

WAKA KOTAHI ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCREENING: WAIKARE GORGE REALIGNMENT

LEGISLATION

Under the current legislation (HNZPTA 2014) all archaeology is protected. This includes both recorded archaeology (that which we know is present) and unrecorded archaeology (that which remains to be formally identified).

BACKGROUND

The Waikare Gorge Realignment Project proposed work underwent a Stage 1 & 2 ArchCheck undertaken by WSP. This process identified that the work lies within a landscape of potential archaeological risk with several recorded sites within ca. 3 km of the proposed work. They include Pukepiripiri (W19/302), a large pa complex comprising several large raised-rim pits with drains, numerous other pits and terraces. The three other sites in this area are all pits, or groups of pits (W19/299, W19/300, W19/301).

Although these recorded sites are outside the area of proposed work, the Stage 1 & 2 ArchCheck recommended further investigations, including a site visit be made to ascertain the potential risk to unrecorded archaeological sites posed by the work (Appendix 1).

SITE VISIT

SCOPE OF WORKS AS ASSESSED

It is understood that the preferred option is that referred to as the 'White Option' in the draft Waikare Gorge SSBC report. This will involve the creation of a new road corridor (approx 4 km) across current farmland, and a substantial new bridge spanning the Waikare Gorge. The earthworks required for the construction of this new road corridor and bridge is expected to encompass a ca. 50 – 100 m wide swathe along the proposed alignment, potentially wider in places where additional access roads or infrastructure is required. Due to the rolling nature of the affected land there will be areas of substantial cut and fill to create the desired road conditions. Culverting of streams and creation of wetland environments for the management of storm water will also be required as part of the wider process, and are largely expected to be captured within the ca. 50 – 100 m swathe of corridor indicated.



The 'white option' preferred alignment and affected properties assessed herein (Source: WSP).

SITE VISIT AND 'ON THE GROUND' ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RISK

A first site visit was undertaken by Gaylyne Carter (Archaeology Hawke's Bay) accompanied by representatives from WSP and Stantec on 29 October 2021. Conditions on the day were initially wet but cleared to sunny as the day progressed. A second site visit to the final property took place on 14 Dec 2021, also accompanied by representatives from Stantec and WSP.

Properties

Ultimately all four properties were visited and the alignment corridor visually assessed via a pedestrian survey. Full access to the proposed road corridor was provided on all properties.

Torr Farm

This property is the southernmost and is where the new corridor will deviate from the existing road. Across this property much of the road corridor will run largely parallel to the existing rail corridor and an existing farm access road. This is currently a dairy unit and the proposed corridor encompasses areas of farm track and unmodified pasture.

Mackintosh Farm

This property is the northern end of the southern side of the Waikare Gorge and will feature road corridor, wetlands and the southern end of the substantial bridge required to span the Waikare Gorge. The wider property is currently dairy farm and the expected corridor of works includes both existing farm track, wetlands and 'unmodified' pasture.

Lee Farm

This property lies on the northern side of the Waikare Gorge and forms the northern mid section of the proposed road corridor, including the northern end of the required bridge. The current landuse is pastoral, featuring largely unmodified paddocks aside from bulldozed farm tracks.

Spring Valley Holdings

This is the shortest section of new road corridor and is the section where the new alignment will ultimately diverge from the current alignment on the northern side of the Waikare Gorge. Currently the property is pastoral.

Site Visit Observations & Identified Archaeological Risks

As the nature of both the landscape, existing modification and proposed work is largely consistent across the four properties visited the archaeological risks are discussed as a whole rather than individually.

Aside from farm tracks, the occasional pond or other farm related activity, and possibly historic ploughing, there was very little apparent modification to the ground surface across much of the four properties. No archaeological indicators such as potential remnant pits or eroding hearth or midden type material was noted on any of the properties. Exposed track banks offered frequent opportunities to search for either material culture or feature profiles. It is assumed that much of this pasture has been plough cultivated, albeit rarely, in the past.

This may have caused the loss of surface expression of pits, but would likely have brought midden or oven material closer to the surface.

Although Mackintosh Farm and Lee Farm are immediately adjacent to the Waikare Gorge, making them ideal candidates for activity or occupation associated with the river, the drop to the water is very steep. Whilst there likely was and may still remain places where the river could have been accessed there are also much easier access points for resource harvesting along the river corridor. It seems more likely that activity associated with monitoring the river traffic was occurring in this area rather than directly accessing river resources.

The ArchCheck prepared by WSP suggested that crops such as kūmara would have been cultivated in the area based in the presence of pits and pā in the wider area. The suitability of the climate in this area is questioned for kūmara, as the winters in particular can be very harsh, whilst the summers can be very hot and dry. This does not of itself preclude kūmara cultivation, but may suggest that other activities and food sources were more important and that the pits identified more broadly are not necessarily associated with horticultural activity in that sense. No evidence of modification to soil or utilization of systems such as puke was noted in the exposed banks and surfaces examined. Images below are typical of the terrain and landuse encountered through the proposed route.



Mackintosh Farm



Mackintosh Farm



Torr Farm



Torr Farm



Spring Valley Holdings

AERIAL IMAGERY

As no aerial imagery appears to have been examined in the WSP ArchChecks, following the site visits a cursory scan of historic aerial imagery from 1940s to present day was undertaken (Retrolens and Google Earth Pro). There are several images from the 1940s that are of relatively good quality and no indicators of archaeology were noted on these. Similarly, nothing was noted on the more recent Google Earth Pro images.

SUMMARY STATEMENT WITH PROGRESSION RECOMMENDATION

It is apparent that the wider Waikare River environs is one of both archaeological and cultural significance, and that there are recorded sites present within ca. 3 km of the preferred alignment road corridor. However, there is currently no observed indication either on the ground or in aerial imagery of any immediate archaeological risks in the affected portions of the four properties visited to date. Whilst the earthworks for the realignment will be significant, on a landscape level it will be localized to a ca. 50 – 100 m wide swathe across the landscape. At present there is no identified reason why the work in the area assessed could not proceed under an Accidental Discovery Protocol. However, it should be noted that this screening, in conjunction with the ArchCheck prepared by WSP does not include all the sources of potential information that a full Archaeological Assessment of Effects does. Therefore, there may be as yet unrecognized risk factors associated with the work.

On the basis of the information to date, within the areas visually assessed and the scope as described:

Work could proceed cautiously under a robust Archaeological Discovery Protocol.

It should be noted that this does not preclude the possibility that archaeological features or materials could be encountered during work. Such an encounter may result in significant (months) delays to the work program. The client is advised to consider the merits of applying for an Archaeological Authority as a risk management strategy. Given the potential timeframes between production of this screening and confirmation of the Project proceeding it is highly recommended that this Screening and recommendation be reviewed in light of any new information or recorded sites that may be identified in the interim.



WAKA KOTAHI ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCREENING

WAIKARE GORGE REALIGNMENT, JAN 2022

APPENDICES:

WSP ARCHCHECK

Project Name		SH2 Realignment at Waikare Gorge		
Project Contact		Joshua Taylor		
	Prepared By:	Reviewed By:	Date Completed:	Recommendation:
Stage 1:	Emily Howitt	Sheelagh Conran	24/06/2020	Archaeological survey and assessment report
Stage 2:				
Stage 3:				

Project Description and Location

This archaeological risk check has been prepared for the proposed realignment of SH 2 at Waikare Gorge west of Putorino, between Napier and Wairoa (Figure 1).

The proposed works will involve the construction of a new road through a previously undeveloped landscape. Significant earthworks will be required along the entire proposed route.

The purpose of this document is to identify the risk of encountering archaeological deposits within the project area (see Figure 1), and to provide recommendations on the best course of management for the archaeological risk in line with the statutory requirements of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014*.



Figure 1: The proposed route of the realigned SH2 (white line). The present alignment is shown in yellow.

Disclaimer and Limitations

- This ArchCheck is only a preliminary guide to identify potential risk and is not a complete archaeological assessment.
- All archaeological sites are protected under the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014*, whether they are recorded in ArchSite or not. It is illegal to modify or destroy an archaeological site without an Archaeological Authority from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.
- This report does not present the views of local iwi regarding the significance of the area to them. Such assessments can only be made by tāngata whenua, as Māori concerns may encompass a wider range of values than those associated with archaeological sites.
- The New Zealand Archaeology Association’s digital site record database ArchSite was the primary resource used for identifying recorded sites in the area. Archaeological site location data in ArchSite should be regarded as a guide only as it is often based on reconnaissance rather than on accurate survey information. In addition to this, the areal extents for many recorded sites are poorly defined.

STAGE 1: ArchSite Review	
Archaeological Site Records Present?	No
Relevant Site Record Numbers:	N/A
<p>Results</p> <p>There are no archaeological site records situated on the proposed road alignment. The closest recorded sites are in the hills about 3km to the east of the project area (Figure 2). They include Pukepiripiri (W19/302), a large pa complex comprising several large raised-rim pits with drains, numerous other pits and terraces. The three other sites in this area are all pits, or groups of pits (W19/299, W19/300, W19/301). The presence of these site types indicate that the wider area and landscape was probably utilised for kumara horticulture.</p> <p>The project area is located approximately 9km inland on the Waikare River where the river runs through a gorge. The Waikare River was most likely an important travel route prior to European arrival, which is evidenced by the presence of numerous recorded archaeological sites in close proximity to the river between the project site and the river mouth. The gorge is likely to have presented opportunities for defensible sites, such as pa and food storage.</p> <p>No surface archaeological features are observable on aerial images of the proposed road alignment, both current or historic. However, the majority of archaeological features are often not visible on the surface, and will only be found during excavation. This area clearly presented a favourable environment for kumara horticulture, and it is possible that there was gardening activity in the area of the proposed road realignment. There is a significant risk of previously unrecorded archaeological features being affected by the proposed works.</p>	

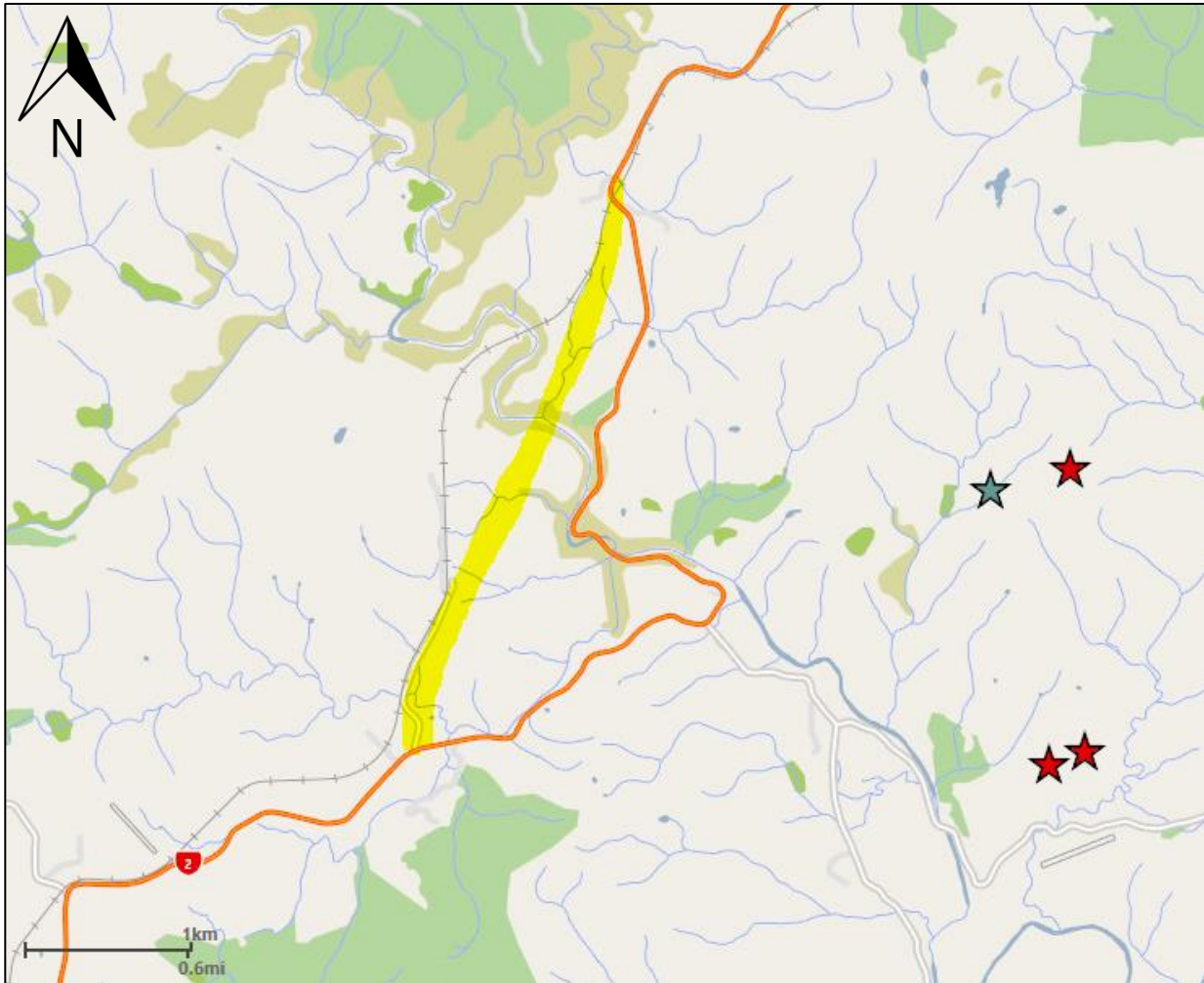


Figure 2: Archaeological site records (stars) near the proposed works area (highlighted in yellow).

Conclusion & Recommendations

The proposed works will involve significant excavations, and given the presence of pa and pit complexes in the wider landscape it is possible that there may be archaeological sites in the area of the proposed works. Sites associated with kumara horticulture and other associated activities are the most likely to be present.

It is recommended that an Archaeological Assessment report is prepared by an archaeologist, including a thorough survey of the proposed route. This assessment report will determine whether there is a risk of archaeological sites being affected by the proposed works. If risk is identified then an Archaeological Authority will need to be applied for from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

STAGE 2: Site Record Form Review

Results

STAGE 3: Site Visit
Methodology
Results