

# **Ardmore Business Park: archaeological assessment**

**report to  
Knight Investments Ltd**

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Knight Investments Ltd

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## 1 Introduction

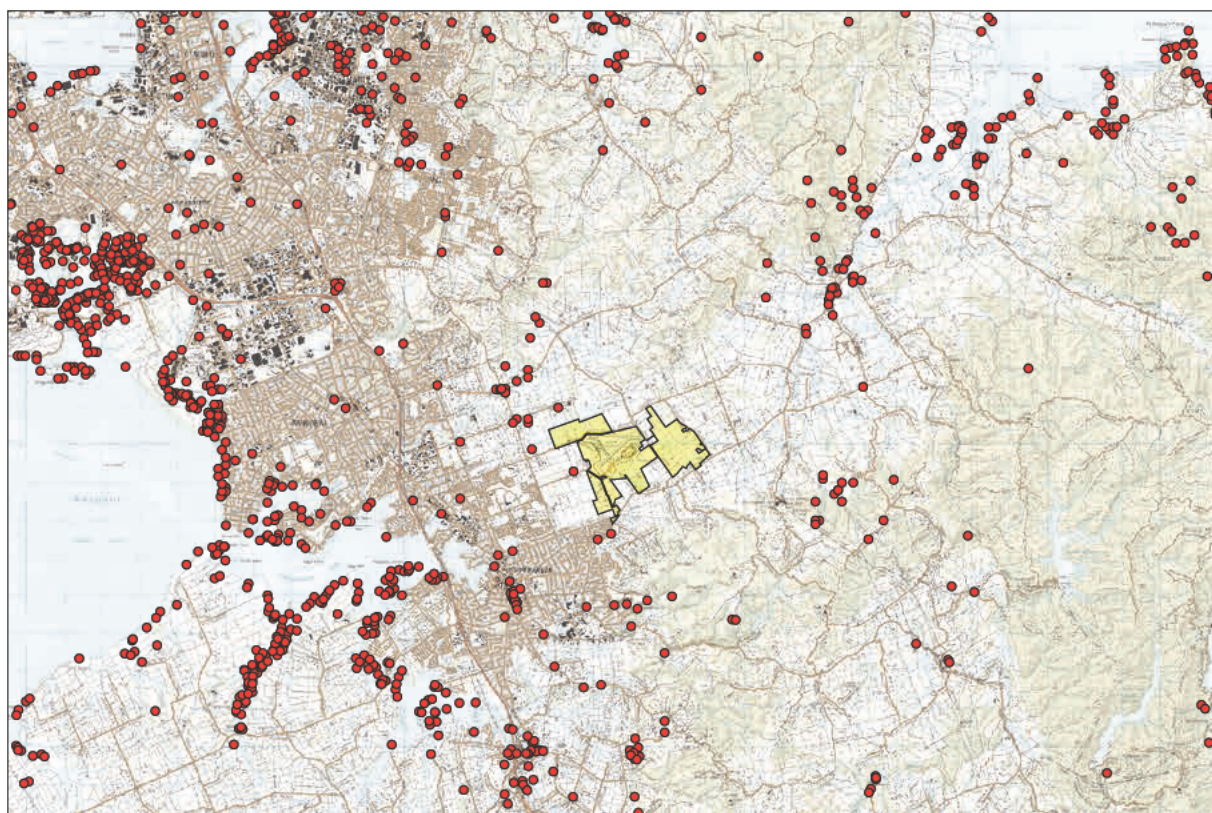
Knight Investments Ltd are applying for referral under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 to develop 58 properties at Ardmore to establish a business park. An archaeological and heritage desk-top assessment is required in support of the referral application. Doyle Smith of Knight Investments commissioned this assessment from CFG Heritage Ltd.

The purpose of this Project is to deliver a regionally significant industrial and employment hub. The Project capitalises on its location surrounding (and including) Ardmore Airport its accessibility to major transport networks (particularly the planned Mill Road corridor) and its proximity to the growing residential areas of Takaanini, Manurewa, Papakura and Drury.

The Project Area is approximately 511 hectares.

Of this total, it is anticipated that:

- (a) The net developable area will be between 193-276 hectares, which excludes significant ecological areas ("SEAs"), streams, stormwater management areas and that part of the Airport either used for existing operations/runways or already under construction.
- (b) The likely gross floor area for future activities / buildings would be between 67 hectares and 136 hectares, with additional land required for yards, individual site landscaping and car parking etc.



*Figure 1. Location of proposed business park and surrounding archaeological sites.*

At a broad level the Project includes:

- (a) The construction and development of a business park for light industry/service type activities.
- (b) A green / blue network providing riparian planting, stormwater management and wastewater disposal and protection of existing SEAs.
- (c) Upgrades to existing roads and intersections.
- (d) New roading connections to the Airport and the wider site.
- (e) Land modification works and infrastructure.

The sites that form part of the Project are set out in Attachment A to this report/assessment.

## 1.1 Statutory requirements

All archaeological sites, whether recorded or not, are protected by the provisions of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and may not be destroyed, damaged or modified without an authority issued by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT).

An archaeological site is defined in the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act as:

- (a) any place in New Zealand, including any building or structure (or part of a building or structure), that—
  - (i) was associated with human activity that occurred before 1900 or is the site of the wreck of any vessel where the wreck occurred before 1900; and
  - (ii) provides or may provide, through investigation by archaeological methods, evidence relating to the history of New Zealand; and
- (b) includes a site for which a declaration is made under section 43(1).

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) requires City, District and Regional Councils to manage the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way that provides for the wellbeing of today's communities while safeguarding the options of future generations. The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development is identified as a matter of national importance (Section 6f).

Historic heritage is defined as those natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures, derived from archaeological, architectural, cultural, historic, scientific, or technological qualities.

Historic heritage includes:

- historic sites, structures, places, and areas
- archaeological sites;
- sites of significance to Māori, including wāhi tapu;
- surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources (RMA Section 2).

These categories are not mutually exclusive and some archaeological sites may include above ground structures or may also be places that are of significance to Maori.

Where resource consent is required for any activity the assessment of effects is required to address cultural and historic heritage matters.

Under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 an applicant may apply to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for an archaeological authority as described in the HNZPTA. Any authority is granted by the EPA.

## 2 Methodology

The following digital data sources were consulted:

- Site records from the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) Site Record Scheme (SRS) were obtained from ArchSite (<https://nzaa-archsite.hub.arcgis.com/>).
- Records of previous archaeological investigations in the area were obtained from the HNZPT digital library (<https://dl.heritage.org.nz/greenstone3/library/collection/pdf-reports/>).
- Historic maps and plans held by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) were accessed using QuickMap.

- Aerial Photographs held by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) and in other online archives were searched (<https://data.linz.govt.nz>; <https://retrolens.co.nz>).
- The Auckland Council GeoMaps GIS viewer (<https://geomapspublic.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/>) and Auckland Unitary Plan Viewer (<https://unitaryplanmaps.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz>) were searched for any areas of historic heritage significance.

A field assessment of the properties was conducted by Matthew Campbell of CFG Heritage, accompanied by Doyle Smith of Knight Investments, on 18 November 2025. This was a visual inspection only and no intrusive methods such as test pitting were used.

### 3 Background

Ardmore is located east of the Pahurehure Inlet, near Alfriston, Clevedon, and Papakura, and situated between the Manukau Harbour and the Hunua Ranges. The Manukau Harbour is New Zealand's second largest harbour with an area of approximately 365 km<sup>2</sup> and a shore length of about 460 km. The harbour formed from the development of a Quaternary dune barrier (Āwhitu Peninsula) enclosing a large bay between Port Waikato and the Waitakere Ranges (Kelly 2008:3). Soils in the project area are overwhelmingly poorly draining peats, clays, and alluvial soils – Ardmore peaty loams to the north and Karaka immature loams to the south (DSIR 1954) – making the area highly prone to water logging.

#### 3.1 Pre-European Māori history

The area around Papakura and Ardmore was an important strategic location for pre-European Māori as it provided access to inland areas like the Hunuas, Clevedon, and the Waikato, from the Manukau Harbour. The area acted as a link between the Auckland isthmus, the Hauraki Gulf, and the Waikato (Clarke 1983, Murdoch 1990), with the Papakura Portage route extending from the area of present-day Papakura town to the Wairoa River (Tatton 2001), passing through Ardmore.

Settlement can be traced back to the arrival of the *Tainui* canoe, which entered the Manukau Harbour in the 14th century (Murdoch 1990). Pre-European settlement was largely concentrated nearer to the Harbour, which was intensively settled, and other waterways such as the Wairoa River valley to the north, with gardening and cultivation making the most of fertile soils on the lower slopes of the Hunuas (Murdoch 1990). The various waterways cutting through the area supported transportation for people to visit, trade, and battle (Te Roopu Kaitiaki o Papakura 2010).

The historic extents of several swamps and other wetlands derived from field observations and soil characteristics, intersect and surround the proposed works area (Whenua Māori Visualisation Tool n.d.). While these wetlands would not have attracted large settlements, there may have been seasonal camps, as the wetlands were rich in resources and would have been utilised for hunting waterfowl and eels, for transportation, storage, and, near the edges of some wetlands, the cultivation of taro (Te Roopu o Kaitiaki o Papakura 2010; Tatton 2001).

#### 3.2 Colonial and 20th century history

From 1834 missionaries began travelling through the general area, notably staying south at Ōpaheke, a kāinga near Otūwairoa / Slippery Creek (Harlow et al. 2007). The strategic location of the area was noted by the government and in 1842 the 'Papakura Block,' stretching from what is now Papatoetoe to Papakura, was purchased, beginning a series of land purchases that would take place across South Auckland.

Māori had been alienated from their land and unease had been building from the 1850s. By 1856, the concept of a Māori king was being discussed openly. However, the Crown saw the Kīngitanga movement as a direct attack on British sovereignty and by the late 1850s the seeds of the land war had already taken root. The Kīngitanga movement opposed the sale of Māori land and although some were receptive to leasing, the Crown saw this as a further obstruction to development.

Construction of Great South Road begun at the end of 1861 under the orders of Governor Grey who was preparing for war with Māori (O'Malley 2019). The road was constructed by British Army

troops and provided access to north Waikato from Auckland. By March 1863 the road construction was complete, and Grey had by then obtained additional British troops and armour-plated steamers (O'Malley 2019).

Tensions between Māori and Europeans in the Auckland and Waikato districts gradually increased and in July 1863 Governor Grey issued an ultimatum to the Waikato tribes around Auckland to immediately swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen and to put down their arms. Those who did not comply were told to remove themselves to the Waikato, beyond the Mangatāwhiri, effectively declaring themselves as rebels against the Government (O'Malley 2019).

Nearby Papakura and Drury both became military garrisons, acting as supply bases and staging posts, and there was an influx of people associated with the British military. Several military and commissariat redoubts were established, as well as a headquarters for General Cameron's 65th Regiment Camp (R12/755) (Harlow et al. 2007). Shortly after Grey's ultimatum was announced, British troops crossed the Mangatāwhiri River and a battle broke out between the militia and Māori occupants of Te Apārangi. European settlers were temporarily evacuated (Murdoch 1990), and over the next eight months soldiers based in Drury were actively engaged in the war (Clarke 1982). By March 1864 General Cameron had moved well into the Waikato, and after battles like those of Ōrākau and Gate Pā, he took hold of the region (Clark 1982).

In an effort to increase security, consolidate territorial gains, and display government presence, in 1864 the New Zealand Government encouraged South African and British migrants to move to New Zealand by offering free 10 acre and ¼ acre blocks. These immigrants were to occupy Waikato lands that had been confiscated following the land wars. However, the scheme did not take off, after the promised financial incentives were not provided (Morris 1965).

European settlement of Ardmore, then simply known as Wairoa Road, began from c. 1854 when Tom Hyde settled on what is now Church Road, with Golding settling nearby by 1858 – his weatherboard house was still standing in 1962 (Goertz 1962). The first settlers were those who felled and milled kauri trees in the nearby ranges. The lumber was transported by bullock cart to Clevedon wharf to be prepared for its transport to Auckland. As kauri became scarce, rimu and kahikatea were exploited on the lowlands, and then harakeke. As the harakeke ran out the land was cleared and ploughed for farming (Goertz 1962; Tonson 1966; Sims 2001).

The first church in the area was St Peters, built on 2 acres of land donated by Golding on Wairoa Road (now Papakura–Clevedon Road) and opened in 1861, which also served as a redoubt during the land wars. This church was destroyed by a fire in 1892 and a new church, St James, opened on Church Road 1893. The first school in the district, the Wairoa Road School, was built on St Peters Church land in 1876. As many different places in the surrounding area as well as throughout the country went by Wairoa, a new name was chosen for the school. As a tribute to John Burnside, the first committee chairman, it was named Ardmore after his family estate in Ireland. The name of Ardmore was soon adopted by the town generally. Ardmore Hall was built in 1897, and later modernised and enlarged c. 1953.

In March 1942, during World War II, the Defence Ministry commissioned an airfield at Ardmore at the request of the American armed forces. Although the Public Works Department objected due to the preponderance of soft peat soils, and the Americans decided they didn't need it, it was built by 1944 and used as a Royal New Zealand Airforce training base. As heavy Corsairs operated out of Ardmore, rather than Kittyhawks, the pavement soon failed and had to be reengineered (Tonson 1966; Noonan 1975: 176).

### *3.3 Archaeological background*

There has been a lack of archaeological research in Ardmore and there are no records of comprehensive archaeological surveys across the properties, nor any archaeological sites recorded on them. There are numerous sites recorded in the surrounding areas where significant research has been undertaken, and the lack of sites recorded in Ardmore does not necessarily reflect a lack of archaeology, simply a lack of research.

The nearest archaeological survey undertaken was the cultural heritage investigation carried out by Clough and Baquié for the Takanini Structure Plan, which did include a small number of properties south of the project area, but no sites were recorded on these properties (Clough and Baquié

2000). Other nearby archaeological investigations have focussed on Kirikiri Redoubt (R11/956) in light of the subdivision and housing developments which have taken place south of the project area (Felgate 1999, Shakles et al. 2021).

#### **4 Field assessment**

At the time of field visit the properties were largely in pasture or orchards, with some crops and some light industry, such as firewood cutting. Ground surface visibility was variable, ranging from newly ploughed paddocks to short, grazed pasture to rank, knee-high grass. The land was generally level, rising slightly to the south along Papakura–Clevedon Road and north along Burnside Road.

No archaeological sites or features were observed on any of the properties. The area was previously swampy, with kahikatea forest on the Ardmore peaty loams to the north and probably manuka scrub on the Karaka soils to the south. These environments would have offered few resources to Māori. Although the Karaka soils could potentially have been cleared for limited gardening, there are better garden soils in South Auckland and it is unlikely that Māori would have utilised the area extensively, although as noted the Papakura Portage passed through here.

The soils are of medium fertility and respond well to modern topdressing. They have been farmed since the 19th century but it is notable that any early buildings are all outside the project area on higher ground – Ardmore School, St Peters Church, St James Church and late 19th century / early 20th century villas at 6421 Papakura–Clevedon Road (this may be Golding’s 1858 weatherboard house described in Goertz 1962 but this has not been researched) and 140 Burnside Road. Prior to the 20th century the lower land of the project area, previously vegetated with kahikatea and harakeke, would have been much damper than it is now. It is notable that there are no extant buildings that would appear to be any older than the airport, e.g., mid-20th century.



*Figure 2. View across farmland in Area B.*



*Figure 3. View across farmland in Area A.*

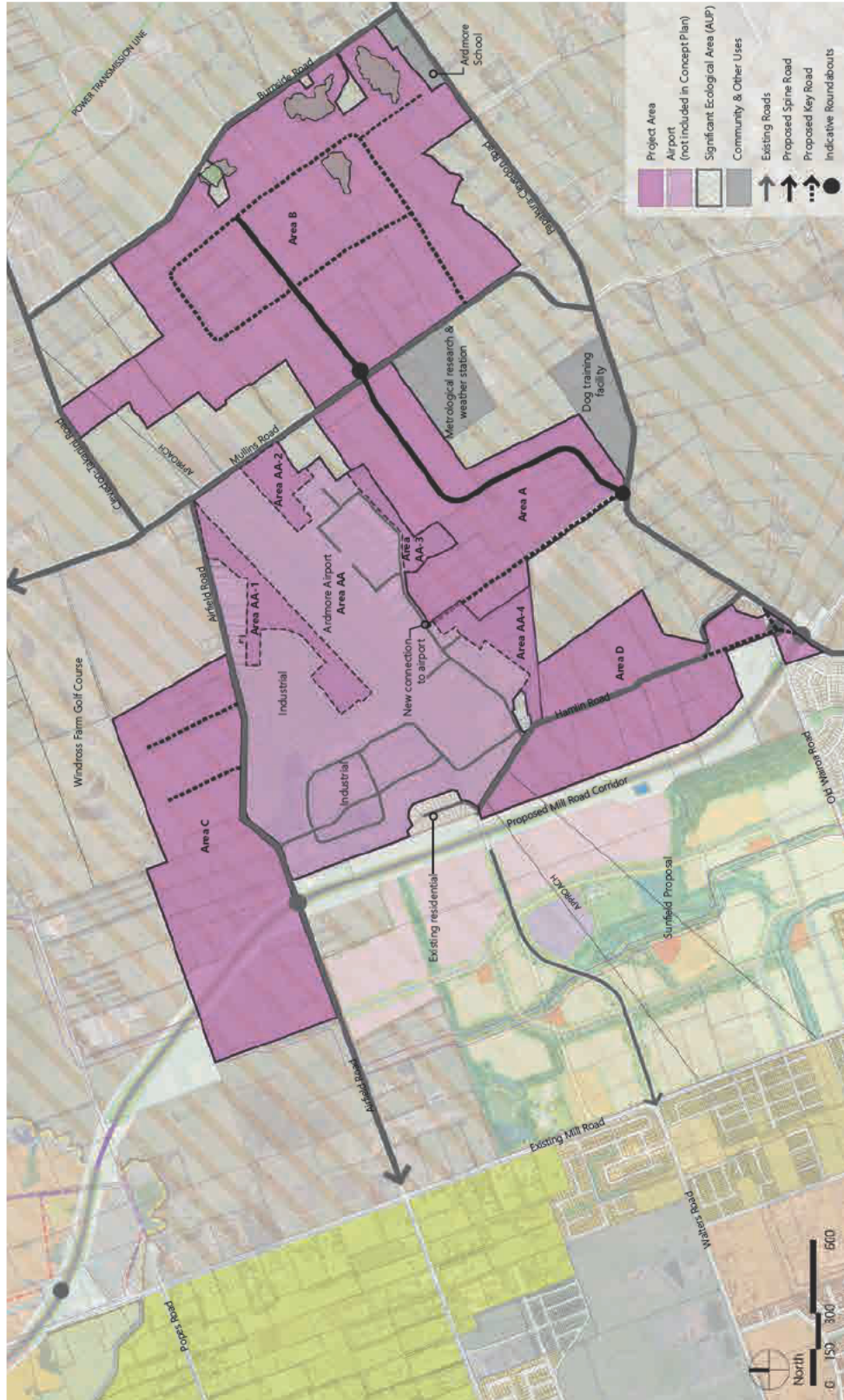


*Figure 4. Ploughed paddocks in Area A.*



*Figure 5. Citrus orchards in Area C.*

# The Proposal



Work in Progress  
 - ra -  
 05/12/25

DISCLAIMER  
 Investigation and concept design. Developable areas may vary and require detailed site investigation, design and stormwater solutions.  
 CONFIDENTIAL  
 The content of these drawings and ideas within are confidential and shall not be disclosed or distributed to people other than the specific recipients.

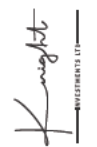


Figure 6. Ardmore Business Park proposal.

## 5 Assessment

Because of soil types and poor drainage, the project area would not have been suitable for pre-European Māori gardening or occupation, although a waka portage ran through or close to it. While there is no evidence that the land was swamp, kahikaitea and harakeke, and the underlying soft peats, imply damp ground. These environments would have provided useful resources, such as harakeke and birds, but exploitation of these would have left no substantial archaeological footprint. There is no reasonable cause to suspect that any archaeological sites will be present in the project area.

## 6 Recommendations

These recommendations are only made based on the archaeological values that have been outlined above. Any other values associated with special interest groups, including tangata whenua, can only be determined by them. It is recommended that:

- an authority to modify or destroy an archaeological sites and features in the project area does not need to be applied for from The Environmental Protection Authority under Section 42(4)(i) and Schedule 8 of the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024 during the Substantive Application;
- All works should be undertaken under the Accidental Discovery Rule in Chapter E11.6.1 of the Auckland Unitary Plan;
- since archaeological survey cannot always detect sites of traditional significance to Māori, or wāhi tapu, the appropriate tangata whenua authorities should be consulted regarding the possible existence of such sites, and the recommendations in this report.

## References

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## Attachment A. List of affected lots

Address	Legal Description
308 Airfield Road	Lot 5 BLK XV DP 20982
348 Airfield Road	Lot 1 BLK XV DP 192819
360 Airfield Road	Lot 2 DP 192819
368 Airfield Road	Lot 2 DP 96780
371 Airfield Road	LOT 1 DP 578804
382 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 96780
394 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 198874
396 Airfield Road	Lot 2 DP 208957
398 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 208957
448 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 336380
453 Airfield Road	Lot 200 DP 319290
457 Airfield Road	Lot 202 DP 458277
460 Airfield Road	Lot 2 DP 336380
463 Airfield Road	Lot 203 DP 458277
469 Airfield Road	Lot 204 DP 458277
470 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 92845
473 Airfield Road	Lot 205 DP 458277
479 Airfield Road	Lot 206 DP 458277
487 Airfield Road	Lot 207 DP 458277
495 Airfield Road	Lot 208 DP 458277
499 Airfield Road	Lot 209 DP 458277
1 Burnside Road	Lot 1 DP 165259
37 Burnside Road	Lot 2 DP 165259
51 Burnside Road	Lot 2 DP 112997
61 Burnside Road	Lot 2 DP 311910
93 Burnside Road	PT ALLOT 1 DP 94470
133 Burnside Road	LOT 2 DP 533681
803 Papakura-Clevedon Road	Lot 1 DP 450259
881 Papakura-Clevedon Road	Lot 1 DP 483053
95 Hamlin Road	Pt Lot 1 DP 50029
115 Hamlin Road	Pt Lot 1 DP 50029 Pt Lot 2 DP 50029
120 Hamlin Road	Lot 1 BLK XV DP 53384
125 Hamlin Road	Lot 1 BLK XV DP 53136
130 Hamlin Road	Lot 2 DP 53384
135 Hamlin Road	Lot 2 BLK XV DP 53136
140 Hamlin Road	Lot 3 DP 53384
143 Hamlin Road	Lot 1 DP 11032
146 Hamlin Road	Pt Lot 4 DP 53384
151 Hamlin Road	Lot 1 DP 316491
155 Hamlin Road	Lot 2 DP 316491
161 Hamlin Road	Lot 6 DP 39433
40 Mullins Road	Lot 2 DP 169281
50 Mullins Road	PT ALLOT 50 PSH Papakura
53 Mullins Road	Lot 3 DP 206430
61 Mullins Road	Lot 1 DP 75641
66 Mullins Road	Lot 1 DP 22687
90 Mullins Road	LOT 2 DP 598608
100 Mullins Road	LOT 1 DP 598608
114 Mullins Road	Lot 1 DP 95196, Lot 1 DP 81758
124 Mullins Road	Lot 2 DP 129748
7 Bullens Road	Lot 1 DP 141367
19 Bullens Road	Lot 2 DP 450259
49 Bullens Road	Lot 2 DP 111591
51 Bullens Road	Lot 2 DP 473510
52 Bullens Road	Lot 1 DP 473510
99 Corsair Lane	LOT 2 DP 578804
45 Clevedon-Takanini Road	Lot 3 DP 169281
61 Clevedon Takanini Road	Lot 1 DP 112997