

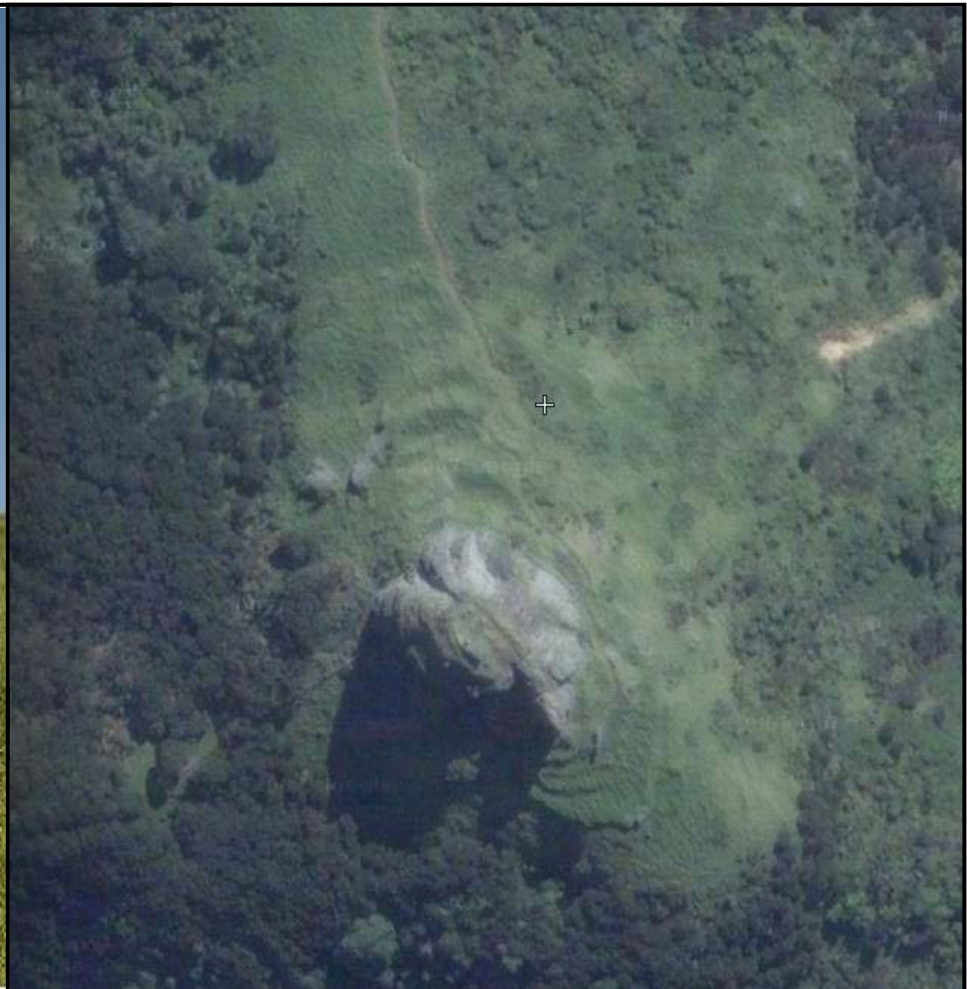
Ohakiri Pa

St Paul's Rock Scenic Reserve

Historic Heritage Assessment



Melina Goddard 2011



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Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Ohakiri Pa: St Paul's Rock Scenic Reserve Historic Heritage Assessment

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Cover image: Ohakiri pa/St Paul's Rock taken facing south (A. Blanshard DoC) Aerial of St Paul's Rock/Ohakiri pa.

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Image: Entrance to the Whangaroa Harbour taken facing northeast from the top of the Dukes Nose (K. Upperton DoC).

□ Location of Ohakiri pa in the Whangaroa Harbour. East Coast, New Zealand



Figure 1: The location of Ohakiri Pa in the St Paul's Rock Reserve, Whangaroa Harbour, indicated in inset.

Site Overview

Ohakiri Pa or St Paul's Rock, as it is better known as today, is located within the St Paul's Rock Scenic Reserve which is under the care of the Department of Conservation. The Reserve consists of two blocks, the northern and southern, on a peninsula that projects out into the Whangaroa Harbour on Northland's east coast (fig 1). The rock is part of the Maori legend that tells of the formation of the harbour and today it is a significant landmark within the district and commands the inner harbour. Ohakiri is regionally significant as one of the only accessible tangible remains of Whangaroa's early Maori and European history.

Land status: *Scenic Reserve*

Administered by: *The Department of Conservation, Bay of Islands area office under the Reserves Act 1977*

Access by: *Old Hospital Road, Whangaroa.*

Visitor numbers: *high visitor numbers, but specifics unknown.*

Heritage status: *protected under the Historic Places Act 1993, the Conservation Act 1987, the Reserves Act 1997 and comes under the ICOMOS charter as a place of cultural heritage value.*

Site area: *The southern block: 28.196ha including the rock itself; the northern block of 45.19779ha that includes much of the coastline and the northern end of the Whangaroa Peninsula.*

Functional location number: *DN-61-200-2041*

NZAA site record #: *PO4/488*

History Description

Whangaroa ("Long Harbour") is a spacious almost land-locked anchorage and represents a drowned river system, with eroded rocks of two different types, hard volcanic breccia and soft sedimentary shales and sandstones.¹ St Paul's Rock is one of several large outcrops that dominate the hills around the harbour. St Paul's rock is one of two prominent breccia capped hills, the other named St Peter's, face each other across the water near the Whangaroa township. The two rocks were named by early European settlers to the harbour based upon a resemblance that they saw with the cathedrals in London. They also represent the clash between the Anglican and Catholic missions stationed on either side of the harbour.

St Paul's Rock does however have a much longer human history than that of early European settlers. The rock itself is entwined in the Maori legend of the formation of Whangaroa Harbour:

Long ago there were two gods; Taratara was tall and handsome with many treasures and two beautiful wives, Okaha-hiria and Turou. Maungataniwha, who lived furthered up the Otangaroa Valley, was a jealous god who would use force if he could not get his way. As Maungataniwha did not have a wife, he became very envious of Taratara, and decided to ask him for one of his wives. As he walked the ground shook for miles around. He stopped beside Taratara and asked for one of his wives. Taratara refused and so Maungataniwha went away disappointed. Many months passed before he decided to ask again but Taratara again turned him down. Maungataniwha was furious and threatened to disfigure Taratara. More months passed and Maungataniwha made a final request, so down the valley he thundered once more. This time when Taratara said "no" and laughed Maungataniwha became so enraged he lashed at Taratara, whose head flew from his shoulders across the Whangaroa Harbour to its present position- Ohakiri or St Paul's. Bits and pieces of Taratara were scattered far and near and lie on the valley floors of Pupuke and Otangaroa. Maungamiemie was so distressed at the sight of her mighty neighbours fighting that she wept, and to this day her tears continue to flow in the streams that wind down to the waters of the Whangaroa Harbour.²

This is the only widely known oral tradition attached to Ohakiri Pa although further information may exist within iwi groups. Further description of the pa comes from visiting European ships. One of these describes an 'old fort' on top of the high hill, named Taratara inland of Whangaroa and practically inaccessible to enemies for access to it could only be by gained by means of ladders.³ Another is by R.A Cruise who wrote a journal during his 10 month stay in New Zealand and was in the Whangaroa Harbour approximately 1824:

An insulated rock, 300feet high, excessively steep, and in some places perpendicular; yet the New Zealanders ascend it without much inconvenience, and find sufficient room upon its extreme summit to form in considerable numbers.⁴

He also goes on to describe the occupation of the pa:

To us its appearance was most imposing; and where firearms are little used, it ought to be an impregnable position; though its chief is said to have fled from it when attacked by the tribe of Poro, and to have abandoned his property and many of his women to the fury of the invader.⁵

Cruise describes the houses as being "numerous and chiefly" on the northern slope of the pa.⁶ These houses were probably located on the larger terraces that still exist.

Cruise also goes on to describe a hut on the very highest point of the rock and as their boat approached the land they “Observed a concourse of people assembled in different parts of it”. He describes most of them as having spears in their hands; and when his party rowed up to the foot of the pa, they were received with wariness. Some of the higher ranking people reportedly stayed halfway up the rock while others went down to receive the Europeans.⁷

By c. 1827 Ohakiri Pa was obtained by conquest during the war campaigns of Hongi Hika. A Maori Land Court hearing was held in 1867 where Hare Hongi and Paoro Ururoa claimed the land area of Ohakiri Block, which was 43 acres. They stated that they and others of their people cultivated the land except for the stony hill (Tarataras rock). There was no opposition and no other claimants. On the 9th of October 1876 Hare Hongi and Paoro Ururoa signed a deed of transfer to the government of 32 pounds and five shillings for this block.⁸ There are two adjoining old surveys, OLC51 and SO3226A which suggest the block was also known as Otakia.⁹

Ohakiri Pa is also connected to a wider history of the harbour beginning from initial European contact to the Whangaroa in 1807 by the sealer ship *Star*. A few more ships visited in the early 19th century and mission stations were established here in the 1820’s and 1830’s. However there was little European impact until the 1830’s when development of the timber and shipbuilding industries resulted in the growth of settlements at Kaeo, Whangaroa and Totara North. In the later years many areas of land were cleared for logging and used for agriculture.¹⁰

One of the more well-known stories from the harbours early European contact history is the burning of the *Boyd*. This tragic turn of events occurred when Captain Wilkinson, in command of the first visiting ship the *Star* took on board a young Maori named Te Ara. Later he was recorded as being transferred to the ship *Boyd*. In 1808 the Captain Ceroni in the brig *Commerce*, with the Bay of Islands chief Te Pahi on board, visited the harbour while on his voyage to Sydney. There is some evidence that on the wake of this visit an epidemic occurred that killed many Whangaroa Maori including a chief, ‘Kytoke’. It was said that Ceroni had dropped his watch, (an alien item to Maori), into the sea which Maori believed to be a curse and the cause of the outbreak.¹¹

In 1809 when the *Boyd* arrived at Whangaroa Harbour her crew and passengers with the exception of a woman and two children, were killed. The reason usually given is that George, on his voyage with the *Boyd* was flogged on the captain’s orders; an intolerable offence to Maori and therefore the ship was lured to the Harbour and avenged. Another less well known version that was given to a missionary from Paihia, William Williams, is that it was not the ill-treatment of George but Ceroni’s curse that caused the massacre.¹²

Whatever the cause the result was a decline in ships visiting the Whangaroa and the Bay of Islands after reports of the *Boyd* massacre spread as far as Sydney. But visits by European Ships increased again after 1814 when the Reverend Samuel Marsden with chiefs Ruatara and Hongi Hika visited the Whangaroa, and returned safely. The purpose of there mission to settle tensions between tribes which had escalated after the *Boyd* tragedy. ¹³

One of the first ship's to call was the *HMS Dromedary* that entered the Whangaroa in 1820 to obtain kauri spars. The *Dromedary* stayed in the harbour for 5-6 months. Trade flourished during this time with Europeans providing biscuits, axes, hatchets, saws, spades, hoes and iron tools, to such a degree that Dr. Fairfowl, a visitor to the harbour, noted "*they (Maori) became over-stocked and indifferent to the items*". ¹⁴ In exchange Maori supplied Europeans with hogs, potatoes, cabbages, turnips, peas and fish. With this increase in demand for foodstuffs, ground had to be cleared for planting and fires were lit that got out of hand, so much that R.A Cruise reported the whole country "*in a blaze*". ¹⁵

The Whangaroa had much to commend it as a place for ships to visit. It had timber, water and a population capable of developing food resources for trade. As R.A Cruise remarked it was also:

'One of the finest harbours in the world, the largest fleet might ride in it, and there is not a wind from which it is not sheltered'. ¹⁶

In 1823 the Wesleyan Church established one of New Zealand's earliest mission stations on the Kaeo River, but was obliged to withdraw after a few years owing to the ever present hostility of some of the Maoris. Hongi Hika's war expedition reached Whangaroa in 1827. He wanted to take command of the Whangaroa and make it a popular anchorage for visiting ships. Some local inhabitants fled immediately; others were driven off. But Hongi himself was the chief casualty; a ball from a musket, the weapon he had helped to introduce, passed through his chest. He died from his bullet wound on 3 March 1828, at Whangaroa. ¹⁷

Whangaroa was again shunned until 1840, when the first permanent settlers arrived, among them Shepherd, Snowden, Spikeman, and Hayes. In that year also the Roman Catholic Church established a mission, still in existence, at Waitaruke. The immigrant ship *Lancashire Witch* arrived in 1865, and progress commenced in the timber and kauri gum industry. Shipbuilding began in 1872 when Lane and Brown erected yards at Totara North. Milling was carried on by Christie and Wiggins and, later, by the Kauri Timber Co. while St Paul's rock towered above it (fig 2).

By the 1880's Whangaroa had become one of the most prosperous and heavily populated parts of Northland. In the early 1900s Sea Sick Bay, just inside the south head, was used as a whaling base, and 20 years later Ranfurly Bay, just inside the north-head, served the same

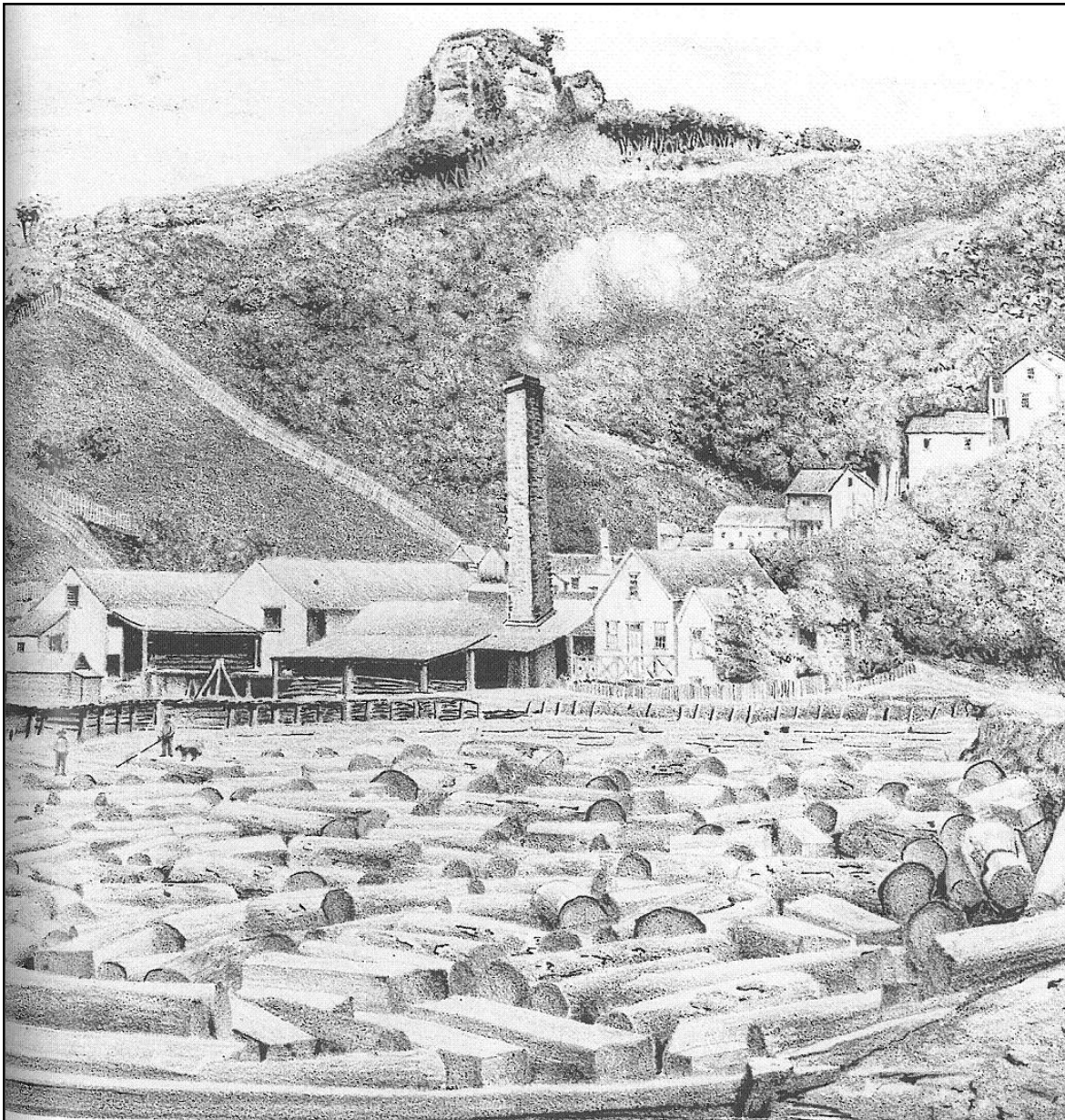


Figure 2: Kauri logs in the booms at Whangaroa underneath St Paul's Rock, the pa site looking overgrown and un-used. The mill at this stage was run by the Kauri Timber Company, it was burnt down in 1905. A drawing from the 'Forest Flora of New Zealand' by T Kirk (1889) and drawn from a photograph presented by H.M Roe, Onehunga. (image from Sale 2006:96).

purpose. Copper was once mined in the mid-water tributaries of the Pupuke River. Dairying is still important, though the local factory has now closed. A little milling is done and some cray-fishing, but today Whangaroa is chiefly known as a base for deep-sea game fishing.¹⁸

St Paul's towers over Kent Bay and the modern township of Whangaroa. In the bay there are still the remains of the old mill jetty and those of the Kauri Timber Company's mill from the early years of this century. There are still brick foundations of the chimney stack, and the small embankment that projects into the harbour at the old mill site was made from ballast deposited from the old ships. Embedded in the tide is the old steel boiler of the mill, so heavy that it fell through the decking of the jetty during its attempted retrieval.¹⁹

Fabric Description

Ohakiri Pa represents built Maori heritage and although pa are common in Northland its focal point of the rock is rare and it is regionally significant as one of the only tangible elements of Maori heritage that is accessible to the public in Whangaroa Harbour.

The archaeological features that make up Ohakiri Pa are terraces and shell midden. Features have been recorded on top of the rock and on the foot of the rock to the east and west (fig 3).

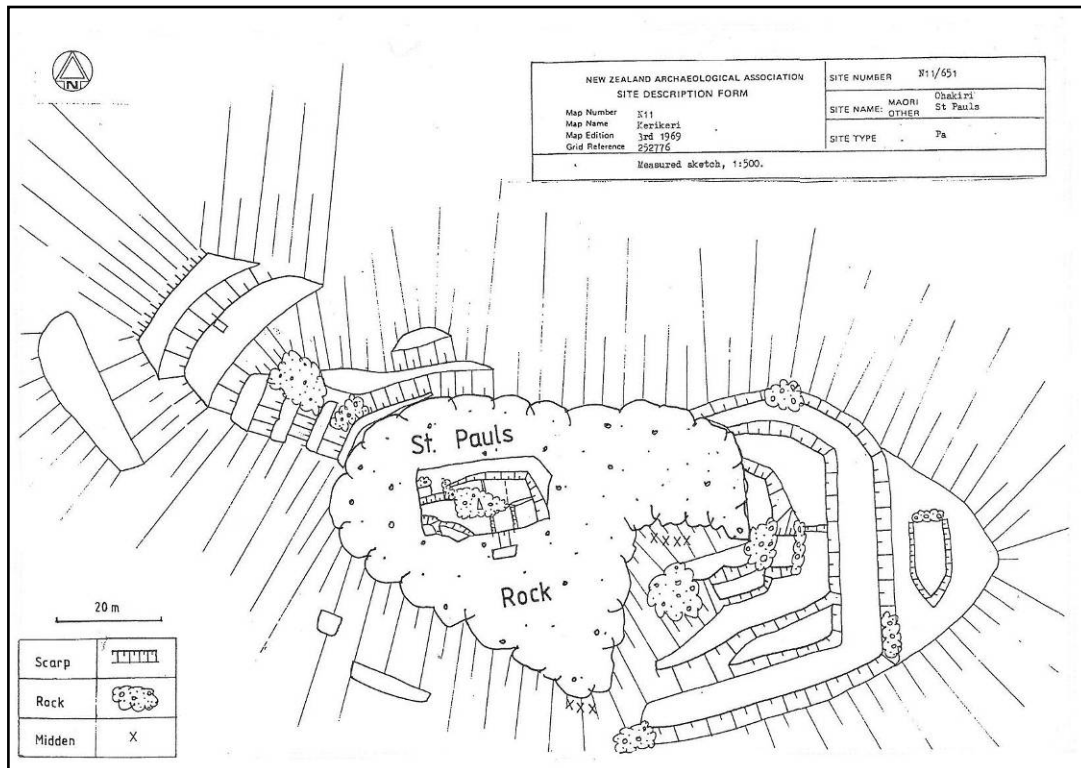


Figure 3: Drawing of Ohakiri Pa showing the terraces located on the eastern and western flanks of the rock and also the terraces cut into the soil located on the top of the rock. (ARCHSITE site record form)

Pa sites frequently include defensive aspects such as ditches and bank fortifications. There are no recorded defensive ditches surrounding Ohakiri but its height and steepness would have acted as its defense mechanism. As previously described Ohakiri was practically inaccessible to enemies as the summit could only be reached by means of ladders.²⁰ Furthermore, many people could be assembled on the rock when a place of refuge, with an excellent vantage point. Therefore the rock was a natural stronghold and did not need artificial defences. In addition to a refuge the top of St Paul's Rock would have acted as an observation post providing panoramic views of the harbour and its entrance (fig 4).



Figure 4: View from the top of St Paul’s Rock facing north towards the entrance of the harbour and the northern block with Kaheka point and “Puhoi” pa on the eastern headland. (A. Blanshard DoC 2009).

In addition to St Paul’s Rock and its surrounding archaeological features there is the northern and southern blocks of the reserve which have 4 recorded archaeological sites (figs 6 & 7). The southern block consists of Ohakiri Pa (P04/488), 1 large terrace site (P04/490) and a terraced knoll that is recorded as a pa, although there are no recorded defensive features.²¹ This site’s traditional Maori name is “Marutoia”. This site is partially located on private land but most is on the DoC reserve. The Maori Land Court hearing for Marutoia Block was held by Judge Manning in 1870 (ML1549) but the minute book is lost. This pa is not on Marutoia Block but on the boundary between Shephard’s OLC51 and Ohakiri Block. It is described by E.V Sale, as at one stage still having the “rotting posts of the old palisades evident”.²²

Recorded on the northern block is one headland pa site (P04/509) on the east side of the peninsula with the traditional name “Puhoi”.²³ Also on the southern block is Kaheka Point that has no recorded archaeological sites. However given the headland’s location and land area it is more than likely that some exist. There is reportedly a small pa located on the northern most edge of the point which faces directly towards the entrance to the harbour.²⁴ There are midden sites on the small bays of the point and large terraces through its centre.²⁵ There is a swamp area on the eastern side and an abandoned orchard that contains quinces. An archeological ground survey would assist with the reserve’s future management. The reserve contains a well preserved archaeological landscape that has the potential to be made more accessible to the public.

In addition to archaeological sites of Maori origin there are probably subsurface remains of the European period. These include the possible remains of a small chapel are on the western slopes of the reserve. Although the exact location is unknown it has been described as being built on the block of land on the side of St Paul’s. It was constructed by James Shephard a member of one of the founding families of Whangaroa.²⁶ There is also a photograph that shows the house of John Beggs, a law clerk on the St Paul’s Block, with the

rock in the background. John lived here as the clerk of the Whangaroa County Council (fig 5). The building later became the local hospital and more recently a youth hostel. ²⁷



Figure 5: The house of John Beggs located on the western slope of St Paul's/ Ohakiri pa (Forest and Flora of New Zealand T. Kirk in Sale 2006:94).

Cultural Connections

Te Runanga o Whangaroa are the people associated the pa and Taratarā's rock. The site is also connected with the descendants of the founding families and later settlers and to all New Zealanders as part of their country's early formational history.

National Context

Ohakiri is a coastal hilltop pa. Its main features are terracing, middens and the striking rock outcrop at its summit. Coastal pa are well represented in Northland and most of the North Island, but Ohakiri's rocky citadel is an unusual and outstanding feature both visually and functionally. In addition it is one of the few pa within the Whangaroa area that accessible to

the public, and offers an interpretation of local history. It also provides the visitor with magnificent, panoramic views of Whangaroa Harbour.

The reserve is an integral part of the wider Whangaroa area. Historically this was closely linked with the Bay of Islands both before and after European contact. Early accounts from explorers, visitors and missionaries provide valuable information on the people, the environment, and the interaction between Maori and Pakeha at this stage of New Zealand history.

Historic Significance

Ohakiri Pa (St Paul's Rock Reserve) is historically significant as part of an old Maori legend describing the formation of Whangaroa Harbour. The harbour is notorious for the *Boyd* incident and subsequent events, and it was once the centre for early European industry.

Fabric Significance

The pa is traditionally significant and a focus for mana in the surrounding area. It is a Maori citadel that is more impressive than many European fortresses.

Cultural Significance

The site is culturally significant to Te Runanga o Whangaroa, to the descendants of early European settlers and in the Whangaroa region, and to all New Zealanders as part of their early history.

Management Recommendations

- Reports from rangers, who maintain the reserve, indicate that the track is steep and slippery in places, and in addition to it being unsafe it is causing considerable damage to the archaeological features of the site. The repair and upgrade of this track needs to be addressed immediately. An authority to modify the site must be acquired from the Historic Places Trust before work begins.
- An archaeological survey of the northern and southern blocks should be carried out to ensure the effective management of sites. This could be done in conjunction with a track upgrade.

Management Documentation

Park board file notes indicate that it was planned to re-vegetate much of the reserve, excluding the archaeological sites. Further site protection was advocated by stock removal, selective re-vegetation by species that would not damage features, and maintenance of feature visibility through hand clearing.

Management Chronology

- 1980s: The crown purchased 2 blocks of land from St Paul's Farms Ltd; the southern block of 28.196ha including the rock itself and the northern block of 45.19779ha that includes much of the coastline and the northern end of the Whangaroa Peninsula.
- 1980: The combined area was gazetted as St Paul's Rock Scenic Reserve and managed by the Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park Board.
- 1987: Management was transferred to the Department of Conservation.



Figure 6: Aerial view of the peninsula showing the conservation land in green. Kaheka Point and Puhoi Pa are on the northern block and Ohakiri and Marutoia Pa on the southern block.



Figure 7: Map of archaeological sites recorded on the northern and southern blocks. The concentration in the centre is sites located on private land. ARCHSITE

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Endnotes

¹ Findlay Hay: 2009

² Sale, E.V 2006 (as recorded by the pupils of Whangaroa College for a Cross Cultural Community Involvement Programme).

³ Best, E. 1975:355

⁴ Cruise, R.A. 1824:79

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *Op. cit*:Cruise. R.A:80

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Northern MB2 and 3 MLC Whangarei

⁹ ARCHSITE www.archsite.org

¹⁰ Robinson. J. 1991:1

¹¹ Owens 1974:35

¹² *Op.cit*:Robinson:36

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ HRNZ, vol. I, p. 551

¹⁵ *Op.cit* Cruise:168

¹⁶ *Op.cit* Cruise:66-67

¹⁷ Ballara. A. 2010

¹⁸ McLintock. A.H: 1966

¹⁹ Sale 2006:3

²⁰ Best 1975:355

²¹ ARCHSITE

²² *Op.cit* Sale E.V:3

²³ *Op.cit* Sale E.V:38

²⁴ Turner, M. pers comm..

²⁵ Blanshard,A pers comm

²⁶ *Op.cit* Sale E.V:91

²⁷ *Op.cit* Sale E.V :95