

An aerial photograph showing a landscape with a winding road that curves around a central building complex. The terrain is hilly and appears to be a mix of natural vegetation and some cleared areas. The road is a light color, contrasting with the darker, more textured ground. The building complex is a cluster of structures, possibly a farm or a small settlement, situated in a valley or a cleared area. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, providing a clear view of the road's path and the surrounding terrain.

Caring for archaeological sites: New Zealand guidelines

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION, MARCH 2002



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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Draft for discussion, March 2002

Kevin L. Jones
Dianne Harlow
Derek Gosling

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Cover: One Tree Hill (Maungakiekie), Auckland, one of New Zealand's outstanding historical landscape areas. This oblique view of May 1997 shows the remains of the central platform with extensive carparking facilities, the obelisk 'memorial to the Maori people' and the grave of Sir John Logan Campbell. An original defensive ditch and bank, crossed by informal foot tracks, can be seen to the right of the encircling road. Sites such as this require careful conservation planning and operations to maintain the archaeological site and the viewpoints over it and the surrounding city.

All photos in this work are by Kevin Jones unless otherwise stated.

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He kupu whakataki

Tēnā rā tātou katoa. Kua tuhia tēnei pukapuka mahi e ngā kaimātai whaipara tangata e ū tonu nei ki te kaupapa, arā, kia penapenatia ngā wāhi mau taonga o neherā hei mahi whai tikanga mā te iwi Māori, mā te iwi whānui o Aotearoa, ā, mā ngā kaitohutohu i roto i ngā mahinga pūkenga o te motu. Ko tētahi o ngā ture tuatahi hei whai mā rātou i roto i te whakatakoto mahere penapena, ko te tātari i ngā uaratanga, arā, ko te hononga tūturu ki tētahi whenua. He whenua whai tikanga ki a wai rānei, ā, he aha rātou i pēnā ai? E whakapono ana ngā kaimātai whaipara tangata, he mahi tahi tā rātou ko te iwi Māori i runga i te maha o aua uaratanga i te mea ko ngā wāhi mau taonga o neherā, ahakoa he wāhi tapu, wāhi noa rānei ki te iwi whānui, he wāhi hoki ēnei mō te tirotiro me te whakaaroaro. He wāhi hoki hei ranga wairua mō te whakaputa mōhio mō neherā kia whai mātauranga takitahi ai te tangata me te mahi tōrangapū mōna ake. He wāhi mātauranga aua wāhi, he wāhi rangahau hoki e tika ana kia tino pai rawa atu te whakamarumarū mā ngā whakahaere mahi huakanga hou e kōrerotia ake nei i roto i tēnei pānui. Heoi anō, kia maumahara tonu tātou kei kino mai ki a tātou ko ngā whakatupuranga e heke mai nā mō ā tātou ritenga whakamarumarū rānei, he nui atu ngā kino i ngā pai o aua ritenga. Me whai wāhi hoki koutou ki aua mahi huakanga hei mahara mā koutou, hei patapatai mā koutou, hei tautoko hoki mā koutou.

Foreword

This manual has been written by archaeologists who believe that conservation of archaeological sites is an important task, for iwi Māori, for the public and for all those people in professional employment who are privileged to advise on conservation. One of the first rules to be followed in planning conservation is to analyse the values, the emotional attachment of a place. To whom does the place matter, and why? Archaeologists would like to believe that they share common cause with iwi Māori in many of those values because archaeological site, be they tapu or open to the public, are places to be viewed and to be thought about. They are an inspiration for consciousness about the past containing lessons for personal knowledge and political action. They are places of education and research that deserve the best protection that our new techniques presented here can provide. However, we must always remember that future generations may judge us harshly if we have rushed to intervene where it was not necessary, or carried out protective measures that have done more harm than good. This work deserves your attention, your questions and your support.

Abstract

Archaeological sites generally fall into two classes: those which are visible at or above the ground surface and those which lie buried beneath it. Minimising deterioration is a key objective of historic heritage management. Earthwork fortifications are a common form of surface-visible site in New Zealand. Surface erosion by visitors and farm animals, and planting in pine forests both cause significant problems. Sub-surface sites also need specific management attention. The management of archaeological sites requires close consideration of plant ecology, because plants will generally be the most cost-effective cover. Techniques and management philosophies are recommended for five broad ecological settings: native grassland, exotic (pasture) grassland, native shrubland, indigenous forest, exotic (plantation) forest. Techniques include encouragement of native grass covers, site-adapted mowing regimes, stock management, fencing patterns and methods, manipulation of native forest succession, felling of problem trees and their removal, artificial covers such as geosynthetic cloths, and deliberate site burial. Mowing and line-trimming should be preferred to grazing for all significant sites, especially those which are open to the public. Wider cultural or historic landscape design needs to be considered, particularly for reserves of large area.

Keywords: resource management, reserves, local government, protection, restoration, re-construction, interpretation, conservation plan, ICOMOS, archaeology, archaeological sites, Māori, wāhi tapu, pre-European, history, prehistoric, landscape, monument, historic archaeology, historic places, weed control, forest succession, grassland, forestry, amenity, farming, agriculture, fire.

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Introduction

As defined in New Zealand, ‘historic places’ can be buildings or other standing structures, traditional sites (wāhi tapu) or archaeological sites. This guide is not about buildings or primarily about wāhi tapu, although some archaeological sites may incorporate elements of both. Nor is the guide about the legal protection process. Instead it is aimed at practical land management to give improved protection to archaeological sites.

It is important that archaeological sites are reserved, accessible, protected and authentic. Of all the sites in New Zealand, only a small portion is in reserve areas. The largest portion is on freehold land, particularly in the northern regions of New Zealand. Any kind of disturbance of the ground surface sets an archaeological site at risk. This raises questions about the best way to manage archaeological sites on farms or forestry land or in urban areas in a manner that is complementary to productive use.

Archaeological sites (in Māori, wāhi taonga) are important to New Zealanders’ sense of history and to their national identity. The Historic Places Act 1993 (s. 2) defines them to be any place in New Zealand associated with human activity (including shipwrecks) which is or may be able through investigation by archaeological methods to provide evidence relating to the history of New Zealand. Such sites include middens (deposits of what was once waste from food preparation), storage pits, fortifications and quarries. Some may be visible on the surface, some not. Some may date from before the time Europeans arrived in the country. Others may be quite recent—an example might be the foundations of a World War II barracks. The term historic may be used to distinguish anything which is not natural, or features of a place that are related to Māori or European history but which are not strictly archaeological sites—e.g. trees planted by past settlers. It may also be used to refer to sites of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Appendix 1 identifies the different types of physical places that are found in New Zealand.

An archaeological site/wāhi taonga is part of a cultural pattern of occupation which may be evident in the landscape. It may be the product of a succession of activities, occupations and conquests. There are 55,000 sites recorded in New Zealand. A high proportion is of Māori origin. Most sites are quite small, maybe just a few pits on a ridge. A small number cover up to 1 ha or occupy as much as 300 m of a ridgeline. A typical farm in coastal regions or on major rivers of the North Island might have one or two medium-sized sites and a scatter of sites of small area. The very largest sites are the large pā such as Ōtatara in Hawke’s Bay, or the pā on the Auckland volcanic cones (Fig. 1). There are also extensive areas of pre-European gardens in the coastal Bay of Plenty or on the flanks and surrounding stonefields of the volcanic cones of Auckland or Northland.

This guide cannot properly give an account of Māori views on archaeological site conservation. Consultation, with Māori in particular, is an essential early stage in any planned work on sites. Early in the consultation phase, good examples of positive management of sites to conserve their archaeological, visitor-appreciation and other commemorative values should be part of the approach of the land manager to Māori communities.

Figure 1. One Tree Hill, Auckland, viewed from the south. Relatively light grazing by sheep has maintained features well. Having staff and concessionaires on site (to right) enables close supervision of visitors. The pattern of treeland reveals the upper features of the site well to visitors on the ground.



Sites with surviving surface earthworks, such as pā or storage pits, are often on high points or on ridge lines. Their protection and management in the course of farm or forestry operations is of particular concern to archaeologists. Many subsurface sites are in areas of intensive rural and urban use (under houses, under flat land used for yards), so that impacts on the sites are always possible. Archaeologists in turn have to recognise that rational protection of site values requires good methods of protection, balanced with the recognition that landowners should enjoy usage and commercial return.

EXAMPLES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WIDER PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

- Single, sometimes very large earthworks visible on the modern ground surface
- Other features visible on the ground surface such as stone alignments, or foundations of former standing structures
- Soil modifications and additions not visible on the surface, such as middens, usually in stratified layers
- Places associated with recorded or oral history but no particular physical form in the ground
- Wāhi tapu and other traditional sites.

In general, sites not open to the public for visiting should be kept in stable vegetative cover that protects the archaeological values and requires the least long-term management effort and cost. Sites for public appreciation should have the vegetation managed so that the stratigraphy, earthworks and other structures are not only visible but also protected. Opening up rare or unique types of sites (this includes the display of excavated areas) should be done with great caution. The same applies to the exploration and documentation of delicate sites such as cave floors and places with rock art.

The guidelines presented here cover methods for the conservation and restoration of archaeological sites. It revises and replaces *A Manual of Vegetation Management on Archaeological Sites* (Hamel and Jones 1982). In 1994 the sites in that manual were re-visited and re-surveyed (and additional sites surveyed) by Jones and Simpson (1995a, 1995b). They noted that few sites had been managed positively following the recommendations of the 1982 manual. Some of the sites were in far worse condition compared with 1982. In more recent years, positive investigations have been carried out on ground covers at Ruapekapeka (Woods 1993, 1999) and we have drawn insights from that work. Recently, Harlow (1997) submitted a thesis summarising many of the issues covered in this guide. Documentation such as these reports is particularly needed because without it, experience of stabilisation initiatives cannot be consolidated and more widely disseminated to professional land managers. In addition we have drawn on the principal author's experience of international practice (Jones 1993, 1998; see also Andropogon Associates n.d., 1988; Thorne 1988, 1989, 1990; Berry & Brown 1994, 1995).

The alternative to management is to accept that there will be a steady loss of archaeological sites and values or that there should be a cost to record and to recover information from the archaeological sites. The Historic Places Act 1993 is based on the premise that the destruction of sites should be controlled. Under the act, where destruction is inevitable there may be a requirement for an excavation, which can be expensive. For many years archaeologists have seen excavation as an early resort where site protection could not be guaranteed. However, in the last decade all international guidelines such as the International Charter for Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM) have moved away from the assumption that sites should be excavated where they come under threat. Instead the stress is on *in situ* (in the ground) management and protection of sites for the information they contain and for their broader cultural interest.

A managed site is a recognised asset, and is less likely to be inadvertently destroyed by careless land development. Even though damaged in some way, sites may have significance to tangata whenua (Māori people) and local communities and will still have archaeological value. Evaluation of the protection possibilities for damaged sites should be the subject of discussion between landowner, archaeologist and tangata whenua.

Examples of the damage that can happen on farms is roading or fencing which may cut through a site. Yet farmland grazed by sheep provides the most obvious way to reveal the form of ancient surface earthworks for visitors or for passers-by. Forest or shrubland cover will obscure these reminders of a more ancient landscape. Tree root growth and tree harvesting destroy sites but there are also opportunities to protect sites in small patches of grass or native shrubs within the forest. Where a site is to be open to the public and interpreted for public presentation, visitors may come from any part of New Zealand or the world. The preservation of archaeological sites in the long term depends on the goodwill of local people. Our guidelines will assist in defining these issues and will provide logical steps in planning for protection and describing techniques that can protect sites in a variety of situations.

We have written these guidelines for people professionally involved in the management of land where there are archaeological sites. They should be relevant to:

Land owners and managers:

- DOC conservation officers and technical services officers
- Farm and forest owners and managers
- Local and regional government reserve managers and operations staff
- Private landowners administering covenanted areas or areas where there are archaeological sites

Iwi:

- Rūnanga iwi and iwi environmental staff
- Trustees and lessees of Māori Reserves

Professional groups:

- Landscape architects
- Queen Elizabeth II National Trust
- New Zealand Historic Places Trust
- Archaeological and resource management consultants.

The general principles and the techniques explained in these guidelines should be able to be incorporated into, or referred to in, management or conservation plans. Such a plan should have resolved issues in detailed site management, including the role of tangata whenua. We state principles which may help define the issues and resolve problems in conservation planning but they are not the final word. Specialist areas where we believe additional professional advice may be needed on a case-by-case basis include: conservation plans for particular areas, landscape analysis sensitive to archaeological site conservation, engineering issues, statutory land management processes and consents, pasture and grasslands, fire risk, and tree felling and forestry operations.

The work is arranged as follows:

- Part 1. Discussion of heritage policy issues that will assist an understanding of archaeological values and management objectives for archaeological sites
- Part 2. Techniques for maintaining condition of sites
- Part 3. Guidance on archaeological site management under particular land uses (amenity, forestry, farming) with several case studies.

Eventually, the three sections of Part 3 may be prepared as leaflets or posters. There are boxed summaries or highlights at various stages of the text. Reading these boxes only should give an understanding of the fundamentals of the guidelines. The boxes and figures may also be used to prepare overhead projector foils or Powerpoint screens. However, we have not attempted to give highly prescriptive advice because the natural setting and the conservation and heritage significance of places vary so much; and because techniques and proprietary products may change.

We are seeking feedback on the guidelines, at the level of principles or comments on specific sections (please indicate page and specific text). Contact Kevin Jones, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 10 420, Wellington (email kljones@doc.govt.nz) or Rick McGovern-Wilson, New Zealand Historic Places Trust, P.O. Box 2629, Wellington (email rmcgwilson@historic.org.nz).