

HBRC CONSENT REPORT - ARCHAEOLOGY

WHIRINAKI

BACKGROUND

An archaeological risk screening of proposed flood control options for Whirinaki, Hawke's Bay, was originally requested from Archaeology Hawke's Bay Ltd (AHB) by Harry Donnelly (Hawke's Bay Regional Council – HBRC: 2024). The screening identified potential archaeological risk and recommended an Archaeological Assessment of Effects be prepared to better assess the risks posed. That document has been prepared and is in the final stages of completion in anticipation of an Archaeological Authority application being submitted to HNZPT.

This Consent Report summarizes the findings of the original screening and the in-prep Assessment of Effects for the purposes of the upcoming Consenting process, as requested by Cam Drury (Stradegy).

PROPOSED WORK:

The proposed work for Whirinaki is the construction of, or upgrade to, existing sections stop-bank on both the coastal and inland sides of SH 5. This will require a circa 30 m wide footprint at an estimated depth of 500 mm subject to ground conditions. In association with the stop-bank will be ancillary earthworks including silt control, lay-down areas and access tracks and potentially culverts, swales and other minor earthwork as required (Figure 1).

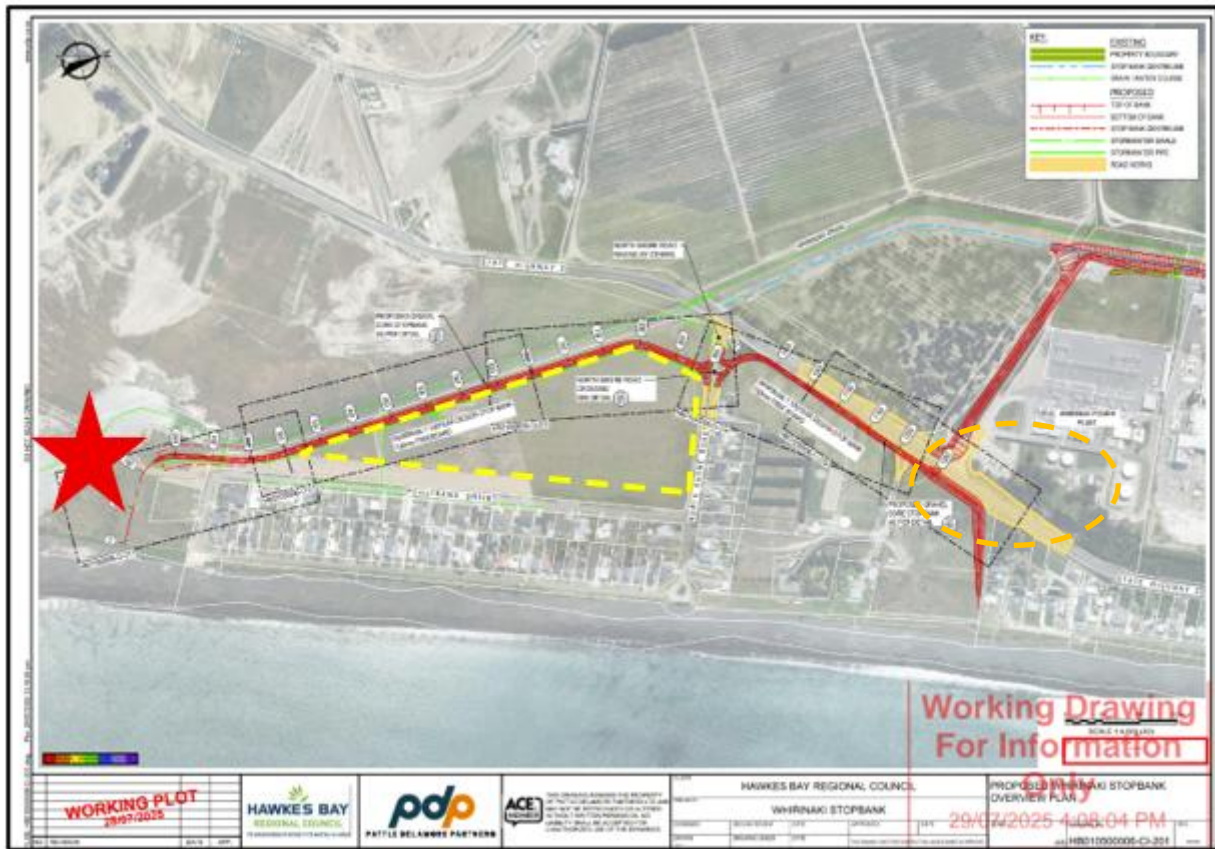


Figure 1: Overview of proposed work showing stopbank and associated work alignment and ancillary works area (Yellow dash); star = indicative location of V20/69 – Nukurangi Pā (Base image: PDP / HBRC).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

The archaeological potential was assessed via several approaches:

- Recorded sites and wider recorded archaeological landscape (ArchSite)
- Current knowledge of oral narratives
- Historic records (maps & plans)
- Historic aerial photographs
- District Plan & HNZPT listings
- Visual assessment – site visit

There is one recorded archaeological site: V20/69 pā, and an ūrupā – Mt Ararat Cemetery in the immediate vicinity of the proposed work..

Environment

The proposed work area is in a coastal environment adjacent to a 20th C river mouth. broad valley base that has experienced multiple flood events in the past. The occupation of the coast and coastal hills is understood to be one of seasonal movement. The foreshore and reefs provided rich seafood resources, with food crops being cultivated on the sheltered alluvial flats. These alluvial flats were overlooked by hilltops promontories upon which pā and kainga were located. Further inland ridge-tops provided fern-grounds, whilst the numerous lakes, swamps streams and lagoons offered an array of resources from wild-fowl to flax (WAI 201: 3.3). The stop-bank work to the west of SH2 is in a highly modified environment and primarily involves raising existing stop-banks.

Historic plans & Maps

Historic plans and maps are a valuable source of information in understanding recorded land usage and historic modifications to the environment including re-routing of rivers and streams.

A Lands & Survey tracing of earlier surveys (1851 and 1856-59) clearly identifies Nukurangi as a separate settlement to Poroaira (Petane – Bethany) along with the former course of the Waiohingahinga / Esk River. The 1851 version also identifies a watercourse extending south back towards the Inner Harbour with its numerous islands. Several other locations or landmarks are identified along the watercourse path including 'Ahutu old pah' almost half way between Nukurangi and the Inner Harbour. In the 1851 version four buildings are identified at Nukurangi and three at Poroaira-a-Petane, although it is not known how accurate or schematic these annotations were.

A tracing of an 1852 Bousefield map identifies a church at Petane, located on the north side of the Waiohingahinga / Esk River mouth, consistent with the locations of Nukurangi and Poroaira-a-Petane as depicted in Figures. Although the Petane River is also shown there is no mention of the landmarks recorded in the previous maps.

Bristed's 1889 Map of the Province of Hawke's Bay only identifies the broad area of Petane in the vicinity of the Waiohingahinga / Esk River mouth.

Several Retrolens historic aerial images dating from the 1940s - 1980s were

scanned for this area and do not show any additional archaeological indicators. However, given the long flood history of the area it is probable that any features such as pits are buried too deeply to see in aerial imagery. Comparisons of pre and post Cyclone Gabrielle imagery shows the extensive changes to the river mouth and land drain caused by this event.

Other sources

The area of proposed work lies within the Hastings District Council District Plan region. No further items of historic or cultural significance were noted in the immediate vicinity of the proposed work areas.

Site Visit

A site visit was undertaken on 12 April 2024 accompanied by Harry Donnelly (HBRC). Limited access into the area of proposed work was available including the known most archaeologically sensitive area, the Ūrupā environs and V20/69. The extent to which the 2023 flood modified this immediate area was clearly apparent with the vast area of former land swept away, leaving behind a large lagoon type water body. No obvious archaeological horizons could be seen in the newly created lagoon banks, however they could only be observed from the opposite bank, approximately 30 - 60 m+ away. There was a large log exposed in one section of bank at a depth of > 2 m. It is assumed that this log was deposited in a past flood event but it demonstrates the potential for wooden structural material to be preserved within the flood deposits if water velocities allowed. No inspection of the northern and western sections of the alignment were undertaken at that time as these are relatively recent design changes.

DISCUSSION

Although there is currently one recorded archaeological site in the immediate vicinity of proposed work, and it is a landscape of known long term occupation. Further research undertaken through the Assessment of Effects process has reiterated the importance of this area for occupation, with several settlements and a church being identified in pre-1900 plans and maps.

The flood history of this area has been intense and is likely masking the surface

expression of typical archaeological markers. Therefore, it is considered likely that archaeological horizons could be encountered at depths > 700 mm below the current ground surface based on experiences elsewhere e.g. V21/465 (Whakatū) and V21/531 (Puketapu) and more recently in Bay View village (V20/282).

The proposed work on the western side of SH2 is in highly modified ground and requires minimal excavation work.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

Recent findings from similar river corridor / stop bank work, and at nearby Bay View, has identified that archaeological horizons representing activity and / or occupation can be buried beneath > 1 m of overlying past flood deposits. Therefore, it would be prudent to assume that there is potentially greater archaeological risk in these areas than is reflected in ArchSite.

East of SH2 Stop-bank and ancillary work: These aspects of the project carry moderate to low archaeological risk due to the limited depth (300 – 500 mm) and localized footprint corridor. However, any archaeology that is encountered in the footprint is unlikely to be able to be preserved in situ unless the Project and Geotechnical Engineers can permit a locally modified footing depth.

Sediment control pond: this is expected to require an excavation ca. 65 m x 25 m x > 2 m deep. This activity potentially poses the greatest risk (moderate – high) due to the extent of surface area and expected excavation depths. Any archaeology encountered in this area is unlikely to be able to be preserved in-situ.

West of SH2 Stop-bank and ancillary work: This aspect carries low archaeological risk due to past modification and the nature of the proposed work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the presence of V20/69 and the nearby ūrupā – Mt Ararat Cemetery, along with the potential for further unrecorded archaeology to be encountered, an archaeological authority application is required for all work east of SH2. Work to the west of SH2 can proceed under Accidental Discovery Protocol.

This Archaeological Authority process is currently being worked through with HBRC Project Management.



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