

Auckland Surf Park Community - Stage 2: archaeological assessment

**report to
AW Holdings 2021 (LP) Limited Partnership**

Brendan Kneebone

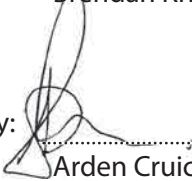


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1 Introduction

AW Holdings are developing a surf park (Auckland Surf Park), visitor accommodation, data centre campus, solar farm and residential, village, live/work and light industrial precincts at 1320 and 1350 Dairy Flat Highway, 89 and 105 Lascelles Drive, 237 and 253 Postman Road, Auckland (Lots 3 and 4 DP 607404, Lots 1 and 2 DP 151504, Lot 4 DP 66181 and Lot 1 DP 605825). The land is approximately 54 hectares of farmland (Figure 1).

An archaeological assessment of effects was required for the Stage 1 resource consent application to the Expert Consenting Panel (Kneebone 2023) and a potential archaeological authority application to Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT). At this time, no archaeological sites were recorded on the properties but there was one heritage site recorded in the Auckland Council Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI 16094), a historic villa. Following the initial assessment (Kneebone 2023), this was recorded as R10/1580 in the New Zealand Archaeological Association's (NZAA) Site Recording Scheme (SRS). Since then, three land parcels have been added to the project (at 89 and 105 Lascelles Drive, and 1350 Dairy Flat Highway), and a decision has been made to demolish R10/1580. Jody Jubber of Invov, on behalf of AW Holdings, commissioned this updated report from CFG Heritage in support of the proposed Stage 2 Substantive Application to be lodged under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA), and an archaeological authority application to HNZPT.

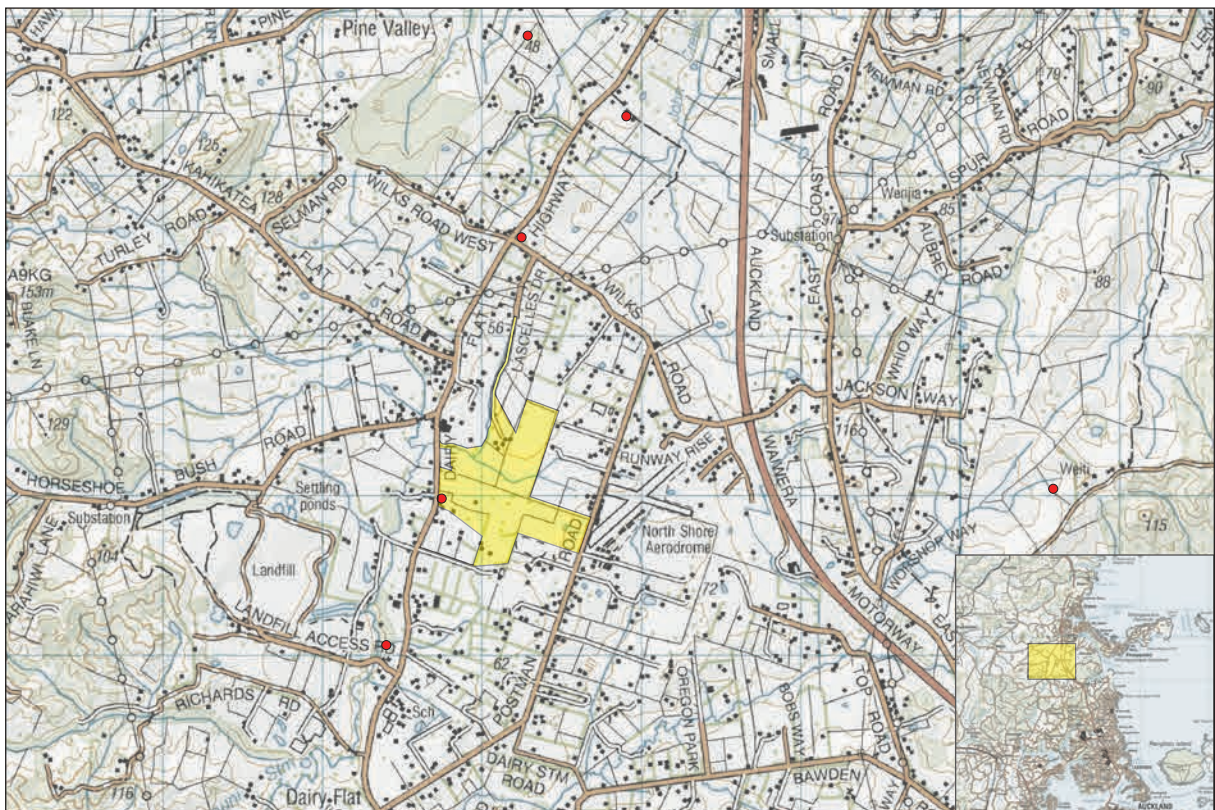


Figure 1. Location of the property and recorded archaeological sites recorded in the vicinity.

1.1 Statement of Qualification and Experience: Brendan Kneebone, author

I am an archaeologist at CFG Heritage, an archaeological and heritage consultancy. I have been employed at CFG Heritage since January 2020. I hold the qualifications of Master of Arts (First Class) in Archaeology from the University of Auckland, which I completed in 2018.

I am currently a sitting Council Member of the New Zealand Archaeological Association, and have been a member of the association since 2016. I have 10 years of professional experience in archaeology in New Zealand the wider Pacific. I have been an approved archaeologist under Section 45 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act (2014) since 2021. My experience includes managing archaeological projects for a variety of clients including government agencies, local councils, and private clients.

I confirm that, in my capacity as author of this report, I have read and abide by the Environment Court of New Zealand's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses Practice Note 2023.

1.2 Statutory requirements

1.2.1 Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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 Māori.

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

1.2.2 Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

Under the Act in Section 42C (1), an authorised person for a listed project or a referred project may lodge with the EPA. Under section 42 (3) (a) the applicant must be eligible to apply for any corresponding approval under a specified Act. A substantive application may seek: under Section 42(4)(a) a resource consent that would otherwise be applied for under the Resource Management Act 1991 and section 42(4)(d) a designation or an alteration to an existing designation for which a notice of requirement would otherwise be lodged under the Resource Management Act 1991. As well, under Section

42 subsection (4) (i) an archaeological authority described in section 44(a) or (b) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 that would otherwise be applied for under that Act- but as stated in section 42 subsection (9) (a) may be made only if the application also seeks an approval described in subsection 4 (a) or (d); it may also include an application under clause 7 of Schedule 8 application for approval of person to carry out activity subsection 9 (b).

Regional, district and local plans contain sections that help to identify, protect and manage archaeological and other heritage sites. The plans are prepared under the provisions of the RMA. The Auckland Unitary Plan Operative in Part 2014 (AUP OP) is relevant to the proposed activity. There are no scheduled historic heritage sites located on the properties containing the Project Area. However, the historic villa located at 1350 Dairy Flat Highway is recorded in Auckland Council's Cultural Heritage Index CHI 16094.

This assessment has established that the proposed activity will affect R10/1580 and any subsurface remains associated with this. The site is not scheduled in the Auckland Unitary Plan. It also has potential to affect unidentified subsurface archaeological remains that may be exposed during development across the wider footprint of the project. Any effects on archaeological deposits or features can be appropriately mitigated through archaeological investigation and recording to recover information relating to the history of the area.

If resource consent is granted, it is recommended that a condition requiring archaeological recording of R10/1850 and monitoring of surrounding earthworks areas shown by the blue outlined area in Figure 22 to investigate and record subsurface remains be included.

An application for an authority to modify or destroy R10/1850, and any unrecorded subsurface archaeology has been applied for to Heritage New Zealand (2025/112) for the Stage 2 works. An Archaeological Management Plan was also prepared as required for the archaeological authority application.

2 Method

The following digital data sources were consulted:

- Site records from the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) Site Recording Scheme (SRS) were obtained from ArchSite (<https://nzarchaeology.org/archsite>).
- Records of previous archaeological investigations on Motutapu and Rangitoto 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), Auckland Council and in other online archives were searched (<https://data.linz.govt.nz>; <https://www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/Pages/heritage-photographs.aspx>; <https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz>).
- The Auckland Council Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) and the Auckland Council GeoMaps GIS viewer were searched for any areas of cultural significance in the vicinity (<https://geomapspublic.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/viewer/index.html>).

Two site surveys were undertaken for this project, both were completed by Brendan Kneebone of CFG Heritage. The first was on 3 May 2023 ahead of the Stage 1 works where properties at 1350 Dairy Flat Highway were walked. The second on 25 September 2025, focussed on parcels at 1320 Dairy Flat Highway, and at 89 and 105 Lascelles Drive, which have been added for Stage 2. This was a visual inspection undertaken on foot. The weather had recently been inclement prior to both surveys and accounts for some surface puddling and boggy paddocks. The primary focus of the survey was to identify any possible archaeological features or material which may be impacted by works. A 1.1m gum spear was used to probe for any subsurface material or anomalies. No other intrusive techniques such as test pitting were employed.

3 Background

Dairy Flat is a rural suburb located around 8 km south of Ōrewa and 28 km north of central Auckland. The project area is open farmland with houses on the west. Dairy Flat Highway / State Highway 31 flanks the west side of the project area and Postman Road the east.

3.1 Pre-European Māori history

Māori occupation of the wider area was concentrated on the coast between Ōrewa and Ōkura, including the Whāngaparāoa Peninsula. Many records note that inland areas remained in mature forest until the historic era. Early plan SO 894 drawn in 1869 includes the project area and shows there were pre-European Māori walking tracks along the inland flats, and that the current path of Dairy Flat Highway generally follows one of those tracks.

The coast between Te Waitematā and Whangārei was depopulated during the musket wars. When Europeans began to settle in the area, Māori were in the area for fishing and shellfish gathering, gathering flax, although substantial settlements were located elsewhere (Grover 2013).

Dairy Flat is near two recorded portages used by pre-European Māori (Hooker 1997). The first is the Aotoetoe Portage which allowed direct east west communication north of Auckland. Hooker (1997) states this is “by far the longest and most difficult portage in the network, the Aotoetoe Portage was over fourteen kilometres in length”. It was probably seldom used but it is mentioned by S. Percy Smith in his book *Peopling of the North*. The other is the Weiti Portage which ran between the Weiti and the Kaukapakapa Rivers allowed direct communication north of Auckland, from the Pacific Ocean to the Tasman Sea.

3.2 19th century history

The area was milled for timber then used for gum digging like most land north of the central Auckland area. The first formal road near the property was what is now Dairy Flat Highway, built in the 1870s. Plan SO 1118 drawn in 1874 shows the project area was labelled as “swampy” and there are “drains” plotted and annotated around 150 m south of the project area, although none within the project area (Figure 2). The land was then prepared and used for farming in the later 19th century, and this remained its main use until the expansion of Auckland in recent decades.

3.3 CHI 16094: Villa

This parcel of land originally formed part of the Crown Grant (allotments 189 and 190 of the Parish of Pukeatua) awarded to Thomas Forgham in 1870 (Auckland Deed Index 14A:334). In 1872 Forgham transferred the property to Alston, who dedicated a road in 1874. The land passed through a number of owners before being purchased by (Archibald?) McNair in 1899. It is unclear what land exactly McNair purchased, however, it is likely at this time he only owned allotment 189. In 1904 McNair purchased an additional 140 acres of allotment 190 from Jackson. It is likely that McNair owned other land in the vicinity as an Archibald McNair is registered against a number of lots in Pukeatua in the 1881 Electoral Roll. Auckland Deed Index 14A:334 state that in 1906 McNair transferred part of lot 189 to another McNair (probably his son, William McNair). Following entries indicate that this was the majority of the allotment which W. McNair later subdivided into the contemporary addresses of 1350 and 1338 Dairy Flat Highway. Auckland Museum records show that in 1907 the wife of William McNair granted a number of gum diggers the right to dig gum across the property of part allotment 189.

Auckland Deed Index 14A: 334 shows that W. McNair conveyed this part of the allotment to Thomas in 1917. Thomas on sold the site to Small in 1927. Certificate of Title NA579/33 was issued to Charles Henry Lester Small in 1935 for the northern portion of lot 189. In 1961 the property was transferred to Henry Lester Small and on to Peter Allan Small in 2012 as executor. It appears that the site remained in the Small family until 2016.

3.4 Archaeological background

There are very few recorded archaeological sites within 1 km of the project area, those present in the wider area are pre-1900 buildings. The site is about 5 km inland from the Long Bay and Karepiro Bay coastlines and Ōkura River where there are many archaeological sites recorded, most of which are pre-European Māori sites. While there are many sites recorded when compared to the inland area, the current record on the SRS is not a full representation of pre-1900 human land use in the area. The Ōkura River and the eastern coastlines have early and complex archaeological landscapes (Tatton 2001). For example, the Long Bay area's human history has complex stratigraphic sites dating to the 1400s, and pre-European Māori gardens and terracing as well as pre-1900 European buildings and sites (e.g., Campbell et. al. 2019, Phillips and Bader 2007, Trilford 2021).

Over the past three decades some ad hoc archaeological assessments have been undertaken in the Dairy Flat area. Most of the reports were for private projects such as subdivisions and did not detect any evidence of archaeological sites (e.g. Bickler and Clough 2006, Foster 2001, Clough 1999, Clough and Prince 2001). It seems likely there was very few pre-European Māori settlements in the area but the waterways passing through were frequented for transport and this is supported by portage records. It is considered highly unlikely that archaeological evidence of pre-European Māori occupation would be found in the project area, but there is a higher likelihood for pre-1900 European sites.

The two recorded archaeological sites within 1 km of the project area are R10/1450 (the Wade Junction Hotel) and R10/1540 (whare). The Wade Junction Hotel was recorded on the SRS by Robert Brassey in 2018, presumably as part of the preparation of the Auckland Council Structure Plan report (Brassey and Francesco 2019). R10/1540 is a "whare" plotted on plan DP 2119 drawn in 1898 and the location was added to the SRS during this assessment. There is no surface evidence of that site but, similarly to the Wade Junction Hotel further north, subsurface evidence may remain.

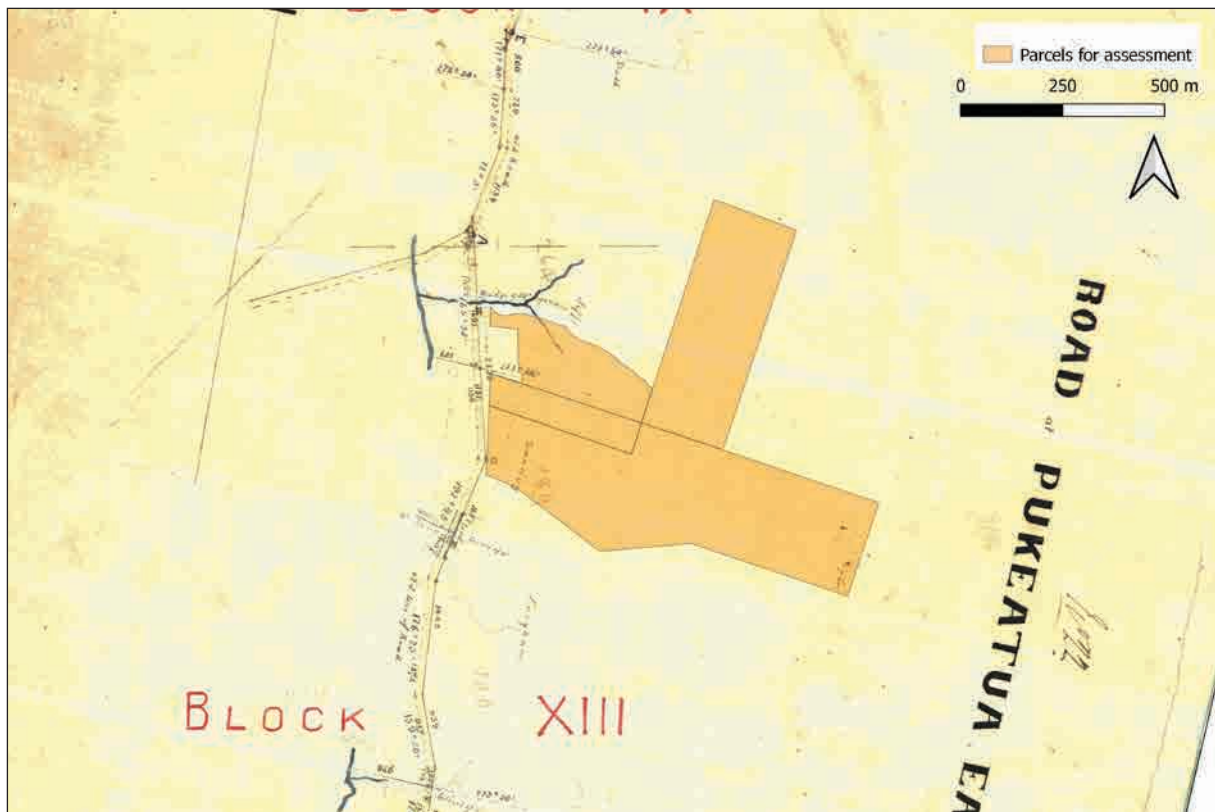


Figure 2. Survey plan SO 1118 drawn in 1874 showing the road build. The property for this assessment has been shaded in orange.

4 Aerial photos

Aerial photographs dating back as early as 1940 were visually inspected and georeferenced to examine the potential for previously unrecorded sites or features. An early photograph from 1940 shows the project area is typical of the wider area and used for grazing – it shows the corrugated iron clad villa (CHI item 16094) (Figure 3). An aerial taken in 1957 is much clearer resolution than the 1940s and at this stage there is no evidence of substantial ground working which would have removed deposits. Aerials taken in the 1960s and 70s show farming infrastructure on the property was being installed but the iron clad villa had not moved.

5 Field Survey

The Project consists of four properties totalling approximately 54ha. The majority of the area is low lying, flat topography. There is a small creek bordering the upper northeastern boundary, and several farm drains which dissect the area. The properties are described separately below.

5.1 1350 Dairy Flat Highway

The topography of these properties is almost entirely flat, with slight elevations towards the northern and eastern boundaries. The properties are divided into paddocks, which are under grass and currently used for grazing. There is a farm pond near the central eastern boundary and farm drains dissect it at regular intervals on the flat areas. Other modifications of the project area include usual farming activities such as wind breaks, farm tracks and races, fences, and farm buildings. Attention was paid to the potentially pre-1900 villa (CHI 16094), and the immediate area which remains as previously described. The house was determined as being built pre – 1900 and has been recorded as



Figure 3. Aerial photograph SN143/86/29 taken in 1940 with the project area outlined.



Figure 4. Map of the properties surveyed. Blue = 2023 survey area, Red = 2025 survey areas.



Figure 5. Farm buildings modification.

R10/1580. Although the area was wet, and flooding/bogginess caused visibility problems in some areas, no other archaeological material or features were identified during the survey (Figures 5 – 15).

5.2 1320 Dairy Flat Highway

1320 Dairy Flat Highway is located immediately to the south of 1350 Dairy Flat Highway and covers an area of approximately 4.2 ha. There are two houses on the property, as well as a swimming pool and concrete driveway. The remainder of the property is divided into small paddocks (Figure 15) Grass in these were short and visibility was good. The ground was wet, and pugging was evident. No archaeology was visible.

5.3 89 and 105 Lascelles Drive

89 and 105 Lascelles Drive are neighbouring properties directly to the east of 1350 Dairy Flat Highway. Combined they cover an area of approximately 6.2 ha. The topography is relatively flat across both properties, except for along the northwestern boundary of 105 where it drops off gently towards a small creek. Both properties had been modified for housing and associated buildings such as garages, as well as driveways and access ways. 105 also had a small stabling area for horses as well as a rectangular horse jumping arena. 89 Lascelles Drive had a small orchard to the north of the house and landscaped gardens. The remaining areas were grassed paddocks. Both properties had been recently grazed and visibility was good, however both properties were quite wet and the stock and horses had caused pugging (Figure 16 - Figure 20). No archaeology was observed during the survey.



Figure 6. Current state of the Historic Villa.



Figure 7. Villa looking north.



Figure 8. Villa looking west.



Figure 9. Farm sediment pond.



Figure 10. Farming modifications.



Figure 11. Farm pond towards the eastern boundary.



Figure 12. Farm tracks and fencing.



Figure 13. Paddocks currently used for grazing.



Figure 14. Example of farm drains dissecting the property.



Figure 15. Typical paddocks at 1320 Dairy Flat Highway.



Figure 16. Landscaping and lawns at 89 Lascelles Drive.



Figure 17. Paddocks and shed at 89 Lascelles Drive.



Figure 18. Orchard at 89 Lascelles Drive.



Figure 19. Typical paddock leading down to creek at 105 Lascelles Drive.

Figure 20. Paddocks in short grass at 105 Lascelles Drive.

6 Assessment

The following assessment of values and effects relate only to archaeological and heritage values of R10/1580. Other interested parties, in particular mana whenua, may hold different values regarding the site. The following assessments of archaeological values is based on the criteria set out in NZHPT (2014).

6.1 Assessment of values

R10/1580: Villa

Condition	What remains of villa is aesthetically in poor condition. The house is not up to code and would require a complete rebuild to make it so.
Rarity	Pre-1900 houses are relatively common, especially in this part of Auckland
Information	This building can provide information on the materials and technology that were used for the construction and it will be possible to draw some comparisons with other investigated 19th century houses in Auckland. Any sub-surface material or features relating to the occupation of the property would provide insight into early farming life in Auckland .
Amenity	The villa remains on private land but information in the form of an interpretive panel could provide information about the house.
Cultural	R10/1580 is a pre-1900 European site

6.2 Assessment of values against the AUP RPS Criteria

CHI 16094: Villa

Historical	The house relates to the European settlement of Ōrewa/Dairy Flat and was constructed before 1900. The site has moderate historical value.
Social	The site is not well understood or acknowledged in the community, the site has little social value.
Mana Whenua Knowledge	Only mana whenua can comment on the value of the site to them. The site can contribute information about the European settlement of the area, including details on construction methods and materials used. The site has moderate knowledge value.

Technology	Based on the known attributes of the villa, there are no signs of special innovation, construction, components or use of materials. The site has moderate technological value.
Physical	The building is typical of those constructed at the time and does not have any clearly identifiable features to indicate it has special physical attributes. The site has little physical value.
Aesthetic Context	The site is visible from Dairy Flat Highway. The site has moderate aesthetic value. The site is part of the European settlement of the Ōrewa/Dairy Flat area. The site as moderate context value.

This site has moderate values, based on its highest values which are its context, aesthetic, knowledge, and historical values. Retention of these values is desirable, but it does not warrant any special protections and any loss of heritage values can be mitigated.

6.3 Assessment of effects

As part of the structure planning for the Kumeu-Huapai, Riverhead, and Red Hill North business Area, Auckland Council reviewed the site but have determined it does not merit further evaluation as a scheduled historic heritage place (Francesco and Brassey 2019). As a result, this building is assessed as having no more than moderate heritage values based on the Auckland Unitary Plan RPS criteria. However, it is a recorded archaeological site (R10/1580) and as such its demolition as well as any modification or destruction of subsurface features associated with it will require an archaeological authority.

The total cut and fill area for the development will cover approximately 46 ha (Figure 21). Once the villa is demolished. These cut and fill plans indicate extensive working of the ground around it, with up to 3 m of fill in the area (Figure 22). This work will require initial topsoil stripping and stabilisation, which means that any surviving archaeology in the area will unavoidably be impacted. These effects can be mitigated through the conditions of an archaeological authority from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

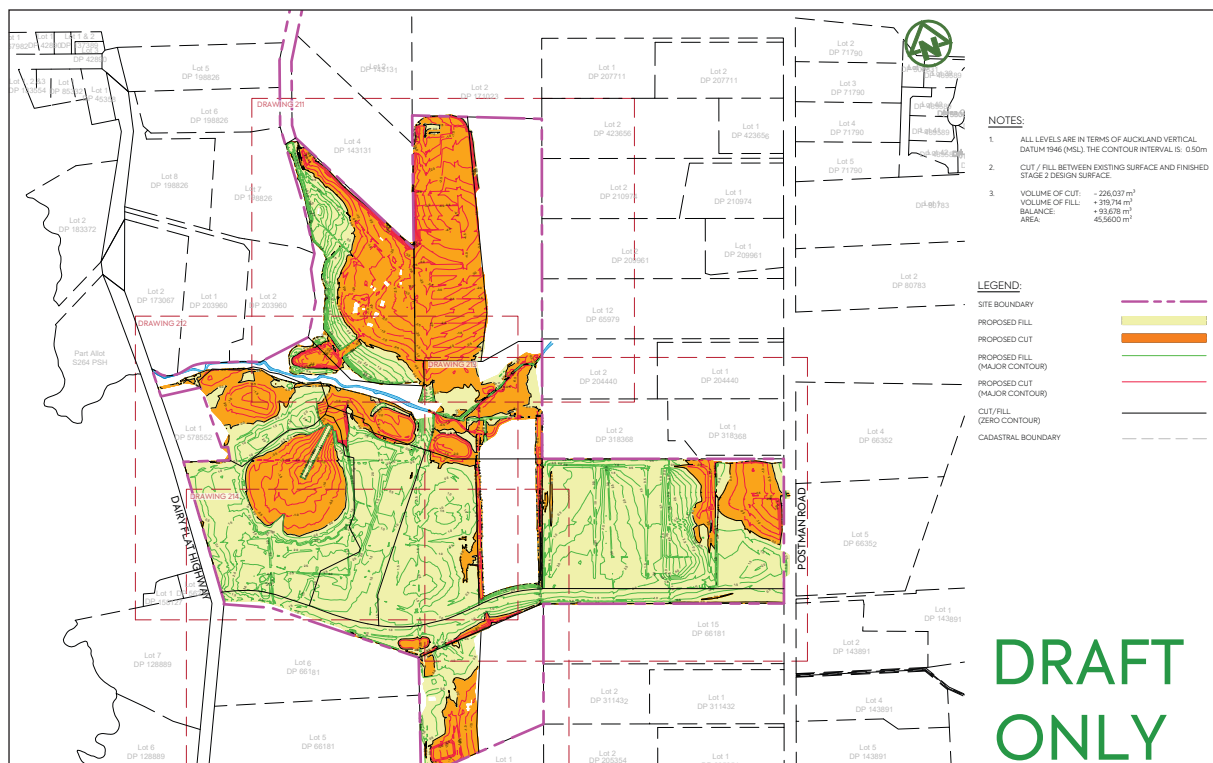


Figure 21. Cut and fill plan for the Auckland Surf Park

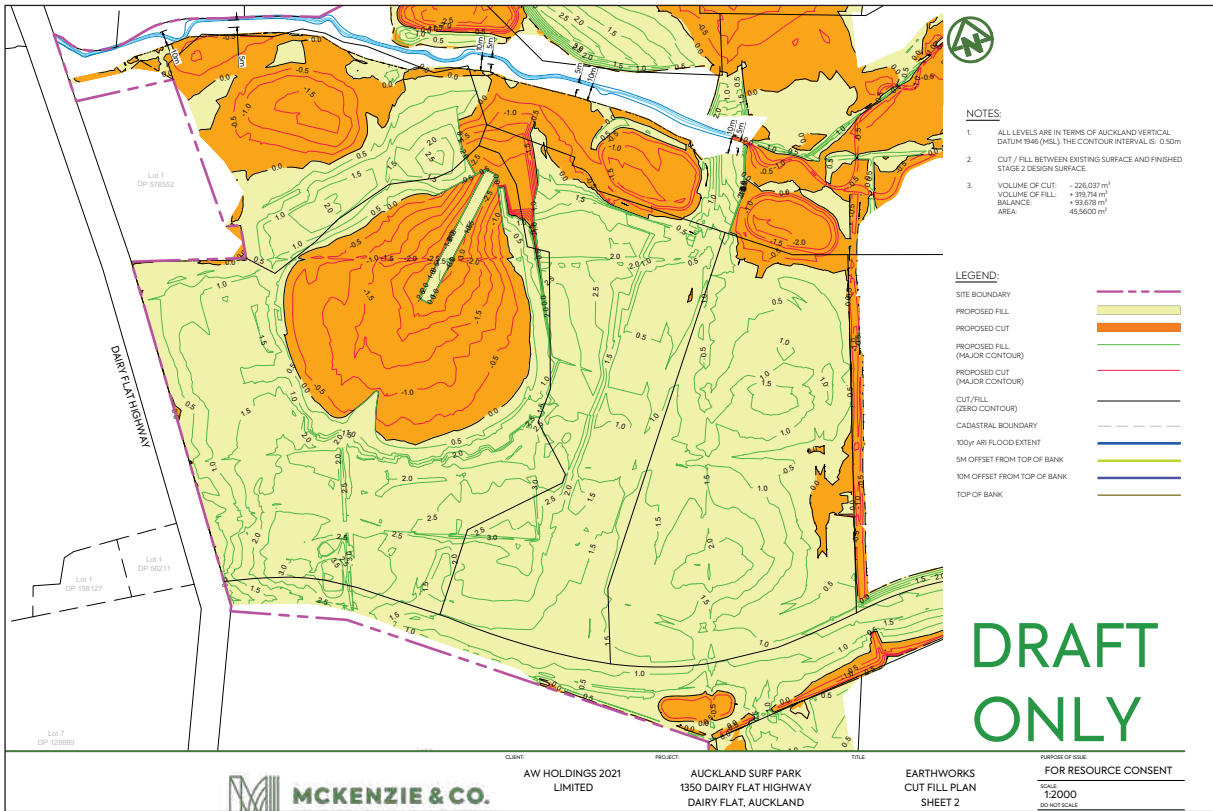


Figure 22. Specific cut and fill plan for the area around R10/1580 (blue rectangle).



Figure 23. Masterplan of the surf park development.

7 Recommendations

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

- an authority to modify or destroy R10/1580 and any subsurface archaeology be applied for from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) under Section 44 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014;
 - note that this is a legal requirement;
- the authority application should be accompanied by an Archaeological Management Plan that outlines where an archaeologist must be present for earthworks, contractor briefings, responsibilities of parties and contact details;
- no authority should be applied for without consultation with the appropriate tangata whenua authorities; evidence of consultation, and views expressed, will be required by NZHPT, and will be taken into account when making a decision about the granting of the authority
- note that the application process may take up to two months from the date of lodgement, and following issue there is a period of 15 working days during which earthworks cannot commence to allow for appeals to the Environment Court;
- appropriate tikanga (protocols) should be followed during works – mana whenua may make recommendations outlining these;
- in the event of kōiwi (human remains) being uncovered during any future construction, work should cease immediately and mana whenua should be contacted so that suitable arrangements can be made;
- since archaeological survey cannot always detect sites of traditional significance to Māori, or wahi tapu, mana whenua should be consulted regarding the possible existence of such sites, and the recommendations in this report.

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