



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



This document is made available by The New Zealand
Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

GOING IT ALONE? NZAA AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS

Harry Allen
NZAA Nominee to the
NZHPT Board

This is a revised version of a paper presented in the symposium "Changes in legislation affecting archaeological sites" at the New Zealand Archaeological Association annual conference held in Wellington, June 2-4th 1990.

Introduction

Restructuring has changed the manner in which archaeological resource management is carried out in New Zealand. There have also been a great many changes in resource management organisations over the past five years. In order to gain the maximum benefit from the changes which have taken place, and to influence future directions, there should also be an evolution in the relationship between the NZAA and the resource management organisations involved (New Zealand Historic Places Trust and the Department of Conservation). This paper offers a personal view of what an appropriate NZAA response might consist of, irrespective of which government has power and whatever details future legislation might contain.

The 1980s: A decade of tumult

Archaeologists are rarely in agreement. However, one view they probably do hold in common is that the 1980s has been an era of unprecedented change for the management of archaeological resources. Old and powerful government departments which once employed archaeologists (Lands & Survey, Works, and Forestry) have disappeared. New departments such as the Department of Conservation have arrived on the scene. Familiar legislation such as the Historic Places Act, Forestry Act, and the Town and Country Planning Act, has been thrown into the melting pot of legislative change. These laws, often based on concepts of government control, intervention and paternalism are now mixed with a heady brew of devolution of decision making, public participation, independent appeal authorities, and government cost cutting. To increase the uncertainty, whatever legislation eventually emerges will also depend on which government is elected in October 1990.

Whatever the new laws, it will be some years before the organisations involved settle down to routine management practices again. An additional wild-card has been the Maori renaissance and Treaty of Waitangi issues. There has been an increase in Maori participation in the political and legal process, an emphasis on resistance to many of the changes, but

also an increasingly independent Maori voice which questions both previous and potential administrative regimes. The courts, local government hearings, the Planning Tribunal and the High Court have become arenas of conflict over Treaty issues. Despite the pervading "good guy" self image, archaeologists should not expect that they will always escape the sharp end of Maori objections, appeals and injunctions.

These rapid changes have taken their toll. There have been setbacks to the site recording and salvage archaeology programmes begun in the 1970s. As far as resource management is concerned, there has been, at best, a continuation of efforts set in place a decade ago. Except for the as yet unrealised potential of restructuring at DoC in Auckland, few real advances have been made in archaeological resource management organisation and procedures. The once lively debate about theoretical issues, priorities, methods, and the relationships between management and research has, with one notable exception (Sheppard 1989), disappeared from the scene.

Except for the NZAA legislation subcommittee, archaeologists have not participated with the Maori community in its demands to be heard on issues of site management and the ownership of taonga.

In terms of teaching and research, there has been little growth in the number of university departments teaching archaeology outside the centres of Auckland and Otago, established in the 1950s. The increases, a single lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington and a part-time lecturer at Waikato, have not kept pace with an expansion in the number of departments teaching Social Anthropology or Maori Studies.

The archaeological reaction

Archaeological institutions such as University departments, the NZAA, the NZHPT and the archaeologists within DoC have fought a rearguard action against the endless rounds of administrative restructuring, the weakening of existing legislation, the devolution of decision making and the reduction of state involvement and financing. The rounds of submissions, hearings and budget cuts have placed a heavy burden on archaeologists, and has taken time away from management programmes.

The NZ Historic Places Trust has shifted from its somewhat narrow focus of the past and is in the process of becoming an organisation capable of responding to both the Maori and Pakeha communities in terms of its aims, Board and committees, staffing and programmes (Allen 1988:149-52). There is much greater Maori input into decision making and an increased emphasis on the preservation and protection of Maori buildings

and traditional sites.

In terms of the Trust's regulatory role for historic sites the focus has shifted from information recovery through archaeology to site management, preservation and public presentation without excavation. This should bring the NZHPT closer to satisfying the requirements of Maori and conservation groups (Greeves 1989:661).

Until quite recently, archaeological resource management in New Zealand was a parish-pump affair. Archaeological researchers and Trust archaeologists worked closely, and sometimes acrimoniously, together. The Archaeology Committee, consisting almost entirely of archaeologists, actively sought to manage and direct the Trust's archaeological role. Trust Board members had a degree of hands-on involvement in staff work. However, the winds of administrative reform and further professionalisation have reached the NZHPT. The Board now sets policy while responsibility for management and action rests with the professional staff. There is the intention to create a Maori secretariat to assist with Maori programmes, especially as regards historic and traditional sites.

The archaeologists are now entirely located in DoC and service the Trust's archaeological requirements from there. However, the administrative jungle created by the new Resource Management Law makes it likely that the Trust will once again require its own archaeological staff. The integration of site protection with local and regional planning procedures will force site managers to act as quasi-lawyers spending a great deal of their time with submissions, hearings, objections and appeals.

Within DoC, there are pressures on departmental archaeologists, particularly in the regions, to work mostly on the DoC estate and in the preparation of DoC management strategies and regulatory functions.

The world of archaeological resource management in New Zealand has become more complex and professional. This, of necessity, creates greater distance between the various organisations and individuals involved in archaeological conservation and research. The NZHPT and DoC, as independent organisations, are setting their own agendas and priorities. For both organisations, research values have become only one of a number of factors taken into consideration in site management decisions. This creates the danger that the necessary connections between site management, preservation and archaeological research will be weakened. Already those engaged in the science of site management do not see a familiarity with archaeological research as being an essential element of their task. Within DoC there is already a tendency

among managers to see scientists as potential exploiters of New Zealand's fauna and flora, just one of many pressures that reserves should be protected against!

The physical and administrative separation of the archaeologists in DoC Science and Research or Regional Offices away from the NZHPT, which retains the legislative responsibility for the preservation of sites, makes the link between research and site management just that much harder to maintain. Sheppard's (1989) "strategies" paper is a timely attempt to reverse this trend. Given the political pressures from Maori and conservation groups, the NZAA cannot rely on the NZHPT to mainly represent a scientific point of view regarding site management and advocacy.

A new role for the NZAA

There is currently a vacuum in terms of the advocacy of archaeological research values within the conservation debate. There is a need for the NZAA to actively promote the conservation of sites for research purposes, public awareness of research results, and the establishment of links between archaeological researchers and the Maori community. Rejuvenation of the organisation of the NZAA and its advocacy functions is essential if the archaeologists wish to avoid being sidelined in the debates over conservation and site protection, museums, the protection of cultural property, planning procedures, tertiary education and finally, research funding.

The NZAA needs to be able to act and react regionally in response to other organisations, such as the NZHPT, DoC, Iwi Runanga and other Maori authorities, regional and local councils, and to the threats of development.

NZAA spokespeople can apply political pressure. There is the possibility that we will have to fight the battles of the proposed legislative changes over again.

There are mutual advantages in closer relations and cooperation with Maori groups. The gains these groups have made as regards sites are entirely legitimate. Yet they will be endangered if there is an anti-Maori backlash in the post-election period. The NZAA should play an active and visible role here.

Finally, the NZAA should consider joint action on an issue by issue basis with other conservation activists in resource/conservation conflicts. DoC archaeologists cannot publicly take any stand against government or departmental policies. Another difficulty is that the number of professional archaeologists outside DoC and the universities is small. It

is for this reason that an organisation such as the NZAA has a crucial part to play.

Science and the western scientific tradition are currently under attack in many countries (Allen 1990). While we should welcome the loss of power and uncritical prestige given to bureaucratic and technocratic institutions, we should not forget the contribution that objective enquiry, free debate, and historical awareness has made to the current popular pressure for environmental conservation and social justice.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dorothy Brown for typing and comments, and the members of the conference audience for useful questions and comments.

References

- Allen, H. 1988. Public archaeology: choices for the 1990s. Archaeology in New Zealand 31:142-52.
- Allen, H. 1990. Archaeology and the Greens in New Zealand. Paper presented at the 59th ANZAAS Congress, Hobart, Tasmania.
- Greeves, T. 1989. Archaeology and the Green Movement: A case for perestroika. Antiquity 63:659-66.
- Sheppard, B. 1989. Strategies for New Zealand Archaeology. Department of Conservation Science and Research Series Report No. 18.