



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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MIMIWHANGATA SITE SURVEY

Angela Calder

A site survey of Mimiwhangata Station in Northland was conducted during November and December 1971. This 2,000 acre farm is situated on the east coast midway between Whangaruru and Whangarei. Land ownership is with the New Zealand Breweries who plan to develop this area into a tourist resort. The Breweries employed two environmental architects to plan and supervise development and changes, and these architects commissioned an archaeological survey to enable them to assess the potential of the farm and to ensure none of its valuable and irreplaceable assets would be damaged by development.

Prior to this archaeological investigation both J. McKinlay (pers. comm.) and Gary Law (pers. comm.) had visited the area in the early 1960s and recorded twenty coastal sites which they filed with the N.Z.A.A. site recording scheme.

The 1971 survey followed the same procedure as that used by J. Davidson on Te Paki Station near North Cape (Davidson, 1971). Ridges and coastlines were examined on foot, and the sites located were rated on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being sites of most importance - to 5 - sites eroded and largely destroyed and of least importance). By definition all sites have some importance for archaeological research but some sites because of their position, structure, state of preservation, or historical connections, were rated as more important than others. Though this system was quite arbitrary it was necessary to use such a scheme to give the planners some indication of probable relative importance. For example, in cases where development was to force the destruction of one of two sites, that rated as being of lesser importance would be the one sacrificed. Such a guide was essential to ensure site protection both during and after development.

One hundred and twelve sites were located, ranging as follows:

REFERENCE

- Davidson, J. 1971 "Te Paki Archaeological Survey", Auckland Museum, mimeograph.

<u>Type of site</u>	<u>Number Recorded</u>
Pits/Terraces	52
<u>Pa</u>	10
Midden	36
Stone structures	3
Agricultural	3
Tracks	2
Burials	1
Burial/midden	4
Terrace/midden	1
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Total	112
	<hr/>

The range of ratings for these sites were as follows:

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Number</u>
1	13
2	20
3	39
4	22
5	18
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Total	112
	<hr/>

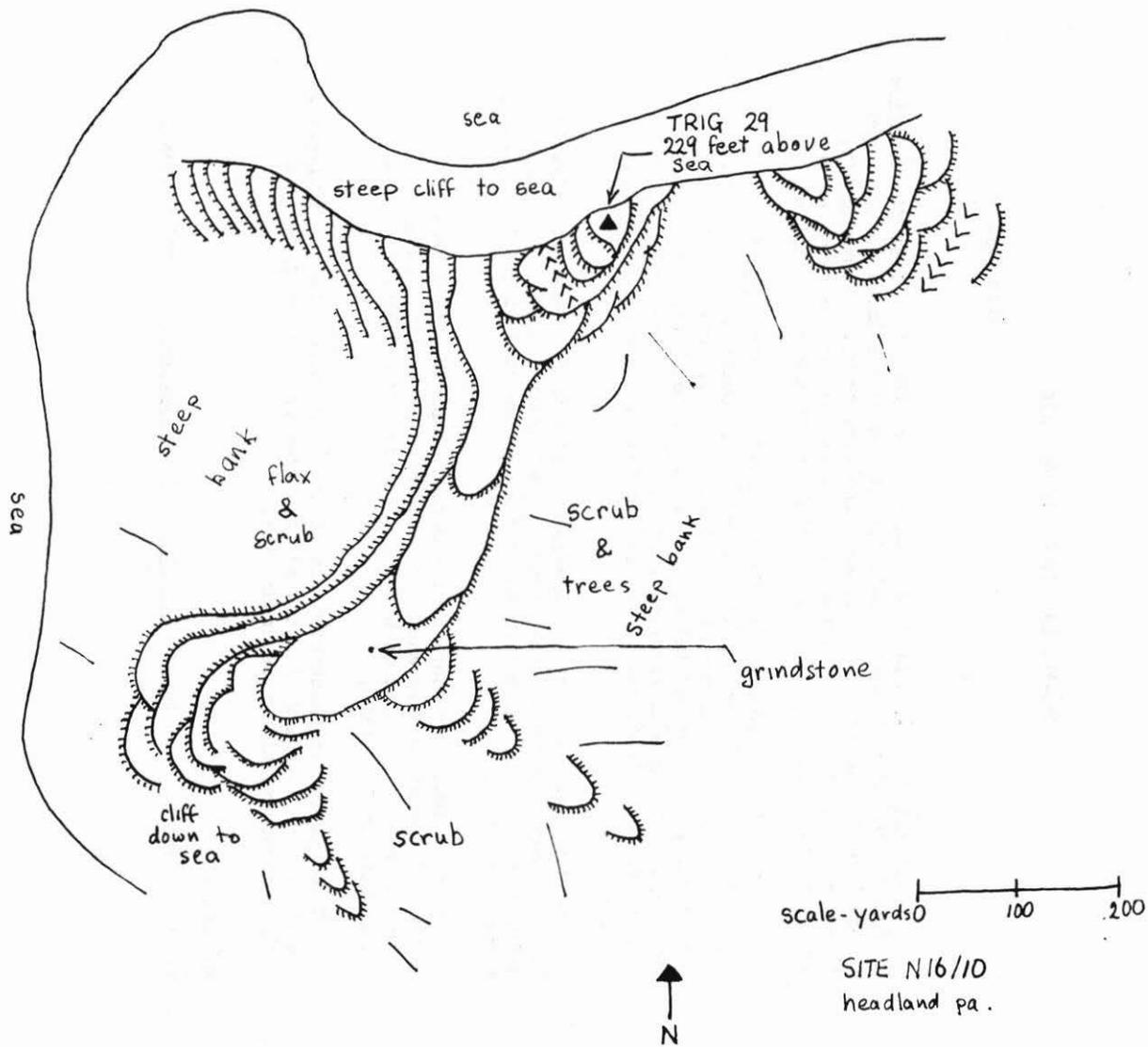
Most of the sites rated as 1 were pa, burials, some well preserved pits, and a stone wall. The most remarkable sites in terms of size and structure were the pa, one of which extends over half a mile (see diagram).

The number and range of sites located indicated that the coastal area was frequently and sometimes heavily populated in the past. The environment was extensively exploited by the pre-European Maori as was evidenced by sites containing information related to hunting, gathering, growing of crops, cooking, storing, and eating food; the construction of defensive posts and graves; and the terrestrial links with other neighbouring areas. Evidence, both archaeologically and historically documented, of cannibal activities was present. There was also valuable information about the protohistoric period particularly evidenced by artefacts from early European times. Systematic archaeological excavations and further research into early European documents will give more information about the life styles of both prehistoric and proto-historic Maori settlement in this area.

Three major recommendations were made to the New Zealand Breweries concerning the future of all sites.

1. Farming and project activities must avoid provoking or causing erosion. Any site threatened by either nature or man needs archaeological attention.
2. The quality and form of archaeological investigation must be of a high standard to ensure the maximisation of knowledge, and the minimisation of damage to sites. Therefore only controlled and systematic investigations under the auspices of a reputable body - such as the New Zealand Archaeological Association, a University Department, or a Museum - should be allowed. Fossicking, or illegitimate 'digging' by untrained people who are poorly equipped both in techniques and knowledge, must be prevented at all costs. The New Zealand Breweries Board of Directors, and the Farm and Project Managers should be notified before any investigation is undertaken in order to assess the legitimacy of the activities. In the case of tapu sites the Ngati Wai tribe must also be consulted.
3. The Ngati Wai tribe must be contacted within the near future to ascertain
 - (a) which sites they regard as tapu
 - (b) how they would like this tapu respected
 - (c) what procedures should be followed when sites containing human bones are exposed or threatened.

To date the meeting with the elders of the Ngati Wai tribes has proved very successful. The elders expressed appreciation at the concern being demonstrated about tapu sites, and also showed an interest in knowing more about the prehistory of the area. The New Zealand Breweries were pleased with the report as it gave them some positive publicity and has helped to improve their public relations with the Ngati Wai tribe. Both the architects and the farm manager appreciated the report and are giving it serious consideration when they plan any changes or developments. It is to be hoped that more planned development of this nature (i.e., with proper assessment of environmental and archaeological assets before changes are initiated) will be undertaken in the future. In this instance it is notable that a privately owned company has instigated the procedures rather than a Governmental body. Ideally, more owners and developers of property, both State and private, should follow suit.



SITE N16/10
headland pa.