



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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## SITE PRESERVATION.

R. G. Green.

Introduction :

This article is derived from the interim report of the Scheduled Site Sub-committee. The Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Archaeological Association in August 1962 charged the in-coming Council of the Association with formulating proposals for the protection and preservation of our national archaeological heritage for submission to the National Historic Places Trust or other suitable bodies. At the Annual General Meeting of the Association in June 1963 the members adopted an amended interim report of the Scheduled Sites Sub-committee, along with a new constitution and new membership form. Also local filekeepers sent or read at the meeting, recommendations on sites in their areas which they felt suitable for protection and preservation under the classification proposed by the sub-committee. As a result, the Association has made a beginning in tackling what amounts to one of the largest problems which confronts the archaeologist in New Zealand today.

With this beginning they have, as well, opened negotiation with the National Historic Places Trust on the legislative and salvage archaeology questions which the proposals cover. But while we may expect considerable help from the Trust, the Nature Conservation Commission, and other similar bodies in these fields, the purely archaeological task of scheduling sites is ours alone. How well we may be able to do this will depend to a large extent on how well our individual members and affiliated societies perform in assembling the relevant field data. In short, site recording must be one of the basic research aims of the Association, for any scheduling of sites is based entirely on site recording. In this respect the rapid growth in site recording reported by the Central Filekeeper is very encouraging; we hope the new HANDBOOK to Site Recording to be produced by the Auckland Society will serve as a further stimulus. A real burst of site recording now will be not only the means of preparing future distribution maps of site types, but also the only means we have of protecting and preserving a key portion of our prehistoric heritage for later generations.

Classification :

The Association has adopted the classification proposed by the interim report of the Scheduled Sites Sub-committee. This classification is based on earlier attempts at site scheduling by the Auckland Society under the direction of Mr. H. J. R. Brown and that used by Dr. A. G. Buist for the Taranaki area. To the categories used by these workers the committee has given new names and has divided them into two major groups : Sites of National Historical Importance and Archaeological Remains.

The division of the categories into two principal groups is based on the legislation recently adopted by British Columbia in their Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act, 1960. The group titled Sites of National Historic Importance is intended to include a small number of sites from each region which are generally well known and are thought on the available evidence to contain basic information on the prehistory of the region and the nation. The second group of sites are expected to be three, four, or more times as numerous and will include all sites which either may be expected to yield relatively little information or which are partly or completely destroyed.

This division of sites into two groups is in accord with the new membership form adopted at the last A.G.M. in which it is recognized that Council may schedule sites as important, and members are requested to apply to Council for permission to carry out excavations on these sites. This is essential if we are to ask for legislation to protect these sites from all but legitimate investigation, and should give no anxiety to members. In short we must be willing to abide by the same basic principles that we propose to apply to others. It is our hope that eventually it will be necessary for everyone to apply to the National Historic Places Trust for permission to modify sites in this category. Hence from time to time Council will be scheduling sites in each filing area for such protection and will be publishing lists of such sites. But as we expect that no one would think of excavating One Tree Hill, Te Totara Pa, or Warehou Pa (Makara), for instance, unless they had made careful preparations and had legitimate aims, such applications either to Council or the Trust will experience no difficulty.

One may expect that some twenty to fifty sites in each filing area will eventually fall within the group of Sites Of National Importance. This will leave an immense number of sites in the division of Archaeological Remains. These are sites that in the era of the bull-dozer, urban sprawl, power and control dams, etc., may not be expected to long survive. All of them, even those now destroyed, bear recording both for distribution purposes and as a means to assessing sites for which we should seek protection where a type is in danger of disappearing completely. Many of them are worth excavating if time, labour, and finance are available. Here the situation remains as before; that is, members are asked to maintain normal standards in their excavations and recording and, wherever possible, to report their findings in the Newsletter or other publications, or at least to Council and the regional filekeeper.

This policy and classification, the committee believes, paves the way for tackling the problem of adequate protection of sites on a national basis. It is obvious to us that it is not excavations by members of our Association which threaten sites of National Importance, but the operations by the public either as individuals or through various governmental bodies. To protect these sites on a national level we have started the following classification. Our next steps are the development of suitable criteria for the scheduling of sites and also the possible recommendations for legislation.

The following is the basic classification now in use :-

A. Sites of National Historic Importance: Scheduled and Protected Sites.

Category I - Permanent Preservation - Historic or Scenic Reserve.

Category II - Interim Protection - in which necessary salvage operations are contemplated should further destruction or modification of the existing site threaten the prehistoric information which it still contains.

B. Archaeological Remains - Sites which are recorded but for which no additional protection is sought.

Category III - Remains worth excavating and recording. - Sites which warrant detailed recording and investigation if time, labour and finance available.

- Category IV - Remains worth recording - sites in which excavations are regarded as not worthwhile because site is despoiled, insignificant, or a better site of similar type exists elsewhere.
- Category V - Destroyed - Sites of which no visible features remain, but are recorded in printed literature or reliable manuscript.

May we stress again that most archaeological sites will fall under the classification of Remains which it is either impractical or impossible to preserve or protect beyond the degree to which they are protected under existing conditions. We feel it is necessary to give careful consideration to both the practical and historic aspects of a site in suggesting its scheduling under any of the above categories. Our basic premise in making the division between Nationally Important Sites and Archaeological Remains is that we can reasonably expect to obtain and enforce legislative protection for only a limited amount of the prehistoric record. Thus it is likely that we may save more of the total record from oblivion if we are willing to grant the eventual destruction of many archaeological remains and permit the destruction of some Nationally Important Sites under specified conditions when the situation demands it. Only in this way can we hope to concentrate our efforts sufficiently to stand some chance of success in the preservation of the few carefully selected sites that we hope will become a part of the National Heritage.

#### Criteria For Scheduling Sites :

Mr Roger Green elaborated at the A.G.M. the criteria for scheduling sites and the Committee's report dealt at some length with Categories I and II. We can no more than summarize here briefly some of the points in the discussions.

First : the kinds of sites and criteria selected must be expected to vary from region to region. This is due to the fact that different types of sites are being or have been destroyed in each region, and more importantly, because the types of sites and settlement patterns found throughout New Zealand vary in kind, number and distribution from region to region. For instance, in the northern part of the North Island, all types of sites are numerous, but in proportion there are relatively few of the older Archaic or moa-hunter type of site. This situation reverses itself as one moves south and the various pa become less frequent while the moa-hunter settlements become the dominant site type. Obviously the preservation of the good examples of pa sites in the South Island will result in a higher proportion of them being scheduled for protection than in some regions in the North Island.

Second : the despoliation of different sites varies from region to region. In the South Island, curio hunters have destroyed many important beach and river mouth middens ; in Auckland volcanic hill pa are threatened ; whilst in some farming areas shell middens are disappearing for road metal or chicken grit. Again, no one set of criteria will apply everywhere.

Third : one cannot schedule only some sites and ignore entirely the division of archaeological remains. Scheduling applies to all sites, and if one is to err, it is best to err on the side of too high a priority of a site which is protected. It is always possible to lower the priority of a site, but it is not possible to raise the priority of a site which has been despoiled or destroyed.

Let us elaborate on the necessity of scheduling all sites by a brief resume of the categories....

Destroyed ; it is this category which frequently will indicate the sites that are rapidly disappearing from the record, and which require some protection, even if the remaining sites of the type do not look promising on the surface evidence.

Remains Worth Recording ; one cannot investigate every site, but a record of all sites is essential for distribution studies. Whilst it is not necessary, or feasible, to excavate every one of many similar site types in an area, it is necessary to record all of them so that an accurate assessment can be made.

Remains Worth Excavating and recording ; Most sites require more than a simple record to reveal the full range of information they contain. Slowly these sites are going to disappear whether we excavate them or not, simply because we cannot protect all sites in New Zealand. In this category, individuals and societies can make an immense contribution if they will continue to carefully record and investigate such remains before they disappear - and then publish the results of their investigations. Here there is scope not only for increasing our knowledge, but also for identifying sites which should be fully protected and in a higher category. It is from this category that many of the future sites of National Historic Importance will come, once the initial scheduling in a region is completed.

Interim Protection ; this is the category in which necessary archaeological salvage operations are contemplated should further destruction or modification of the existing site threaten the prehistoric information which the site still contains.

Progress, man's increasing ability to modify his environment, and the economics of many situations, make the attempt at long-term preservation of many sites impractical. It would be unwise and unrealistic to attempt to preserve all of them. But such sites are of sufficient importance to warrant their protection except under certain conditions. For instance, most sites of national importance are private land, or are quarries, or are in the rights-of-way of roading and housing developments, or are on rapidly developing beach resorts belong in this category. In the same category we would place sites that have already proved important nationally, but which are so disturbed that further excavations would only serve to clarify the existing picture without leaving sufficient material to make further investigations profitable.

For this category it will be our aim to obtain legislation under which the agents responsible for the destruction of the site will have to furnish sufficient notification of the area they intend to modify and some assistance to the archaeologist to permit him to salvage through an emergency programme at least some of the information before the site disappears completely. The category should therefore include all outstanding sites of importance and of which it is vital that we have some record.

Permanent Preservation ; this category is intended to include unique sites in the region which - because of their wealth of visible features, or of their association with events in Maori tradition, or the fact that their partial excavation and the information derived from it has made them key sites

in the interpretation of New Zealand prehistory - warrant consideration as sites of NATIONAL HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE. for the most part these sites should have been little disturbed by European settlement so that possible excavations in them may be expected to throw additional light on existing problems and still yield materials for new interpretations in the future.

We are seeking a list of sites which hold the key to understanding the pre-historic sequence in New Zealand and which are also protected to some extent by existing legislation, private owners, or public sentiment, and which reasonable people would concede should be protected. Thus, the number of sites in this category in each region should be small and the reasons for their preservation fairly obvious.

#### Legislative Recommendations.

The members of the Association have already acted on the first two recommendations of the Sub-committee by adopting the above classification and forwarding it to the National Historic Places Trust as the basis for seeking further legislative protection for archaeological sites in New Zealand. They have also agreed to apply to Council whenever they wish to conduct excavations on sites scheduled for permanent preservation, and to abide by a general regulation that may be specified for modifying sites placed in the Interim protection category.

Our next moves now will be to try and obtain amendments to existing legislation in conjunction with National Historic Places Trust for sites placed in Categories I and II. The final proposals remain to be worked out fully, although the committee suggested some desirable changes which are now being examined. One of our members is exploring the possibility of more extensive use of Private Historic Reserves, as another means of gaining protection for these sites.

#### Information.

Your committee notes that its task is impossible unless the members of the Association are willing to furnish it with the requisite information. We ask, therefore, that not only all regional filekeepers but also all members through the filekeepers provide us with lists and brief descriptions of sites for scheduling. It will not be through the work of a small committee that a portion of New Zealand's archaeological heritage is preserved for the future, but only through the efforts of every member in our Association.

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