

Island Bay Foreshore: Archaeological Issues

Prepared for
Wellington City Council

February 2005

Introduction

Wellington City Council is considering work to develop and enhance public spaces and facilities along the foreshore at Island Bay. There are several published references to the presence of archaeological evidence relating to Maori settlement in the bay. Maori heritage places at Island Bay are important to Tangata Whenua and are listed in the District Plan as Waahi Tapu sites.

The purpose of this report is to document research carried out to identify any archaeological sites and issues along the Island Bay foreshore, from the southern point of the bay to the baitshed and Trent St, and to provide archaeological guidelines for the proposed work to ensure protection for any sites and compliance with the *Historic Places Act* 1993. An archaeological site is defined as any place that was associated with human activity before 1900 that can be investigated by archaeological methods to provide evidence of the history of New Zealand¹.

This report is concerned with physical evidence of past human activity and is not an assessment of cultural values. Advice from Tangata Whenua should be sought about Maori cultural values.

Documentary Research

The main sources consulted were historical records, published accounts, the New Zealand Archaeological Site Recording Scheme and the Wellington City Council Maori Sites Inventory.

Historical Records

No relevant information was able to be located from historical records. Research was undertaken at the National Library, the Alexander Turnbull Library and National Archives for possible published and unpublished sources. Pictorial collections were also considered. National Archives hold a map of the “Island Bay Swamp” (Acc. No. 16025) dating from 1849, which may be of interest from a natural heritage perspective. Early survey plans held by Land Information New Zealand were also reviewed.

Collections at Wellington City Archives were considered. WCC Archives hold survey plans from the 1880s relating to the subdivision of Island Bay. These do not contain any reference to earlier settlements in the bay. It is however important to note that the road and subdivision date from pre-1900, so there is a possibility of archaeological evidence of those early European activities. The surviving buildings and structures along the foreshore however post-date 1900².

Published accounts

The Waitangi Tribunal report *Te Whanganui A Tara Me Ona Takiwa: Report on the Wellington District Wai 145* was reviewed, but any references to Island Bay and surrounding areas refer to published accounts by Adkin and Best (discussed below). The report does make reference to a tribunal document recording oral history evidence about Island Bay, but this was not able to be accessed.

The main sources from Maori settlement in Island Bay are the published works of Best and Adkin. The location of a number of Maori settlements around the harbour was noted by Eldson Best in the early twentieth century. Best was one of New Zealand’s first ethnographers and recorded many Maori traditions and history. Best’s map of Wellington County District Showing Native Names, published by the Department of Lands and Survey in 1916 shows several Maori sites around Island Bay (Figure 1). These are a pa on

¹ Section 2, *Historic Places Act* 1993.

² Laura Paynter. The beach at Island Bay and Shorland Park: A history and heritage assessment. Unpublished report, Wellington City Council, December 2004.

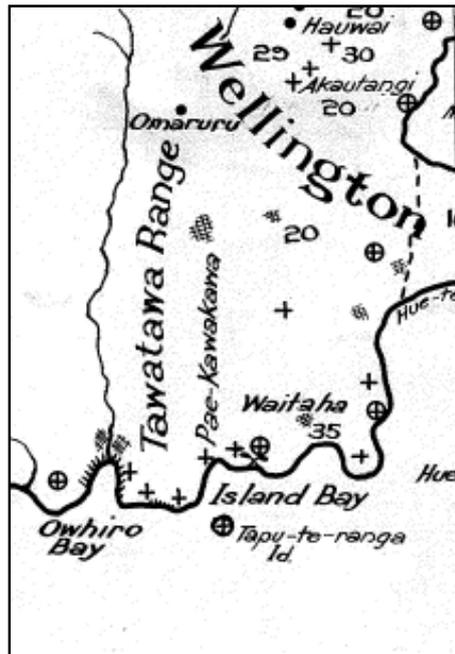


Figure 1: Detail from Best's map *Wellington County District Shewing Native Names*, showing the location of archaeological evidence of Maori occupation.

Tapu Te Ranga island, and pa on the eastern hillslopes above the bay and three villages around the foreshore. In another version of this map published in Ward³, occupation evidence is also shown at the western end of the foreshore. These locations can only be considered indicative of the general location of sites because of the scale of the map, but do illustrate an apparent concentration of Maori sites in the vicinity.

The sites are also discussed in Best's Land of Tara series in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (1917-1919). Places with archaeological evidence specifically referred to by Best are the terraces at Uruhau (the high hill on the eastern side of the bay); on the hillock above Liffey St, on a central hillock, at Milne Terrace and on the hill at High Street. As Best⁴ observed, "Prior to European settlement traces of Maori occupation were discernable all round the bay, on the flat, on the hills on both sides; it appears to have been a favoured place." The locations at Island Bay referred to by Best are shown in Figure 2.

In 1959 G. Leslie Adkin published *The Great Harbour of Tara*, a compilation of Maori place names and sites around the harbour drawn from a range of sources including Best's work. Adkin discusses Tapu Te Ranga Pa and island, Uruhau Pa on the eastern hill slopes above the bay and Te Mapunga kainga at the western end of the beach, and includes their general location on maps, and makes reference in the text to Motu-haku kainga, "at or near Island Bay".

Adkin's placement of Te Mapunga kainga⁵, between the foreshore and the corner of The Parade and Reef St (see Figure 2), is of particular relevance to this study. The kainga is shown in the area now known as Shorland Park. Adkin⁶ cites information from Christie that Te Mapunga was a village near the beach at

3. Ward, L.E. 1928. *Early Wellington*. Whitcombe & Tombs, Auckland. Figure 63.

4. *Journal of Polynesian Society* Vol. 26, Pt 6 p 8.

5. Adkin, G.L. 1959. *The great harbour of Tara: Traditional Maori- place names and sites of Wellington harbour and environs*. Whitcomb & Tombs, Christchurch. Map III.

6. *Ibid*, p 37.



Figure 2: Island Bay, showing areas where archaeological evidence has been noted. Areas are indicative of general location only. (Aerial photography provided by Wellington City Council).

Island Bay and that the name was sometimes also used for the bay itself. Best⁷ also cites Henry Stowell (Hare Hongi) as applying the name to Island Bay

New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme

The national inventory of archaeological sites in New Zealand is the NZ Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme. The Site Recording Scheme currently contains over 55,000 records. It was established in 1958 to encourage the recording of information about archaeological sites and is endorsed by the NZ Historic Places Trust and the Department of Conservation as the official national inventory for archaeological sites.

7. *Journal of Polynesian Society* Vol. 26, Pt5 p 174.
 8. Ward, *Early Wellington*, p 235.

A search of the Site Recording Scheme showed that there are two sites recorded in Island Bay. These are the terraced hillside known as Uruhau Pa (R27/53) and Tapu Te Ranga Pa (R27/255). There are no recorded archaeological sites along the foreshore. It is worth noting however that there has been a lack of systematic archaeological survey carried out in the Wellington urban area, archaeological sites have therefore not been well recorded and many have been lost during the growth of the city.

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Nga Waahi Taonga O Te Whanganui a Tara, Wellington City Council's Maori Sites Inventory, identifies the Tapu Te Ranga – Haewai Precinct and associated sites, including those in Island Bay, and describes some recent history, including warfare.

The sites listed in Island Bay are:

M82	Te Mupunga kainga	Forward western corner of Island bay
M83	Island Bay (Te Mapunga)	Seaward side of The Esplanade, Island Bay
M84	Motu-haku Kainga or Pa	Near Island Bay foreshore, between Trent and Brighton Sts.
M85	Uruhau Pa	Melbourne Rd, Island Bay hill
M90	Tapu Te Ranga Island	

Conclusion

There has clearly been a Maori presence in Island Bay for a long period of time but identifying specific localities for the kainga and archaeological evidence noted along the beach, from the information sources consulted, does not appear to be possible. The pa sites at Tapu Te Ranga and the eastern hill slope are documented in more detail.

Given the amount of archaeological evidence noted by Best in the bay at the turn of the 20th century, it is possible that buried material has survived in the dune system and under roads and houses. A large midden site at Tarakena Bay disturbed during the construction of the car park in the 1970s and a smaller site beneath a garage in Breaker Bay discovered recently during alterations demonstrate this possibility. The amount of modification in Island Bay, however, reduces the likelihood of site survival. In 1928, Ward⁸ describes Island Bay as a former summer holiday resort for city residents, with picnics held in the sand dunes, but by the time he was writing his account he states that the dunes had been flattened and built over.

Guidelines for work along the Island Bay Foreshore

Historic Places Act

The NZ Historic Places Trust administers the *Historic Places Act* 1993 (HPA). The HPA contains a consent process for any person intending to do work that may affect an archaeological site. The HPA defines an archaeological site as any place that was associated with human activity before 1900 that can be investigated by archaeological methods to provide evidence of the history of New Zealand. Any person intending to undertake work that may damage, modify or destroy an archaeological site must first obtain an authority from the NZ Historic Places Trust for that work.

Archaeological Issues

Although the foreshore area has been modified by levelling of the dunes and construction of the road and houses, a concentration of archaeological evidence was observed there in the early 20th century. Whether any part of this evidence has survived is not known at this point.

There is therefore a possibility that buried sites may be encountered during earthworks, particularly in the Shorland Park area and where excavations extends beyond the depth of recent modifications and into the original dune system. The likelihood of encountering archaeological evidence depends to some extent on the scale of the works undertaken. Limited excavations for landscaping and planting, for example, are unlikely to encounter archaeological material.

It is important that contractors are aware of the requirements of the *Historic Places Act 1993*. An Accidental Discovery Protocol can be included in contract documents to set out the process to be followed if any archaeological sites are discovered or suspected. An example is appended to this report. Contingency plans should be available in the event that archaeological material is uncovered and contractors should be made aware of potential delays if sites are encountered. A stand down period for archaeological work could be built into contract documents.

Archaeological evidence that may be found includes burnt stones from ovens, charcoal, concentrations of shells, wood and stone artefacts, post holes, old bottles and ceramics and human burials.

If archaeological evidence is discovered or suspected, work affecting that evidence must cease and the NZ Historic Places Trust and Tangata Whenua should be informed without delay. Depending on the nature of the site, an application for an authority under the *Historic Places Act 1993* may be required, if an authority is not already held. If human remains are found, the NZ Police should also be informed.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that if large scale excavations of a depth of over one meter are planned, that advice is sought from the NZ Historic Places Trust as to whether an application for an archaeological authority is required before work commences, or whether an Accidental Discovery Protocol and briefing to contractors will suffice in the first instance.
2. It is recommended that an Accidental Discovery Protocol is included in any contract documents and that contractors are briefed on the possibility of unearthing archaeological material and the appropriate course of action to take if this situation arises.
3. Any discovery of archaeological material, where an archaeological authority is not held, must be reported to NZ Historic Places Trust, if Maori sites are involved Tangata Whenua should be advised, and also the NZ Police if human skeletal remains are encountered. Work affecting the site must cease until the Historic Places Trust has been advised and given instructions regarding compliance with the *Historic Places Act*.

Example of an Accidental Discovery Protocol for Archaeological Sites

If any archaeological site(s) are uncovered during physical works <insert Site Manager> will require the contractor to adopt the following protocol. Evidence of archaeological sites can include oven stones, charcoal, shell middens, ditches, banks, pits, old building foundations, artefacts of Maori and European origin or human burials.

1. Work shall cease immediately at that place.
2. The contractor must shut down all machinery, secure the area and advise the <Site Manager>.
3. The <Site Manager> shall notify the NZ Historic Place Trust and if necessary the appropriate consent process shall be initiated. Contact : NZHPT Central Region Archaeologist phone 04 494 8038 mobile 025 293 7163.
4. If the site is suspected to be of Maori origin, the <Site Manager> shall notify <insert appropriate iwi groups> to determine what further actions are appropriate to safeguard the site or its contents. Contact: <insert appropriate iwi contacts>
5. If skeletal remains are uncovered the <Site Manager> shall advise the NZ Police.
6. Works affecting the archaeological site shall not resume until the NZ Historic Places Trust, the NZ Police (if skeletal remains are involved) and <insert iwi groups> have each given the appropriate approval for work to continue.