

Archaeological Assessment: Tahimana Ltd Rural 3 Development, Stagecoach Road.

17 July 2026



1.0 Introduction

Tahimana Ltd own a property in Tasman contained within two separate Survey Parcels, Lot 1 DP450728 and Lot 3 DP450728, contained within one Title RT 573241. The property is either side of Stagecoach Road and to the east of State Highway 60. Tahimana Ltd are applying under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 [FTAA] to subdivide and develop the land.

The project is to subdivide and develop land for the purpose of establishing a residential and rural lifestyle development on approximately 70 hectares of land off Stagecoach Road, Tasman, in the Tasman District. The project will include works within the Stagecoach Road, Dicker Road and Williams Road reserves. The project will include:

- a) subdivision to create approximately 145 allotments, including 4 allotments for reserve, roading and services, and enable construction of approximately 141 residential units across a range of densities;
- b) development of an open space network including a public reserve and walkways, and upgrades to shared pathways;
- c) landscape planting and restoration and enhancement of waterways and wetlands;
- d) associated infrastructure, including for three waters services and transport (including external road upgrade works).



Figure 1: The location of the Tahimana Ltd property (topofthesouthmaps.co.nz).

Tahimana Ltd previously commissioned an assessment of the property's archaeological values and consideration of the impact of the development on those values. The assessment was prepared in 2023 and revised in 2024. It

has been reviewed for the purposes of the FTAA and in response to an updated scheme plan. There has been no change to the assessment and conclusions.

The report does not consider wāhi tūpuna (sites of significance to Māori) except for those with archaeological values and in that case does not consider the cultural and spiritual significance of the archaeological sites to Māori. Cultural values are the province of Māori. This should be addressed by Te Tau Ihi iwi.

2.0 Statutory Requirements

There are no Statutory Acknowledgements over the Tahimana Ltd property area. There are no recorded archaeological sites on the property. There are no sites or places recorded on the New Zealand List, nor in the Tasman Resource Management Plan.

3.0 Environmental Context

The main part of the Tahimana Ltd property (Lot 1) is on the east side of Stagecoach Road. The narrow strip of Lot 3 runs between State Highway 60 and Stagecoach Road. This is within a region generally known as the Moutere Hills. The name Stagecoach Road was not used until ca.2010 when the new State Highway 60 was constructed (the Ruby Bay Bypass). It was previously part of Old Coach Road and Dicker Road.

The land consists of gentle rolling hills of Moutere Gravel (clay-bound gravels) covered with a thin layer of topsoil (Mapua sandy loam). This has been described as “Shallow, sandy, easily erodible loam with deep, heavy, leached clay subsoil and impeded drainage. Derived from underlying strongly weathered sedimentary gravels. Low fertility but good moisture-holding ability. Not drought prone.”¹

The pre-European vegetation of the area was dense podocarp - mixed beech forest and swamp forest in gullies and hollows and on gentle toe-slopes.²

Lot 1 is currently in grazed pasture with scattered *Pinus radiata* (pine). There are limited areas of wet pasture wetlands which most probably formed after native vegetation was cleared³. Pines are planted on Lot 3 some of which have been recently harvested. There are minor watercourses running through Lot 1 originating from seepages. A larger watercourse is in the valley outside the eastern boundary of Lot 1.

Previously the land was in plantation pine. There have been at least two forestry rotations. A large fire apparently burnt through the property in the 1980s⁴. There are tracks, including one down the middle of the main ridge, and fences on the property but no buildings or structures.

¹ <http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/conservation/native-plants/nelson-marlborough/ecological-restoration/tasman-bay/moutere-downlands-hill-country.pdf>

² <http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/conservation/native-plants/nelson-marlborough/ecological-restoration/tasman-bay/moutere-downlands-hill-country.pdf>

³ Personal comment G. Ussher 17/3/2023.

⁴ Personal comment D. Horne 17/3/2023.



Figure 2: View to the east with the coast in the distance (Young 2023). This is taken from the western end of the main ridge.



Figure 3: The northwestern corner of the property (Young 2023). The plantation to the left is on Lot 3.



Figure 4: The main ridge (looking east).
Young 2023.

4.0 Archaeological Context

There are no archaeological sites recorded on the property.

Most archaeological work in this particular region of Tasman has concentrated on the coastal strip and around the Waimea and Moutere Inlets. However, the Moutere Hills have been included in some studies.

The area was part of an intensive archaeological study of the Motueka region by Aidan Challis in the mid 1970s⁵. Challis wrote that the distribution of sites in the Moutere subregion was generally sparse with few sites inland. Further work in the area has been carried out by me. In 2001, when the land was part of the Tasman Forest, I carried out a paper-based predictive model of forests administered and / or owned by Carter Holt Harvey⁶. I concluded that this part of the forest, inland from the coast, had low potential to contain unrecorded sites. I assessed the area for the new State Highway 60 (the Ruby Bay Bypass) then between 2008 and 2010 monitored the work under archaeological authority 2008/90⁷. No archaeological sites were found within the Moutere Hills section of the bypass. I've also carried an assessment of a large property to the north in Tasman which was also subject to a development proposal⁸.

A literature review, including standard sources such as the Te Tau Ihu Statutory Acknowledgements, Mitchell and Mitchell (2004, 2007), Jackson (2007), Peart (1998) and Knapp (n.d), found no specific mention of the area. I have also been privileged to have access to five Cultural Impact Assessments / Cultural Values Statements that discuss this area of Tasman. Ngāti Rārua and Ngāti Tama have written statements specifically for the Tahimana Ltd proposal⁹. The remaining three assessments were for other projects in the wider area.

The Tahimana Ltd property is located within a wider archaeological, cultural and natural area. However, previous archaeological and historical research suggests that Māori settlement in the Moutere Hills, with its infertile Moutere clay soil, was generally sparse. The interior region was used primarily as a resource gathering area, for example, tuna / eels, manu / birds, harakeke / flax and ngahere / timber. It was also a through route. Stream valleys and ridges running up from the coast would have been used to access the interior and go through to the Motueka Valley and onto the West Coast and Marlborough. The Moutere Hills was a refuge in times of trouble and a place of battle, for example during the 1820s when Kurahaupo people fled to the inland hills from the invading Taranaki – Tainui alliance during the Te Heke Niho Mango (the migration of the shark tooth)¹⁰. Recorded sites are generally associated with this transitory activity, for example, isolated taonga / artefact findspots, or small midden sites representing camps or refuges.

⁵ Challis 1978.

⁶ Young 2001.

⁷ Young 2011.

⁸ Young 2015.

⁹ Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rārua 2023; Ngāti Tama ki te Waipounamu Trust 2024.

¹⁰ Mitchell 2004: 122-125.

The nearest recorded sites to the subject property are along the coast. They include Te Pā Pā / Moutere Bluff Pā (N27/74), approximately 2.7 km to the northeast, and Te Mamuka Pā (N27/73), 3.8 km further to the northeast. Just south of Te Pā Pā, about 2.8 km to the northeast of the property, is a cluster of sites at Moutere Bluff that represent an occupation area – N27/75 midden and ovens, N27/76 burials and N27/77 ovens. Many other sites are recorded at Kina, Mapua and in Orinoco / Ngatimoti / Motueka River valley.

Recorded sites on the Moutere Hills are few and represent transitory sites along ara / pathways including tributaries of the Moutere and Motueka Rivers and near the Rosedale Saddle. The nearest Māori sites to the subject property are N27/99 adze findspot, about 6 km to the southwest; N27/98 cockle deposit, about 6 km to the west; and N27/48 adze findspot, about 7 km to the west. Further away are N27/50 adze findspot near the Rosedale saddle and N27/49 pit and drain near Neudorf saddle. There are also two historic hotel sites, the Moutere Inn (N27/193) and Wyperserfontein (N27/194) next to Neudorf Road.

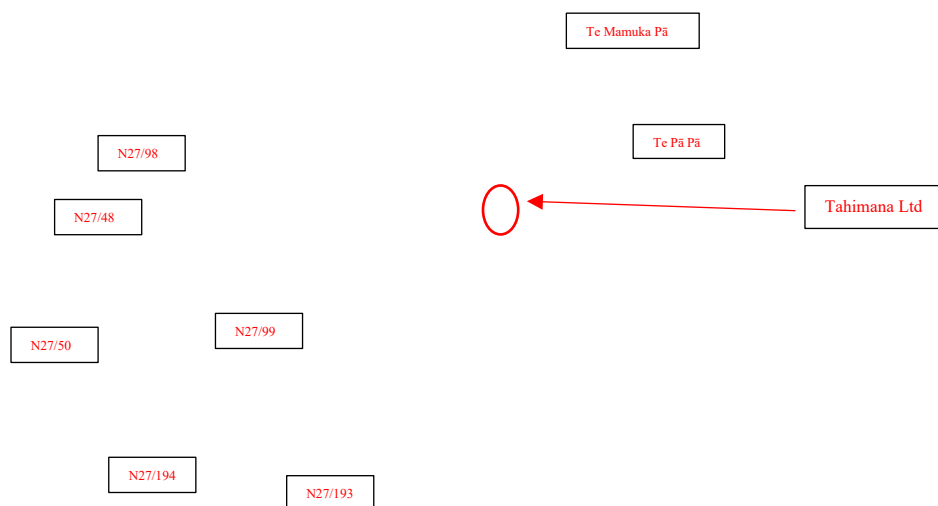


Figure 5: Recorded archaeological sites in the subject region.

5.0 Historical Context

The initial impression of the Moutere Hills by European settlers was that it was an area unfavourable for settlement. The New Zealand Company surveyor Tuckett wrote in 1846 that the area was not suitable for anything except for

scanty subsistence for cattle and sheep¹¹. The area was surveyed by the New Zealand Company surveyors in 1842 and 1843, and the area was settled by European immigrants from then¹². Most of the settlers had small farms or used the land for grazing. There were many absentee landowners.

I ascertained in this day's walk that the tract of land between the Moutere and Waimea rivers was almost uniformly sterile; its surface consisting of a mixture of clay, gravel, and sand, about four inches in depth, on a subsoil of stiff ochre-coloured clay, producing only stunted fern and manuka on the high ground, and in the marshes within it, into which the vegetable mould has been washed, the flax plant and tufts of coarse grass. The surface of the higher land appears washed, as if the rain flowed over its surface, and was not absorbed; also that the belt of low forest land, in which I had anticipated discovering an extensive and valuable tract, was on one side under water, and consequently not available.

Figure 6: "First Report of Lands in Blind Bay" Monday October 11, 1841 by Frederick Tuckett. Reproduced in Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 23 May 1846, page 46.

Initially land in the Moutere Hills was cleared for sheep but as this proved generally unsuccessful much of the land reverted back to manuka, bracken, fern and gorse. There was only "...the occasional dirt tracks leading to a handful of isolated homesteads."¹³ Old Coach Road was one of the early routes between Waimea and Motueka.

Apples were planted on the north and north east facing Moutere Hills in the early 1900s. The subject property was on the edge of the "Tasman Fruit Land Ltd" subdivisions, which subdivided off large parts of Tasman for pipfruit growing between 1910 and ca.1916¹⁴. Pine plantations were planted across Tasman - Moutere from ca.1915¹⁵. From the 1920s there were extensive plantations throughout the district, some of them on "failed" orchard land. Historic aerial photographs show that the subject land was in pasture in the 1940s and planted in pines in the mid-twentieth century¹⁶.

¹¹ "First Report of Lands in Blind Bay" Monday October 11, 1841 by Frederick Tuckett; "To the Proprietors and Agents of Land in the Settlement of New Zealand" Frederick Tuckett, 12 of 5 mo., 1846. Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 23 May 1846, page 46.

¹² McMurtry 1992.

¹³ Mackay 2008: 21.

¹⁴ Mackay 2008; McMurtry 1992.

¹⁵ Mackay 2008: 102-104.

¹⁶ www.topofthesouthmaps.co.nz; <http://retrolens.co.nz>.

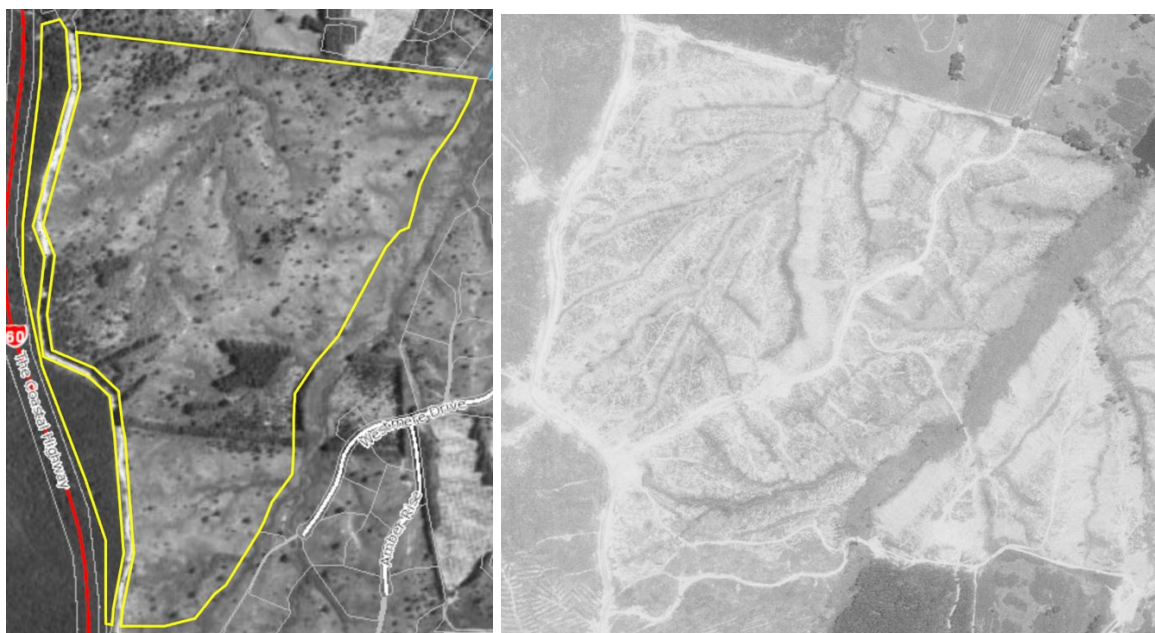


Figure 7: The Tahimana Ltd property in the 1940s (topofthesouthmaps.co.nz).

Figure 8: The property in 2000 (Retrolens.co.nz. Survey no. SN25020. Run no. B. Photo no.7. Photograph taken 13/01/2000).

6.0 Site Visit

A site visit was made to the subject property on 17 March 2023. The visit was made with iwi representatives from Te Ātiawa and Ngāti Rarua, the directors of Tahimana Ltd, and the project planner, engineer and ecologist.

The entirety of the property was not walked over; however, it was able to be viewed from the main ridgeline near Stagecoach Road. This was believed to be adequate due to the modified nature of the property and the low risk for surface archaeological evidence.

7.0 Assessment of Archaeological and Other Values

The Tahimana Ltd property contains no recorded or known archaeological sites. There are no known pre-1900 structures, tracks or buildings on the property, and there is no evidence of any in the archival material.

The archaeological values of the Tahimana Ltd property are low. This opinion is based on the extensive modifications that have occurred to the land combined with the archaeological record, the environmental context, discussions with iwi and a review of archival sources.

The Tahimana Ltd property is inland on the gentle rolling but unfertile Moutere Hills. There are no large water courses going through the property that would have enabled easier access for Māori. The once extensive lowland harakeke swamps at the base of the hills would have presented a barrier for waka travel far inland¹⁷. There is a main

¹⁷ Personal comment G. Ussher 17/3/2023.

ridge line that could have provided a route up from the coast; however, this is similar to others in the area and not particularly prominent. Wetlands, which have the possibility of being a repository of taonga and were a rich source of resources, are not within the development area.

The archaeological record indicates that the Moutere Hills were not favoured for Māori settlement, permanent occupation or defensive positions. That was concentrated along the coast, inlets and rivers. The property may have been used for transitory movement, resource gathering and a place of refuge. These activities leave little physical evidence. It is also understood, including from onsite discussions, that there would have been incidents of violence across the whole area during the pursuit of people fleeing from the 1820s Taranaki – Tainui raupatu.

There is no evidence that the property had historic domestic buildings. It was grazed prior to becoming a pine plantation. There may have been agricultural structures and buildings on the property although none are evident in the 1940s photograph. The historic dray track was along the ridge line following the approximate alignment of Stagecoach Road.

The possibility of finding any physical *in-situ* archaeological evidence on the property is reduced by the previous land use and modification. The ground surface of the property has been modified by bush clearance, at least two rotations of forestry (including probable root raking¹⁸), and the re-establishment into grazing. There is only a very thin layer of topsoil apparent on the higher slopes. The main ridge line has been machine modified into a wide flat area. Historic aerial photographs show that this was the location of the main forestry road.

There are no known historical, rarity, contextual, technological or historic landscape values. Iwi will address cultural values.

8.0 Assessment of Effects

The property will be developed into 141 dwelling allotments with a variety of lots sizes ranging from residential size allotments through to lifestyle allotments plus 4 allotments for reserve, roading and services. The larger dwelling allotments are on the higher ground and to the south and east of the ridgeline. Small sections will be clustered in the lower basin to the north and west of the main ridgeline. There will be a communal wastewater scheme in the west on the land between Stagecoach Road and State Highway 60 to service the residential sections largely contained within the clusters of development within the basin. Water will be brought from Stagecoach Road using directional drilling and trenching. It is envisaged that there will be widespread earthworks associated with the development. The wetlands will not be adversely affected and will be enhanced with further planting.

¹⁸ As evidenced by historic aerial photographs (retrolens.co.nz).

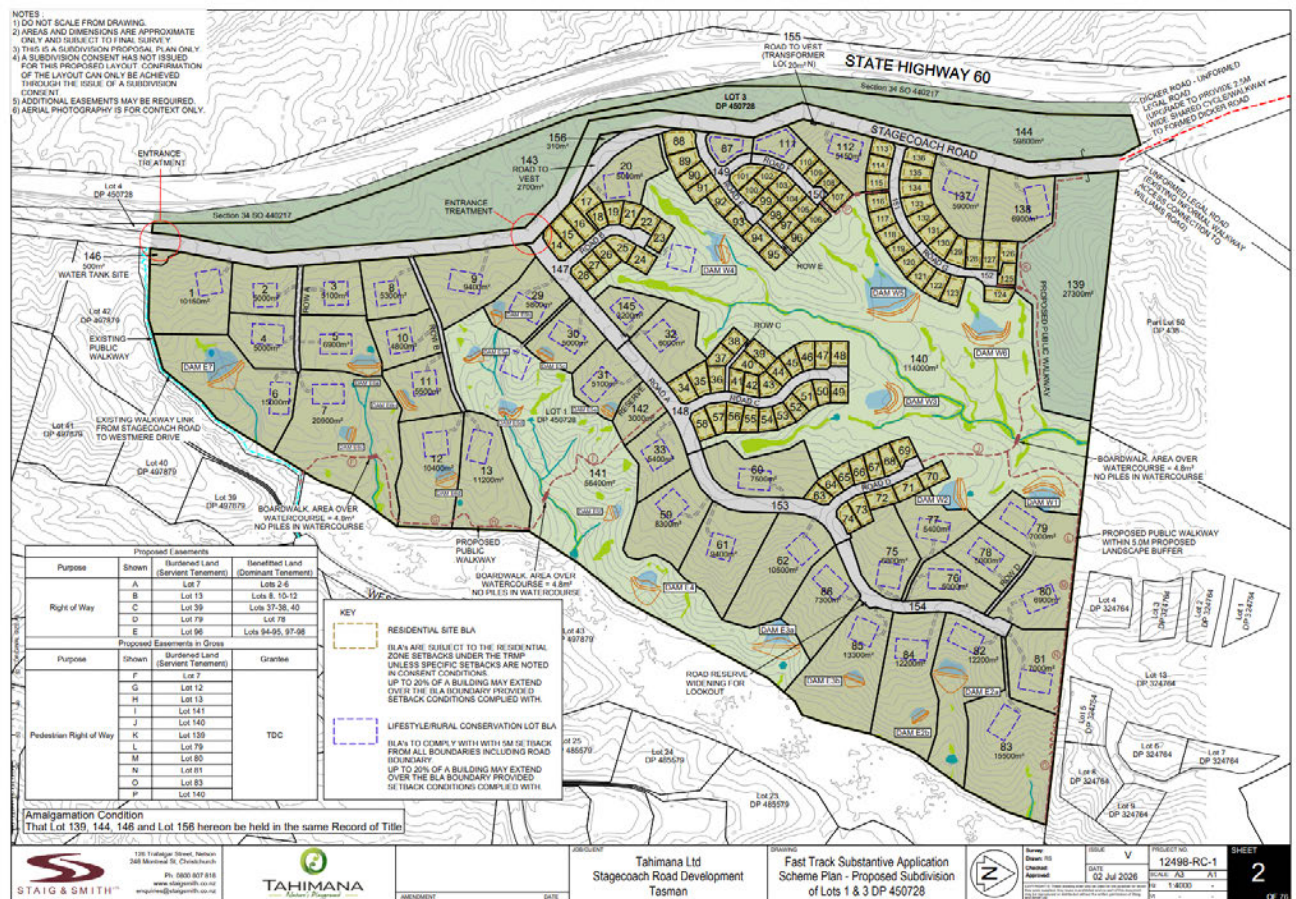


Figure 9: Scheme Plan of the Tahimana Ltd development.

The risk of uncovering physical *in-situ* archaeological evidence during earthworks on the property or during associated works is low. Most likely would be taonga / artefact findspots. Less likely, although still possible, would be evidence of oven(s), small areas of midden, pits and historic evidence such as track cuttings, rubbish deposits, old fence posts and foundations. There is the possibility of isolated kōiwi tangata / human remains across the property. This risk is no more or less than any other property in the district.

The risk can be managed by a robust archaeological site discovery protocol (see attached), thorough briefing of contractors by a qualified archaeologist before work commences, and the continued involvement of iwi.

9.0 Conclusion

It is unlikely there will be archaeological sites on the Tahimana Ltd property that will be adversely affected by development of the property although this cannot be ruled out entirely.

The risk of encountering archaeological evidence can be managed by a robust archaeological site discovery protocol. All contractors who are involved in earthworks and ground modification should be briefed as to the archaeological and cultural values of the area, how to recognise archaeological material and the steps to be taken

if it is encountered. There is presently no reasonable cause to require an archaeological authority application under the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014*.

As a reminder, all archaeological sites are protected under the provisions of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* in so far as that approval must be gained from Heritage New Zealand before an archaeological site can be modified, damaged or destroyed. This is the case regardless of the legal status of the land on which the site is located, whether the activity is permitted under the District or Regional Plan or whether a resource or building consent has been granted. The Tasman Resource Management Plan also has rules to protect archaeological sites and historic heritage sites and to control their modification. The finding of taonga / artefacts is subject to legal requirements outlined in the *Protected Objects Act 1975*. If pre-1900 and in an unmodified *in-situ* context they also fall under the archaeological provisions of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014*.

If any archaeological material is uncovered during works (e.g. midden, hāngi / ovens, horticultural / garden soils, Māori occupation deposits, taonga / artefacts, kōiwi tangata / human remains, historic rubbish pits and bottle dumps, historic tracks and historic foundations), work should cease in the vicinity of the remains and an archaeologist (and iwi if a Māori site) contacted immediately in order to assess and record the remains.

10.0 Bibliography

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Web based resources.

www.archsite.org.nz

www.heritage.org.nz

www.mapspast.org.nz

www.natlib.govt.nz

www.nelsonmuseum.co.nz

www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz

www.retrolens.co.nz

www.topofthesouthmaps.co.nz



Archaeological Accidental Discovery Protocol

All archaeological sites (evidence of pre-1900 human activity) are protected under the provisions of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* in so far as that approval must be gained from Heritage New Zealand before an archaeological site can be modified, damaged or destroyed. This is the case regardless of the legal status of the land on which the site is located, whether the activity is permitted under the District or Regional Plan or whether a resource or building consent has been granted. The finding of taonga / artefacts is subject to legal requirements outlined in the *Protected Objects Act 1975*. If pre-1900 and in an unmodified context taonga / artefacts also fall under the archaeological provisions of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014*.

Prior to earthworks commencing on the property, contractors should be briefed as to the archaeological potential of the area and the procedure to occur if anything is uncovered. If any archaeological material is uncovered during works (e.g. midden, hangi, horticultural / cultural soils, taonga / artefacts, structural remains such as post holes, hearths and ovens, historic rubbish pits and bottle dumps, and historic foundations), work should cease in the vicinity of the remains and an archaeologist and an iwi representative (if potentially a Māori site) contacted immediately in order to assess them. At that point an archaeological authority may be required for work to proceed.

If an archaeological site, or possible / suspected archaeological site, is uncovered:

- **Stop all work likely to damage the site;**
- **Do not damage or investigate the site, or allow anybody else to do so;**
- **Mark off the area;**
- **Notify all contractors on site (to avoid the risk of inadvertent damage);**
- **Immediately notify project archaeologist (Amanda Young 021 758 964), and iwi monitor if a Māori site, so the site can be assessed;**
- **Do not recommence work in the area until the archaeologist, and iwi monitor if a Māori site, has given approval to do so;**
- **If fragile artefacts or taonga are uncovered (i.e. wood, cloth or fibre items), these should be kept in the same environmental state.**

Examples of possible archaeological evidence.



Historic rubbish deposit.



Pit toilets showing in the section.



Well found beneath more recent building.



Historic building remains found under a carpark and a modern building – Boulder Bank stone building piles; brick paving.



Midden lens with a cultural soil.



Pakohe (argillite) adze.



Pakohe (argillite) flakes.



Oven stones and a cultural layer.