



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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the corresponding angles between blade face and sides and while the blade is polished, the butt face and sides are left hammerdressed. Only a short step separates this butt treatment which is demonstrably of Archaic type from that described for the adze butt from Pukeiti for there is no reduction of the face of the butt on the Otauataua specimens. Had this been polished in continuation of the polish of the blade face, the Pukeiti type would have resulted. The thickness indices of the two Otauataua adzes are typically large: 59 and 67.

These adzes from Otauataua may be slight grounds for suggesting the Archaic inspiration of at least some of the well-known Auckland pa. But they add their quota of evidence to the case for this argued more fully at the conclusion of the Kauri Point report in this issue.

THE DESPOLIATION OF AUCKLAND'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

by H.J.R. Brown

The Auckland Metropolitan area is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing urban centres in New Zealand. In the 24 years between 1916 and 1940 its population doubled, and by 1959 doubled again to reach a total of more than 400,000. Over £200 million, it is expected, will be spent on construction work in the next five years. This together with rapid urban sprawl has resulted in an increasing number of archaeological sites being built on, damaged, or removed to provide the room for development and the metal needed for the new highways and buildings.

To date there are few archaeological sites which have not been despoiled in some form or other. The majority of the larger sites are volcanic cones which are scattered in profusion around the city and together form one of the most densely populated areas of neolithic settlement in the world. Of the thirty eight which existed all were prominent pa, but five have been completely denuded of earthworks and only three are today completely intact. To deny a modern, rapidly expanding city some of these sites would be impossible, but to exploit them in the haphazard and often piecemeal fashion that is the rule at present is an inexcusable destruction of our national heritage.

A rational approach to this important and insistent problem was outlined in 1957 by the Historic Auckland Society, ² but despite a measure of public support and the very active backing of one of Auckland's leading newspapers, the campaign achieved few major successes.

Besides this larger problem, however, there exists the more practical one of ensuring some examination and record of sites before they are destroyed. In certain circumstances, when major government or local council work is contemplated, intention to undertake the project must be publicly announced, in order that objections may be heard. In addition, such projects are usually publicised in local newspapers because of their news value. Under these circumstances it is often possible for local archaeologists to undertake some record of the site before work commences.

Thus a year ago the government announced its intention of taking Hamlin's Hill, (N42/352520) a prominent non-volcanic hill just north of Westfield, under the Public Works Act, and using it to reclaim a large section of the Upper Manukau Harbour. The Public Works engineers when approached agreed to allow archaeological work once the land had been acquired and even delay removal of the archaeologically important portion as long as possible.

On the other hand the public notice given of an official project of this kind is easily overlooked in the advertisement pages of a newspaper, especially when there is no simultaneous publicity about a scheme in the news pages.

It is only when the Auckland City Council called tenders for the construction of a large service reservoir on Mt. Wellington (N42/364558) that members of the Auckland University Archaeological Society were aware of the impending removal of part of this already badly quarried pa. Urgency was so great that the manpower was stretched to its utmost and excavations concluded with members making notes and salvaging material in the face of the bulldozer blades. Good relations, however, were established with officers of the Waterworks Department and as a result the Auckland City Council has recently given the University Society notice of intent to site another service reservoir on another volcanic-cone pa, - Mt. Roskill (N42/258532). Further it seems that the City Council has modified its original plans in order to reduce damage to archaeological features, although surrounding pits and terraces will possibly be damaged by bulldozers and trucks.

Ironically both Mt. Wellington and Mt. Roskill are public domains "safeguarded" by Act of Parliament. A further point is worth noting. Service reservoirs are designed to hold three days' supply as a safeguard against possible mishap to headworks or trunk mains and provide extra storage for summer peak consumption. On present calculations, storage will in 1964 account for twice the amount stored in 1944. We can therefore expect to see in the near future a considerable increase in the size and number of service reservoirs, involving interference with more

archaeological sites, in particular those on volcanic cones.

A further difficulty is that public works of which notice has been given sometimes involve changes of plan. These may endanger sites which originally had not been threatened with destruction. Construction of the Mangere International Airport was at first considered to involve no destruction of sites of archaeological importance. Recent information however, suggests that the airport will not comply with International Civil Aviation Organisation requirements unless one or possibly two volcanic cones with well preserved earthworks are lowered considerably, as they are located too close to the airport approaches.

The worst cases, however, are without doubt those of sites on private land where destruction can take place without public notice of any kind being needed. Thus private owners of volcanic cones refer their intent to quarry to no one other than the local Council and the Inspector of Quarries who must by statute inspect the quarry from time to time. Auckland's greatest loss in recent years has been the privately owned McLennan Hills, (N42/364512), northeast of Otahuhu, where extensive quarrying has now removed most of what from early aerial photographs was a very interesting and complex pa constructed on a four cratered cone. The most recent case involves a neighbouring site, the outstanding pa Mt. Richmond (Otahuhu), (N42/354505), dominating what was probably one of New Zealand's shortest and most used portages. Though the destruction here is only partial, the circumstances are particularly disturbing since the agent of destruction is the Otahuhu Borough Council, a considerable area of earthworks has been removed without the opportunity of even recording them, and a most impressive landmark on the main road south has been emasculated. The justification for this work is the "tidying up" of an untidy frontage and the provision of sports fields and industrial sites. The area already has sufficient of both!

The time is now long overdue in Auckland for a concerted effort to preserve as much archaeological material and as many sites as possible and to record and investigate where destruction is inevitable. Though Auckland's situation is perhaps the most critical, the same safeguards are necessary in the country at large.

Two courses of action are possible. As individuals, groups, and as an Association we must make the general public aware of the desirability of site protection and of the need for recording those sites that for one reason or another have to be destroyed. Public education, however, is a slow affair and in Auckland's experience is an ineffective safeguard against economic interest.

There seems to be only one satisfactory approach to the matter which has now reached crisis proportions. The National Historic Places Act must be revised!

The following recommendations are made in this connection:

- (1) that a schedule of archaeological sites be drawn up under the authority of the National Historic Places Trust, whereby a landowner on whose land a scheduled site exists be required to give a minimum of two years notice of intention to plough, quarry, road, subdivide or carry out any other activity involving the scheduled site;
- (2) that all scheduled sites be under the strict control of the N.H.P.T. with sufficient legal powers to enforce the prohibition on despoliation by landowners, fossickers, contractors, local bodies and government departments;
- (3) that where intention to undertake work affecting a scheduled site is announced by a landowner, the N.H.P.T. shall, within the two years period of grace allowed, assess the importance of the site and decide upon appropriate action, viz: surface record and photography, partial excavation, total excavation, or complete preservation (with adequate compensation);
- (4) that where archaeological material of special importance is uncovered unexpectedly in the course of industrial or agricultural activity, there shall be the power on the part of the N.H.P.T. to suspend commercial operations until scientific investigations have been carried out, with compensation payable to the persons affected;
- (5) that to make possible the proper functioning of this scheme, a permanent trained archaeological staff be appointed within the N.H.P.T., spread over the four metropolitan centres but divided on a regional population basis;
- (6) that the staff be responsible, in cooperation with regional committees of the Trust, with the N.Z.A.A. and its affiliated bodies and members throughout the country, and with museum and university personnel, for the scheduling of sites and for any proposed site investigations;
- (7) that reports on any investigation carried out under the auspices of the Trust be published within five years of completion of the work and that the material eventuating from these investigations be placed in the care of the provincial museum, unless a recognised local museum is in existence or a site museum planned;
- (8) that in order that continuity and standards be maintained, adequate salaries be paid to the trained staff to encourage them to remain in the service of the Trust.

A revision along these lines is urgently required. It is not impossible, as similar schemes are in operation in many countries. The proposed revision represents a compromise between the patent deficiencies of present legislation and an impracticable and undesirable degree of legal prohibition. To make all excavations conditional on government licence as is the case in many states in the U.S.A. and in Israel would lead to a flouting of the law, a reduction or killing of amateur enthusiasm

and an unhealthy secrecy on the part of members of the public who may well discover nationally important sites. But to tolerate the present destruction of our historic heritage is to incur the charge of philistinism on a national scale and to reduce our mana in a world that has become much more enlightened.

References

1. Refer to the handbook Auckland's Volcanic Cones published by the Historic Auckland Society and reviewing the position as of 1957. In the early days of Auckland's settlement some 20 non-volcanic cone pa were destroyed by quarrying or settlement.
2. Auckland's Volcanic Cones pp 13-22
