, Mangati Urupa 2037.

6.2 The project area was originally suburban Section 115 of the planned settlement of New Plymouth and set aside as New Zealand Company Reserve. The Bell Block area was subject to European occupation as early 1843, when Captain J.G. Cooke took up his suburban Section 113 to the west of this project area. However, European land development stalled until the sale of the Waiwhakaiho and Hua Blocks by 1854, when colonial settlement of the Waiwhakaiho, Hua, Bell and Puketapu Blocks intensified. From this point in time the project area has been in European ownership and used for pastoral farming. There are no land plans that indicate permanent European housing, or structures have ever been established on the property, other than a cow shed shown in an early 20th Century plan (see Figure 3).

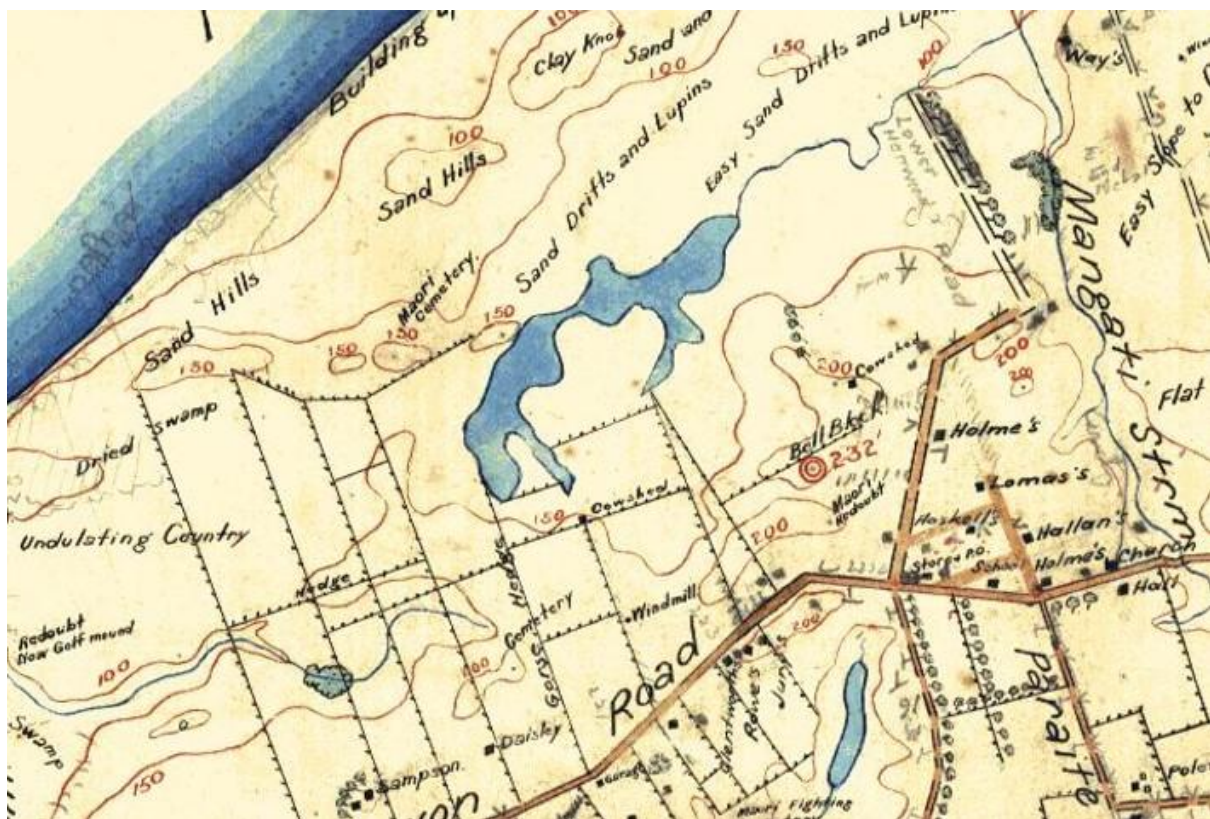


Figure 3: Detail from early 20th C century land plan SO 7394 showing a cowshed and a windmill on (or very near) the project area.

6.3 The Bell Block Stockade, constructed by the Taranaki Militia in 1860³, was situated on the hilltop overlooking the project area 400m to the southwest, prior to being bulldozed to make way for the Bell Block Hotel circa 1970. The site is now occupied by the Maida Vale retirement village.

³ Prickett. Pp10-12.

6.4 Early aerial image 1784/6 shows a collection of farm structures and the windmill, commensurate with the early land plan in Figure 3, but gives no indication of prior Māori or early colonial archaeological sites on the project area.

6. New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) Archaeological Site Record

6.1 No archaeological sites or heritage structures are listed on the operative or proposed New Plymouth District plan within the project area.

6.2 One site and area of significance to Māori (SASM), site ID 675 is listed on the NPDC proposed district plan. This site is named the Waipu Lagoon in the appendix to the proposed district plan and Puketapu and Ngati Tawhirikura Hapus are named as having Manawhenua over this site. The extent of this site is indicated on the plan, Rules SASM – R5, R8 and R9 may apply in this case.

7. New Zealand Archaeological Site Recording Scheme (Archsite)

Figure 4: NZAA Archaeological site distribution within 1km of Lot 2 DP 521660, outlined in red.

7.1 Archsite (accessed November 2021) records no archaeological sites on the project area. However, as far as I am aware there has been no subsurface archaeological investigation undertaken on the project area to date and unrecorded subsurface archaeological sites cannot be discounted at this time.

7.2 A high number of archaeological sites have been recorded within a one-kilometre radius of the project area. Most of these sites have been subject to archaeological investigation and comprise extensive groups of archaeological features. These sites range from pre-European era storage pit and horticultural features⁴; to the well preserved and highly complicated mid-19th Century Māori papakainga and gunfighting defences of Hoewaka and Te Oropuriri; and Victorian era European colonial homesteads and farming sites.

7.3 The following archaeological sites are recorded within 1km of the project area, as indicated in Figure 6 above.

P19/159 – Military Stockade. Bell Block Stockade. Destroyed in 1970 by the construction of the Bell Block Hotel.

P19/172 – Pa. Ngahinepourī. Ring ditch pa, pre-European. Also an Urupa.

⁴ A defining feature of the pre-European archaeological site distribution in the area north of SH3, between Bell block and the Ngamotu Golf links, I now refer to these pit clusters as the Hua horticultural complex.

P19/261 – Pa/ Papakainga. Te Oropuriri. Mid-19th Century Māori papakainga and gunfighting pa. Partially excavated during the SH3 Bell Block bypass project⁵.

P19/262 – Pa. Hoewaka. Mid-19th Century Māori papakainga. Partially excavated during the SH3 Bell Block bypass project.

P19/299 - Pa/ Papakainga. Tapuirau. Mid-19th Century Māori papakainga. Partially excavated during the Links residential development⁶, contains an Urupa.

P19/321 – Horticultural features. Excavated prior to development of Oropuriri Road commercial area.

P19/332 – Colonial homestead site. Cooke's Farm, site of the first European farm in the Hua/ Bell Block area.

P19/334 – Late Victorian era, colonial Homestead. Also find spot for a stone adze and cooking fires.

P19/384 – Findspot. Te umu Hapuku/ Pukehou. Oven stones and worked pumice recovered. Also a traditional named landmark.

P19/405 – Pits. Small cluster of pre-European era Māori storage pits, excavated as part of the Fairways residential housing development⁷.

P19/408 – Pits. Small cluster of pre-European era Māori storage pits, excavated as part of the Links residential housing development⁸.

P19/409 - Pits. Large cluster of pre-European era Māori storage pits, excavated as part of the Links residential housing development⁹.

P19/419 - Pits. Large cluster of pre-European era Māori storage pits, excavated as part of the Green residential housing development.

P19/420 - Pits. Large cluster of pre-European era Māori storage pits, excavated as part of the Summerset Bell Block retirement village.

⁵ Holdaway and Gibb. 2006

⁶ Judge et al 2006.

⁷ Bruce 2016.

⁸ Bruce 2015.

⁹ Ibid



Figure 5. Storage pits excavated during the Summerset Bell Block Retirement Village in 2020.



Figure 6: Photo taken looking east across Lots 1 – 38. Image: Ivan Bruce, September 2021.



Figure 7: Photo taken looking northeast across Lots 1 – 38. Image: Ivan Bruce, September 2021.

8. Archaeological evidence

8.1 No archaeological field evidence was noted on the project area during my field survey. The property was grazed and under grass. Surface depressions, or earthworks indicative of Māori land use were not noted. Erosion faces were inspected where presented but none showed evidence of anthropogenic charcoal, fire-cracked stone, or midden.

9. Archaeological potential

9.1 The primary issue for archaeological assessment of the project area is the inability to identify subsurface features following a century of ploughing and land modification associated with European farming and development. Pre-European era Māori archaeological sites, such as food storage pits, may exist below the plough zone but show can no surface indication of their existence. This has been the case for archaeological sites discovered and excavated during the Links; Fairway; Golf View; The Green; and Summerset subdivisions in the Bell Block area, where subsurface archaeological deposits, primarily storage pit clusters, still survived below the plough zone. Given the intensive pre-European Māori settlement pattern established by archaeological investigations undertaken in the immediate vicinity, I consider it

reasonable to take the conservative view, that similar pit clusters may exist unrecorded within this project area.

9.2 However, these sites will only be confirmed by topsoil stripping of relatively large spatial areas, followed by controlled archaeological excavation.

9.3 Any archaeological features encountered in the project area will most likely relate to prehistoric Māori occupation; probably in the form of storage pits, like those recorded recently at the nearby Summerset retirement village excavations (P19/420). As evidenced by the results of that excavation, there is still potential for artefacts; midden; even human remains to be recovered from within the project area, although this can be expected to exist in a highly modified condition and unless recovered from the lower levels of a backfilled pit, can only expect to be recovered from a secondary context.

10. Recommendations

10.1 It is recommended that all earthworks on this development are completed under authority to modify archaeological sites from HNZPT. I consider that the authority process will provide adequate opportunity to recover and record archaeological evidence should it exist within the project area and would be consistent with practices undertaken on developments elsewhere in the Bell Block area.

10.2 It can be expected that any authority will be conditional, at a minimum, at earthworks being monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Typically, topsoil is removed by mechanical digger, using a cleaning bucket to the level of the underlying sub soil. At this point the sub soils can be cleaned down using hand tools and archaeological features, should they exist, will be evident in plan view. Once archaeological evidence is encountered, excavations would be undertaken to record the site in accordance with accepted archaeological practice, prior to any further development taking place.

10.3 This methodology has been successfully used to identify the comprehensive assemblage of archaeological sites in Bell Block to date; and archaeological sites are routinely recovered in archaeological excavations through NZ using this methodology.

10.4 Any authority application must contain evidence of consultation with tangata whenua, and a statement of cultural values will be required by HNZPT prior to making any decision about the granting of an authority and the conditions that it may contain.

11. References

11.1 Written Sources

Bruce, I. 2015. *The Links Coastal Development - Stage 3 Preliminary Archaeological Report*. Unpublished report prepared for The Links Coastal Development.

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Judge C., R. Clough, and T. Mace, 2006. *The Links Coastal Development, New Plymouth, Stage One: Archaeological Investigation*. Unpublished report prepared for The Links Coastal Development.

Prickett, N. 1994. *Fortifications of the First Taranaki War 1860 - 61, 1865 - 69*. Records of the Auckland Institute and Museum 31: 1-87.

11.2 Aerials and land plans reviewed

Aerial image 1784/6

DP 2846

SO 7394

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Carrington, F. A. (ND) LINZ Stack Y (1-11), No.49, *New Plymouth Sections drawn for the New Plymouth Company*.

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11.3 Websites

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