

Before the Fast-track Panel

Under: Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

In the matter of: FTAA-2603-L003 – Belmont Quarry Development Project – Land
Exchange

Statement of advice: Richard Nester

Cultural Heritage

Department of Conservation Senior Heritage Advisor

22 April 2026



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Introduction

1. My full name is Richard Paul Nester.

Instruction

2. I have been requested to provide expert advice on behalf of the Director-General of Conservation for her section 35 land exchange report required to be prepared under the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024, for the Belmont Quarry project land exchange application.

Qualification and Experience

3. I am a Senior Heritage Advisor with the Department of Conservation's (DOC) Biodiversity, Heritage and Visitor Group based in Wellington and provide cultural heritage advice nationally and specific advice to the Lower North Island region. I have a Bachelor of Science in physical geography from the University of Otago (1994) and a Masters of Library and Information Studies from the Victoria University of Wellington (1997). I have been employed with the Department of Conservation for twenty-nine years, including 14 years as a Heritage Technical Officer and 15 years as a Heritage Advisor
4. My role in this project has been to review and provide technical comment on the cultural heritage values, primarily the archaeological values of the Belmont Quarry Development Project.

Code of conduct

5. Whilst it is acknowledged this is not an Environment Court Proceeding, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in the preparation of this advice. Unless I state otherwise, this advice is within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

Scope of advice and expert opinion

6. My expert advice relates to the following:

- i. Adequacy of the Applicant's assessment of the cultural heritage values of the land proposed in the exchange, including any values that have been missed or not assessed.
- ii. The physical and documented evidence of tangible cultural heritage values on the land areas defined in the Land Exchange report.
- iii. The impact of losing or gaining any areas or sites of cultural heritage importance.

It should be noted that the broader cultural values identified and associated with mana whenua are not addressed in this report.

Material Considered

7. In preparing this advice I have reviewed the following documents as part of the land exchange application:

- i. Proposed land exchange for Wellington Belmont Quarry, OBDA, archaeological assessment: Prepared for Winstone Aggregates A Division of Fletcher Concrete and Infrastructure Ltd, by Clough and Associates Ltd, November 2025.
- ii. Land exchange report: An application by Winstone Aggregates for the Belmont quarry development: Prepared for Winstone Aggregates by Wikaira Consulting limited, 7 december 2025.
- iii. Email correspondance Appendix D8 Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga
- iv. Data held on ARCHSITE – archaeological site recording scheme

Overview

8. Winstone Aggregates Ltd have proposed and applied for a land exchange with DOC to develop an overburden disposal area (OBDA) adjacent to the Belmont quarry, Lower Hutt. The land wanted for the OBDA is owned by DOC. There are 4 parcels of exchange land owned by Winstone Aggregates (Northern Gully, Southern Gully, Firth Block and the Dry Creek Gully). It is noted that two of the blocks offered for exchange have QEII covenants over them. These include the whole of the Firth Block and part of the Northern Gully. This document provides a technical assessment of the impacts on the cultural heritage conservation values of the proposed land swap areas.
9. In general, my review of the Clough and Associates Archaeological report was found to be complete and thorough. Meetings held by the applicant and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga also concurred that the overall site low cultural heritage values. My own review and findings of the sites, align with the above in that the potential is for only low value, tangible cultural heritage to be located on the sites. Any transfer would not impact on the conservation of cultural heritage values.
10. It should be noted that if any archaeological finds were made in the future, then the archaeological provisions of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 would still apply. This could impact ongoing land management decisions for either DOC or Winstone Aggregates Ltd.

DOC Give site

11. The proposed Winstone Aggregates OBDA site has one recorded cultural heritage site. It is recorded by the New Zealand Archaeological site recording scheme as R27/910 and is described as the remains of Farm Building and historic artefacts. The site includes a collapsed roof and associated building framing, roofing iron, concrete footings, fences and some artefacts (glass bottles).
12. Although this indicates a previous land use, the significance of it is low. The feature does not appear to be outstanding in nature or is unlikely to change our understanding of the land use in the local area. Irrespective of the significance of the site, if it is determined to be pre 1900 any change of land use would require an authorisation from Heritage New Zealand before the site could be modified in any way.
13. Currently this is a location not usually frequented by visitors, and there has been no attempt to manage and or conserve the heritage fabric of this site. This would be unlikely to change if the site were to remain under conservation management.

DOC Get sites

Firth Block (QEII)

14. This area of land has no recorded or known cultural heritage associated with it.

Northern Gully (QEII area)

15. There are no recorded archaeological or cultural heritage sites of significance inside the North Gully QEII land area. There is the potential for the partial remnants of a pre-1900 tramway used for timber extraction to be found in this area. At the time of writing, the tramway has not been discovered. The tramway is identified on a 1900 Deed Plan. Should it be found or located in the future, it is unlikely that it would be actively managed and would instead be formally recorded with protection being given through the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act as an archaeological site.

Northern Gully (Non QEII)

16. There are no recorded archaeological or cultural heritage sites of significance in North Gully area outside of the QEII land area. There is the potential for the partial remnants of a pre-1900 tramway used for timber extraction to be found in this area. At the time of writing, the tramway has not been discovered. The tramway is identified on a 1900 Deed Plan. Should it be found or located in the future, it is unlikely that it would be actively managed and would instead be formally recorded with protection being given through the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act as an archaeological site.

Southern Gully

17. There are no recorded archaeological or cultural heritage sites of significance in the Southern Gully land area. There is the potential for the partial remnants of a pre-1900 tramway used for timber extraction to be found in this area. At the time of writing, the tramway has not been discovered. The tramway is identified on a 1900 Deed Plan. Should it be found or located in the future it is unlikely that it would be actively managed and would instead be formally recorded with protection being given through the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act as an archaeological site.

Dry Creek

18. This area of land has no recorded or known cultural heritage associated with it.

Overall assessment

19. The values of the DOC Give and DOC Get sites are identified in Tables 1 & 2. My overall assessment is as follows:

- Rating of the Cultural Heritage values of the DOC give site is **Low**
- Rating of the Cultural Heritage values of the DOC get site is **Low**

Comparative reporting of criteria assessment

Table 1 - DOC Give Sites

Criterion	Ranking	Comments
Aesthetic significance or value	Low	Minimal or no known aesthetic values relating to the cultural heritage values at this site
Archaeological significance or value	Low – Med	Archaeological Site R27/910 is recorded on the DOC Give site – this represents a Post 1900 house site associated with farming. It is technically outside the legal definition of an archaeological site. It is described as the ‘remains of a farm building: wooden beams, corrugated iron roof, concrete floor, enclosure of concrete nib wall, bottles, strainer fencepost, patch of flowering daffodils. Possibly a piggery’. ⁱ
Architectural significance or value	Low	Remains of the house site shows characteristic building techniques that are unremarkable of the period
Cultural significance or value	Low	Refer cultural values report
Historical significance or value	Low	Some of the site is likely to include local significance relating to historic farming activities as indicated by previously mentioned site record R27/910
Scientific significance or value	Low	Minimal or no known scientific values relating to the cultural heritage values at this site
Social significance or value	Low	Low to medium significance limited to local value or those associated with having been associated with the use of the land prior to the Quarry activity in the area
Spiritual significance or value	Low	Minimal or no known spiritual values relating to the cultural heritage values at this site
Technological significance or value	Low	Minimal or no known technical values relating to the cultural heritage values at this site
Traditional significance or value	Low	Minimal or no known traditional values relating to the cultural heritage values at this site

Table 2 - **DOC Get Sites**

	Aesthetic value	Archaeological value	Architectural value	Cultural value	Historical value	Scientific value	Social value	Spiritual value	Technological value	Traditional value	Overall cultural Heritage Value
DOC Give Site											
OBDA	L	L/M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
DOC Get sites											
Dry Creek	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Firth Block (QEII)	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Northern Gully (QEII)	L	L/M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Northern Gully non QEII	L	L/M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Southern Gully	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

ⁱ NZAA Archsite site record form R27/910 accessed on the 10/4/2026