

APPENDIX 20

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

SHIPYARD AND DRYDOCK FACILITY, MARSDEN POINT, WHANGĀREI HARBOUR: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Prepared for MBIE

June 2026



An aerial view of Marsden Point, 1940. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 1974-065

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BASIS OF THE REPORT

This report has been prepared for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment in respect of its application for approvals under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 for the Shipyard and drydock facility at Marsden Point, Whangārei Harbour. The Panel appointed to consider the project application may rely on this report for the purpose of making its decision under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for expert witnesses, contained in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2023. The authors of this report agree to comply with the Code of Conduct, and confirm that unless otherwise stated, the issues addressed in this report are within the area of expertise of the authors. No material facts have been omitted that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this report.

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is proposing to progress the Shipyard and drydock facility at Marsden Point, Whangārei Harbour via the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) (Figure 1 to Figure 3).

The project aims to deliver the development and operation of a marine maintenance operations facility abutting the western side of the existing Northport port facility at Marsden Point, Whangārei Harbour. The project includes a reclamation, vessel haul-out system, and associated wharf structures, dredging, and supporting infrastructure.

Key components of the project include:

- reclamation of approximately 9.7ha
- a ‘cutout’ to the reclamation where a vessel haul out system is to be located, being a floating drydock or potentially shiplift or other lifting mechanism
- construction of a piled wharf structure to accommodate vessels either temporarily (before/after haul out), or for extended periods where works not requiring haul out can be undertaken
- dredging stage one: capital and maintenance dredging associated with construction and ongoing operation of the marine maintenance operations facility, including a berth pocket and a vessel turning basin to provide for safe navigation
- dredging stage two: capital dredging to ensure sufficient volume of dredge spoil is available to construct both the NDD and Northport’s Vision for Growth development
- fixed plant and buildings to accommodate marine maintenance activities and materials
- sufficient working and laydown areas for marine maintenance operations, including the ability to transfer vessels to hardstand
- access to and around the marine maintenance operations facility, including a landside area for staff carparking
- public access around the edge of the reclamation to a public fishing platform

The marine maintenance operations facility is to provide vessel maintenance, repairs, and servicing, including but not limited to cleaning, painting, and repair of commercial and naval vessels, including Cook Strait ferries and Royal New Zealand Navy logistics vessels, along with other vessels such as international freight vessels, privately owned vessels and super yachts. The facility has design capacity to accommodate vessels ~50m to 230m in length with displacement between 500t and 28,000t. The facility will be based on normal working hours of 7am-6pm but with the capacity to operate 24/7/365 where required, subject to appropriate restrictions on noise-generating activities.

The location of the facility has been carefully selected for functional and operational requirements, including the need for deep water access, sheltered harbour conditions, proximity to existing port services, sea and land transport links, and integration with established and proposed marine and land based industrial infrastructure.

The project is listed in Schedule 2 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 as having significant regional or national benefits.

An archaeological assessment was commissioned by MBIE, to establish the potential effects of the proposed work on archaeological values. This report has been prepared as part of the required assessment of effects for a resource consent application for the Northland Shipyard and Drydock Facility under the Fasttrack Approvals Act. Recommendations are made in accordance with statutory requirements.

Methodology

The New Zealand Archaeological Association's (NZAA) site record database (ArchSite), District Plan schedules and the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (Heritage NZ) New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero were searched to determine whether any archaeological sites had been recorded on or in the immediate vicinity of the project area. Literature and archaeological reports relevant to the area were consulted (see Bibliography). Early survey plans and aerial photographs were checked for information relating to past use of the project area.

A visual inspection of the property was conducted on 19 May 2026. The ground surface was examined for evidence of former occupation (in the form of shell midden, depressions, terracing or other unusual formations within the landscape, or indications of 19th century European settlement remains). Exposed and disturbed soils were examined where encountered for evidence of earlier modification, and an understanding of the local stratigraphy. Subsurface testing with a probe and spade was carried out to determine whether buried archaeological deposits could be identified or establish the nature of possible archaeological features. Photographs were taken to record the topography and features of interest.

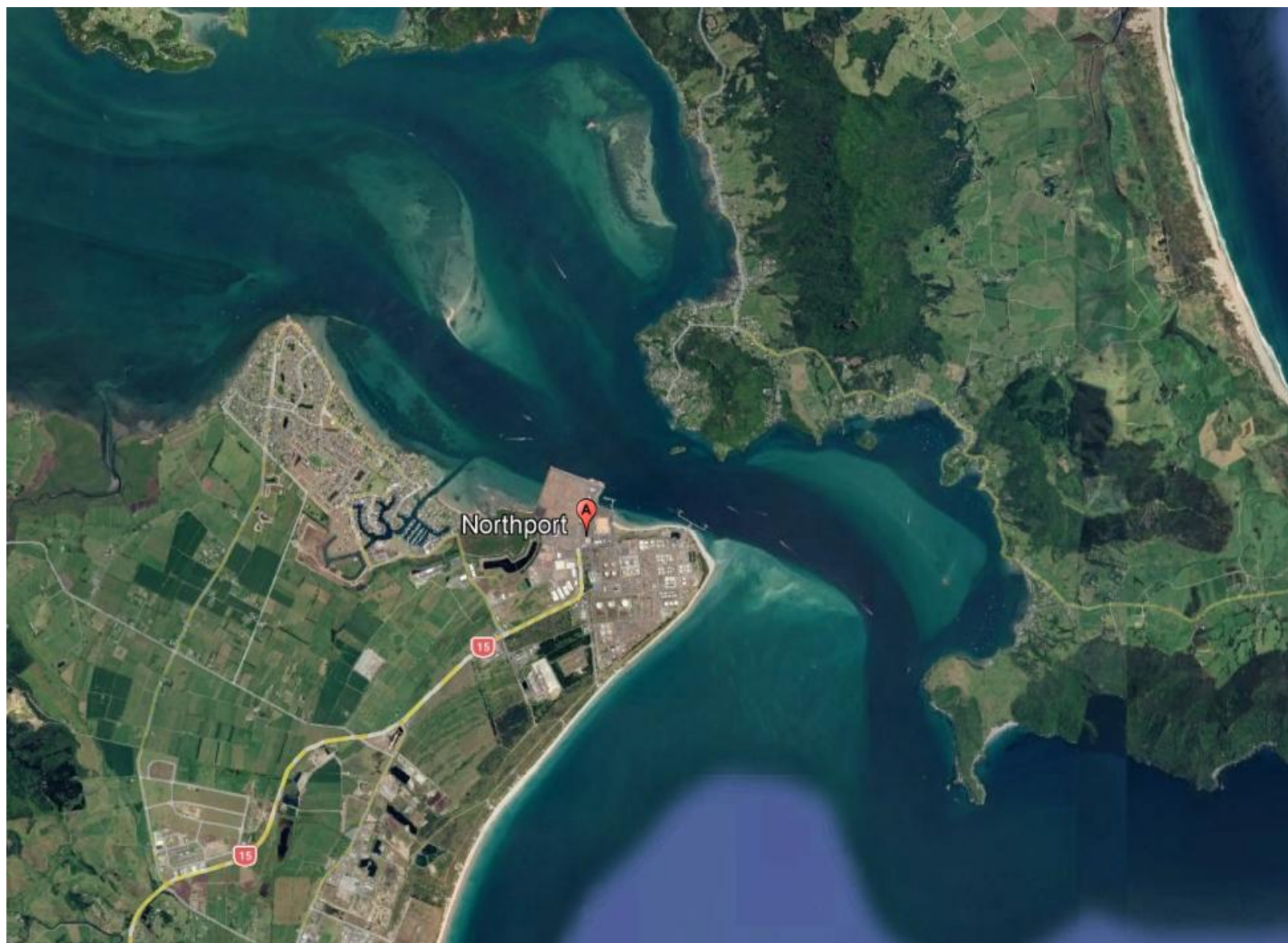


Figure 1. Aerial showing Whangarei Heads and its environs and the location of Northport (source: Google Maps)

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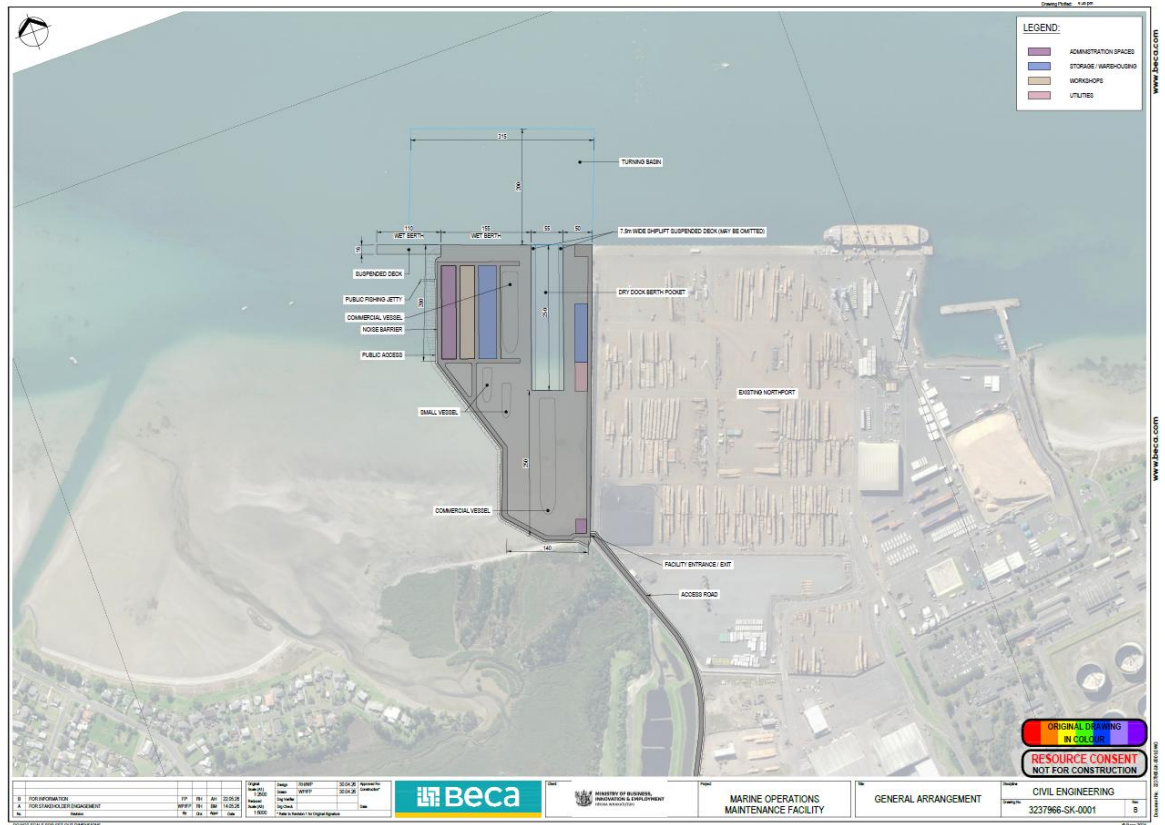


Figure 2. Layout showing the general arrangement of the proposed facility adjacent to the existing Northport facility (Source: BECA Concept Design Report, drawing No. 3237966-SK-0001, 22 May 2026)

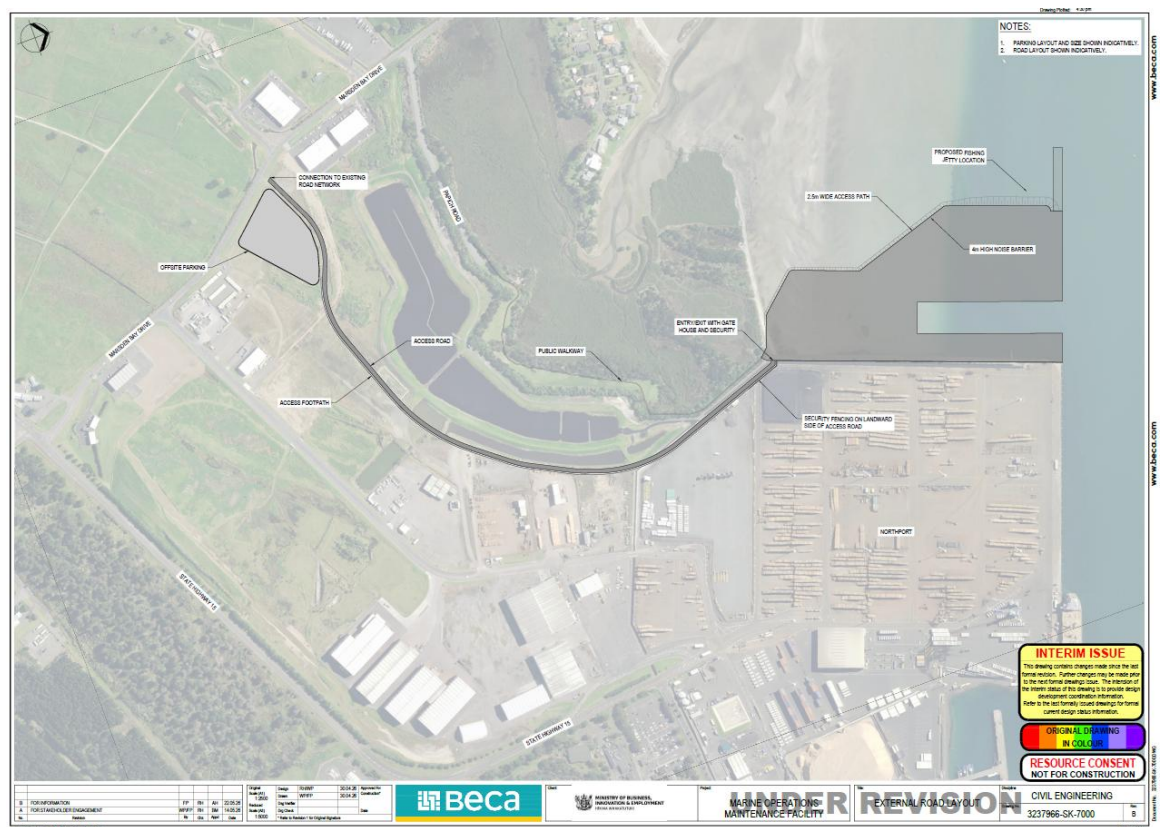


Figure 3. Plan showing road and carpark layouts (Source: BECA Concept Design Report, drawing No. 3237966-SK-7000, 22 May 2026)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND¹

Māori Settlement

Whangārei was formerly occupied by the Ngāi Tahu people, who are recorded as having landed at Te Arai in the canoe Tū Nui a Rangi in the fourteenth century, and whose rohe once extended from Auckland to approximately 80 km north of Whangārei (Fletcher 2018:17). Whangārei was a desirable place to live due to its sheltered harbour, ample marine and freshwater resources, and temperate climate. However, from the seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, the northern tribes were engaged in almost constant warfare, and the position of Whangārei at the southern boundary of Ngāpuhi tribal lands meant that it was a focal point for campaigns against southern tribes, and for retaliatory attacks from Hauraki, Kaipara, and Waikato groups seeking revenge. Great gatherings of up to 2,000 to 3,000 men were said to camp on the shores of the harbour, giving rise to the name ‘Whangārei Terenga Paraoa’, interpreted as the swimming place of the whales, or the meeting place of the chiefs (ibid.) (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).

Around 1750, the Ngāti Ruangaio chief Te Ponaharakeke came from Ngāpuhi of Orauta to live among the Ngāi Tahu people on the western shores of Whangārei Harbour (ibid.). To avenge a perceived insult, he called on Ngāpuhi allies, including Ngaro-ki-te-uru and Tawhiro, to join him in battle, securing the area from Whangārei to Waipū and Waihonga to Tangihua, with the conquerors dividing the land between them (ibid.). Te Ponaharakeke and Te Tokaitawhio took the western shores of Whangārei Harbour from Te Awatawhiti to Mangapāi (ibid.:18). The latter lived at Ōtaika until his wife became pregnant, at which point he moved to the Hokianga (ibid.).

However, the conquerors remained vulnerable to attack on the shores of Whangārei Harbour, being at the southern limit of Ngāpuhi tribal lands and with no place of retreat except north. Many tribal leaders were killed in subsequent battles: Tawhiro and his nephew were attacked and killed by Ngāti Maru from Hauraki in a battle called Ōtaika-timu; Te Wha and Hautakere were killed by Ngāti Whātua from Kaipara; and Te Ponaharakeke, Te Waikeri, and Te Tirarau I were killed by Ngāpuhi from the Bay of Islands (ibid.).

Warfare intensified following the introduction of muskets through trade with Europeans, giving Ngāpuhi, who acquired them first, a strong initial advantage. Thousands of Māori died in intertribal wars in New Zealand between c.1818 and the 1830s (Ballara 2003). The end of the intertribal wars was brought about during the 1830s by two factors: constant warfare had exhausted the tribes, and the influence of missionaries was increasing (Pickmere 1986:13). Subsequently, the coastal areas of Whangārei were repopulated.

European Settlement

In 1823, the missionary Samuel Leigh travelled through the Whangārei district and found it desolate. He landed near One Tree Point with a mission group and spent the night at Takahiwai (Vallance 1964:30). The missionary Samuel Marsden had travelled through the area in 1815 and 1820, and the influence of visiting missionaries is considered to have assisted in reducing conflict. Another missionary, William Colenso, travelled through the district between 1836 and 1842, accompanied by the British Resident James Busby in 1839, who purchased the Ruakākā area from Parawhau and Patuharakeke chiefs. The sale was

¹ The historical background is drawn from earlier Clough & Associates reports including Jones et al. 2020, Larsen and Clough 2020 and Bicker and Clough 2017.

supervised by the chiefs Te Tirarau III and Karekare (Nevin 1982:14). Busby also purchased land in 1839 on the south side of the harbour from Patuharakeke (Pickmere 1986:27).

In 1841, Colenso travelled from the Kaipara, with the first habitation encountered by the party being near the present settlement of Takahiwai, where they were welcomed by the Patuharakeke rangatira Pou and the hapū (Vallance 1964:34). A contemporary sketch dated 1842 shows the entrance to Whangārei Harbour with silhouettes of the Heads and a manned waka (Figure 5).

In February 1854, Ruakākā was again sold by Māori, this time to the Crown. It was a smaller block than that sold previously, not including Marsden Point or One Tree Point, and compensation to Busby was therefore sought. The excluded area was known as Poupouwhenua (Figure 6) and was sold to the Crown in July 1854 (Richards 1984:9-12).

In 1857, Land Commissioner Donald McLean wrote to the Governor describing the district of Whangārei:

‘... the low, sandy country around the town site of Marsden, ... on the banks of streams are some Native villages, ... here and there are occasional patches of poor white clay soil, which have been dug over for kauri gum’ (Nevin 1982:5).

It is likely that one of these settlements was located along the banks of the Takahiwai Stream, and it is possible that Patuharakeke were engaged in gum-digging activities, as Māori became rapidly involved in the trade as it developed. Nevin mapped likely gumfield areas around Whangārei Harbour, indicating probable activity in the One Tree Point and Marsden Point areas, although neither was listed among the principal gumfields in the district (Nevin 1982:16–17; Vallance 1964:84).

Captain Duncan Mackenzie appears to have been an early landholder in the area, having a property and store at One Tree Point in 1854. From here, ships’ passengers were offloaded and taken by open boat along the coast to Waipū. Mackenzie, also known as ‘Prince’, was active in the shipping trade, and his four sons were all master mariners (Pickmere 1986:127).

A.M. Rust, born in 1859, later wrote in his reminiscences of Whangārei that fishing was a major activity for Māori, describing how sharks were taken near One Tree Point, cleaned, and hung to dry in the sun (Rust 1936:125).

The Takahiwai area supplied flax to mills in and around Whangārei during the early period of European settlement. The chief of Patuharakeke at that time was Te Ikanui Te Pirihi (Nevin 1982:15). Pickmere records that a Māori settlement remained at Takahiwai in the 1880s (1986:151).

In 1906 a survey was carried out around One Tree Point by G. Martin (SO 14130, Figure 7). The property on which Northport is now based was described as being covered in mānuka and fern, forming part of Lot 83 and part of the Marsden Town Sections.

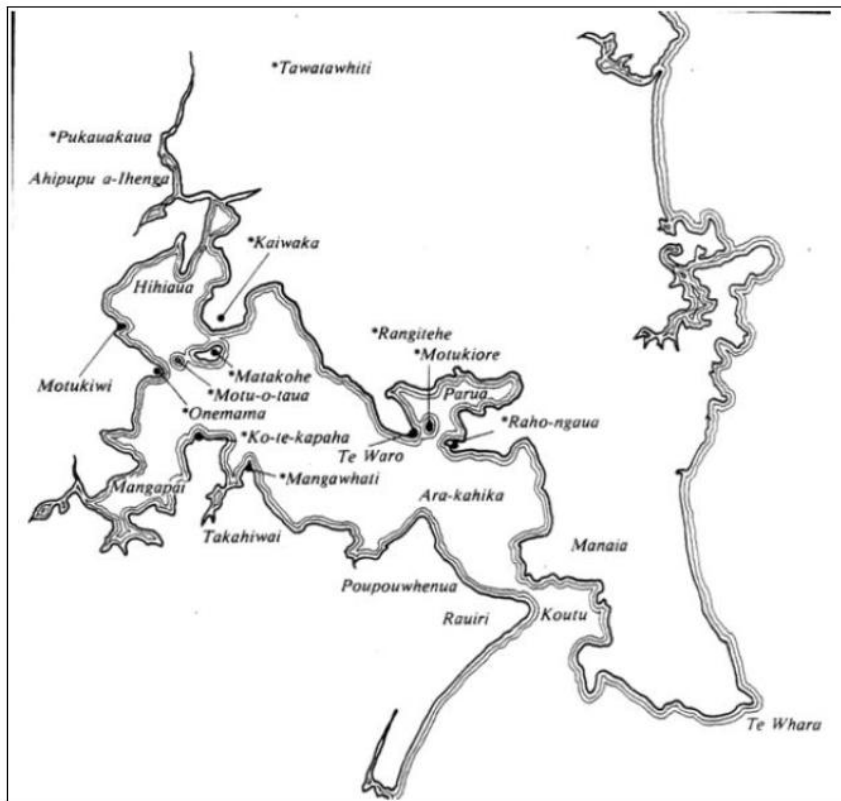


Figure 4. Traditional place names used in the early 19th century (Pickmere 1986:5)



Figure 5. Drawing, dated 1842, entitled "Entrance to Whangari River, bearing NW by W; Hen and Chickens, New Zealand..., Te Waka Maori (canoe of New Zealand); Wangari or Bream Bay, New Zealand". (source: Alexander Turnbull Library, Reference number: MS-0104-071, <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.239815>)



Figure 6. A close-up of Roll 16 (approximate location of the development arrowed in red) (source: Quickmap)

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND²

The district is dominated by Whangārei, the largest city north of Auckland, which is situated at the western end of a large harbour with extensive mangrove and estuarine catchments, rich shellfish beds, and other marine resources. The harbour entrance at the eastern end of the harbour is a relatively narrow channel that is bordered by the Whangārei Heads area to the east and the Marsden Point–One Tree Point area to the west.

The last decade or two have seen increasing subdivision of the farmland and orchards surrounding the city of Whangārei, extending westwards towards Maunu, eastwards beyond Onerahi and southeast onto the Whangārei Heads. On the southern side of the harbour, the Ruakaka–One Tree Point area has also seen increasing subdivision. The wider district remains largely rural, with extensive farmland, and large areas of both native and exotic forestry. There are a number of smaller settlements along the coast, including Waipū, Pataua, Ngunguru, Tutukaka, Matapouri and Whananaki. The district also includes several offshore islands, notably the Poor Knights and Hen and Chickens Islands.

For Polynesians arriving from the tropics hundreds of years ago, the Whangārei district was a highly favourable area for settlement. The sheltered Whangārei Harbour and other major rivers and inlets (Ngunguru, Horahora, Ruakākā, Pataua, Taiharuru and Whananaki), with their rich marine resources and easy accessibility by canoe, attracted occupation from the earliest times. Thorne (1876) described moa bones and obsidian tools in locations around the Whangārei Heads and particularly at Pataua, indicative of this early ‘Archaic’ settlement. Similarly, European settlers and traders rapidly adapted to the environment during the nineteenth century, establishing homes, gardens, and a range of farming, extractive, and other industries along the coastline.

Previous Archaeological Work

Excavations have been carried out around Whangarei Harbour since the 1960s. At Bream Head, for example, a large midden site produced evidence of significant shellfish cooking as well as seal, dog, bird tuatara and fish bone, chert flakes and hangi stones and fishing equipment (Green and Davidson 1964 and NZAA Site Record Form Q07/103 cited by Phillips and Harlow 2001:14). More recent test excavations at Bream Head have been conducted, but little information is available regarding the results.

Bickler et al. (2008) excavated midden sites in McGregor’s Bay, opposite the subject area on the north side of Whangarei Harbour, consisting of small to medium-sized middens, but these were relatively simple sites with no evidence of structural features.

Nevin and Nevin (1981) and G. Nevin (1984) carried out the main archaeological surveys on the southern side of Whangārei Harbour and identified a large number of sites in the Ruakākā area. These were predominantly coastal midden sites. Further inland, G. Nevin (1984) identified a wider range of site types in the Takahiwai hills, including pā, pits, terraces, and evidence of gardening, in addition to widespread midden sites.

In inland areas around Takahiwai and Ruakākā, Māori settlement appears to have been focused along higher ridgelines. Pā sites provided defensive advantage against raiding parties moving through the area, while gardening was undertaken in the hinterland. Access

² This section incorporates background information from Plowman et al. 2008 which has been more recently summarised and updated in Jones et al. 2023.

to rich marine resources was straightforward, and seasonal movement between inland and coastal locations likely occurred for food gathering and storage.

A small number of excavations have been undertaken on the western and southern sides of Whangārei Harbour. These include the investigation of Ruarangi Pā (Q07/30), which indicated repeated occupation from the 1700s, with evidence of houses and midden within the defensive earthworks. Cockle was the dominant shellfish species identified (Hougaard 1971 cited in Phillips and Harlow 2001:12–13).

A large midden (Q07/58) excavated by Nichol and Walton in 1976 also indicated extensive shellfish processing, similar to sites recorded at One Tree Point (Nichol 1988 cited in Phillips and Harlow 2001:13).

In 1999 Best excavated a small pit and terrace complex (Q07/897) at Ruakākā, which included a pollen sequence demonstrating environmental change associated with Māori and later European land use. The site also included a cache of digging implements of relatively recent age (likely nineteenth century), and a radiocarbon date from an associated midden produced a range of AD 1640–1870 (2σ).

More recently, Druskovich (2017) oversaw investigations of midden site Q07/1411 during works to construct a protective seawall at the former Bercich Stream mouth. A series of midden deposits were recorded across an area approximately 13 m by 7 m, with several associated firescoops also identified. Midden samples were analysed and found to be predominantly pipi, with cockle also commonly present. Charcoal analysis indicated a dominance of pōhutukawa, with shrubs, small trees, and mangrove also represented. Some unidentifiable fish bone was also recovered. Three radiocarbon dates were obtained, indicating a period of occupation between approximately AD 1650 and 1800.

One Tree Point Investigations

A number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken over the past 20 years in the immediate vicinity of One Tree Point. Extensive excavations by Phillips and Harlow (2001) recorded a series of midden deposits ranging from small concentrations of hangi/firescoop features overlain by shell, through to larger complexes including firescoops, hangi, stakeholes, and postholes.

These sites were interpreted as representing seasonal summer occupation of the One Tree Point area for large-scale shellfish processing from around AD 1500 onwards. Most sites appear to have been used for a single season, although at least one site shows evidence of reuse. Some late nineteenth to early twentieth century artefacts were also recovered, interpreted as incidental finds associated with gum-digging activity rather than earlier occupation.

Further investigations have been undertaken on other properties within One Tree Point (Campbell 2005, 2006; Prince 2003; Bickler et al. 2007). These generally indicate similar site types to those identified by Phillips and Harlow (2001), with limited evidence of structural remains.

A large residential subdivision surveyed in 2004 (Prince 2004a, b) identified a range of midden sites across Stages 1 and 2. Monitoring and excavation during earthworks (Plowman et al. 2008, see Figure 9) recorded 16 midden sites, most with underlying hangi features (Figure 10). Shellfish species included predominantly cockle (*Austrovenus stutchburyi*) and pipi (*Paphies australis*), along with a range of minor species. Radiocarbon dating indicated occupation from the mid-sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries.

Work on the project for Stages 3-9 was undertaken in 2019-22, during which seven midden deposits were investigated (Jones et al. 2023). Each of the sites reflected the remains of small, temporary cooking areas in a coastal landscape that was dominated by scrub such as ti tree and bracken. The cooking areas are situated in the swales in between the dune ridge crests. Radiocarbon dating indicated these sites were occupied from the mid-sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries.

Overall, the archaeological record for One Tree Point indicates widespread, largely seasonal shellfish processing from around AD 1500 onwards. While Phillips and Harlow (2001) recorded structural features such as postholes and stakeholes, these have not been consistently identified in subsequent investigations. The sites investigated indicate seasonality of settlement, with hangi, middens and small bin pits most predominant in the record. The remnants of these relatively short-lived settlements have left clusters of shell debris across the sand dunes.

Recorded Archaeological Sites

Twenty archaeological sites are recorded within 1km of the proposed project area. These sites are all midden deposits, although one is described as midden/pit (Table 1, Figure 9 and Figure 10).

A review of records identified no shipwrecks or maritime archaeological features in the immediate area. Given the regular bathymetric surveying of the harbour (undertaken by Northport), it is considered likely that any such maritime features or hazards would have been identified. In addition, the modification of the seabed around the port through the action of dredging and reclamation activities are likely to have greatly modified the seabed and would have removed any maritime archaeology that may have been present.

Table 1. Archaeological sites previously recorded within a 1000m radius of the Northport facility (source: NZAA ArchSite 2026)

NZAA Number	Easting	Northing	Site Type
Q07/72	1734116	6032829	Midden
Q07/100	1733667	6032278	Midden
Q07/105	1733615	6033227	Midden
Q07/106	1733415	6033127	Midden
Q07/107	1733515	6033127	Midden
Q07/108	1733616	6033028	Midden
Q07/311	1732168	6032174	Midden
Q07/324	1732764	6033675	Midden/Pit
Q07/325	1733316	6032927	Midden
Q07/1039	1732618	6033896	Midden
Q07/1040	1732656	6033818	Midden
Q07/1041	1732764	6033675	Midden
Q07/1152	1733516	6032827	Midden
Q07/1153	1733716	6032928	Midden
Q07/1154	1733816	6033028	Midden

Q07/1157	1733432	6032882	Midden
Q07/1162	1733506	6032827	Midden
Q07/1163	1733496	6032827	Midden
Q07/1191	1732168	6032174	Midden
Q07/1212	1733020	6031856	Midden

Q07/72: This site was recorded in 1961 prior to the construction of the oil refinery. The site record form states that it covers the whole of the area owned by the oil company, and describes four midden deposits with references to further scatters of shell ‘too numerous to detail’. It is highly likely that all of these deposits were destroyed either during the construction of the refinery or during developments on site since then. The site record has not been updated since its original recording. If any remnants of the site survive, they will not be affected by the proposed development.

Q07/100: This site was recorded in 1975 as part of a survey undertaken for an environmental impact report relating to a proposed PVC factory at Marsden Point. The site consisted of shell midden spread over approximately 5 m² and was recorded as being 30–80 mm thick, comprising cockle and pipi shell. The site record has not been updated since its original recording. The site is located approximately 200 m from the proposed works area and will not be affected by the proposed development.

Q07/105: This site was recorded in 1981 as part of a large works scheme survey. The site consisted of three midden deposits. Two deposits were located approximately 10 m apart and exposed within an eroding beachfront bank, while the third was situated approximately 10 m inland beneath gorse and tea tree scrub. The first deposit was exposed over approximately 10 m along the beachfront and was recorded as being c.50 cm thick beneath 8 cm of topsoil, extending approximately 3 m inland. An obsidian flake was collected from the beach in front of the site at the time of recording. The second deposit consisted of a small midden exposed over approximately 2 m, while the inland deposit measured approximately 4 m x 4 m.

Comparison between modern aerial imagery and 1979 aerial photography suggests that the beachfront has shifted southwards by approximately 20 m since the time of recording, and it is therefore considered likely that the site has eroded away. The site record provides limited locational detail beyond the map reproduced in Figure 8, and has not been updated since its original recording. The approximate ArchSite location and original site map place part of the recorded site within the broader reclamation area; however, based on the degree of shoreline modification since recording, it is considered highly unlikely that any intact archaeological deposits survive within the proposed works area.

Q07/106: This site was recorded in 1981 as part of a large works scheme survey. The site consisted of midden washed out along the high-water line over an area approximately 10 m by 6 m and was described as partly eroded and partly covered by consolidated dune deposits. The site record provides limited locational detail beyond the map reproduced in Figure 8 and has not been updated since its original recording. The recorded location is more than 150 m from the proposed works area. If the site still survives, it will not be affected by the proposed development.

Q07/107: This site was recorded in 1981 as part of a large works scheme survey. The site consisted of midden extending along approximately 20 m of the high tide line and was described as partly eroded and partly covered by consolidated dune deposits. An obsidian flake was collected from the beach in front of the site at the time of recording. The site

record provides limited locational detail beyond the map reproduced in Figure 8 and has not been updated since its original recording. The recorded location is more than 150 m from the proposed works area and will not be affected by the proposed development.

Q07/108: This site was recorded in 1981 as part of a large works scheme survey. The site consisted of three adjacent midden deposits eroding from a 1 m high bank of consolidated sand dune. Two of the deposits were relatively small, measuring approximately 8 m and 2 m in length respectively, and were recorded as approximately 10 cm thick beneath 2–10 cm of topsoil. The third deposit consisted of a 25–50 cm thick midden layer exposed over approximately 53 m on three sides of a point extending into the mudflat. The site record provides limited locational detail beyond the map reproduced in Figure 8 and has not been updated since its original recording. The recorded location is more than 150 m from the proposed works area and will not be affected by the proposed development.

Q07/311: This site was recorded in 1981 as part of a large works scheme survey. The site was recorded as a sparse midden spread over approximately 40 m by 30 m along the crest of a consolidated dune. An update in 2003 was unable to relocate the site. The site is recorded some 850 m away from the proposed works area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/324: This site was recorded in 1981 as part of a large work scheme survey. The site was recorded as three midden deposits and a single pit feature. The midden deposits were 10 m, 120 m, and 50 m in length and were recorded as being from 20 cm to 1.2 m thick. The pit measured 1.4 m long and 60 cm deep and was infilled with shell midden. An update in 1997 noted midden present intermittently along 90 m of the cliffs, with several pits and cooking ovens visible. These features are some 900 m away from the proposed works area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/325: This site was recorded in 1981 as part of a large work scheme survey. The site consisted of five middens eroding from the beach front on the point on the western side of Blacksmith Creek. The deposits were 5 m, 20 m, 12 m, 3 m and 15 m in length and were described as being around 30 cm thick. These sites are more than 300 m away from the proposed works area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1039: This site was recorded in 1997, and is described as an historic midden, containing both shell and ceramic material. This was located near a boat ramp and was exposed over some 2 m and was 10–60 cm thick. A later, undated, update noted the midden was no longer visible. This was likely due to the placement of large rocks for erosion control. This site is approximately 1 km away and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1040: This site was recorded in 1997 as a scatter of midden visible within a garden on the Esplanade Reserve. The deposit was described as very sparse and fragmented. An update in 2006 noted some traces were visible eroding from the bank edge. This site is approximately 1 km away and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1041: This site was recorded in 1997 as a shell midden visible in the cliff edge. The deposit was some 2 m long and up to 30 cm thick. This site is some 900 m away from the proposed works area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1152: This site was recorded in 2001. The site was described as shell midden extending over an area approximately 22 m by 19.5 m. The material was initially exposed following removal of a macrocarpa tree visible on historic aerial photography. Further details indicate the site was likely situated between the current pond and the public access walkway, and the recorded grid reference therefore appears reasonably accurate. The site

record notes that the midden was to remain undisturbed, although soil placement over the site may have occurred during embankment construction. The site is more than 200 m from the proposed works area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1153: This site was recorded in 2001 in pasture. The site was exposed during topsoil stripping for a culvert and covered some 32 m by 16 m. At the time, the culvert design was altered to avoid direct impacts to the site, although partial covering by embankment fill was proposed. Further details indicate that the site was likely situated between the current pond and the public access walkway, and the recorded grid reference therefore appears reasonably accurate. The site is more than 100 m from the proposed works area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1154: This site was recorded in 2001. The site was exposed during topsoil stripping and measured at least 5 m by 4.5 m, having been partially cut by a grader. The midden was reportedly buried beneath at least 1 m of topsoil. The recorded grid reference appears reasonably accurate and would place the site either within a later stormwater pond or beneath the adjacent embankment associated with the port. The site is therefore likely to have either been destroyed or buried beneath several metres of fill. While located in the near vicinity of the proposed works, it will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1157: This site was recorded in 2002. The site was exposed during topsoil stripping and measured 5 m x 3 m. The site was situated immediately on the southern side of the vehicle access road and extended south into the native plantation area. The grid reference appears to place the site within Blacksmith's Creek, and is probably out by 50 m to the north. This site is about 300 m away from the proposed works area will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1162: This site was recorded in 2002. The site measures 24 m x 17 m and is situated within the native plantation area on the south side of the vehicle access road. This site is about 250 m away from the proposed works area will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1163: This site was recorded in 2002. The site measures 13 m x 10 m and is situated within the native plantation area on the south side of the vehicle access road. This site is about 300 m away from the proposed works area will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1191: This site was recorded in 2003. This is recorded in very close proximity to Q07/311, but according to the recorded is a different site from that one which they were unable to find during the site visit. This is described as a 3 m x 3 m patch of midden. The site is recorded some 850 m away from the proposed works area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Q07/1212: This site was recorded in 2005 as midden extending across an area approximately 24 m by 14 m. Test pits identified predominantly cockle and pipi shell, although whale and seal bone were also present. The site is approximately 450 m from the proposed works area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

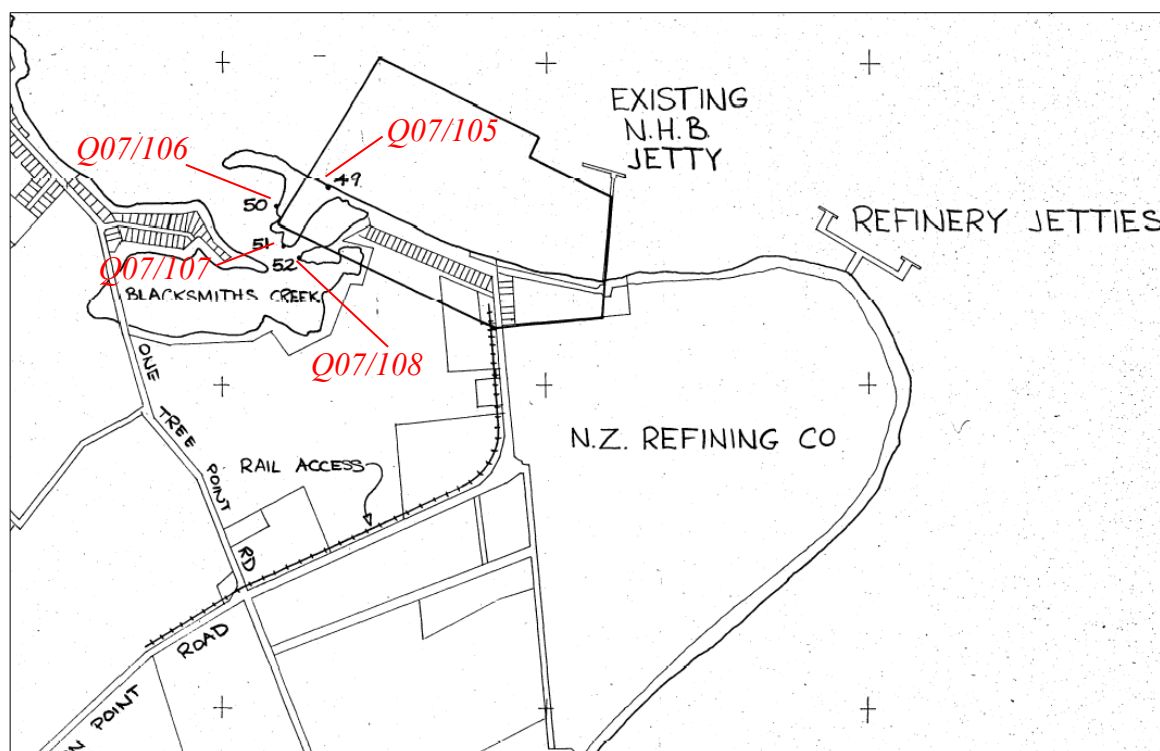


Figure 8. Site location map for sites Q07/105 to Q07/108 (source: NZAA Q07/108 site record form)

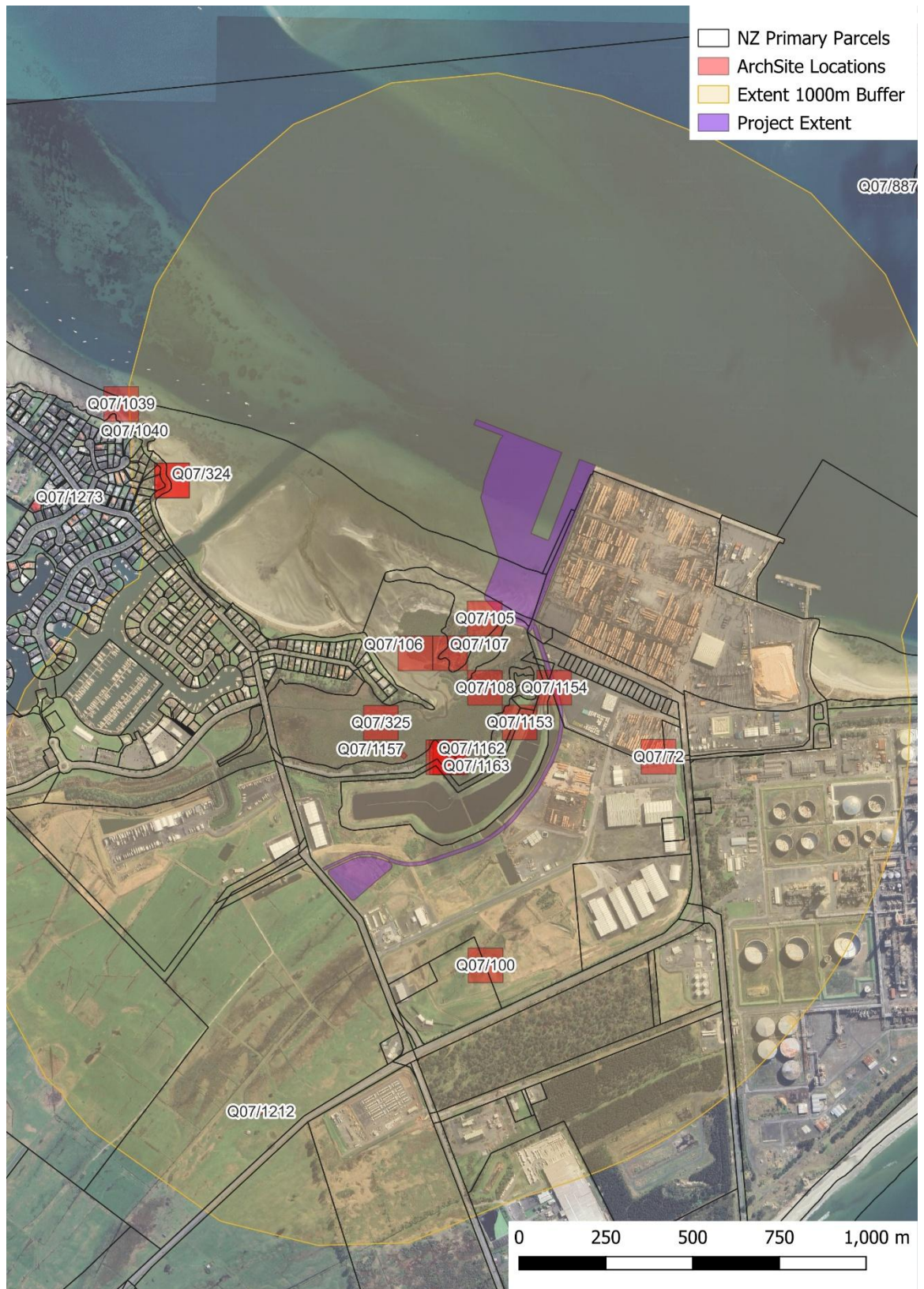


Figure 9. Plan showing project extent in relation to recorded archaeological sites with the 1000m buffer shaded in yellow



Figure 10. Plan showing project extent with recorded archaeological sites, and site locations derived from site record form plan (orange)

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A review of historic aerial photographs was undertaken to track the development of the area and record modifications.

The 1942 aerial (Figure 11) shows that most of the proposed reclamation area was within the CMA at that time, although the southern end is on the beachfront. The angle of the beach at that time followed a clear NW–SE orientation, which over time has reduced, and is now closer to a W–E alignment. The proposed access road passes through scrubby land with a house and outbuilding in close proximity to the alignment, with the curtilage marked by a hedge. The carpark location was situated within paddocks, some of which were partially covered with scrubby vegetation.

In the 1950 aerial (Figure 12) the scrubby vegetation has been removed to a considerable extent. There are some faint anomalies present which, in later photographs, are identifiable as young trees that subsequently develop into hedges.

The 1966 aerial (Figure 13) shows the growth of hedges in the area. A drain on the eastern side of the carpark appears to have been abandoned, but a new drain has been cut further to the west.

By 1971 (Figure 14), the house situated in close proximity to the proposed access road had been removed, with evidence of drainage clearance and removal of scrub vegetation from the pasture.

By 1979 (Figure 15), all trace of the house and outbuildings had been removed, and much of the landside area of works remained in pasture. The beachfront appears to have eroded southwards by this time and barely intersects the area of reclamation.

The 2004 aerial (Figure 16) shows development of Northport underway. The beachfront had changed alignment and retreated further south. A large stormwater pond had been formed, and works had modified parts of the access road alignment. The carpark area remained largely unmodified.

An aerial photograph from 2010 shows the formation of a second alignment of stormwater ponds to the east of the earlier pond. This work would have removed any remains relating to the house that was previously located in the area. Further works, including apparent levelling activities, were underway along the access road alignment and within the carpark. These works continued through 2012 (Figure 17), by which time the area of modification had expanded and parts of the land were being used for log storage.

By 2018, much of the developed area had been converted to hardstand and port facilities. The remainder of the project development area has been substantially modified by previous development works.

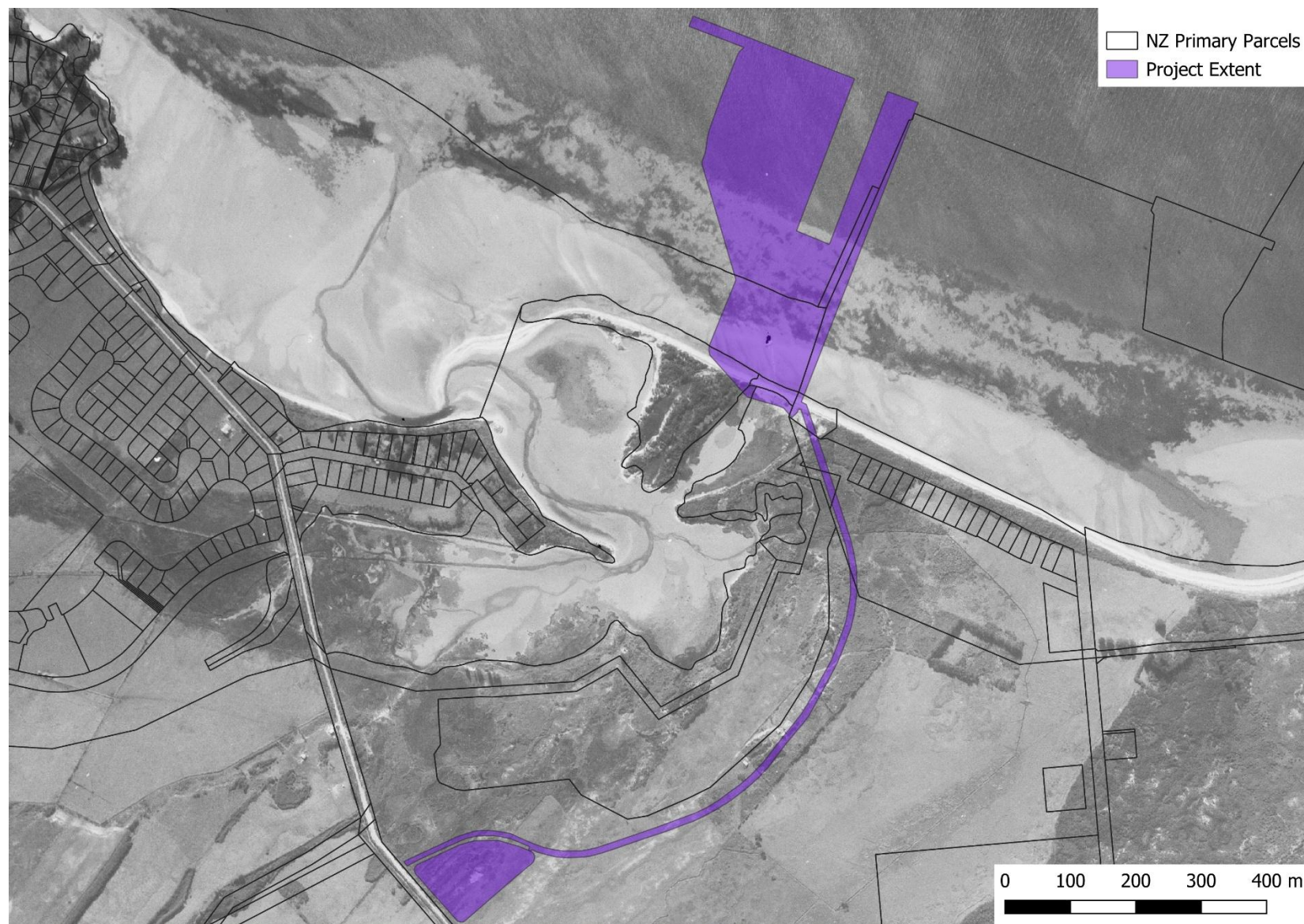


Figure 11. Georeferenced aerial photograph, dated 1942, in relation to the proposed project extent (source: Retrolens SN212-412-38)

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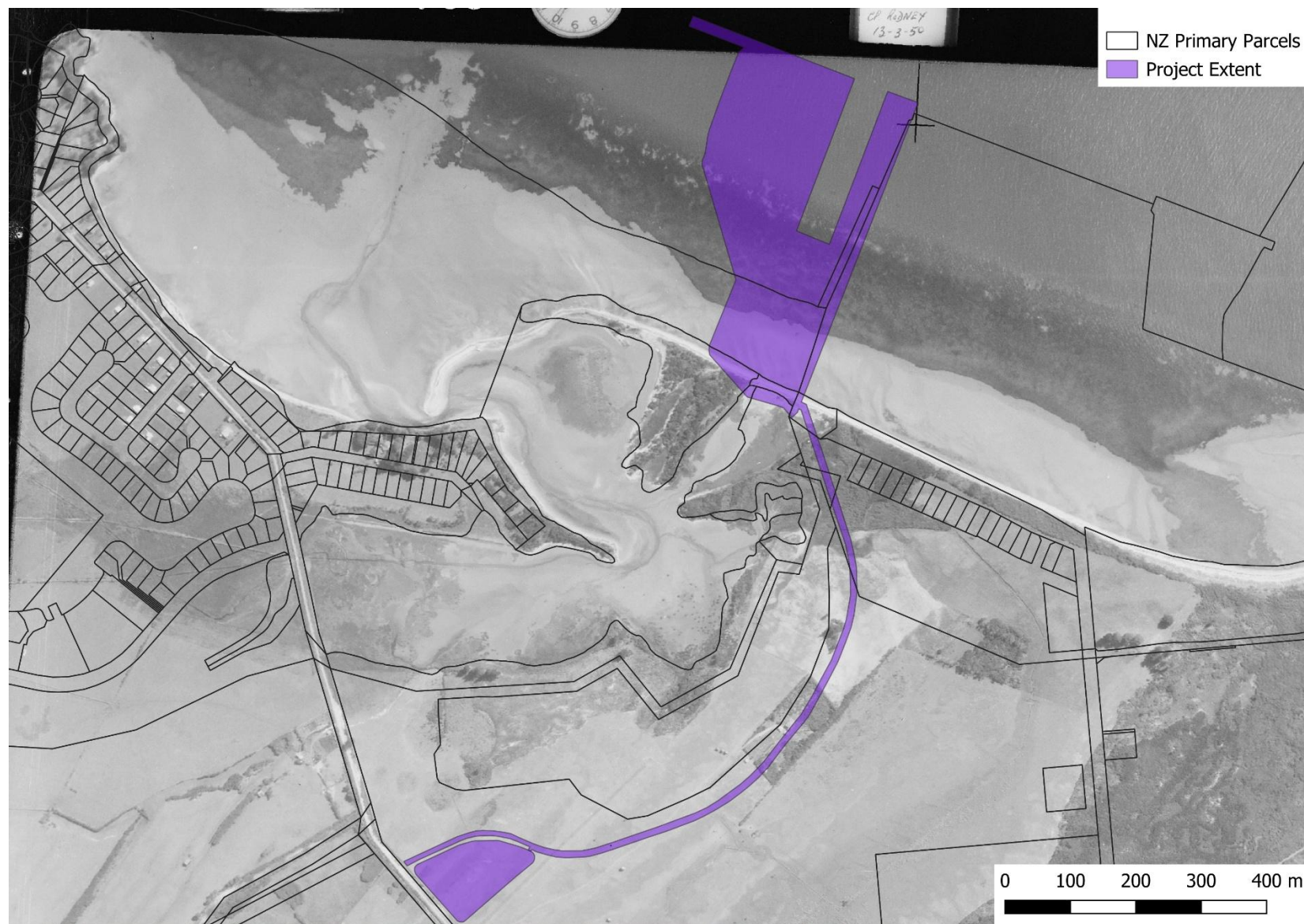


Figure 12. Georeferenced aerial photograph, dated 1950, in relation to the proposed project extent (source: Retrolens SN212-412-40)

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Figure 13. Georeferenced aerial photograph, dated 1966, in relation to the proposed project extent (source: Retrolens SN1875-5032-18)

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Figure 14. Georeferenced aerial photograph, dated 1971, in relation to the proposed project extent (source: Retrolens SN3292-4414-14)

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Figure 15. Georeferenced aerial photograph, dated 1979, in relation to the proposed project extent (source: Retrolens SN5091-K-91)



Figure 16. Georeferenced aerial photograph, dated 2004, in relation to the proposed project extent (source: Retrolens SN3292-4414-14)

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Figure 17. Georeferenced aerial photograph, dated 2012, in relation to the proposed project extent

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FIELD ASSESSMENT

Field Survey Results

A visual inspection of the project area was conducted on 19 May 2026. The Author also undertook an earlier inspection on 9 September 2020 as part of a previous project under consideration by Northport. Both surveys were made during fine weather conditions, and surface visibility was generally good.

During the survey the beach and beachfront dune environments were examined (Figure 18 to Figure 22), both around the intersection of the beach with the port facility and further to the west. It was noted that the gorse covering had increased in the intervening years which impeded access into the dune environment, although it does appear to have stabilised the dunes to some extent. Some dune sections were eroding and these were inspected (Figure 22).

While shell material was frequent across the beach, and to a lesser extent within the dunes, this material was primarily interpreted as natural beach-derived shell rather than archaeological deposit. Of particular note, however, were eroding midden and hangi deposits relating to site Q07/108 (Figure 23 to Figure 25).

A brief examination of the access road alignment was undertaken, although this area was not inspected in detail as it has previously been heavily modified. The same applies to the eastern carpark area, where the surface appears to have been previously cut down and hardstand established (Figure 26). A review of photographs available through Google Earth and StreetView shows that this modification took place between 2006 and 2009.

No archaeological deposits were identified during the survey, and the potential for archaeological material to be present within the proposed development area is considered to be low. While archaeological material may be present more generally within the wider dune environment, no evidence of such deposits was identified within the areas proposed for development.



Figure 18. Stitched panorama with a view from west to north showing Northport at right (September 2020)



Figure 19. View showing the current beachfront (May 2026)



Figure 20. View facing east along the beach towards Northport (September 2020).



Figure 21. View showing an example of the beach dunes (September 2020).



Figure 22. View showing example dune profile (September 2020).



Figure 23. View shingle eroding hangi deposit, part of Q07/108 (May 2026)



Figure 24. View facing east showing eroding midden (Q07/108) mingling the natural shell. This spread contains burnt rock and shell material and chert fragments (May 2026)



Figure 25. View showing eroding midden from Q07/108 (May 2026)



Figure 26. View showing the carpark location (May 2026)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Results

Prior to European settlement, the One Tree Point/Marsden Point landscape was occupied by Māori. Archaeological investigations undertaken in the wider area demonstrate the long-term and widespread nature of Māori settlement and resource use in the coastal environment. A number of archaeological sites associated with Māori occupation have been recorded in the surrounding area, primarily clustered along coastal margins.

No archaeological sites have previously been recorded within the area proposed for the Project. While 20 archaeological sites are recorded within 1 km of the project area, these are all located to the southwest, away from the proposed shipyard and dry dock facility development area. No archaeological sites are recorded within the adjacent marine area, and given the extensive modification of the seabed through earlier reclamation and dredging activities, it is considered unlikely that intact archaeological deposits survive there.

No archaeological sites or features were identified during the field survey. Based on the results of the survey, previous archaeological investigations in the wider area, and the extent of previous ground disturbance associated with the development of the port and associated infrastructure, the potential for intact subsurface archaeological remains within the project area is considered to be low.

While no adverse effects on known archaeological sites are anticipated, any previously unrecorded archaeological material encountered during construction could provide additional information regarding the nature and extent of Māori occupation and resource use within the wider Marsden Point area, which would be a benefit to our understanding of the history of the area.

Māori Cultural Values

This assessment addresses archaeological values only and does not constitute an assessment of Māori cultural values. Assessments of cultural values are appropriately undertaken by tangata whenua. Māori cultural concerns may encompass a broader range of values than those associated solely with archaeological sites.

The historical association of the wider area with tangata whenua is demonstrated through recorded archaeological sites, traditional histories, land records, and known Māori place names.

The wider cultural and heritage context of the project area is further described in the Patuharakeke Trust Board Cultural Values Assessment (2019), which identifies a number of sites and areas of significance within the One Tree Point and Blacksmiths Creek area, including associations with Rauiri and Poupouwhenua. The CVA highlights the presence of recorded heritage sites within the broader landscape and recommends a precautionary approach to the management of potential effects on cultural and archaeological values, including the use of accidental discovery protocols and engagement with Patuharakeke as appropriate.

The Landscape Assessment (Stephen Brown) similarly identifies the presence of recorded heritage sites within and around the Blacksmiths Creek and Marsden Bay area as part of the wider landscape and cultural context.

Survey Limitations

It should be noted that archaeological survey techniques (based on visual inspection and minor sub-surface testing) cannot necessarily identify all sub-surface archaeological features, or detect wāhi tapu and other sites of traditional significance to Māori, especially where these have no physical remains.

Archaeological Value and Significance

The project area has no known archaeological value or significance, as no archaeological sites have been confirmed within the development footprint. Based on previous investigations, recent field survey results, and the extent of modification associated with historic reclamation and port development activities, the potential for intact archaeological remains to be present within the project area is considered to be low.

Should archaeological remains nevertheless be present within the project area, they would have archaeological value primarily through their information potential. Archaeological value relates to the extent to which sites can provide evidence relating to local, regional, and national history through archaeological investigation, and the degree to which they may contribute to broader research questions.

The surviving extent, complexity, integrity, and condition of archaeological deposits are key factors influencing their information potential. For example, pā sites are generally more complex and may have greater information potential than small midden deposits, unless the latter are of early date or contain unusual material.

Archaeological value may also include contextual or heritage landscape values. In addition, archaeological sites can possess a broader range of historic heritage values, including historical, architectural, technological, cultural, aesthetic, scientific, social, spiritual, traditional, and amenity values.

Effects of the Proposal

The proposed development involves construction of a shipyard and dry dock facility at Marsden Point, including reclamation works, marine infrastructure, dredging, access upgrades, service installation, and associated operational infrastructure.

Key project components include reclamation of approximately 9.7 ha, construction of a vessel haul-out system and piled wharf structures, capital and maintenance dredging, construction of hardstand and laydown areas, installation of fixed plant and buildings, and associated access and servicing works. Rock revetment is proposed along the southern and western margins of the reclamation area. Additional services are proposed within existing service corridors, while upgrades to the access road and carparking areas will require localised levelling, pavement preparation, and surfacing works.

The proposal has the potential to affect archaeological deposits (if present) through earthworks, excavation, dredging, reclamation activities, piling, trenching, and associated ground disturbance. However, no archaeological sites are currently recorded within the project area, and no archaeological material was identified during field survey.

The majority of the proposed marine works are located within the Coastal Marine Area (CMA). No archaeological sites are recorded within the marine project area, and no archaeological deposits were identified during the assessment, and none would be considered likely to survive in this environment.

Within the terrestrial portions of the project area, historic aerial photography demonstrates that much of the land has also been modified through drainage works, vegetation clearance, earthworks, stormwater pond construction, hardstand development, and associated port infrastructure activities. No archaeological evidence was identified during inspection and the potential for intact archaeological deposits is considered low.

Twenty archaeological sites are recorded within 1 km of the project area, primarily comprising midden deposits associated with Māori coastal occupation and resource use. All recorded sites are located outside the proposed development footprint, predominantly to the southwest, and none will be directly affected by the proposal.

No recorded archaeological sites are present within the marine portion of the project area. Given the extent of historical dredging, reclamation, seabed modification, and ongoing port maintenance activities, the likelihood of intact submerged archaeological deposits surviving within the proposed dredge footprint is considered very low.

Overall, the proposal is considered unlikely to result in adverse effects on archaeological values. Nevertheless, as with all large-scale earthworks and marine infrastructure projects, the possibility remains that previously unrecorded archaeological material could be encountered during construction. Should archaeological material be identified, works should cease in the immediate vicinity and appropriate procedures followed in accordance with the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

Relevant Planning Provisions

Regional, district and local plans contain sections that help to identify, protect and manage archaeological and other heritage sites. The Regional Plan for Northland (Operative in part 2026), and the Whangārei Operative District Plan 2022 are relevant to the proposed activity.

The Regional Plan for Northland records sites of significant historic heritage and sites and areas of significance to tangata whenua. No sites in either category are within 1000 m of the project, however two sites are located within 2000 m. The site of the former Reotahi Freezing Works is located at Motukaroro Marine Reserve, on the northern side of the harbour, adjacent to Lort Point.

Te Poupouwhenua is a site of significance to tangata whenua and encompasses the Mair and Marsden Banks situated just off the eastern end of Marsden Point.

The Whangārei Operative District Plan does not record any historic heritage site or sites of significance to mana whenua within 1000 m of the project area.

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 Requirements

The HNZPTA protects all archaeological sites whether recorded or not, and they may not be damaged or destroyed unless an Authority to modify an archaeological site has been issued by Heritage NZ (Section 42).

An archaeological site is defined by the HNZPTA Section 6 as follows:

‘archaeological site means, subject to section 42(3), –

(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)'

Authorities to modify archaeological sites can be applied for under the HNZPTA or under the FTAA for listed or referred projects either in respect to archaeological sites within a specified area of land (as described in section 44(a) of the HNZPTA) or to modify a specific archaeological site where the effects will be no more than minor (as described in section 44(b) of the HNZPTA). An application for an archaeological authority for the purpose of conducting a scientific investigation or to carry out an exploratory investigation of any site or locality to confirm the presence, extent and nature of a site or suspected site may only be made under the HNZPTA.

An archaeological authority will not be required for the proposed shipyard and dry dock facility at Marsden Point as no known sites will be affected, and it is unlikely that any undetected sites are present. However, should any sites be exposed during development the provisions of the HNZPTA must be complied with.

Conclusions

No archaeological or other historic heritage sites have been identified within the development area of the proposed shipyard and dry dock facility at Marsden Point. While 20 archaeological sites are recorded within a 1 km radius of the project area, these are located outside the development footprint and will not be affected by the proposed works.

Based on the available archaeological information, previous investigations in the surrounding area, and the degree of modification associated with existing port and reclamation activities, the proposed development is considered unlikely to result in adverse effects on archaeological values.

While the potential for previously unrecorded subsurface archaeological material cannot be entirely excluded, particularly within reclaimed or formerly coastal environments, no known archaeological sites will be directly affected by the proposal. Appropriate accidental discovery procedures should nevertheless be implemented during construction works.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There should be no archaeological constraints on the proposed development of the shipyard and dry dock facility at Marsden Point, as no archaeological sites are currently known within the project area and it is considered unlikely that archaeological material will be exposed during the proposed works.
- Nevertheless, if subsurface archaeological evidence is encountered during construction (for example intact shell midden, hangi, storage pits associated with Māori occupation, or cobbled surfaces, brick or stone foundations, or rubbish pits associated with nineteenth-century European activity), works should cease in the immediate vicinity of the find and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and the Council should be notified.
- If modification of an archaeological site does become necessary, an Authority must be applied for under Section 44(a) of the HNZPTA and granted prior to any further work being carried out that will affect the site. (*Note that this is a legal requirement*).
- In the event that kōiwi tangata (human remains) are uncovered, work should cease immediately in the vicinity of the find and tangata whenua, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, New Zealand Police, and the relevant council should be contacted so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
- As the archaeological values of the wider area primarily relate to Māori occupation and resource use, tangata whenua consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of substantive applications under the Fast-track Approvals Act, including proposals that may require an archaeological authority. Continued engagement with iwi and hapū throughout the approvals and construction process is recommended.

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