

6 Culture and history

6.1 Existing conditions

The area covered by the Northern Reserves Management Plan has many cultural and historical associations.

This plan highlights the key historical values in relation to the reserves of the northern suburbs.¹²

6.1.1 Maori history and significance

The two most significant areas for Maori in the north are Horokiwi and Ngauranga.

The traditional Maori name for Horokiwi is Waihinahina, which means 'the stream of the white wood'. Despite some extensive and disfiguring quarrying, it is still possible to see the stream (as a waterfall) from various vantage points, near Hutt Road. Horokiwi - 'skin swallower'¹³ is wrongly named, being a corruption of a place named Horokiri, which is in turn a valley in Porirua (also now wrongly spelt).¹⁴

Horokiwi has a significant history of Maori occupation. Perhaps the most significant feature of this area for Maori was a track from Korokoro north to Takapu, which went over the upper Horokiwi area. One of three tracks providing access north from Wellington Harbour (the others being via Kaiwharawhara and Ngauranga), the route over Horokiwi provided access to cultivations in the Takapu Valley and to places beyond, like Porirua. There are urupa, pa and cultivation sites in Horokiwi and the area remains of considerable significance to tangata whenua.

Ngauranga was a canoe landing site¹⁵ and the site of a well-established kainga when Europeans first arrived in Wellington. The attractions of the site were manifest; there was a lagoon fed by a stream – the Waitohi (or Ngauranga) Stream, all close to the sea. Behind on the hills were cultivations and, beyond, a steep gorge surrounded by thick forest.

When Ngauranga was first settled is not known, but the name is thought to originate from the period of Ngati Ira occupation.¹⁶

Two major events changed Ngauranga markedly. Firstly, the huge 1855 earthquake, which raised the general level of land around Wellington Harbour, partly drained the lagoon and created much more space for development. Secondly, in 1859, work was completed on the construction of a road through the rocky gorge to Johnsonville. This road eventually turned into today's six-lane motorway.

¹² Based on Northern Suburbs History provided by Michael Kelly.

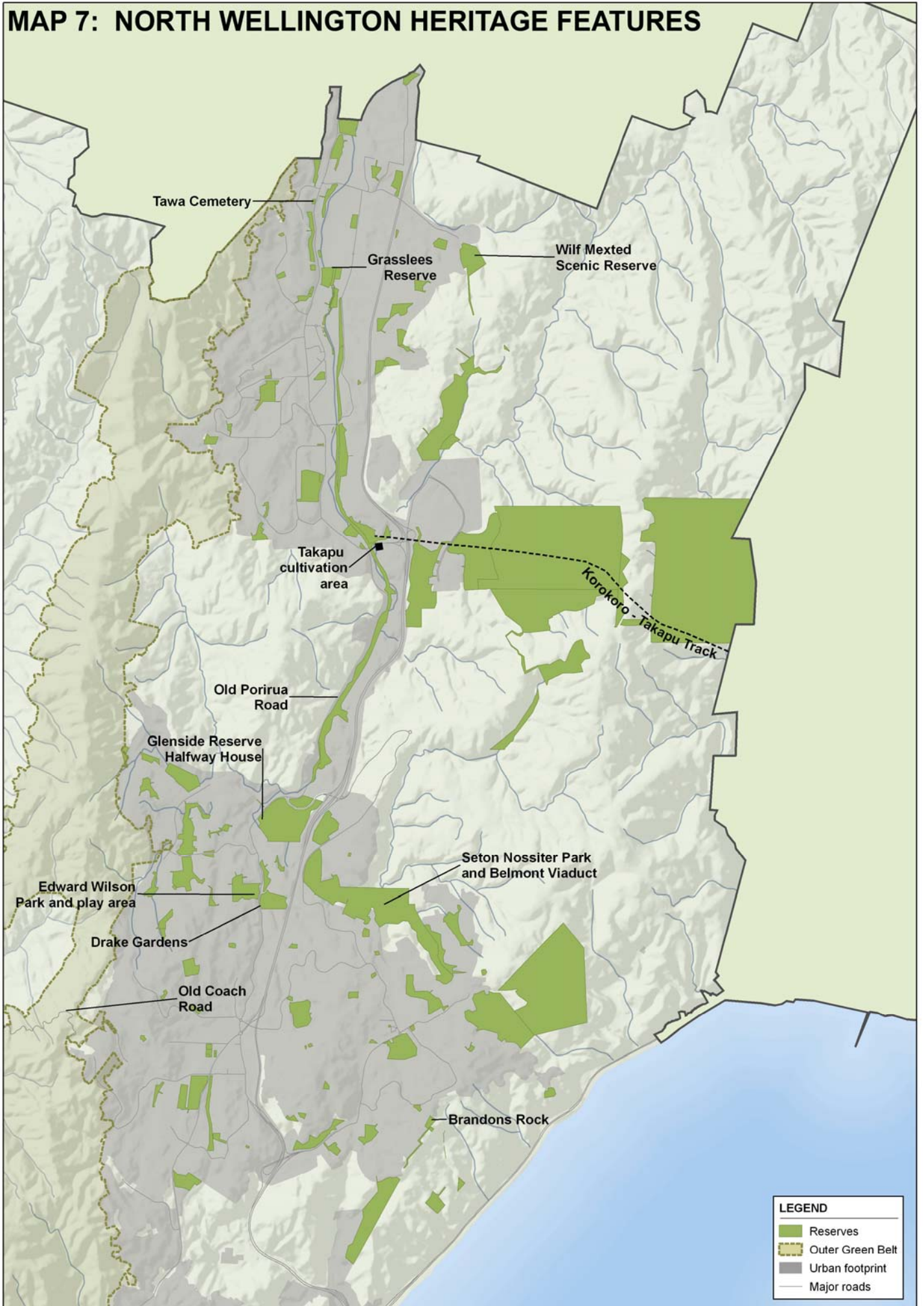
¹³ Best, Elsdon 1914, 'Olla Podrida' in *Porirua And They Who Settled It*, reproduced in www.tawahistory.wellington.net.nz

¹⁴ Adkin, L. 1959, *The Great Harbour of Tara*, Whitcombe and Tombs, Wellington p.92

¹⁵ Adkin, L. 1959, *The great harbour of Tara*, Wellington, p.48 as quoted in Nga Waahi Taonga O Te Whanganui a Tara: Maori Sites Inventory (Maori Sites of Te Whanganui a Tara), Wellington City Council, 1995, M50 - Ngauranga.

¹⁶ Ibid.

MAP 7: NORTH WELLINGTON HERITAGE FEATURES



While Tawa was not occupied by Maori for any period, it was likely to have been a place passed through between Porirua and Te Whanganui a Tara (Wellington) both of which supported Maori populations for some centuries. One of the Maori tracks between the two harbours formed the basis of Porirua Road. Another known track was between Willowbank and the Horokiwi Ridge and to Petone.

6.1.2 Important cultural and historical reserves and features

6.1.2.1 Old Porirua Road

Porirua Road was the main road north out of Wellington and to a large extent still exists through the north. The land through the area was well traversed by Maori prior to settlement by colonists in 1840. Some of the early Maori tracks and later bridle trails were developed to become the “Porirua Road” The road was first surveyed in 1843 and continued as an extension of a track started by Captain Daniell to his farm *Trelissick*. It was eventually known as “Porirua Road” but was little more than a dray track at this time.

Although some parts of the original route of Porirua Road have gone, Glenside Road and Middleton Road, from Johnsonville to Tawa, largely follows the road’s original course. The section of the old Porirua Road through Tawa is now marked at various places along the route by marker plaques.

6.1.2.2 Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company line

This line opened in 1885 with commuter services introduced in 1895. The Wellington- Manawatu Railway Line Company was purchased by the Government to become the North Island Main Truck Line. During the 1930’s it was subject to major deviation of the route when tunnels were constructed between Kaiwharawhara and Glenside.

6.1.2.3 Seton Nossiter Park and Belmont viaduct

This park is made up primarily of some 13.3 hectares of land once held by the Newlands Trust Board, much of which was redesignated a Wellington City Council reserve in 1983 and later named Seton Nossiter Park. Seton Nossiter was a local farmer and Wellington City Councillor during the 20th century. Later, more land was acquired from the Trust Board.

Included within Seton Nossiter Park are the remains of what was once New Zealand’s biggest timber viaduct. These are the 14 concrete abutments for the Belmont viaduct, built in 1885 by the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company. Today it is possible to see at least two in the regenerating bush.

The threat of fire led the Company to replace the bridge in steel in 1904. In the 1930s, during the building of the main tunnel for the Tawa Flat deviation, which ultimately ended the need for the viaduct, a huge vertical shaft was sunk here. The shaft was sealed and the spoil eventually used in the building of the nearby motorway. The deviation opened in 1937 and ended over 50 years use of the viaduct. Finally, in December 1951, the army blew it up. However, it took several blasts before the bridge was finally brought down.

6.1.2.4 Glenside Reserve

Glenside Reserve is the principal recreational reserve in the Glenside area and consists of two parts

The first part, which is on the north side of Westchester Drive east was originally set aside as part of a subdivision planned in 1930. It was to occupy an area between Stebbings (now Glenside) Road and the Porirua Stream. The larger part on the south side of Westchester Drive east was purchased by Council in 1951, partly from funds paid by Victoria College (now Victoria University) in compensation for extending the College into Town Belt land. In 1991 the Council approved the construction of a road through the reserve. Some land was provided in compensation.

This reserve was the site of the Tawa Flat Deviation workers' camp from 1927-1937, a New Zealand Army camp during World War II, and the Glenside saleyards for approximately 30 years from 1950 to 1980.

6.1.2.5 Halfway House

Glenside was the place where some of the families from the first New Zealand Company immigrant ship *Aurora* settled. Anthony and Susannah Wall, who arrived in 1841, built a house on land bought from Frank Johnson (for whom Johnsonville is named) and provided overnight accommodation for travellers. This became known as 'The Halfway House'. The business was issued its first licence for the sale of liquor in 1842. Like any early road trip, the journey along the old Maori trails and, later, Porirua Road, was arduous, so the overnight stop was important as a place for horses and travellers to refresh.

A second Halfway House was built by John McKain in 1849 and was later known as Joseph Clapham's Halfway House, after a subsequent owner. It became important as a coaching stop. Alexander Brown built the third and largest Halfway House in 1880. This house survives today. Halfway House and its later incarnations were one of the best known features along the Porirua Road.

6.1.2.6 Drake Gardens

On the southern side of Wingfield Place, a short distance before Glenside is the site of the former home of Thomas and Ceres Drake, who travelled from London on the *Aurora* and arrived in 1840. Drake bought a number of sections which he owned until his death in 1889, planting many trees and sending seeds to, among other places, the Botanic Garden. His widow Ceres sold all the land, with the exception of that occupied by the homestead, to the Government under the Small Farms Settlement scheme.

6.1.2.7 Grasslees Reserve

Grasslees Reserve is named after the farm established by William Best whose son, Elsdon Best, is Tawa's most famous inhabitant. He was variously a farmworker, soldier, sawmiller, health inspector, ethnologist and writer. His ashes are interred in a memorial at the reserve. Best was the foremost ethnologist of his time and a prolific writer on Maori history and mythology.

6.1.2.8 Wilf Mexted Scenic Reserve

This reserve contains a remnant of the original forest that covered Tawa before the arrival of Europeans. The reserve was gifted by Wilf Mexted, a great lover of trees who was a member of one of Tawa's longest established families.

6.1.2.9 Brandon's Rock

Brandon's Rock is the peak on the Paparangi range and is named for Alfred de Bathe Brandon who owned land in the Newlands area. Brandon arrived in 1840 and was a prominent lawyer, provincial councillor, parliamentarian and crown prosecutor. Brandon's land and adjoining property was the subject of two unsuccessful attempts to mine gold.

6.1.2.10 Old Coach Road

Old Coach Road is part of the Outer Green Belt and managed in accordance with the Outer Green Belt Management Plan (2004).

6.1.2.11 Tawa Cemetery, Main Road

Tawa Cemetery contains the remains of some of Tawa's most important families and local identities. The cemetery was established in 1867, on land gifted in 1861 by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the founder of the New Zealand Company. An Anglican Church, St. Peter's, was constructed on the site in 1866. Most of the graves date from prior to 1900 because the church was moved to Porirua two years later. Burials did continue sporadically, but the cemetery finally closed in 1978.

6.1.2.12 Edward Wilson Reserve

Edward "Teddy" Wilson was a Glenside farmer who obtained title to his property in 1904, in the days when the area was known as The Halfway. He sold much of his farm to the Churton Developer John Walker, but retained his home in its park like setting. In his will he left the house and property to his Norwegian nephew Bjorn Lund, who in 1985, left it to the Wellington City Council as future reserve. The old farm driveway is now the entrance to the reserve from Middleton Road.

6.2 Issues and opportunities

6.2.1 Glenside Reserve and Halfway House

The future use of Glenside Reserve and the use of the Halfway House needs to be determined. The Halfway House is listed as a heritage building in the District Plan and options for its conservation will be investigated.

6.2.2 Identification and recognition of historical sites

In developing this plan other important heritage sites and features have been identified. Further assessment of their heritage significance needs to be undertaken to determine their potential for listing as heritage items in the District Plan or other mechanism for their protection.

6.2.3 Highlighting history and interpretation

The main historical features should continue to be protected and where appropriate should provide interpretive material.

6.2.4 Maori history and place names

Appropriate recognition of Maori history and values needs to be given to important sites. Maori names of important landmarks, ridges and valleys need to be included in Wellington City Council publications and maps.

6.3 Objectives

- Recognise, protect and interpret the historical and cultural site features and values of the northern reserves.
- Facilitate and enable the exercise of tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga by Wellington's tangata whenua and other Maori.
- Protect and enhance the existing character and values of Glenside Reserve.
- Conserve and develop a sustainable use for the Halfway House.

6.4 Policies

- Where appropriate, Maori place names will be used, in conjunction with European place names on signs and maps.
- Consultation with the NZ Historic Places Trust and with the tangata whenua will be an important part of managing historic and traditional sites and waahi tapu.
- Recognised historic sites on reserves will be protected in a manner reflecting their value and significance, in consultation with any directly affected groups or individuals.
- Sites identified as part of this plan as having heritage value will be assessed to determine their significance and potential for listing as heritage items in the District Plan.
- Where possible historical features will be suitably restored and interpreted.
- A concept plan for the ongoing protection and enhancement of Glenside Reserve will be implemented.
- A process for the refurbishment and reuse of the Halfway House will be implemented.