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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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# **GUIDELINES FOR PROVISION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT FOR AUTHORITY APPLICATIONS UNDER SECTION 11 OR SECTION 12 OF THE HISTORIC PLACES ACT 1993**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Historic Places Act 1993 requires an assessment of a site's archaeological values and the effects which a proposed activity will have on the values as part of an application to the Historic Places Trust for an authority to destroy, damage or modify an archaeological site. The following guidelines have been developed in response to both requests from archaeologists and an apparent need identified by Trust staff for assessments which contain sufficient information to enable the Trust to make a decision.

While these guidelines have been compiled with the particular requirements of the Historic Places Act 1993 in mind I also hope that the general principles and themes embodied in the guidelines may be of value to archaeologists supplying archaeological assessments for other purposes, such as resource consent applications.

The Historic Places Act 1993 requires that any person wanting to destroy, damage or modify an archaeological site must first apply to the NZ Historic Places Trust for an authority to do so. The applicant is required to provide information about the archaeological site which the Trust must consider when making its decision on the application. The following guidelines have been developed after the first year of the new Act's operation in order to ensure that applications contain all the archaeological information required by the Trust.

## **REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 11(2) AND SECTION 12(3)**

Sections 11(2) and 12(3) of the Historic Places Act 1993 require applications for authority to destroy, damage or modify an archaeological site<sup>1</sup> to contain certain information. Specifically, three pieces of archaeological information are required and should be obtained from an archaeologist. They are;

1. a description of the archaeological site or sites over which authority is sought.

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2. an assessment of the archaeological values which the site or sites contain.
3. an assessment of the effect which the proposed activity will have on those values.

If the information supplied is incomplete or inadequate, the Trust will request that further information be supplied. It is empowered to do this under sections 11(3) and 12(3) of the Act. It is also empowered to extend the statutory time period for processing the application.

Trust will grant an application under section 12 only if it is satisfied on reasonable grounds that there is no particular benefit to justify the cost of locating and identifying every individual site present within a specified area of land or every individual site of the class to which the application relates that is present within that area. This section may be relevant in areas of forestry or large residential subdivisions. An example of such a situation where the Trust may be satisfied is in a forestry situation where ground conditions and visibility create problems which means that the location and identification of sites is difficult.

It should be remembered that archaeological advice forms part of the application. Any assessment done by an archaeologist constitutes advice to the applicant, not to the Trust. Assessments are a tool to inform the applicant and others of the nature of the resource and any recommendations or advice should be acted upon by the applicant on that understanding.

In addition, it should be recognised by archaeologists that assessments are of value from management, advocacy, and research perspectives and that such assessments may be subsequently used by others for such purposes.

Assessments will be used as a basis on which to develop a research strategy should an investigation be required as a condition of an authority. Consequently, particular care should be taken to include a complete statement of methods used to gather information for the assessment and of the results gained. All data should be accurately referenced and all sources consulted, even when no relevant information was retrieved, and should be listed as this indicates the breadth of background work undertaken.

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Description of the site**

A detailed statement of all known or verifiable data relevant to the site/s is required. In general, the description of the site/s should include the methods by which data was obtained. For previously recorded sites NZ Archaeological

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Association site numbers should always be used. However, existing site record forms will seldom be sufficient on their own, but copies should always be attached to the application.

In addition, if the site/s are registered with the Trust or listed or scheduled by the District or Regional Councils, the relevant information should also be cited. Legal descriptions and certificates of title should also be noted.

### **Field Inspection**

Information supplied must be based on current field-work. The field-work undertaken may range from a foot inspection of the site/s to a limited archaeological excavation.

The methods used in field-work must be described (eg pedestrian transects east-west at X metre intervals).

Due to the nature of archaeological sites, much of the deposit may not be visible. Consequently, some form of subsurface investigation is usually necessary to determine the extent (both vertical and horizontal), the condition of the site (e.g. has it been ploughed or cultivated), and accurately establish the nature of the site. These are fundamental sets of information for the development of a reliable assessment of archaeological values and effects which the proposed activity will have.

An application for authority to investigate a site under section 18 of the Act is necessary to undertake such investigations.

The information gathered and the assessment should be considered by the applicant regarding issues of site avoidance or mitigation for the development of the final Proposal to be submitted to the Trust.

Where an area survey has taken place, the results must be accompanied by a statement of how confident the archaeologist is that he/she found some or all of the archaeological sites in the area. Factors relevant to this, such as ground cover and topography, must be detailed (e.g. ground surface 90% covered by grass and scrub). It is valuable to record this information on a map of the area inspected, with specific information about how the visibility varied over the area.

### **Plans maps, and photographs**

Maps, plans, and photographs of the site/s and their locations and settings are essential. Maps and plans should be to scale and, where possible, maps and plans of the site itself (including those detailing the proposed activity)

should be of the same scale to facilitate comparison. Photographs must be prints or high quality reproductions - standard photo-copies are not acceptable.

### **Condition of the site**

An explicit statement needs to be made about the current state of the site and should detail potential future threats from natural and human actions irrespective of the activities proposed in the application.

### **Physical Setting**

The geography or physical setting of the site/s should be detailed and include relevant environmental and topographic data such as:

- i. geology and soils: for information on possible relative dating of the archaeological deposit, for information about possible functions of the site, and for information about the stability of the site.
- ii. topography: not only of the site but also the surrounding area.
- iii. vegetation.
- iv. palaeo-environment: where this data is available, it must be included.
- v. land-use: both current and past land-use, including possible implications that this may have for the archaeological deposit.

### **Historical, ethnographic data, and oral history/whakapapa**

Historic and ethnographic information, where available, is necessary in order to place site/s in an appropriate context as part of an assessment of the archaeological potential and the historic and cultural significance of a site/s.

Contact should be made with local individuals and appropriate groups such as marae. Details of any information gained from such sources should be included and the sources themselves clearly identified.

### **Predictive models**

Predictive models are useful in assessing the potential for archaeological sites to be present where some or none have been located. These models must be developed from data such as that described above and from data from surveys and investigations in areas having similar environmental characteristics. These models have particular value for applications made under section 12 of the

Act. However, they are also useful for applications made under section 11 of the Act.

## **ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL VALUES**

Archaeological value can be thought of as the potential of a site/s to provide evidence relating to the history of New Zealand. An assessment should be made in terms of the site's potential ability to answer questions about New Zealand's history/prehistory and to test current hypotheses including those raised/developed in the course of the assessment. The assessment of archaeological values must be a discussion of all of the realistic interpretations and values of the site/s

In addition to the information provided by the description of the site/s, it is important to review previous relevant archaeological work and prehistory. Such a review should not be restricted to the site/s in question but must include what is known about other sites in the same area and about similar types of sites as the site/s under assessment. Previous site surveys and excavations must be considered with brief descriptions of the methodologies and results. It may also be necessary to assess the quality of the previous work, particularly of surveys.

The site/s should be placed in the context of what is known about the prehistory of the area and New Zealand as a whole. Consideration should also be given to whether the site is unique or representative.

Assessment of a site's values should not be framed in terms of the criteria for entering an historic place or area on the Trust's register (section 23 of the Act). The principle values considered in applications are archaeological and Maori. Other values will be considered where relevant as it is understood that some sites may manifest one or more other values.

The Trust's decision may be to grant an application on the condition that an archaeological investigation is undertaken as permitted under section 15 of the Act. The Trust can only do this if it is satisfied on reasonable grounds that an archaeological investigation will provide significant information about New Zealand's historical and cultural heritage. All archaeologists should be aware of this when developing assessments.

### **Assessment of the effects which the proposed activity will have on the archaeological values of the site/s**

This requires the direct correlation of the archaeological data and the assessment of the site/s archaeological values with the proposed activity by the applicant. This should be a carefully considered discussion. Once again, it should be detailed, and a plan of the archaeological site/s superimposed on a

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plan of the proposed activity is helpful for this. Consideration must also be given to the effects of subsidiary activities, e.g. machinery parks, spoil dumps, temporary fences, etc. where applicable. The general integrity of the values associated with the site should also be considered.

Following consideration of these issues, recommendations should be made for avoiding adverse effects on the archaeological site/s or for mitigating those effects. The recommendations should detail how these are to be achieved. Any modification of the original proposal to ensure lesser impact should be detailed as it is important that the Trust is aware that such efforts have been made.

Recommendations for avoiding adverse effects may suggest the possible use of building foot-prints, covenants, notations on the title, inclusion in reserves and so on. These methods for avoidance should be designed to ensure protection of the site/s for the longest term possible.

Mitigation should only be pursued where it is not practical or reasonable to avoid adverse effects on the site/s and must be considered in the light of the site/s values. Normally mitigation will involve data recovery and so recommendations on mitigation should include a research strategy and methodology. An investigation must be likely to provide significant information as discussed above.

1. An archaeological site is defined in the Act as:

*any place in New Zealand that -*

*(a) Either-*

*(i) Was associated with human activity before 1900; and*

*(ii) Is the site of the wreck of any vessel where the wreck occurred before 1900; and*

*(b) Is or may be able through investigation by archaeological methods to provide evidence relating to the history of New Zealand.*