

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH INTERNAL REPORT NO. 70

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE SURVEY OF THE SHEPHERD
RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION, WHANGAROA.**

by

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ABSTRACT

C.A. and O.B.J. Shepherd have developed a subdivision of three 1000 m² sections and five 'acre' sections in the lower Tauranga Whangaroa. Five archaeological sites were identified within the subdivision.

The sites recorded are identified as representative of the sites present on the volcanic valley sides.

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INTRODUCTION

This report results from an archaeological survey and assessment of two proposed subdivisions in the Tauranga Valley, Whangaroa. The owners, C.A. and O.B.J. Shepherd, had applied to Whangaroa County Council for planning consent to subdivide three sites of 1000 m² each for residential purposes and five single 'acre' blocks from Pt. Lot 2 D.P. 65547 Tauranga Bay. The total land area amounts to 2.5 ha. The applications were sent to the Planning Department, Regional Office, Department of Conservation, Auckland, for comment and were forwarded to the Regional Archaeology Unit to establish any archaeological concern. Contact was made with the owners who subsequently commissioned an archaeological survey and assessment of the proposed subdivision. This was conducted by Leigh Johnson and Clayton Fredericksen of the Regional Archaeology Unit on 26 May 1988.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Whangaroa coastline is known to contain a large number of archaeological sites. Yet at present the sequence of prehistoric human adaptation in this area is poorly understood. To date there has been no archaeological excavation undertaken in the Whangaroa County. Importantly, the Tauranga valley is the only mature valley system in the Whangaroa area that opens directly onto the coast. The coastal location of the valley, its fertile alluvial flow and the old volcanics on the valley sides provide an attractive environment that was likely to have been settled at an early point in New Zealand prehistory. So far no diagnostically early material has been recovered from the valley, though is likely to exist under the consolidated dune complex in the vicinity of the stream at the mouth of the valley. While little is actually known of the valley's prehistory, the present visible archaeological landscape indicates that, at the close of prehistory, the valley had an important position in the political and economic life of the Whangaroa Maori community.

While the prehistory of the valley is not known in detail, it has been surveyed previously (Stretton and Cassels 1976). This survey recorded much of the extant settlement evidence and, more significantly, identified evidence of wetland horticulture on the valley floor. While not a detailed survey, Stretton and Cassels work provided a good preliminary record of the extent and nature of prehistoric occupation and agricultural activity in the valley, identifying the valley as a rich archaeological landscape in need of further investigation.

SURVEY AREA

Fig. 1 shows the location of the two proposed subdivisions and the survey area at the mouth of the Tauranga Valley. The lower valley itself contains two fertile soil zones consisting of Mangakahia alluvial silts on the valley floor and Bream volcanic loams on the valley sides (Sutherland, Cox, Taylor and Wright 1980). The proposed subdivision of the three 1000 m² sections is located on the alluvial flats behind Tauranga Bay, 450 m back from the beach and to the south-west of the Tauranga Bay road. The land is flat and is presently maintained as farmland. The three proposed sections will occur as an extension of the existing residential zone at Tauranga Bay.

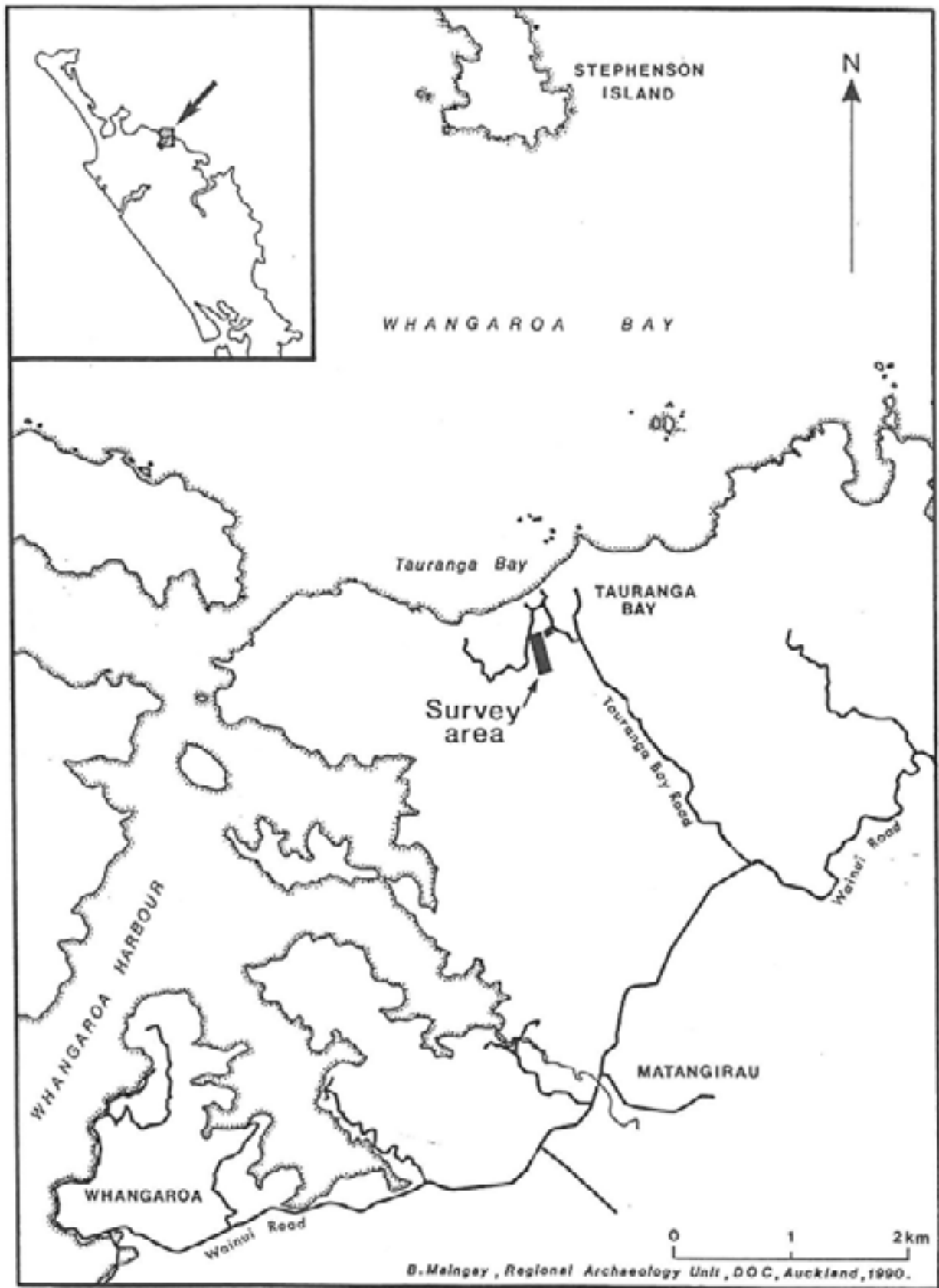


Figure 1. The location of the Shepherd Subdivision, Tauranga Valley.

The second proposed subdivision, of the five single acre blocks, is located on the south-western side of the valley above the flats and approximately 500 m back from the beach. The land is steep and under regenerating manuka with the exception of Lot 5 that contains a house and fenced section. All eight lots have access from a driveway that extends from the Tauranga Bay Road to the house in Lot 5.

SURVEY METHOD

No archaeological sites were known to exist within the survey area. However a small pa, N8/13 had been recorded immediately outside the boundary of proposed Lot 4. The nature of this type of site raised the likelihood that ancillary archaeological evidence could extend into the subdivision. The area of land involved in the five subdivisions is small and it was possible to cover most of the ground in detail. However with the occasional patch of dense vegetation and the badly eroded nature of the archaeological evidence on the steeper slopes, the possibility remains that some archaeological evidence was not identified.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Fig. 2 shows the location of the five archaeological sites recorded within the subdivisions during the survey.

NZAA Site No.	Grid Ref (NZMS1)	Description
N8/198	288 827	<u>Stone mound</u> . Located in lower north-west corner of proposed Lot 1. Single stone mound, eroded. 3 m in diameter, 60 cm in height.
N8/199	288 825	<u>Terraces</u> . Located on the boundary between proposed Lots 2 and 3. Site consists of two terraces cut into hillside. Under regenerating manuka.
N8/200	288 826	<u>Terraces</u> . Located in proposed Lot 2. Site consists of a flight of three terraces. The upper terrace is stone faced.
N8/201	289 824	<u>Stone wall and Mounds</u> . Located in southern corner of proposed Lot 5 and south-eastern corner of proposed Lot 4. Site consists of a remnant stone wall 25 m in length, 2 m in width and 60 cm in height. Also six stone mounds occur to the south of the stone wall in Lot 5.



Figure 2. The Shepherd Subdivision plan and location of archaeological sites.

N8/202

288 823

Terrace. Located on the southern boundary of Lot 4. Site consists of a single terrace 6 x 4 m. This terrace site appears ancillary to the pa (N8/13) located on the ridge above.

DISCUSSION

The subdivision of three 1000 m² sections is situated on an aggraded terrace on the valley floor. The area covered by this subdivision has previously been modified by ploughing and gardening (Shepherd pers. comm.). Consequently no surface archaeological evidence was recorded for this area.

The five sites recorded during the survey are all located on the steep side of the valley in the area of the proposed five single acre blocks. The three terrace sites, N8/199, 200 and 202, are relatively well preserved with site N8/200 in particular displaying a good example of stone facing. However, the two sites, N8/198 and N8/201, displaying stone features (wall and mounds) are badly eroded and are in poor condition.

A remnant stone wall at site N8/201 extends up slope for 25 m and would appear to represent a boundary between garden systems. This feature along with the stone mounds and terrace facing are likely to have been constructed from stones removed from garden areas. The evidence for occupation within the garden areas consists of terraces at sites N8/199 and N8/200. These sites consist of flights of two and three terraces respectively that were likely to have resulted from short occupation by small domestic units. While no visible evidence of occupation was identified at these sites a small flake of local basalt was recovered from terrace at site N8/200 and provides some indication that the terraces were functionally distinct from the garden areas. Terrace site N8/202 is located on the slope below pa N8/13 and would appear to have been associated with occupation of this site.

It is likely that the surviving archaeological evidence is not fully representative of the range of prehistoric activities undertaken within the subdivision area. Previously recorded site N8/126 consisting of an area of prehistoric wetland drains on the floor of the valley, in an adjacent section, would suggest that most of the fertile alluvial valley floor was cultivated in addition to the volcanic soils of the side of the valley. Similar patterns of prehistoric wetland and dryland agriculture are known in New Zealand (Johnson 1986) and occur commonly throughout the Pacific (Bulmer 1989).

CONCLUSION

The survey plan prepared for the owners, by R.J. Donaldson and Associates Ltd., May 1988, indicates that the present proposal for the subdivision of Pt. Lot 2 D.P. 65547 may be followed by further subdivision. This report relates only to that land for which planning consent was applied for on 5 February 1988. All future subdivisions should be subject to archaeological survey and assessment.

The proposed subdivision of three 1000 m² residential sections does not appear to affect any surviving archaeological evidence. However, archaeological sites occur in each of the five single acre sections. The development of these sections is likely to modify all of the recorded archaeological evidence. While the site types recorded are typical of volcanic areas generally, no investigation of this type of evidence has occurred within the area of the Whangaroa andestic volcanics. The sites within the subdivision while in varying degrees of preservation are representative of the archaeological evidence found on the hillsides of the valley and as such are capable of supplying information on settlement and agricultural adaptations within the Tauranga valley.

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