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# A FADING LANDSCAPE: STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE

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## **Introduction**

This report presents the results of a survey of prehistoric, (pre-1830) Maori archaeological sites within an area of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Parkland to determine the nature and quality of local authority heritage management. It considers a number of key issues that impact on resource management and determine effective management of the prehistoric heritage resource by Auckland Regional Council (ARC).

It discusses to what extent a key heritage objective – the preservation and protection of a diverse and representative range of cultural heritage resources – is adequate, effective and sustainable.

## **Research objectives**

The objectives of the project were:

- To gather information about prehistoric site types, their distribution, state and condition in order to provide a contextual framework for resource management issues.
- To identify sites under threat and suggest consider mitigation strategies.
- To identify and recommend sites of prehistoric significance and consider appropriate management planning strategies.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies to manage, protect and conserve the cultural heritage resource.

## Context

### *The survey area*

The survey concentrated within and around the Cornwallis and Kaitarakihi Parks of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Parkland (Figure 1). It extended from the water supply catchment boundary in the north to the Manukau Harbour and between the settlements of Parau and Huia. It included the Puponga Peninsula and the catchments of Huia, Kaitarakihi Bay, Kakamatua Inlet, Mill Bay and Big Muddy Creek. The total survey area was approximately 12 square kilometres.

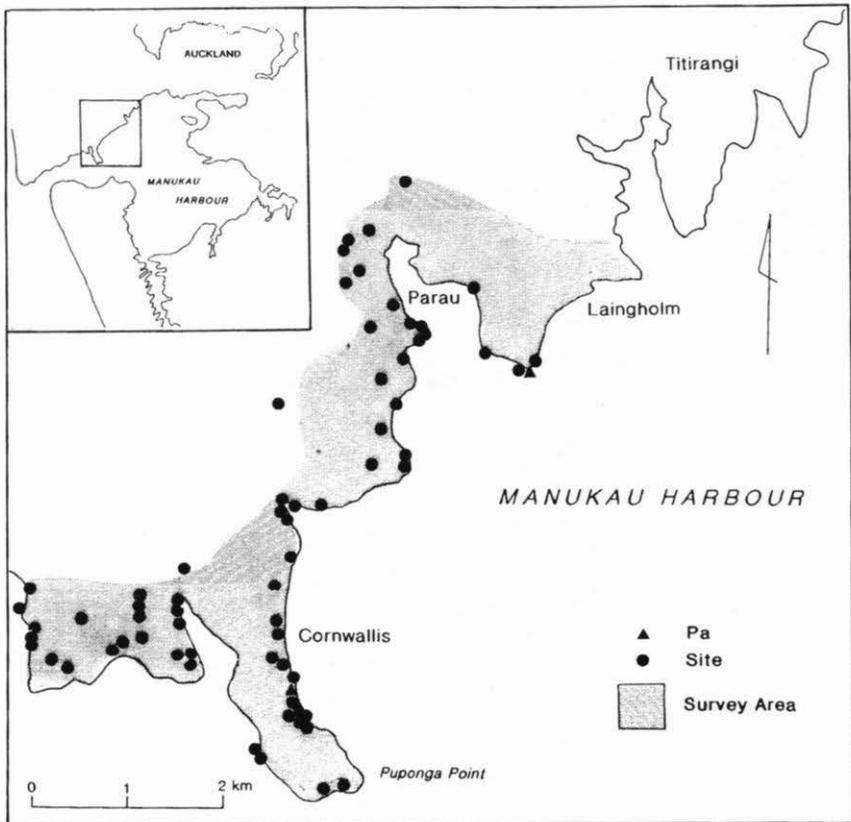


Figure 1. Location map.

### *Sources of Information and Subsequent Surveys*

These included The New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Record File; the Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) for Waitakere City and the wide ranging survey work of Bruce Hayward and Jack Diamond (Hayward and Diamond, 1978).

There have been other resurveys of the Waitakeres. In 1996, Ross and Foster investigated the state and condition of archaeological sites in the Auckland region as part of an upgrade of information recorded within the CHI of ARC (Ross and Foster, 1996). Phillips undertook a limited coastal survey in 1998 upgrading the information of sites in the Laingholm region (Phillips, *pers. comm.* March 2000).

### *Site type*

The survey comprised a non-probability, geographic sample. A total of 71 sites was investigated and are shown on the map, (Figure 1); some sites formed a complex of several features. The most numerous prehistoric site type is shell midden, comprising 85% of the total, as shown in Figure 1. The sites conform to the observed tendency for sites in the Waitakere region to be located in sheltered positions on the coast. Five new sites were discovered in the course of the survey.

*Table 1. Summary of Site Types*

Site type	Tally
Midden	61
Pits	4
Terraces	3
Find spot	3
Cultivation	3
Possible pa	2
Settlement	1
Shelter	1
Pa	1
Burial	1
Ovens	1

## Methodology

The field survey comprised an investigation into the physical condition of the 71 sites and their adjacent areas, complemented by an investigation of site records, consultation with agencies and specialists and documentary research. In addition, this survey assisted the Historic Places Upgrade and Assessment Project of ARC.

## Results

### *Field Assessment*

**Selection:** The 66 sites for field assessment were selected from the CHI Waitakere within a clearly defined geographical area (see Fig.1); a further 5 sites were discovered during the course of survey work, making a total of 71 sites.

**Documentation:** Primary information was derived from Historic Place Record descriptions in the CHI Waitakere City (Felgate, 1996) and Hayward and Diamond (Hayward and Diamond, 1978). The CINZAS was also consulted for additional information.

**Accuracy of information:** Information on the ground showed general accordance with the Historic Place Record descriptions and CHI AutoCAD maps incorporating GIS data. The grid references for 21 sites were inaccurate by +/- 100 metres and were amended.

**Information upgrade:** Only a small proportion (7%) of the CHI state and condition information has been updated to the current situation:

- 2 sites (R11/379 and R11/381) had a current (within the last 10 years) state and condition report.
- Three sites, R11/212, R11/360, and R11/364 had a current state and condition report because they no longer existed.
- 11 sites had been visited since 1977 and the CHI description upgraded. However, this additional information was not shown in the CHI database field recording the date of last visit.

**Preservation status of sites:** Damage to sites is caused by a variety of agencies ranging from natural causes such as coastal erosion through to farming activities and the consequences of residential and industrial development as indicated in Table 2. It is difficult to monitor and mitigate the natural processes causing site damage, however the consents procedure of the Historic Places Act 1993 (HPA

93) is designed to control the potentially destructive activities of modern development. It is likely that the major damage to sites in the survey area occurred before the more robust litigation process introduced under the HPA 93.

Intact sites: 4%

Four sites are recorded as intact in the CHI Waitakere. The field survey failed to locate 3 of these sites, including R11/371 middens listed in the Waitemata District Scheme 1984 (Waitemata, 1984). One site, R11/381 Karangahape Pa, was well preserved and mainly free from damage.

Partly damaged sites: 80%

The majority of sites fall into this category. In 1977, 51 sites were considered damaged with 55 affected by continuing minor damage. This survey found that all 57 of the sites that were located (including the 5 new sites) were in a damaged state with, in the majority of cases, minor damage continuing.

Table 2. Summary of State and Condition of Surveyed Sites

Danger or Threat	A	B	C	D	Total
<b>State or Condition</b>					
A Intact		1		2	3
B Partly damaged		37		20	57
C Virtually destroyed		2		1	3
D No information on condition				2	2
<b>Total</b>		40		25	65
Site no longer exists					6
<b>Total</b>					<b>71</b>

- A Little future damage
- B Continuing minor damage
- C Risk of severe damage
- D No information on danger

Damage is caused by a variety of activities that compromise either the whole or a proportion of a site. Activities that impact on the entire site and compromise the condition of its features include the following: natural, coastal and tidal erosion processes; farming – stock damage, grazing; public use – walking tracks, beach activities, picnic and playground areas. Natural and coastal erosion has caused significant damage to shell middens – the most abundant site type.

Activities may also threaten the integrity of a site by destroying a part of it. Housing subdivision for residential purposes, road construction, powerline installation and quarrying have all caused such damage.

*Table 3. Cause of Damage*

<b>Cause of damage</b>	<b>Tally</b>
Natural erosion	28
Coastal erosion	14
Housing subdivision	8
Public use	7
Road/car park construction	6
Grazing/clearance	2
Stock damage	1
Stream/tidal erosion	1
Powerline installation	1
Bulldozed	1
Quarrying	1
Bones removed	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>

Largely or completely destroyed sites: 4%  
3 sites fell into this category; one could not be located.

No information on condition or danger: 3%  
This applied to 2 sites. One was a cultivation site #405 with no visible remains. whose associated artefacts had been removed to the museum. The other was a burial #951 where the bones had been removed.

Sites that no longer exist: 8 %

Six sites no longer exist. They have all been destroyed by a variety of developmental activities including bulldozing for a picnic area, road construction, powerline installation, and housing subdivision.

Sites not located: 32%

Table 4 depicts the 23 sites which could not be located, including all sites with pits as the predominant feature. The main problem was the situation of sites on privately owned land, and the difficulty of finding sites situated in dense bush. Four sites may have been destroyed. Site R11/371 comprising pits and midden and possibly an undefended settlement, was formerly listed in the Waitemata District Scheme 1984 as a site of particular significance (Waitemata, 1984); its non-appearance is cause for concern.

*Table 4. Sites not Found*

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Tally</b>
Inaccessible-private land	10
Under bush	9
Possibly destroyed	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

Combining the categories of sites for which there is no information on their condition or danger, sites not located in this survey, largely or completely destroyed sites and sites that no longer exist, gives a total of 47%. In effect, nearly half the prehistoric sites in the survey area have been destroyed or are at risk.

#### Modifications and investigations

From the information available, there has been no Historic Places Trust authorities granted to modify, damage or destroy any site nor any excavations or monitoring of any sites in the area.

#### Summary

Table 5 indicates the current state and condition of all the sites investigated. Of the 71 sites surveyed, only one site is in a stable condition. The survey data has indicated that more than 98% of the archaeological sites have suffered and continue to suffer from varying degrees of damage and 80% are in a continuing state of destruction. The number of sites for which there is no information as to

their state of preservation because they could not be found, must place their survival at risk. The current preservation status of all sites shows a steady deterioration since previous assessment data.

*Table 5. Present State and Condition of Sites*

<b>2000 State and condition</b>	<b>Tally</b>
Well preserved	1
Continuing minor damage	39
Probably destroyed	1
Site no longer exists	5
Site not found	23
Artefacts in museum	1
No information	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>

## **Recommendations**

### **Identification of Unknown Sites**

Suggestions for the identification of unknown sites include:

- the use of GIS in unsurveyed areas to locate sites by predictive modelling;
- using the information derived from site surveys to predict the likely location of sites in unsurveyed areas or missed in previous surveys;
- documentary research;
- consultation with Tangata Whenua to discover sites recognised in Maori tradition (Felgate 1996);
- monitoring of resource consents in areas likely to produce cultural material; a process which should happen in principle but often fails in practice.

None of these measures require prohibitively high levels of funding.

### **Recording Systems**

Major inconsistencies and lack of co-ordination between the various databases and recording systems suggests that a comprehensive overhaul is long overdue. A great deal of cultural heritage information exists, but the quality is variable; access and co-ordination must be streamlined and simplified.

The operating conflicts that exist at both national and regional level are outlined below with appropriate recommendations:

### *The Site Recording Programme*

There is incomplete survey and identification of Maori places and archaeological sites. A priority is the completion of cultural heritage survey and assessment work with ARC Parks to which this research has contributed.

Many sites have not been visited since their discovery in the 1970s. There should be a renewed programme of revisiting, site recording and update to reflect their current state and condition. Challis' recommendation of a 5 year cycle for site re-inspection, (Challis 1992), is impractical as it would require prohibitive levels of resourcing; targeting specific sites and areas would have greater success. Such a programme should be directed at:

- coastal areas under threat of severe erosion;
- areas of proposed urban expansion and coastal development;
- validation of 'reported' sites;
- sites recorded prior to 1980 that have not been revisited since; (Ross and Foster 1996: 24).

In addition, all survey work carried out regardless of its primary purpose must provide information upgrading the current condition of sites visited.

### *The Site Record File*

A redesign of the NZAA Site Record Form to enable more accurate, consistent, and reliable information regarding the condition of sites, and potentially damaging activities threatening sites to be gathered is long overdue. This would also help overcome the problem of subjective recording and bias. Ross and Foster's suggestion of a checklist approach with a prompted set of 'state and condition' choices to describe what has been the initial damaging agent and the type and degree of threat to a site is sensible. This would result in more substantial and accurate data about each individual site (Ross and Foster 1996: 25).

### *CHI Upgrade*

The CHI is an effective management tool, providing accurate and reliable cultural heritage information. However, it could be improved in a number of areas. Ross and Foster have made the following proposals (Ross and Foster 1996):

- CHI Database: Details of authorities and permits granted by the NZHPT should be entered in a separate database within the CHI.

- CHI Updating: The CHI must be updated more regularly to overcome the existing delay in receiving information. ARC should arrange to receive copies of new site record forms from the NZAA filekeeper as soon as they have been processed.

### *Consistency of Records*

Discrepancies in the accuracy of information in the CHI need to be addressed. This research discovered a number of inaccurate site descriptions and grid references, faulty information on digitised maps, and wrongly transcribed information.

### *Co-ordination*

There needs to be a rationalisation of operating procedures for consultation, transfer of information and co-ordination of the archaeological site records between the three main agencies. A combination of the recording functions of DoC, the NZHPT and the NZAA under a single national agency of record must represent a rational solution to the problems that bedevil the present system. A model that may be usefully considered here is the Monuments Protection Programme, described by Fairclough as '*a comprehensive review and evaluation of England's archaeological resource, designed to collect information which will enhance the conservation, management and public appreciation of the archaeological heritage*' (Fairclough 1996: 2).

This Programme has been operational for 10 years. Its undoubted success in achieving its main objectives prompts one to consider whether it could be applied in whole or in part to the New Zealand heritage environment.

### *Upgrade Projects*

A comprehensive programme of upgrade projects must be developed to ensure that proposals for the sustainable management of the archaeological resource are based on up to date and relevant information. At present, upgrade and assessment projects are instigated on a 'one off' reactive basis, in response to threats from development.

### **Information Recovery and Mitigation Strategies**

Long term preservation of sites being destroyed by natural processes is not a practical option. However, the following measures are suggested to minimise heritage loss:

- A programme of sampling material from coastal sites threatened by natural processes of erosion should be implemented for immediate analysis and

storage to provide more detailed archaeological information. The samples should be curated for future generations and future techniques of analysis (Felgate 1996: 28).

- Detailed recording of surface features by field survey. The Waitakere region could provide the resource focus for surveys of a limited nature carried out by groups of archaeology students or with the co-operation of local historical societies. The region could be divided into survey blocks for thorough field investigation and assessment. The information gathered would complement existing data on prehistoric sites and areas and would be an efficient, cost-effective method of securing invaluable information.
- Test trenches or limited invasive procedures to establish the extent of subsurface features.
- Anti-erosion measures. Suitable protection measures should be implemented to prevent further erosion to sites that are being rapidly destroyed.
- A midden monitoring project similar to the Overton Downs Experimental Earthwork Project, England (Renfrew and Bahn 1991: 45), would provide valuable information on which to structure an effective management protection strategy for all shell midden sites at risk from coastal erosion. These suggestions offer efficient, cost-effective means of gaining additional archaeological information.

### **Interpretative Presentation**

Many sites are not spectacular or visually attractive; however, this should not detract from the obligation to preserve examples of a range of prehistoric sites in the area. An area of Cornwallis, around the sites of Kaitarakihi, Mill Bay, Pine Ave, Firebreak Road and Cornwallis Wharf, has potential for recreational use incorporating cultural heritage features. All are areas where examples of the material remains of the past could be sensitively displayed.

Two sites are suitable for interpretative presentation:

#### **R11/388 midden, Mill Bay**

Sufficient evidence remains for this site to be developed as an interpretative feature of Maori lifestyle with the addition of explanatory and illustrative signage. Its position within a public park at Mill Bay suits it to preservation management.

#### **R11/381 Karangahape Pa, Puponga Peninsula**

It is the only pa on the north Manukau coastline between Huia and Big Muddy Creek and has considerable historical and archaeological value. Murdoch

considered the earthworks 'well preserved' in 1997 (ARC 1996). The pa is on local body land and is well suited for interpretative presentation and preservation possibly as part of a heritage trail incorporating the recently restored Cornwallis Wharf. It could serve as a model for similar interpretations.

### Conclusion

This report reflects the current state of knowledge based on an extensive survey assessing the evidence in the field not as part of a paper-based exercise. Interpolating directly from this field assessment, there is incontrovertible evidence that the prehistoric archaeological resource of the Waitakere region of West Auckland is threatened by continuing destructive activities which must place its future survival in jeopardy. The size and speed of Auckland's growth imposes special pressures on its heritage. It is no exaggeration that only 10% of archaeological sites will be left for the next generation if decisive action is not taken immediately.

The current resource management philosophy must actively promote sustainable heritage protection. Affirmative management of the historic resource must be undertaken in a constructive rather than in the *ad hoc* manner which has characterised decision-making in the past. It is vital to ensure that not only the 'cultural' element of New Zealand's heritage is afforded the recognition and protection it deserves but that strategies for managing it are robust and sustainable.

### Abbreviations

- ARC Auckland Regional Council
- CHI Cultural Heritage Inventory
- CINZAS Central Index of New Zealand Archaeological Sites
- DoC Department of Conservation
- HPA Historic Places Act
- MPP Monuments Protection Programme
- NZAA New Zealand Archaeological Association
- NZHPT New Zealand Historic Places Trust
- RMA Resource Management Act
- SRF Site Record File

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