

Limited Archaeological Assessment 340E Pahoia Road, Pahoia, WBOPDC

Tena koutou,

Thank you Morgan for facilitating our site visit to 340E Pahoia Road (Figure 1) today at the request of Pirirakau hapu. This visit was to address the potential for an archaeological (pre-1900AD in date as defined by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014) landscape or sites to be present at the property, and in the wetland next to the foreshore in front of sub-divided Lots within 340 Pahoia Road, and part of a retrospect consent application associated with an existing seawall and planting proposal currently lodged with Western Bay of Plenty District Council.

As we discussed via phone and email this is a limited assessment of the property and surrounding area, due to current workload.

Pirirakau hapu had indicated their interest in two possible 'islands' in the wetland, and requested specialist opinion in relation to their possible historic, archaeological or cultural use.

During the site visit the foreshore and wetland were walked over and a visual examination made. It was immediately evident that the existing extant foreshore was part of a residual barrier dune, or spit, that extended outward and parallel to the original foreshore. Today mangroves, have been introduced to infill and reclaim the small estuary that would have been present between it and the original foreshore.

Subsequent analysis of the 1943 aerial photograph (Figure 2) of the area confirmed this, and demonstrated that in the 1940s the spit was nearly double its current length, and likely to have been affected by harbour hydrological processes and the spread of mangrove growth.

Although no recorded archaeological sites are recorded on the New Zealand Archaeological Association ArchSite database (Figure 3) in the area of the seawall and foreshore, U14/1203 and U14/1204 are both shell midden sites recorded in 1982 on the steep coastal escarpment behind the area of works. Several midden are located within 200m and pa site north, south and west of the property.

Island 1

At the current tip of the remnant barrier dune/spit, a dense spread of surface shell was observed covering an area of c. 15m x 20m area. They appear to be natural ie. not affected by human activity, and deposited by tidal processes. Most of the shell was whole and comprised harbour species, predominantly cockle (tuangi). The location of this deposit is seen in Figure 1, labelled 'Island 1'. It has been established as a result of this brief site survey that this is not an 'island' but a more elevated part of the old sand spit through which drainage channels have cut creating sand bunds. It cannot be discounted that Maori did not use this location prior to 1900AD but no evidence was identified.

Archaeology Identified

Closer to the property of 340e Pahoia Road, along the same barrier dune/spit, four areas of archaeological interest were identified;

1. 'Island 2' – similar to 'Island 1', on the tip of a remnant extant area of the sand spit, comprises a shell deposit over an area c. 10m x 15m with the exception that the shell reaches a depth of 150mm in places, and is highly fragmented with evidence of being heat affected with charcoal. Based on the evidence and presence

of food species (cockle (tuangi), pipi and mud snail (titiko) and limpets) it is considered most likely that this is a food processing site, effected by tidal processes.

It has been established as a result of this brief site survey that this is not an 'island' but a more elevated part of the old sand spit, and it is most likely that Maori used this location prior to 1900AD.

2. A find spot along the surviving 'beach' at the northern end of the sand spit, facing out to the harbour. The land here (and also locations 3. and 4. described below) is more consolidated, with a layer of vegetated matter creating a terrace overlain by white sand, with mangrove and wetland on one side, and mangrove and harbour on the other.

A worked obsidian flake tool showing retouch and use wear. A notch along its long blade edge suggest use for cutting/processing foreshore vegetation or cutting of sinew. The obsidian is from Tuhua and has been water blasted from lying in the tidal zone. It was found in association with fire cracked rock.

3. A find spot along the surviving 'beach' at the northern end of the sand spit, facing out to the harbour. It lies c. 10m north of site 2. described above and sits at the same stratigraphic level on a layer of vegetated matter creating a terrace overlain by white sand, with mangrove and wetland on one side, and mangrove and harbour on the other.

Three obsidian flake tool were identified with use wear evident, including one with the same notching described in site 2. above, interpreted as probably relating to use for cutting plant material or sinew or the like. The obsidian is from Tuhua and has been water affected from lying in the tidal zone. It was found in association with fire cracked rock, larger in size than site 2, and more likely associated with hangi/ovens.

4. Next to the south end of 340e Pahoia Road in the coastal esplanade next to the reclaimed foreshore and seawall. There is a small gently sloping beach here, which continues beneath the reclaimed area demonstrating that the original beach and foreshore was filled over during seawall construction. This was also seen in the boat launch area at the north end of the sea wall.

A possible roughly flaked stone tool was recovered from here, with use wear on both ends.

The Seawall and its Effect on Archaeological Material

Where the seawall is positioned, as described above, the original beach foreshore has been filled over, and any archaeological or cultural material that may have been here has been buried. It is considered highly likely that this landscape, as described in Sites 2-4 above, would continue here, and may still survive.

The area of reclamation associated with the seaway construction is substantial, creating level platform. Where any future home or buildings are likely to be positioned, there remains the potential that archaeological material may survive and be encountered as a result of earthworks. Any archaeology discovered at this time is likely to be associated with the archaeological landscape described in Sites 2-4 above.

The effect of the seawall and associated property levelling is that unrecorded archaeology may have been modified and buried as a result of works.

In conclusion

Two possible "Islands" in the mangrove filled wetland are remnant landforms of a barrier dune/sand spit that would have protected a small estuarine environment in the past.

One of the remnant dunes is likely to contain an archaeological site based on the evidence recovered during the brief site visit.

Three other areas along the remaining dune/spit beach has a vegetated terrace along its length creating a hard standing and on which four obsidian flake tools, fire cracked rock and possible roughly worked stone tools were identified. All obsidian was sourced from Tuhua.

The seawall and associated reclamation infill would have covered this landscape, and it may survive beneath.

Archaeological Values and Significance

Based on the evidence seen in the coastal esplanade and property visited today, substantial coastal escarpment slips and coastal erosion, as well as the effect of tidal movement has caused irreparable damage to archaeological sites that were known and unknown here. Remnant sites do however remain, where survival of the original barrier dune and sand spit remain. No intact sites were identified, and there are genuine queries related to their preservation, and the future effect of coastal change should be part of any research questions asked of this area.

Any past land use is most likely to relate to Maori, and in settling here, the location provided excellent views of Matakana Island and across to Te Puna along the harbour to the south. It is ideally positioned for a sheltered landing and living area, with a resource rich environment to support long term settlement.

There are strong cultural associations with this whenua, and Pirirakau hapu of Ngati Ranginui iwi are the appropriate people to address this.

Recommendations

Two new archaeological sites should be recorded and located in the coastal esplanade, along which the seawall is located.

Should new building works occur in the property, a project specific archaeological assessment should be prepared at the earliest phases of planning. Based on the available evidence an archaeological authority is recommended and should be applied for and granted before earthworks commence. This should be undertaken in consultation with Pirirakau hapu and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

I hope this limited assessment suits your needs at this time.

Please let me know if you have any queries.

Brigid



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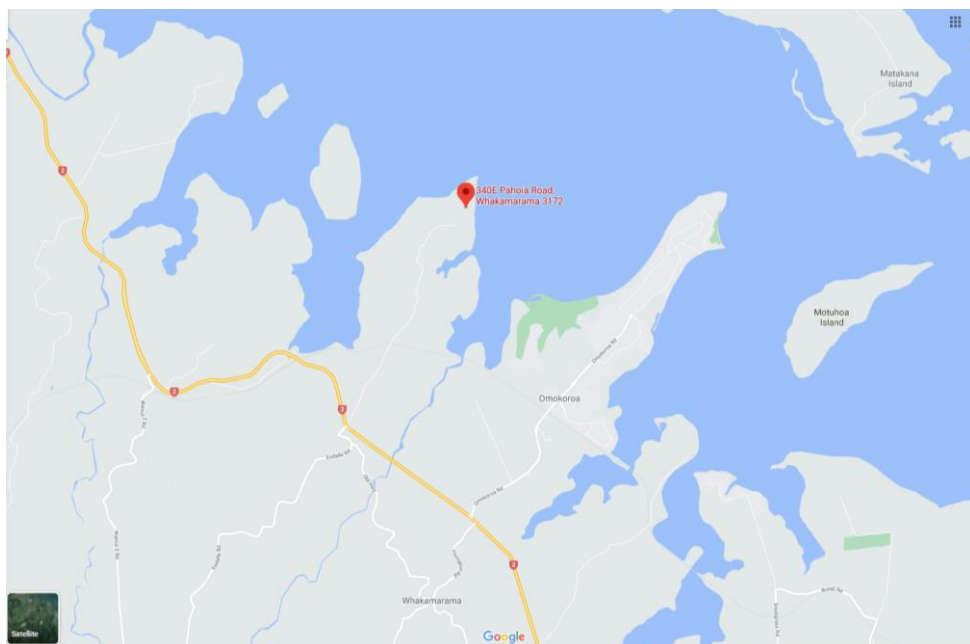
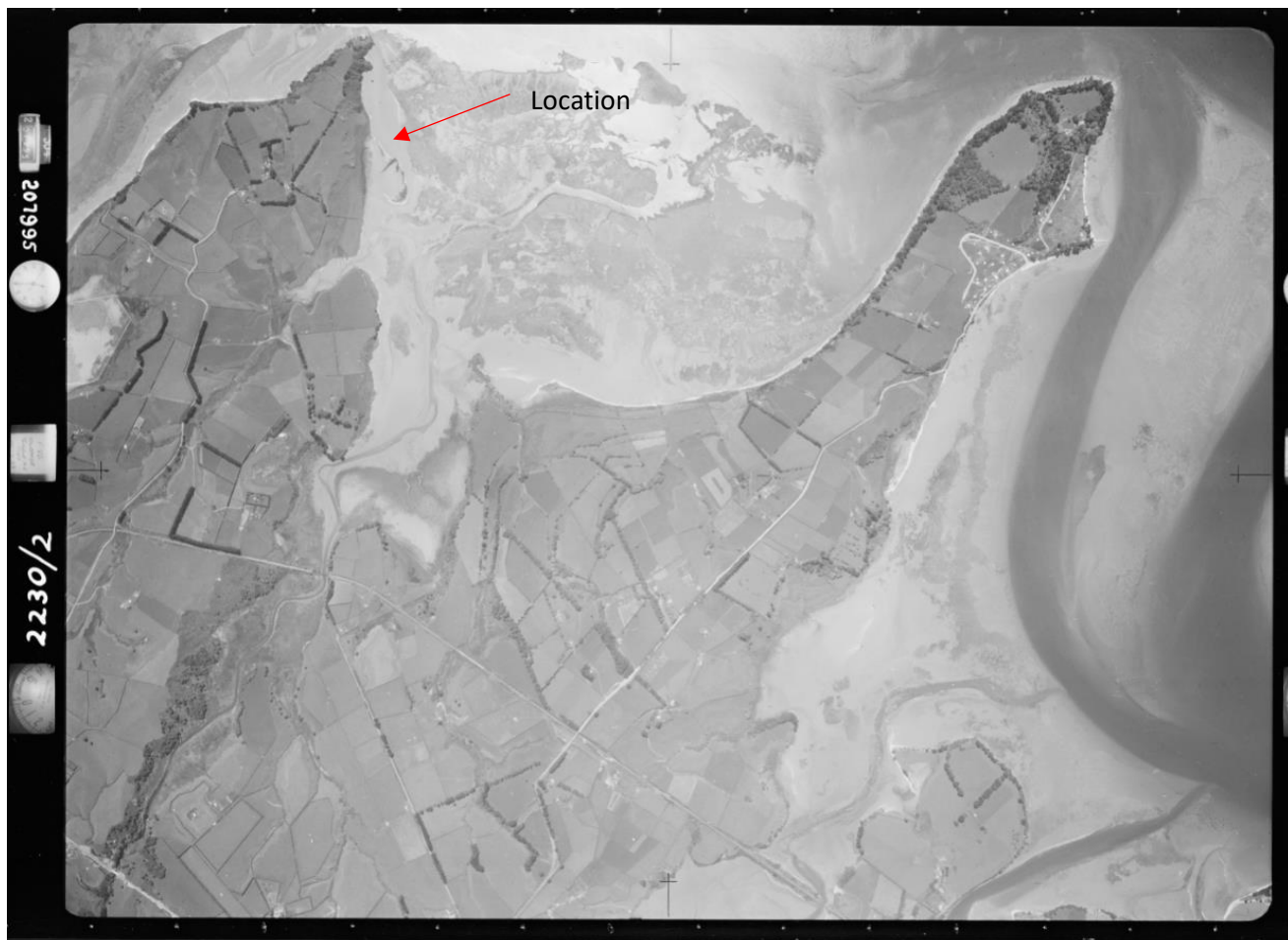
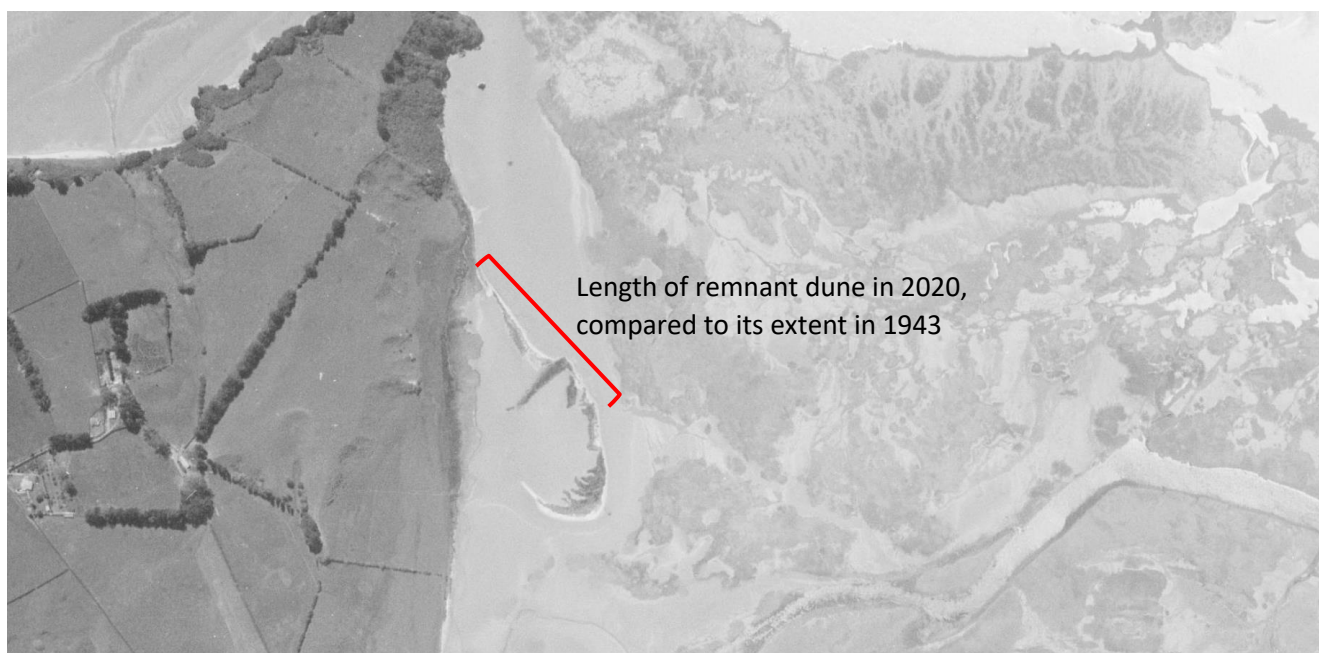


Figure 1; Property location. Google Maps.



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Figure 2, above and below; 1943 aerial photograph. Close up of barrier dune/sand spit



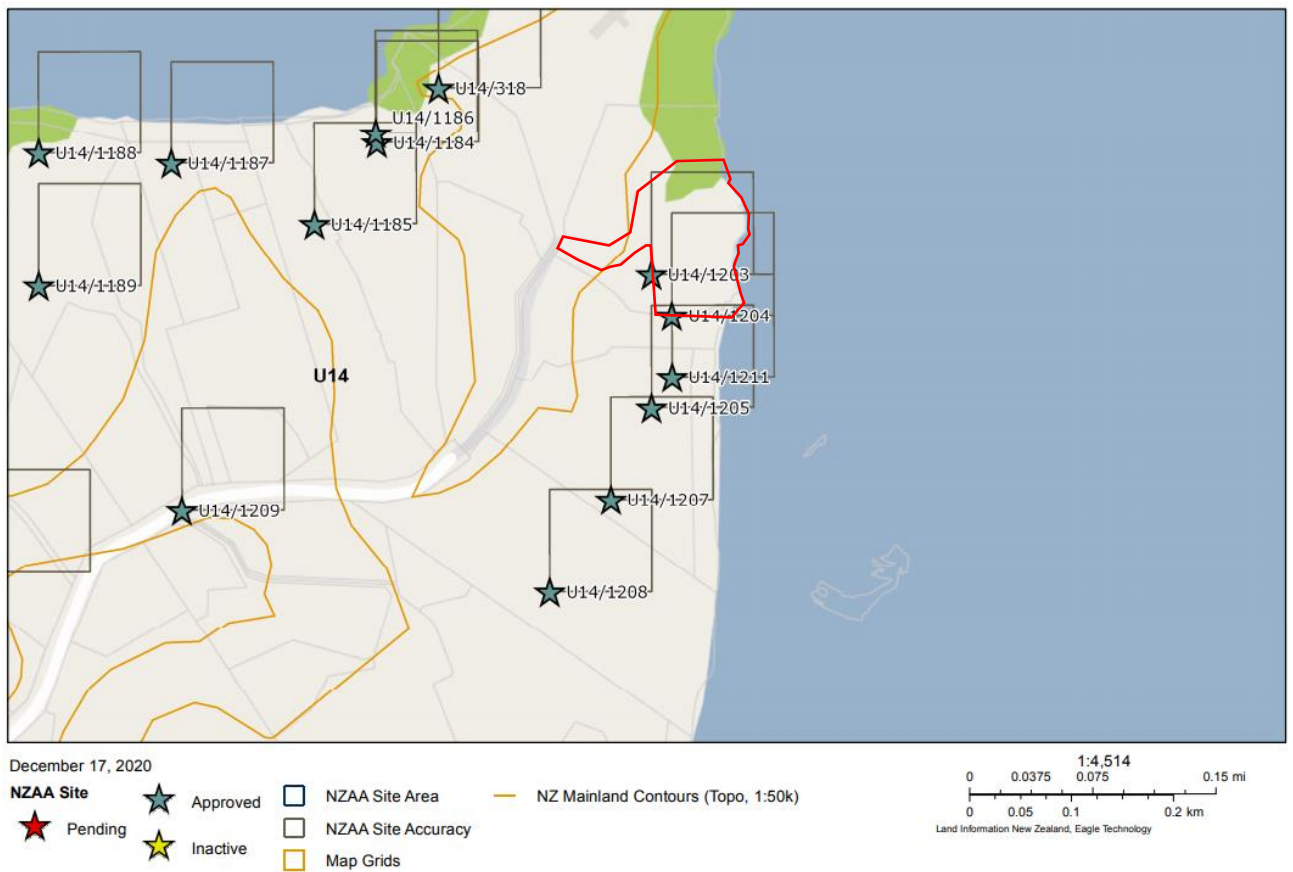


Figure 3; ArchSite map near the property (in red). ArchSite MMH.



Figure 4 above; archaeological results on modern landscape and below, on 1943 landscape (positions approximate).

