

Orawaahi, 156 Clarks Beach Road: archaeological assessment

**report to
Knight Investments**

Matthew Campbell and Ella Ussher

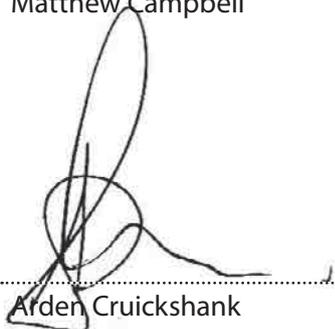
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Prepared by:


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Date: 28 October 2025

Reference: 25-1671

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1 Introduction

Knight Investments propose to develop the property at 156 Clarks Beach Road (Lots 1 and 3 DP 337204) for subdivision, including associated accessways and other infrastructure, along with some planting and walkways in the neighbouring Esplanade Reserve and legal (paper) road. Two archaeological sites are recorded on the property in the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) Site Recording Scheme (SRS) as R12/888 (shell midden) and R12/1211 (pits). An archaeological assessment of effects is requested in support of an application for referral to the Environmental Protection Authority under the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA). Doyle Smith of Knight Investments commissioned this assessment from CFG Heritage Ltd.

1.1 Statutory requirements

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

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

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

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

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

Historic heritage includes:

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

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

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

2 Methodology

The following digital resources were accessed:

- Archaeological site records were accessed from the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) Site Recording Scheme (SRS) through ArchSite (<http://archsite.org.nz>).

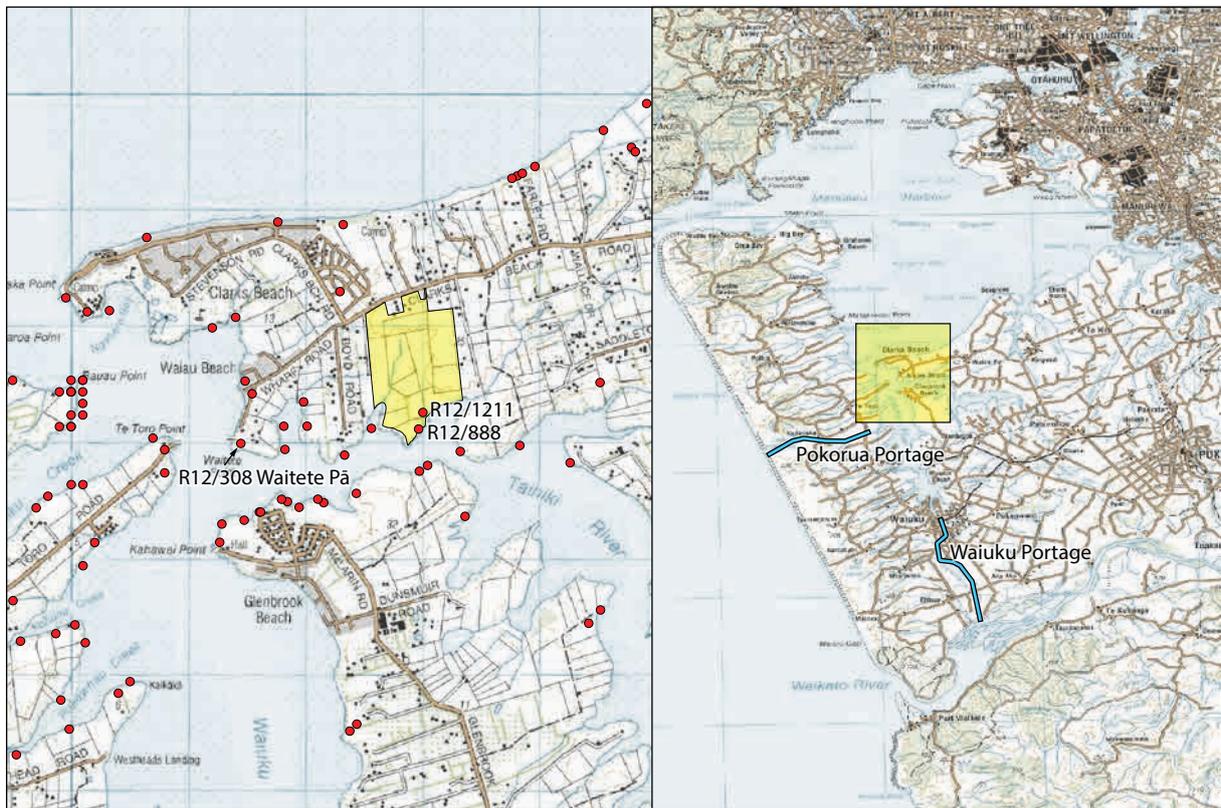


Figure 1. Location of 156 Clarks Beach Road and recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity.

- The Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) digital library was searched for relevant reports on previous archaeological investigations (<https://dl.heritage.org.nz/greenstone3/library/collection/pdf-reports/>).
- Auckland Council’s Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) and Auckland Unitary Plan scheduled places were searched using GeoMaps (<https://geomapspublic.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/>)
- Modern aerial images and land parcel information were accessed from Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) data service (<https://data.linz.govt.nz/data>).
- Historic aerial imagery was accessed from Retrolens (<https://retrolens.nz/>)
- Historic maps and plans held by LINZ were accessed using QuickMap.
- LINZ Landcare Research, Visualising Māori Land, (<https://whenuaviz.landcareresearch.co.nz>)
- The HNZPT New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero was accessed for information on listed heritage sites.

A site visit was conducted on foot by Ella Ussher of CFG Heritage Ltd on 11 Feb 2020. Five spade width test pits were dug during this site visit. A second site visit was conducted on foot by Matthew Campbell of CFG Heritage on 13 August 2025. This report has been updated by Matthew Campbell to include the most recent development plans and the provisions of the FTAA.

3 Background

Clarks Beach lies on the Manukau lowlands in a rural area, approximately 17 km north west of Pukekohe township, on the southern coast of the Manukau Harbour. The suburb is on a headland that is flanked closely by water on three sides, with the Waiuku River to west, Taihiki River running south, and the Manukau Harbour to the north. The property at 156 Clarks Beach Rd fronts onto the Taihiki River. The soil in the area is part of the Pakihi Supergroup, an Early Quaternary alluvium and colluvium which is described as “alluvial and colluvial gravel, sand and mud, commonly pumice-rich in central areas, with intercalated lignite or peat; locally includes non-welded ignimbrite and tephra,

and, in the south and east, loess" (GNS, accessed 11 June 2019). The vegetation before human landfall would have been beech forest with areas of scrub, shrubland and tussock-grassland.

3.1 *Pre-European Māori*

Along with Ngāti Te Ata, Ngāti Tipa and Ngāti Paoa, Ngāti Tamaoho dominated the Franklin district at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. No clear boundaries existed, but Ngāti Tamaoho claimed the central area from the Patumahoe–Drury area to Pokeno and Mangatangi (Franklin District Website). Their ancestry is traced back to the *Tainui* waka. In 1822 raids by musket armed Ngāpuhi had a devastating impact on the local tribes who scattered. After spending time in the Waikato, the tribes returned to take up their traditional settlement sites (Bickler et al. 2006). An example of the return to land use after abandonment from the Ngāpuhi attack is the nearby Waitete Pā (Bulmer 1983) (R12/308). The area sits near two main waka portages (Figure 2. SO 1067 showing original subdivision of Clarks Beach.):

1. The Pokorua Portage is east of the property and provided direct access to the Tasman Sea from the Waiuku River via Lake Pokorua. The portage allowed canoes to leave Manukau Harbour, access Muriwai for resources, and re-enter the harbour without passing through the harbour entrance.
2. The Waiuku / Te Pai o Kaiwaka portage was an important path across the narrow stretch of land between the Waiuku River and the Awaroa Stream which is a tributary of the Waikato River. People reaching the Manukau Harbour and heading south would pass down the Waiuku River, haul their vessels over the portage to Purapura on the Awaroa Stream, and from there, gain access to the Waikato River and its tributaries, the Waipa and the Mangawara (Hooker 1997).

3.2 *Historic period*

The Waiau Pā region was surveyed and mapped by the Crown in 1855, and in 1856 the Clark Family moved to what is now Lots 35 and 36 (Figure 3. Looking south across ploughed pasture towards Taihiki River.). Other families moved there over the 1850s and 60s, such as the Coxes, Schlapfers, and Mowbrays (Dell 2001). Most of the first European land purchasers chose coastal properties. The main industries began with farming and flax milling, and then expanded to include brick making and gum digging over the 1870s and 80s. It is said that gum diggers dug up "most" of the Waiau area and heavily disturbed transport routes around the Waiau area often leaving people and their horses "disappeared up to their necks" in holes (Dell 2001). The first brick making operation is said to have been at Lot 32 in the 1870s. This is not recorded in the SRS but is in the CHI – ID 865 and ID 15713 are both identified as Mowbray's Brickworks but it is likely 865 is in the wrong location. The first hotel was opened on the Taihiki River, the "Mauku Hotel", on Lot 1 in 1861, and the first store with postal service was opened in 1871. Then in 1881 the Waiau Ferry service began. Once a ferry service was complemented by the road in 1910 the population slowly expanded and people also began hay making and oat growing.

156 Clarks Beach Road was once part of the original allotment of Allotment 29, identified in SO 1067 (no date, but prior to 1894), the eastern portion of which was owned at that time by C. Temple. By 1921 Allotment W. 29 was owned and occupied by S.A. Owen, and Allotment E. 29 was owned and occupied by G. Leaming, who also owned E. 28 (DP 15626). These were later recombined to form the property at 156 Clarks Beach Rd.

3.3 *Archaeological background*

Andrew Clark (1983) suggested that the Manukau Lowlands were not densely settled by Māori, despite an apparent wealth of resources, and that much of this occupation was late in the sequence. Although many more sites have been recorded since Clark's 1983 paper, most of these are small coastal middens with unexpectedly few inland sites, for instance around the fertile soils of Pukekohe. Clark suggested that it was a political buffer zone or no-man's-land between powerful iwi federations



Figure 2. SO 1067 showing original subdivision of Clarks Beach.

centred on the Tāmaki Isthmus, Hauraki Gulf and lower Waikato, and so not a generally safe place to live. This theory has not since been tested archaeologically although Tony Walton (1985) argued instead that the fertile soils of the area were not easily gardened without metal tools, and that the environment was not well suited to pre-European Māori occupation. Kim Tatton, summarising the archaeology of the Auckland Region in 2001, wrote “the present distribution of cultural heritage sites within Franklin District is reflective of where survey has been undertaken rather than a true site distribution. Most of Franklin District remains to be surveyed and therefore, there are substantial gaps where there has been no survey and consequently no recorded sites.” She assessed Pukekohe Hill and the Manukau foreshore as priority areas for archaeological survey. While numerous sites have been recorded on the Manukau Lowlands in the subsequent quarter century, the site distribution pattern noted by Clark (1983) and Tatton (2001) has not improved and the Manukau Lowlands remain something of an archaeological enigma.

Several archaeological sites are recorded in the wider vicinity of Orawaahi, particularly along the banks of the Waiuku and Taihiki Rivers, and the shores of the Manukau Harbour (Figure 1). The majority of sites are shell middens, with some pā, pit and terrace sites and 19th century historic period sites.

There is a significant headland pa 1.2 km to the west on the next headland at Waitete Point, known as Waitete or Waiau Pā (R12/308). The site was excavated by Susan Bulmer and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in 1978 (Bulmer 1983). Historical records cited by Bulmer show that the pā was occupied by Ngāti Whātua after their return to Tāmaki in 1835, having been driven into exile in the Waikato by musket armed Ngāpuhi. Waitete was part of a “settlement pattern characteristic of the late 18th and early 19th century ... as having permanent central settlements with specialised seasonal settlements in various places some distance away, on the Manukau and Waitemata harbours and in the Hauraki Gulf” (Bulmer 1983: 27). Bulmer interpreted the site as a gardening and fishing, particularly shark fishing, defended seasonal encampment. It was on the periphery of the early 19th Ngāti Whātua rohe and would have played a role in controlling trade across the Manukau Harbour

and into the Waikato. Muir (1981) records that the pā was part of the Crown purchase of Whakaupoko Block in 1854 and was probably not occupied after that date.

Site R12/888 was recorded at 156 Clarkes Beach Road in 2004 by Vanessa Tanner, Charlotte Judge and Edith Tuhimata. The site record describes the site as a 2 m long exposure of predominantly cockle shell midden in poor condition, visible in slumping and stock-trampled pasture behind the foreshore. The record also notes that Muir (1981) suggests that the area was possibly the site of a fishing village, but this is incorrect – Muir is referring to Waitete / Waiau Pā on the next headland to the west.

4 Field assessment

The property was first visited by Ella Ussher in 2020, and subsequently by Matthew Campbell in 2025. Both field visits are described here.

4.1 The 2020 field assessment

The property in 2020 was primarily under pasture, with exotic trees planted as shelter belts and along the coastal frontage with the Taihiki River. The landform is gently sloping hills and spurs and most of the property had been ploughed. A rainfall fed stream runs from the centre of the property to the coast and has been modified by recent earthworks and bridged in one location where a farm race crosses it.

The field survey primarily targeted the coastal area, which was walked over in areas of pasture above the banks of the Taihiki River. Five spade-width test pits were dug at various locations along the coast to assess levels of landscape modification and any variation in natural subsoils. These showed only a small amount of variation in the depth of topsoil (100–200 mm) above a sterile orange-



Figure 3. Looking south across ploughed pasture towards Taihiki River.



Figure 4. TP3 showing 150 mm of topsoil (photo scale segments = 200mm).



Figure 5. TP2 showing conglomerate gravel at 100 mm below topsoil (photo scale segments = 200 mm).

brown clay subsoil (Figure 4). A test pit dug on a coastal highpoint showed a conglomerate gravel at a depth of 100 mm below a layer of topsoil.

Midden R12/888 had previously been identified on the coast but was not relocated in 2020.

An area of at least 12 indistinct pits and small associated terraces were recorded on the eastern facing slopes of a gully that sloped away towards the banks of the Taihiki River (Figure 6). The pit complex has subsequently been recorded as site R12/1211 in the SRS. These features appear to have been heavily modified and likely truncated by repeated ploughing of the pasture. The pits were mostly around 3 x 2 x 0.5 m deep, but some were larger, around 4 x 3 m, with the largest close to the bottom of the slope at 8 x 4 m. Probing suggested that the pits may in fact be around 500 mm below the subsurface and in-filled. Each pit is cut into a small corresponding terrace, with a 300–800 mm scarp at the rear cut into the slope (Figure 7). These pits are visible in LiDAR imagery and aerial photography from 1940 onwards (Figures 8–10).



Figure 6. Looking north towards pits and terraces recorded as site R12/1211.



Figure 7. Indistinct pits and associated terraces on eastern slope near Taihiki River (photo scale = 1 m).



Figure 8. Visible extent of recorded site R12/1211.

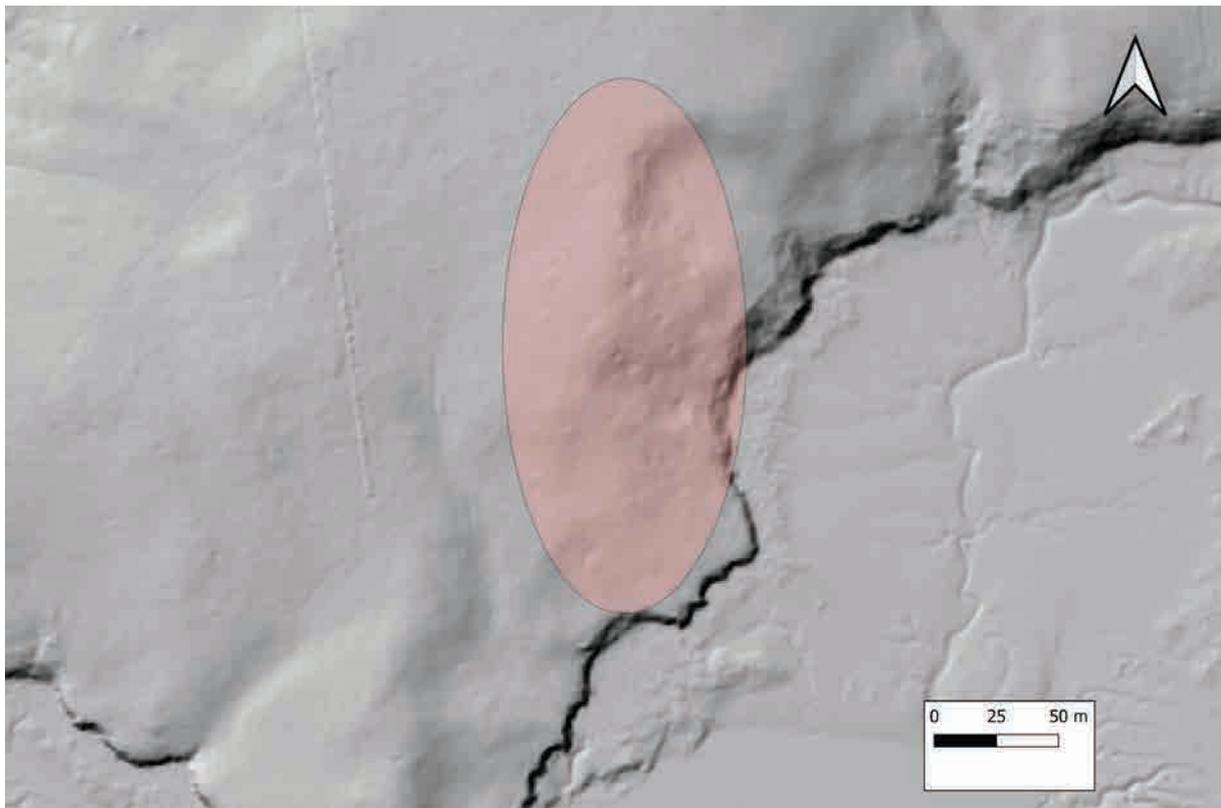


Figure 9. LiDAR imagery showing pits and terraces recorded as site R12/1211.

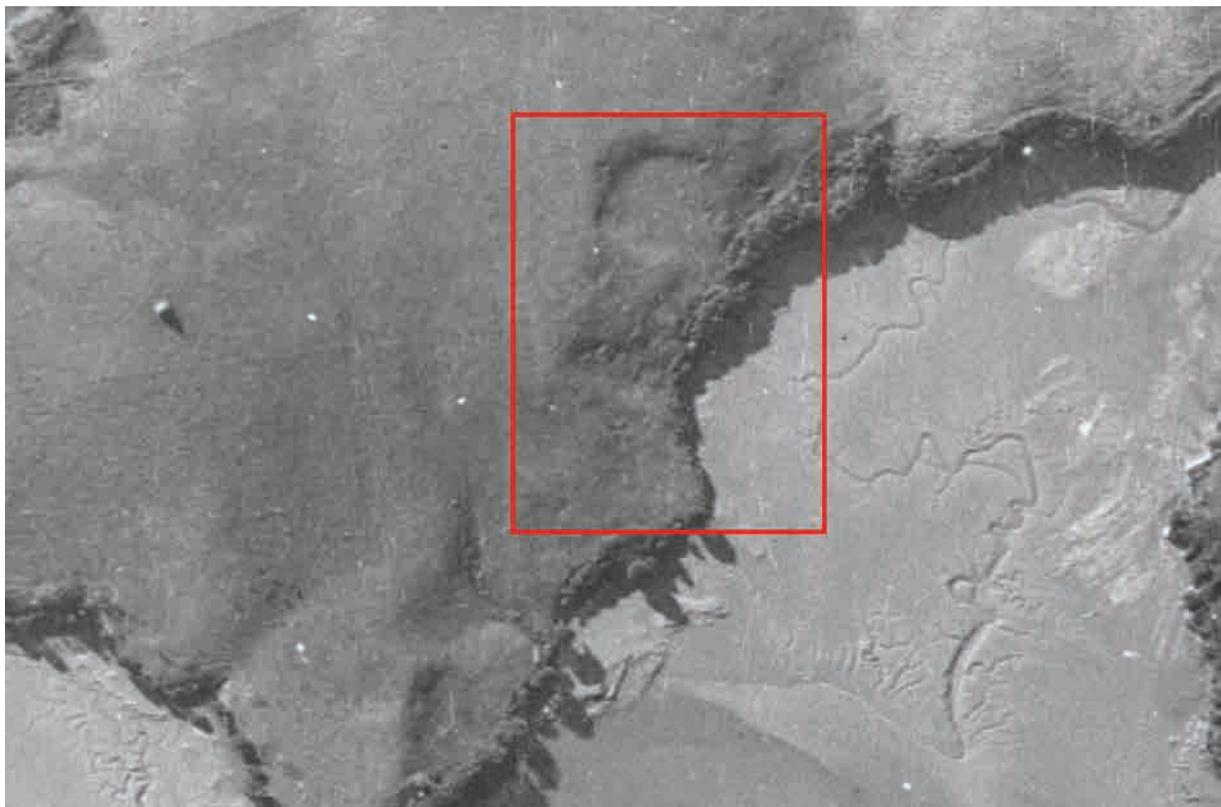


Figure 10. Aerial photograph SN192/276/13 from 1940 showing pits and terraces.

4.2 *The 2025 field assessment*

Much of the property was recently cultivated or in recently planted crops, and the ground surface was visible. Other parts were in low pasture and the topography was clearly visible. The riverbank was not generally accessible, being edged by cliffs up to 5 m high (Figure 13). Where it was potentially accessible, footing was generally not secure while with a rising tide and only one archaeologist on site, health and safety considerations meant the foreshore was not accessed.

4.2.1 R12/888

The site was not relocated by Ella Ussher in 2020 but was relocated Matthew Campbell in 2025. A thin, eroding lens of tuangi was visible in the riverbank about 2 m above the foreshore. It was only about 500 mm long (the original site record recorded it as 2 m long) but a thin lens of shell could be detected with the probe for about 7 m back from the exposure, 200–300 mm below the surface. This is located in one of the few places where the riverbank is both low and sloped, allowing easy access to the foreshore (Figures 14 and 15).

4.2.2 R12/1211

The site remained largely as described by Ussher in 2020, although the grass was longer and the pits were less distinct. The visible pits are on the nose of a low ridge overlooking the Taihiki River and it is quite probable that there may be further pits on the top of the ridge but these have been infilled and ploughed out (Figures 16 and 17). The paddock immediately to the north had been recently cultivated but no archaeological material was observed.



Figure 12. Looking south towards the Taihiki River.



Figure 13. Typical overgrown and inaccessible river bank.



Figure 14. Location of R12/888.



Figure 15. R12/888 exposed in the riverbank. Photo scale = 0.5 m.

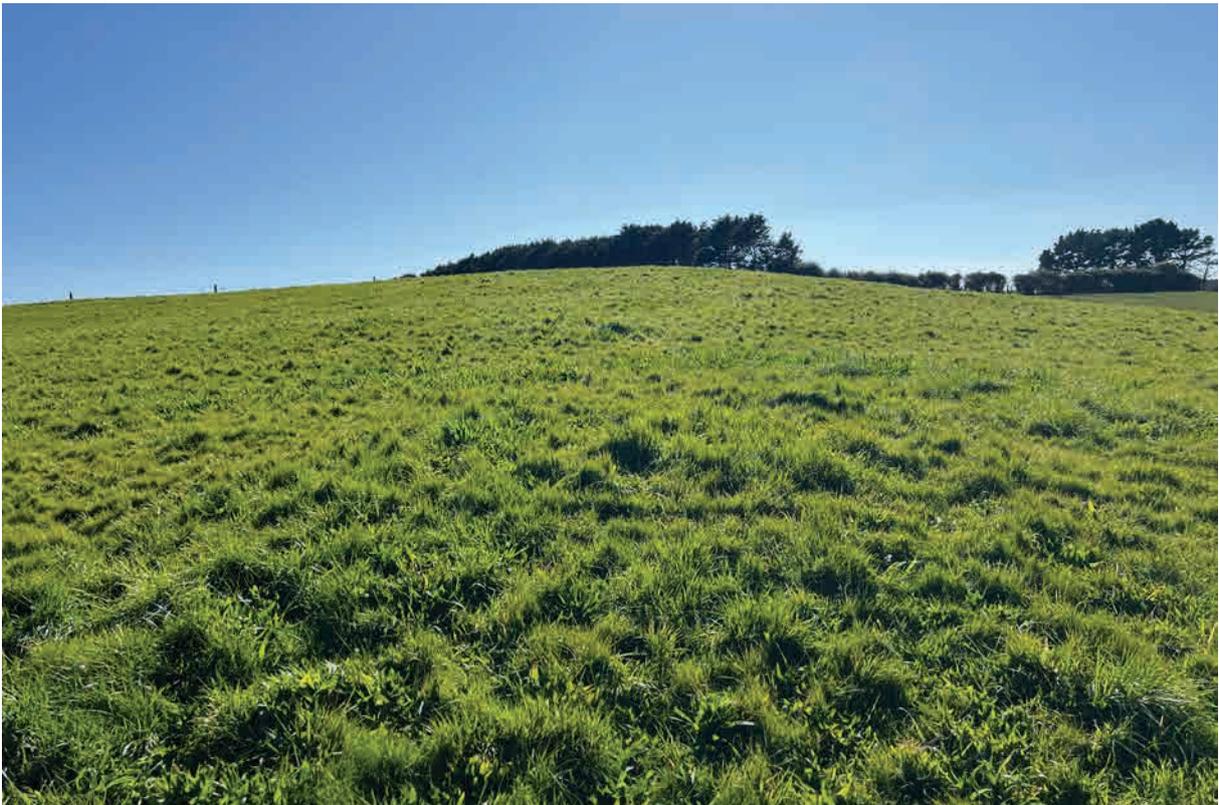


Figure 16. Pits and terraces of R12/1211 on the nose of the ridge, looking north.



Figure 17. Cultivated paddock north of R12/1211, looking south to the Taihiki River.

5 Assessment

The following assessments of values and significance relate only to archaeological values. Other interested parties, in particular mana whenua, may hold different values regarding the proposed development.

5.1 Assessment of values

The following assessments of values are based on the criteria in HNZPT 2019.

5.1.1 R12/888

Condition	Midden R12/888 was previously visible for 2 m along the river bank, is now only visible for 0.5 m. Its condition appears to be deteriorating but probing indicated that a thin lens of shell remains intact.
Rarity	Middens are the most commonly recorded site type nationally, regionally and locally.
Context	Midden R12/888 is located on the banks of the Taihiki River, 1.5 km to the east of Waitete Pā (R12/669). That pā was utilised over several time periods, with the last being in the 19th century and is historically recorded.
Information	Midden R12/888 may relate to the occupation of Waitete Pā or to earlier occupations. The Manukau Lowlands are not well understood archaeologically and the midden, although small, could contribute to the archaeological understanding of the area.
Amenity	Midden R12/888 is on private land and cannot be readily interpreted to the public.
Cultural	The cultural values of Midden R12/888 can only be determined by mana whenua.

5.1.2 R12/1211

Condition	The pit and terrace features appear to have been modified by ploughing, with minimal surface evidence remaining.
Rarity	Pit and terrace sites are common nationally and regionally, although there is only one other pit/terrace site recorded on the banks of the Taihiki River, site R12/1197 5 km further east.
Context	The site is located on the banks of the Taihiki River, 1.5 km to the east of Waitete Pā (R12/669). That pā was utilised over several time periods, with the last being in the 19th century and is historically recorded.
Information	There is the potential for scientific information to be recovered by archaeological means if archaeological material is uncovered during works.
Amenity	The site is on private land and cannot be readily interpreted to the public.
Cultural	The cultural values of these sites can only be determined by mana whenua.

5.2 Assessment of effects

No earthworks plans are available yet but the draft masterplan (Figure 17. Draft masterplan.7) indicates that extensive earthworks are likely, and this is likely to destroy any archaeology within the development footprint. This report has been prepared for referral to the Environmental Protection Authority under the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024. It is understood that if the project is referred, full earthworks plans will be required for a Substantive Application.

6 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 tangata whenua, can only be determined by them. It is recommended that:

- an authority to modify or destroy an archaeological sites and features, including R12/1211, on Lots 1 and 3 DP 337204 be applied for from The Environmental Protection Authority under Section 42(4)(i) and Schedule 8 of the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024 during the Substantive Application;
- a Historic Heritage Management Plan be prepared to accompany the authority application, which sets out appropriate methods for managing any effects on the sites during construction;
- no authority should be applied for without consultation with the appropriate tangata whenua authorities;
- 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 wāhi tapu, the appropriate tangata whenua authorities should be consulted regarding the possible existence of such sites, and the recommendations in this report.



Disclaimer: Aerial obtained from Auckland Council GIS Database. This masterplan is a concept and subject to change through detail design and further analysis.

Masterplan
Scale@A3 NAS Date : 22/10/25 | MP1

Figure 17. Draft masterplan.

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Qualifications and Experience
Matthew Campbell

I have an MA in Anthropology from the University of Otago Ōtākaou Whakaihu Waka and a PhD in Archaeology from the University of Sydney. I have over 35 years' experience as a professional archaeologist in New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific. I am a founder and director of CFG Heritage since 2005, before which I was a sole trader based in Auckland. I confirm that I meet the criteria required to be an approved person to undertake an activity under the authority under sections 7(5) of the Act and 45(2)(a) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. I have been a section 45 approved archaeologist under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (previously section 17 of the Historic Places Act 1993) for 25 years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'M.C. Campbell'.

28 October 2025