

Section 18 Research Strategy for

Area N

Bell Block, Taranaki

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1.0 Introduction

Recent archaeological assessment and non-invasive archaeological investigations (Geometria 2008, 2010, 2011) of a block of land, designated as Area N by the New Plymouth District Council, were undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the area for which a zoning plan change is being considered. The proposed zoning change will result in intensified land-use within the area, and will include the construction of a new access road through the area which is required to service sections in the intended redevelopment and provide an essential linkage between Egmont and Henwood Roads (Figure 1).

Area N contains a number of archaeological sites (Figure 2), several of which have been excavated during the Bell Block Bypass development. These include Te Oropuriri Pa (P19/261), Hoewaka Village (P19/331), and a European homestead site with evidence of an underlying Maori occupation (P19/321). More recently the redevelopment of the west end of the subject area saw further archaeological work undertaken on a set of possible pits (P19/322)¹. These sites are all located on the northern boundary of the Area N, in close proximity to the historic Devon Line.

The field assessment undertaken in 2008 identified several areas with archaeological potential. Specifically, these were surface features identified on the Caskey and Rowe properties that are thought to be associated with Te Oropuriri Pa, surface features identified adjacent to Ngahinapouri Pa/Hoewaka urupa (P19/172), and two areas on the Wheeler property that may represent Maori or early European occupation. Areas with archaeological potential identified during the field assessment were further investigated by geophysical survey (Geometria 2010). A second geophysical survey (Geometria 2011) directly investigated areas on the Caskey property thought to be directly associated with Te Oropuriri.

As a result of these investigations it is recommended that an archaeological investigation under section 18 of the HPA be carried out to ground truth and verify the nature of the identified surface and sub-surface anomalies and, if they are confirmed as archaeological features, to assess how the rezoning designation and the proposed access road will impact them.

A wide corridor within which the access road alignment is to be constructed has been proposed. This corridor passes close by or through archaeological sites P19/321, P19/261 and P19/172. It is hoped that the wide corridor will permit circumvention of any identified archaeological sites and features confirmed following the s18 investigation.

This research strategy has been prepared in support of the application for the Section 18 authority.

¹ This site has subsequently been interpreted as modern farming rubbish pits following investigation under S18 of the HPA (refer to report by Geometria 2007)



Figure 1: Proposed Area N road alignment corridor.



Figure 2: Area N recorded archaeological sites in relation to proposed alignment corridor.

2.0 Section 18 Investigations and the Historic Places Act 1993

All archaeological work in New Zealand has to be carried out under the Historic Places Act 1993. It has to adhere to the following principles:

(1) The purpose of this Act is to promote the identification, protection, preservation, and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand.

(2) In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it shall recognise—

(a) The principle that historic places have lasting value in their own right and provide evidence of the origins of New Zealand's distinct society; and

(b) The principle that the identification, protection, preservation, and conservation of New Zealand's historical and cultural heritage should—

- (i) Take account of all relevant cultural values, knowledge, and disciplines; and
- (ii) Take account of material of cultural heritage value and involve the least possible alteration or loss of it; and
- (iii) Safeguard the options of present and future generations; and
- (iv) Be fully researched, documented, and recorded, where culturally appropriate; and

(c) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wahi tapu, and other taonga."

Section 18 of the Historic Places Act 1993 which guides this research strategy states:

"(1) For any purpose consistent with this Act, but subject to subsections (2) and (4) of this section, the Trust may—

(a) Carry out an archaeological investigation of any archaeological site

(b) Authorise in writing any person to carry out an archaeological investigation of any such site subject to such conditions as it thinks fit to impose."

(2) Any person may apply to the Trust for an authority under subsection (1)(b) of this section and the Trust, in considering the application, shall take into account the purposes of the investigation, the competency of the person, and the adequacy of the institutional and professional resources available to that person to enable the investigation to be satisfactorily carried out.

(3) No archaeological investigation shall be carried out under this section except with the consent of the owner and occupier of the land on which the site is situated and, where the Maori Heritage Council considers it appropriate, with the consent of such iwi authority or other body as the Maori Heritage Council considers appropriate.

(4) All archaeological work done under subsection (1) of this section shall conform to accepted archaeological practice and the land shall be returned to its former state as near as possible, unless otherwise agreed with the owner."

This research strategy has been prepared to comply with the guidance provided by the Historic Places Trust for research strategies and Section 18 investigations (Historic Places Trust, AGS3: 2006 and AGS4: 2008).

3.0 Research questions

The principal aim of the investigation is to ground test the geophysical survey results and identified surface features to gain a greater understanding of the type and extent of archaeological features within Area N, and more specifically to:

- Determine the nature and function(s) of features identified on the Caskey and Rowe properties as interpreted in the geophysical data, and to ascertain if these features relate to the contiguous archaeology and extent of Te Oropuriri Pa.
- Investigate the surface features evident on the northern lower flat below and adjacent to Ngahinepouri Pa/Hoewaka Urupa (P19/172), and to determine the nature of these features.
- Investigate the nature and function(s) of the features on the two areas of interest on the Wheeler property, and establish if they are archaeological or post-1900 in nature. If the features prove to be archaeological, a key objective will be to establish whether these sites are of Maori or European origin.
- Investigate if multiple settlement events can be identified in any of the identified areas.
- Assess the state of preservation of archaeological features.

4.0 Research Strategy

The aim of this research strategy is three fold. It seeks to allow sufficient data to be gathered in order to answer the above research questions with a minimum of damage to the site; it aims to provide more certainty to the New Plymouth District Council and other stakeholders as to the type and extent of archaeology within Area N; and finally it undertakes to provide alignment options for the access road within the designated corridor.

The geophysical anomalies and surface features that require investigation are dispersed throughout four properties. Small areal units will be hand excavated to investigate the targeted areas. These are:

4.1 Caskey Property - 1C2B2 Oropuriri None

The feature numbers cited below refer to the feature numbers as assigned in the original reports and geophysical grid alignments (Figure 3 - 4).

Unit 1 - Feature 14²

This is a possible posthole alignment that may represent a southern boundary of the palisades that enclosed the defended area of the pa. A trench approximately 1x40m feature (Unit 1) running from this point across the proposed corridor will be machine stripped and any identified features investigated by hand excavation. Due to inclement weather and recently felled logs this area was unable to be geophysically surveyed.

Unit 2 - Feature 7³

This is a possible pit feature on the ridgeline above the excavated area of the pa. A 3x1m area (Unit 2) will be machine stripped and any features hand excavated.

Unit 3 - Feature 9⁴

This feature is another possible pit feature near the high point of the ridgeline. A 4x1m area (Unit 3) will be machine stripped and hand excavated to investigate this feature and to determine whether this represents part of the Te Oropuriri ridgeline occupation. A longer unit is proposed so as to include part of feature 8.



Figure 3: Alignment of geophysical grids on the Caskey property

²Refer Figure 9, Geometria 2011

³Refer Figure 7, Geometria 2011

⁴Refer Figure 7, Geometria 2011

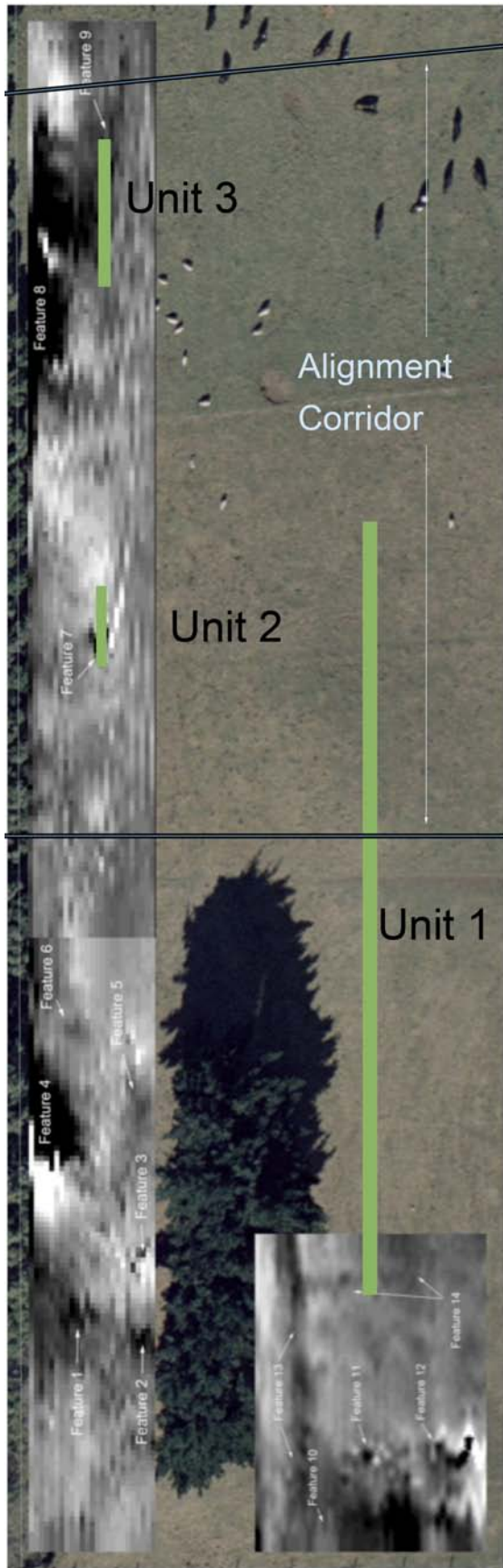


Figure 4: Detail showing geophysical grids, feature and unit numbers

4.2 Rowe Property - MBLK 2B3B5 Hoewaka None

The feature numbers cited below refer to the feature numbers as assigned in the original reports and geophysical grid alignments (Figure 5 - 6).

Unit 4 - Feature 1⁵

This feature is a depression and has been preliminarily interpreted as a possible extension of the defensive gunfighter trench or drainage feature associated with the old orchard operation (or both). A 2x1m unit will be excavated across this feature.

Unit 5 - Feature 2⁶

One of several angled depressions that are possibly short rifle pits forming part of the rear facing defenses of Te Oropuriri. A 2x1m unit will be excavated across this feature.

Unit 6 - Feature 3⁷

One of two adjacent pit features thought to be kumara pits. A 1x1m unit will be excavated across the corner of this feature.



Figure 5: Location of geophysical grids on the Rowe property

⁵ Refer Figure 65, Geometria 2010

⁶ Refer Figure 66, Geometria 2010

⁷ Refer Figure 67, Geometria 2010



Grid 5



Grid 6



Grid 7

Figure 6: Location of proposed excavation units on the Rowe property

4.3 Wheeler Property - Lot 2 DP400849

The feature numbers cited below refer to the feature numbers as assigned in the original reports and geophysical grid alignments (Figures 7 – 9).

Unit 7 - Feature 3 and 4⁸

A possible trench or drain at the foot of a small rise identified in both the geophysical and field surveys. A 2x1m unit will be excavated across this feature.

Unit 8 - Feature 5⁹

Two adjacent possible small pit features identified in both the geophysical and field surveys. A 3x1m unit will be excavated across the two features.

Unit 9 - Feature 1¹⁰

A large geophysical anomaly representing a possible pit feature. A 1x1m unit will be excavated.

Unit 10 - Feature 2¹¹

A possible pit feature identified in both the geophysical and field surveys. A 1x1m unit will be excavated.



Figure 7: Geophysical grid alignment for Grids 1 and 2 on the Wheeler property

⁸ Refer Figure 62, Geometria 2010

⁹ Refer Figure 62, Geometria 2010

¹⁰ Refer Figure 61, Geometria 2010

¹¹ Refer Figure 61, Geometria 2010

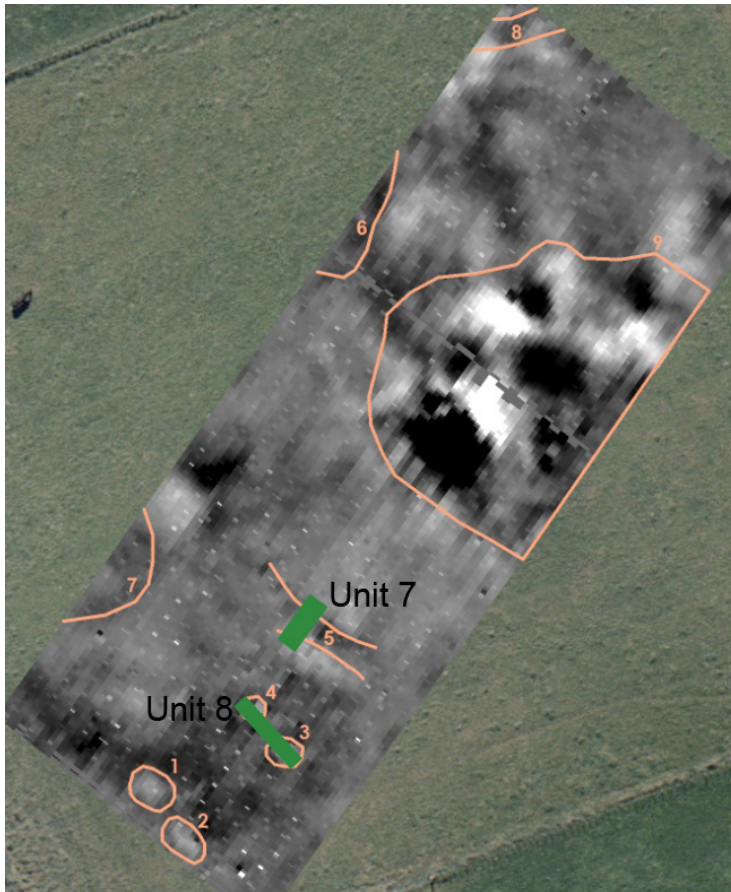


Figure 8: Proposed excavation units on the Wheeler property

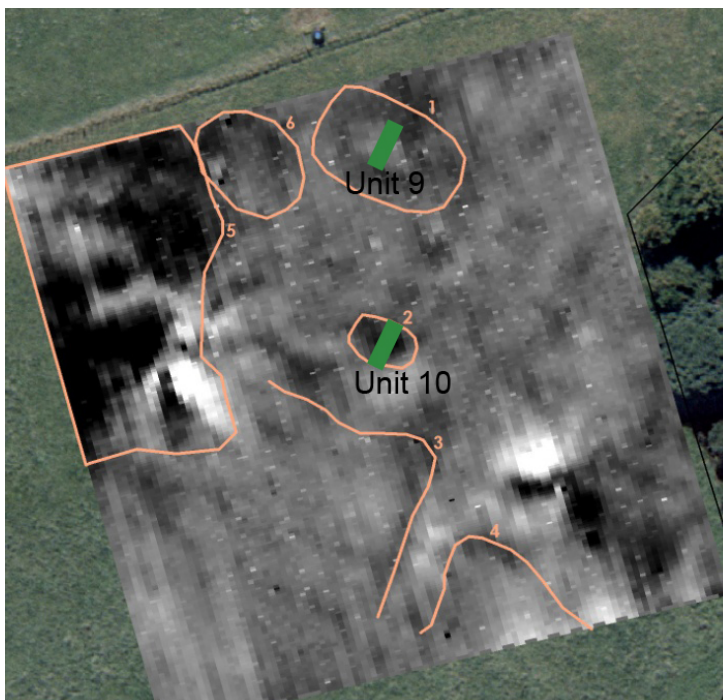


Figure 9: Proposed excavation units on the Wheeler property

4.4 NPDC PT MBLK 2B2 Hoewaka None

The area where the proposed corridor alignment passes adjacent to Ngahinapouri Pa/Hoewaka urupa (P19/172) was not geophysically surveyed but there are a number of obvious surface depressions in this area, particularly on the northern slopes below the fenceline of the urupa. It is thought that these might represent remnant features relating to the pa. A 4x1m unit (Unit 11) will be machine stripped and any identified features partially hand excavated to allow positive identification (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Location of Unit 11 adjacent to the boundary of Ngahinapouri Pa/Hoewaka urupa (P19/172).

5.0 Reinstatement

All excavation units will be recorded as per accepted archaeological standards, then in-filled and reinstated to original condition post excavation.

6.0 Conclusion

It is anticipated that the proposed excavation units will be large enough to locate either dateable finds or charcoal within an undisturbed archaeological context to undertake C14 dating, and that detailed stratigraphic recording of different subsurface features as interpreted from the geophysical data will give us a clear understanding of the general pattern and function(s) of the site. This will enable all stakeholders to gain a more comprehensive overview of the known archaeology within the proposed alignment corridor.

7.0 References

Geometria Ltd., 2007. Archaeological Report, S18, Egmont Road, New Plymouth, Egmont Road, P19/322. Unpublished report prepared for BTW Company Ltd.

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