

Urupukapuka Island

Historic Heritage Assessment

Bay of Islands Area Office



Melina Goddard 2012



newzealand.govt.nz

Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Urupukapuka Island Scenic Reserve Historic Heritage Assessment

Melina Goddard, DoC, Bay of Islands Area Office 2012

Cover image: Q05/116 pit overlooking western arm of Urupukapuka Island (A Blanshard)

Peer-reviewed by: A. Blanshard

Publication information

© Copyright New Zealand Department of Conservation

(web pdf # needed)

Contents

Site Overview	6
History Description	6
Fabric Description	9
Cultural Connections	14
National Context	14
Historic Significance	14
Fabric Significance	15
Cultural Significance	15
Management Recommendations	15
Management Chronology	15
Management Documentation	17
Sources	17
Endnotes	



Figure 1: Urupukapuka Island in the Bay of Islands, Northland, New Zealand. (Map toaster)

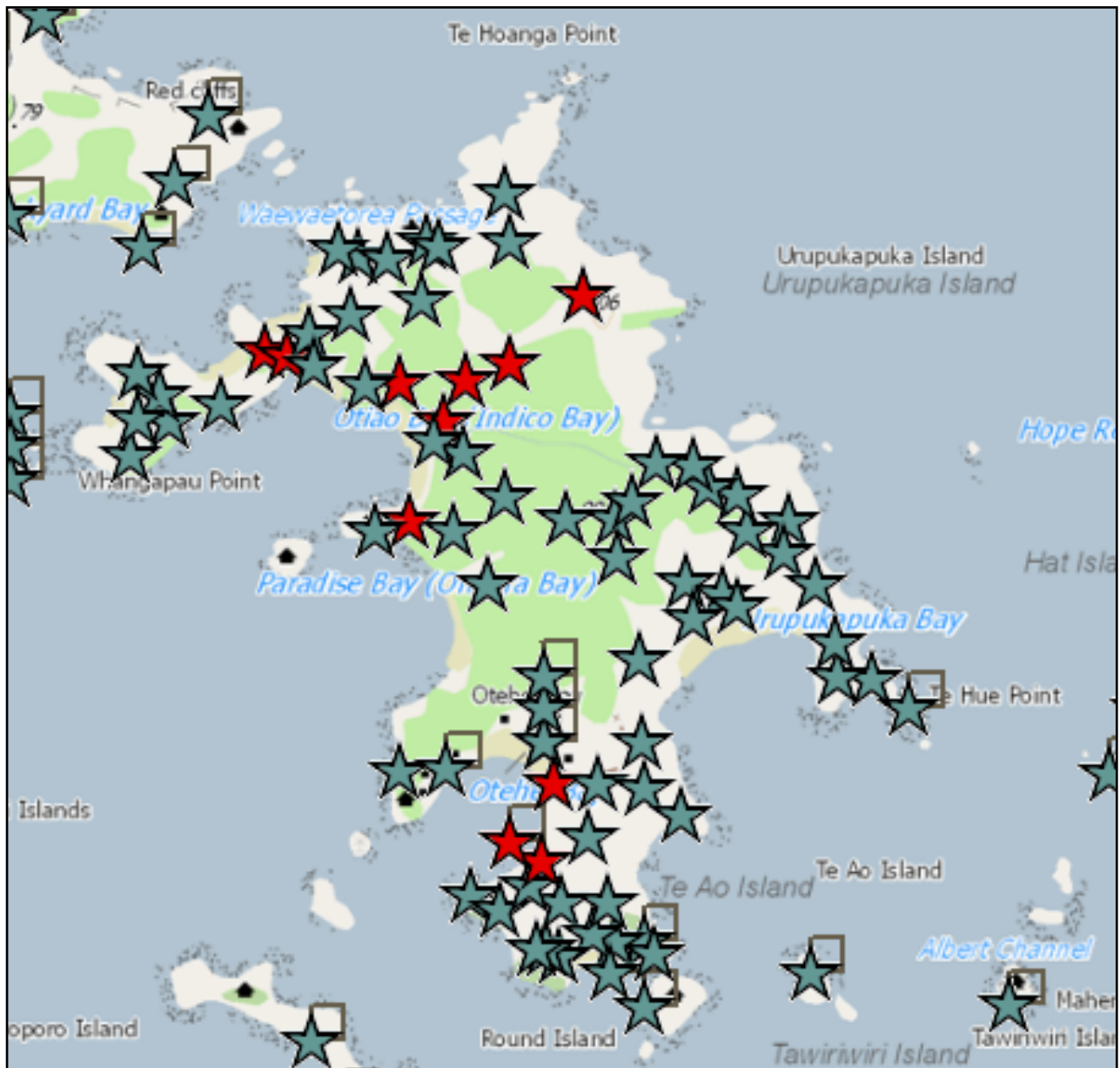


Figure 2: the green and red stars representing individual archaeological sites on Urupukapuka Island (ARCHSITE)

Site Overview

Urupukapuka is the largest island in the Bay of Islands and is managed by the Department of Conservation as a recreational reserve that offers camping facilities and walking tracks (fig 1). In addition to having high recreational and scenic values the island is a dense archeological landscape with 73 recorded sites related to pre-historic Maori occupation. Historically Urupukapuka is connected to accounts by early explorers Lieutenant James Cook and Marion Du Fresne. In the 1920's the island was used as a sport fishing resort by American author Zane Grey and has a history of early farming. Buildings from these episodes in the island history still survive.

It is however the archaeological fabric of the island which tells a greater story of prehistoric Maori that has left pa, terraces, pits and fortified and unfortified villages over the islands landscape. The diversity and preservation of the features of the island over this relatively undisturbed landscape is rare nationally and is considered one of the few surviving archaeological "remnants" in New Zealand.¹

Land status: *Recreation Reserve*

Administered by: *The Department of Conservation, Bay of Islands Area Office*

Access by: *Private and public boats*

Visitor numbers: *Visitors to Otehei Bay from ferry trips:*

Heritage status: *protected under the Historic Places Act 1993, the Conservation Act 1987 the Reserves Act 1977 and comes under the ICOMOS charter as a place of cultural heritage value.*

Site area: *208ha*

Functional location number: *DN-61-200-1018*

History Description

Urupukapuka Island topography is dominated by numerous small valleys and large bays separated by broad ridges and headlands. The island is partly grazed and the coastal fringe consists of pohutukawa trees and manuka/kanuka. Geologically Urupukapuka is made up of the Waipapa group which is greywacke being the most dominant, and argillite, chert, red mudstone and marble.²

For early Maori settlers Urupukapuka offered sheltered bays for launching canoes and other settlement activities. Fresh water streams located on the island would have been used for drinking and gardening purposes and plentiful kaimoana was available in the surrounding waters. Maori thrived in this island environment which is seen in the density of archaeological remains (fig 2).

Before the arrival of Europeans in the Bay of Islands, Maori stories tell of a long settlement on Urupukapuka by Ngare Raumati, Ngatiawa, Ngati Wai, and Ngapuhi.³ Oral traditions specific to the island exist within the iwi groups associated to the island.

Urupukapuka Island is located within the rich historical and archaeological landscape of the Bay of Islands. The first European contact was in 1769 by English explorer James Cook and then again in 1772 by French explorer Marion du Fresne. These early explorations provide accounts of some of the first Maori and European interactions, and thus providing a unique look at pre-European Maori culture in the Bay.⁴

The historical accounts that exist for Urupukapuka Island come from Marion Du Fresne in 1772. He described it as containing “*villages of the natives fortified with palisades*”. Additionally the Plan du Port Marion, a map of the islands drawn by Du Fresne and his crew illustrates Urupukapuka and some of these fortified villages (fig 3).⁵

Early land court documents show several unfortified villages from 1800-1835 and it is suggested that these were associated with extensive cultivations behind Otiao Bay and Otehei Bay and until fairly recently Urupukapuka Bay.⁶

In the early European period a whaling captain named Brind claimed to have purchased 150 acres on Urupukapuka from the Ngapuhi chief Rewa, but the claim was not upheld. In the late 1800's two Europeans by the name of Symonds and Greenway leased some land for grazing purposes and began to clear land and build fence lines. A Maori Land Court hearing in 1905 partitioned Urupukapuka into three holdings with shares for 98 claimants. A Mr Baker from Russell began to buy land from the Maori shareholders.⁷

In 1927 Otehei Bay became the base of Zane Grey's big game fishing expeditions, and a fishing resort was later established there (fig 4).⁸ The history of the island from this time onwards is primarily sheep grazing.⁹

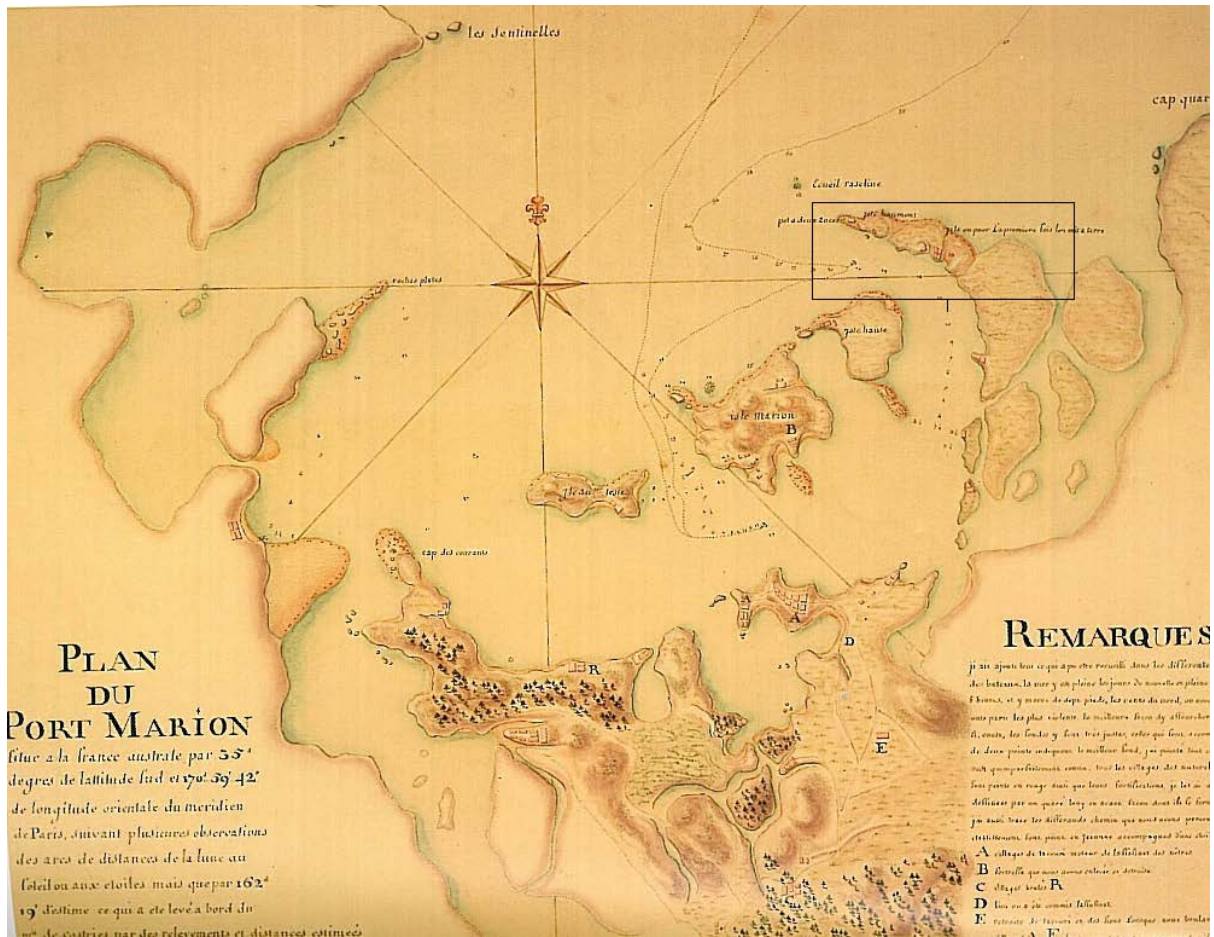


Figure 3: The Plan du Port Marion of the Bay of Islands. Urupukapuka Island is likely to be the group of islands on the far upper right. (Salmond, A 1991).



Figure 4: Zane Grey Fishing Resort c. 1927 northern end of Otehei Bay (Auckland Museum Institute).

Fabric Description

Attached to the grazing history of the island, is the woolshed located in Otehei Bay which was built sometime in the 1920's.¹⁰ The woolshed is a rectangular timber framed building clad on the walls and roof with corrugated iron, with some marked COMET MADE IN ENGLAND (Figs 5 & 6). The woolshed has historic significance in its role in the farming history of the island.¹¹

Further buildings in Otehei Bay that were built in the early 1900's are the boatshed, located adjacent to the woolshed. The Bakers house, a three bedroom house with living room, kitchen and verandah.¹² There are also buildings that remain from the Zane Grey fishing resort now part of the Explore NZ accommodations and restaurant. These are eight small timber huts used as sleeping areas and includes Zane Grey's personal hut. The resort is also dotted with fruit trees planted in Zane Grey's period. In a small bay within the Otehei Bay harbour is a cottage known as Ferriers and associated buildings, currently used as work related accommodation by DoC staff.



Figure 5: The woolshed and Bakers house 1939 southern end of Otehei Bay (Auckland Museum Institute)



Figure 6: The woolshed today (DoC)

Urupukapuka Island has 73 archaeological sites as updated and recorded in the 2009 ground survey by Department of Conservation. In total over 1,000 features were recorded as a result of this survey.¹³

Eight of the sites have been identified as pa sites. Pa site Qo5/84 is located on the northern end of the island and is extensive and well-defined. It would have had palisades encircling its southern flanks with the cliff edge on its northern flank acting as a natural defence (fig 7).

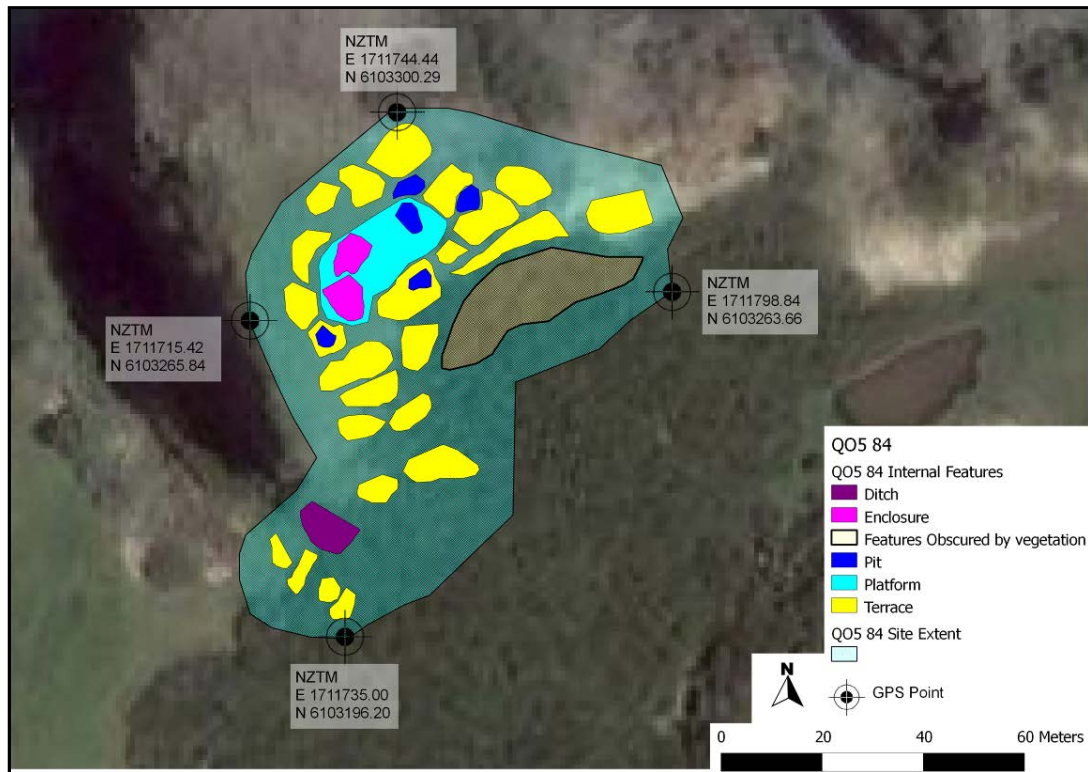


Figure 7: Q05/84 cliff pa located on the northern end of Urupukapuka Island. Features recorded using a Trimble Nomad GPS with a post processed accuracy of 98% >5m.

Terraced knoll complexes are a recurring site type on the island. These are described as undefended settlements and are likely to be associated to a headland pa site. An example of one of these is located on the southern end of the island Q05/91. Within this site extent are terraces likely used for habitation and gardens, with larger terraces on the summit acting as a probable lookout. These knolls may also have been defended with palisades at some stage (fig 8).

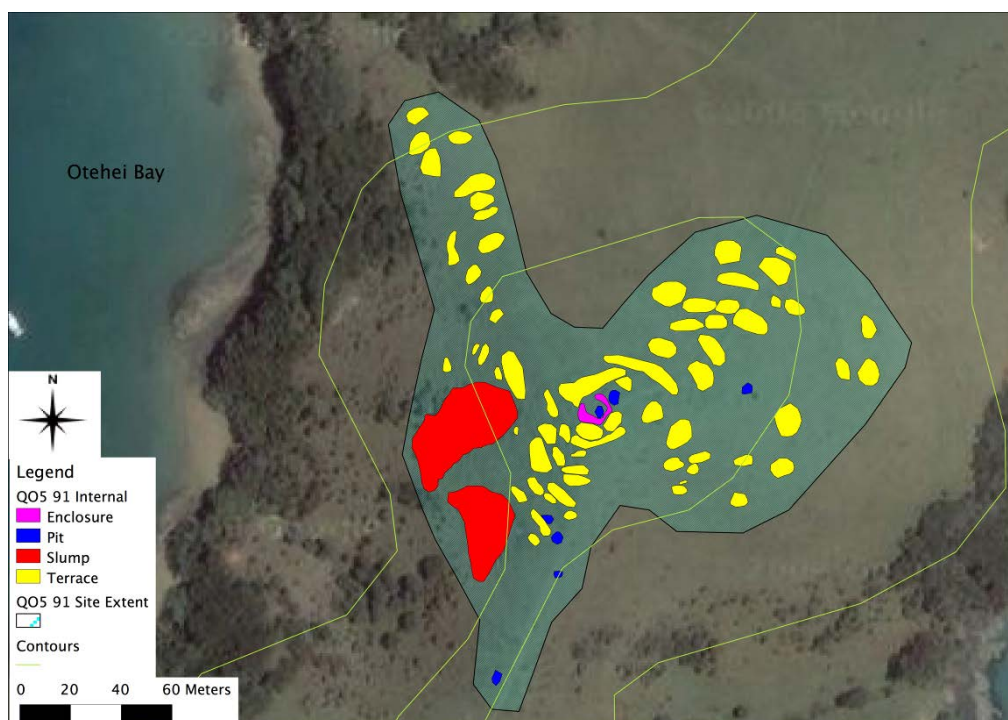


Figure 8: Q05/91 terraced knoll site located on the southern end of Urupukapuka Island. Features were recorded using a Trimble Nomad GPS with a post processed accuracy of 98% >5m.

Other site types are exclusively terrace features, defined as flattish areas of habitation that are dug into the slopes of ridges, knolls and spurs. These features represent a high percentage of the sites on the island.

Pits were used as storage rooms for crops and in the Bay of Islands they are generally located on terraces or hidden from the habited areas for protection against raids.¹⁴ An outstanding pit site is located on the northern end of the island and is possibly associated to cliff pa Qo5/84 (fig 9). The pits represent the largest on the island ranging from 7x4m to 4x2m with depths of 2-3m.



Figure 9: Q05/116 extensive pit site with associated terraces features recorded with Trimble Nomad GPS with a post processed accuracy of 98% >5m.

When the sun is low and bright, garden drains can be seen running down steep slopes and flat areas behind bays on Urupukapuka. These may have also acted as plot division markers.¹⁵

Midden sites or shell refuse-the remains of past meals, are present on the island. The most extensive site of this nature found is on the flats of Otehei Bay Q05/1101. This is located under and surrounding the current Explore NZ restaurant and accommodations. Numerous excavations of a small and large scale have been carried out here and show the use of these flats from early on in the pre-historic Maori period. Archaeological remains include mammal, dog, pig and human bone, obsidian, hangi stones, shellfish remains, and stone flakes from tool making and fish bone, which indicates early occupation (at the time of Maori colonization and settlement) of this island by Maori.¹⁶

In addition to Pre-European Maori sites the island is also represented by early buildings associated to its time as a fishing resort and also buildings attached to the islands farming history dating from the early 1920's.

Overall the condition of sites is considered to be medium to high with early cattle farming and erosion being the major contributors to archaeological site deterioration. The highest amount of site damage that was found, based on previous archaeological work was that of Q05/1101 in Otehei Bay. This site has been subject to disturbance due to operations conducted by the leaseholders and also from water action of the stream, which has eroded the banks and caused material to be washed out into the stream mouths and the tide.¹⁷ In turn however these excavations have highlighted the importance of this site and the island overall, as a landscape that has been in use from the beginning of human time in the Bay of Islands.

The fabric of the island is diverse and a high amount of individual features and further archaeological evidence is highly likely subsurface. The diversity values of the sites are high.

The subsurface fabric of the island has been explored through geophysical surveys and has yielded results that indicate the likelihood of extensive archaeological remains. Firstly was in 2009 by M. McCoy and assistants who surveyed eight locations and found that the location of defensive and irrigation ditches, pits, midden and other features that are currently not visible on the ground surface.¹⁸

H. Badar carried out a geomagnetic survey on sites on the southern portion of the island to establish the presence of underground features in relation to the features seen on the surface. In addition to the visible surface features further anomalies indicated the presence of sub surface features which could be pits, fire events and gardening activities. For example the terraced knoll Q05/91 (fig 8) indicates that in addition to terraces there was probably Maori horticulture taking place.¹⁹

The sites that are represented occur repetitively across the island and throughout the Bay of Islands. However due to the high visibility of the sites on Urupukapuka compared to the surrounding islands which are heavily vegetated and the close distribution of such a diverse range, this archaeological landscape is considered to be rare.

Urupukapuka Island and the islands of the bay are part of an entire archaeological landscape. For example, the settlement patterns and use of the landscape within this island could not be understood or researched without the consideration and comparison of the whole island and the wider area, likewise for the other islands in the Bay. The contextual values of the sites are high.

Cultural Connections

Urupukapuka Island is culturally connected to the people of *Ngati Kuta* and *Patu Keha*. Further cultural traditions of the island exist within these iwi groups.

National Context

Urupukapuka and its surrounding islands are unique and important as an example of single archaeological island entities and as a set off islands with intact archeological landscapes.

*“Intensified land development and subdivision are changing the rural and urban terrain so rapidly that only remnants of the landscapes relating to the 500 years of Maori settlement and the subsequent 100 years of joint Maori and colonial settlement will survive into the 21st century”.*²⁰

Nationally Urupukapuka is an example of a complete archaeological landscape or remnant which in the sought after coastline of the north is a rarity.

Historic Significance

The historic significance of the island is represented by the associations to the explorations of Lieutenant James Cook and Marion du Fresne. These accounts provide opportunities to glimpse at Maori life during this period.

The islands history also represents by early farming, with buildings from that time still present. The buildings although having no special features are unique to this island environment.

Fabric Significance

The fabric significance of Urupukapuka is immense. The diversity and preservation of the features of the island over this relatively undisturbed landscape is rare and its associations to other relatively undisturbed island archaeological fabrics such as Waewaetorea, provides unique opportunities for a collective archaeological island comparison. Additionally the fabric of the island tells of an extensive Maori pre-history.

Cultural Significance

The cultural significance of the island is high as a representative of New Zealand's early history and is also highly significant to local iwi.

Management Recommendations

- The preservation of the archeological sites on Urupukapuka be maintained through lack of intervention and where this is sought then an authority from the Historic Places Trust is required.
- Sheep grazing which is carried out (mainly on the southern end) is preferable to maintain open spaces on the island and also much less destructive than cattle.

Management Chronology

- 1971: Gazetted as a recreation reserve under the care of Maritime and Historic Park Board.
- 1976: An extensive island wide archaeological foot survey using tape and compass to record features by Leahy and Walsh.
- January 1980: Permit No.19/22 granted by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust to modify site N12/83, drains and field systems in Urupukapuka Bay.
- 1980-85: Cattle replaced with sheep.
- 1983: Archaeological survey of the island by K. Rountree located a further twenty four sites in addition to Leahy and Walsh's survey of the island in 1976 which recorded 42 archaeological sites. (Archaeological Site Survey Kerikeri-Paihia NZHPT). Sites recorded via foot survey and tape and compass forms lodged with NZAA.
- 1988: Report to the Historic Places Trust on the archaeological sites Urupukapuka Island that would be affected by the proposed development of Otehei Bay Company Ltd
- 1995: J. Maingay and J. Robinson from the Department of Conservation undertook a small test excavation under authority 1995/32 in the centre of Otehei Bay. Found shell midden and obsidian flakes.

- 2002: Test excavation conducted along the Otehei Bay foreshore by DoC as a result of planned landscape by Zane Grey Company. This was located between the restaurant and the northern drain.
- 2003/2004: 46 spade test pits across the extent of the Zane Grey Resort dug by Northern Archaeological Research for the company who wished to redevelop resort.²¹
- 2006: Conservation report done of the woolshed and other buildings in Otehei Bay by C. Cochran, Conservation Architect.
- 2007: An archaeological assessment of campsites on the island conducted and reported on by A. Blanshard.
- 2007: Asbestos survey and assessment of the Old Museum Building in Otehei Bay adjacent to Ferriers cottage.
- 2008-2009: Archaeological site survey conducted by DoC (Blanshard & Goddard) to update condition and location of sites recorded on the island in 1976 and 1983. 73 archaeological sites were recorded on the island using a Trimble nomad GPS this allowed a post processed accuracy of 98% >5m. All GPS points are in New Zealand Traverse Mercator Projection, based on the NZ2000 Datum. This information was then overlaid onto a Google map of the island (figs 10 & 11).
- 2009: A report by Mark McCoy on intensive archaeological survey and geophysical survey of northern Urupukapuka Island and Waewaetorea Island, Bay of Islands.
- 2010: Bader, H. Archaeological Geomagnetic report, Urupukapuka Island, 2010, Bay of Islands. Prepared for Department of Conservation by Archaeology Solutions Ltd.
- 2010: An authority sought and granted for fencing and replacement of footbridge on the southern portion of the island. (2010/262).
- January 2011: University of Auckland field school research excavation in Urupukapuka Bay of Q05/121 & Q05/115.
- 2011: Authority sought and granted to upgrade walking tracks and install a campsite on island (2011/442).
- 2011-2012: Completion of the fencing and footbridge.
- 2011: Koiwi and pou placed on the southern peninsula of island facing Rawhiti.

- 2012: Work begins on islands northern and southern ends for upgrading tracks on island under authority.

Management Documentation

DoC files: Northland - Bay of Islands Area Office - Urupukapuka HHA-01-02-15 NLB-1; Northland - Bay of Islands Area Office - Urupukapuka - Archaeological Sites HHA-01-02-15-01 NLB-1, HHA-01-02-15-01 NLB-2; Northland - Bay of Islands Area Office - Urupukapuka - Research, Surveys, Assessments HHA-01-02-15-03 NLB-1 01/07/2010 Northland - Bay of Islands Area Office - Urupukapuka - Archaeological Sites HHA-01-02-15-04 NLB-1 01/01/1981 Northland - Bay of Islands Area Office - Urupukapuka - Site Interpretation, modification etc HHA-01-02-15-05 NLB-1 01/08/1984 Northland - Bay of Islands Area Office - **Urupukapuka** - Management Plans [HHA-01-02-15-06](#) NLB-1 16/03/2010 Northland - Bay of Islands Area Office - **Urupukapuka** - Maintenance, restoration etc [HHA-01-02-15-07](#) NLB-1 01/01/1976 Northland - Bay of Islands Area Office - **Urupukapuka** - Otehei Bay Assessments, Research etc

Baseline inspection: Leahy, A. Walsh, W. 1976. Archaeological site survey Bay of Islands Kerikeri Paihia area.

Sources

Allen, H. 2010. The crisis in 21st century archaeological heritage management. In *Bridging the Divide: Indigenous Communities and Archaeology into the 21st Century* (eds) Caroline Phillips and Harry Allen. One world archaeology, Left Coast Press INC.

Badar, H., 2010. Archaeological geomagnetic report, Urupukapuka Island 2010, Bay of Islands. Prepared for the Department of Conservation by Archaeology Solutions Ltd.

Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park. 1989. *The story of the bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park. Bay of Islands*. Maritime and Historic Park.

Blanshard, A., Goddard, M. 2009. Urupukapuka Island track upgrade, an archaeological assessment for the Department of Conservation.

Bruce, I. 2004. Archaeological survey and assessment of the proposed upgrade development at the Zane Grey Resort, Otehei Bay, Urupukapuka Island. Northern Archaeological Research Mangonui.

Burgess, S. 2004. Statement of Sally Burgess. Department of Conservation files; HHA 01 02 15 07.

Cochran C, Urupukapuka Island Woolshed, report for the Department of Conservation, Conservation Architect.

Department of Lands and Survey. 1984. Urupukapuka and Waewaetorea Islands Management Plan. Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park Boards. DoC files

Leahy, A. Walsh, W. 1976. Archaeological site survey Bay of Islands Kerikeri Paihia area.

McCoy, M. 2009. A report on intensive archaeological survey and geophysical survey of northern Urupukapuka Island and Waewaetorea Island, Bay of Islands, New Zealand. San Jose University and Auckland University.

Robinson, Slocombe, Barr. 2002. Archaeological investigations northern end of Otehei Bay beach flats. DoC files.

Salmond, A. 1991. *Two Worlds: First meeting between Maori and Europeans 1642-1772*. Penguin Books, Auckland.

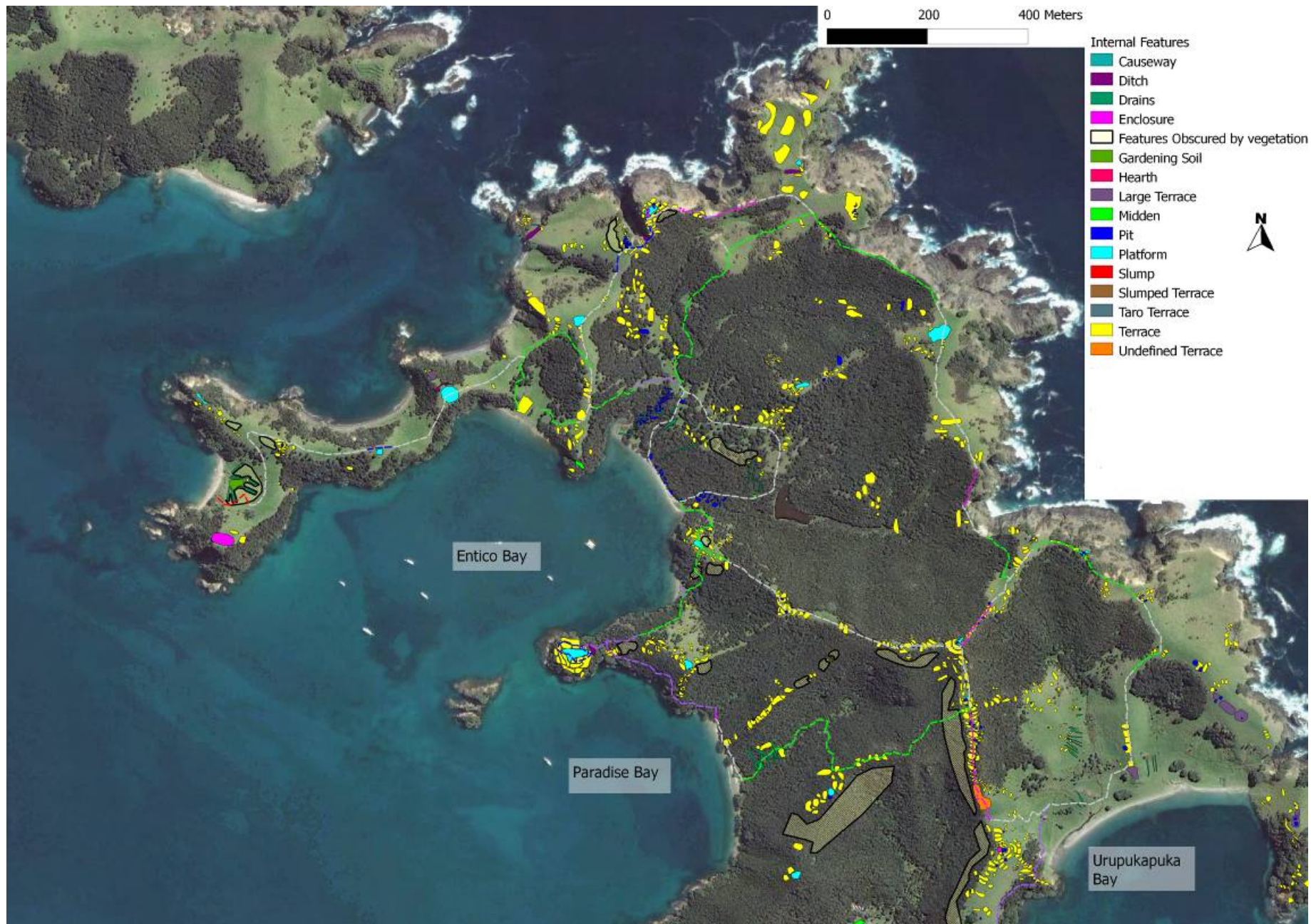


Figure 10: Map of Urupukapuka Island (excluding southern peninsula and eastern side of Urupukapuka Bay) with archaeological features recorded in 2009. (A. Blanshard, M. Goddard).

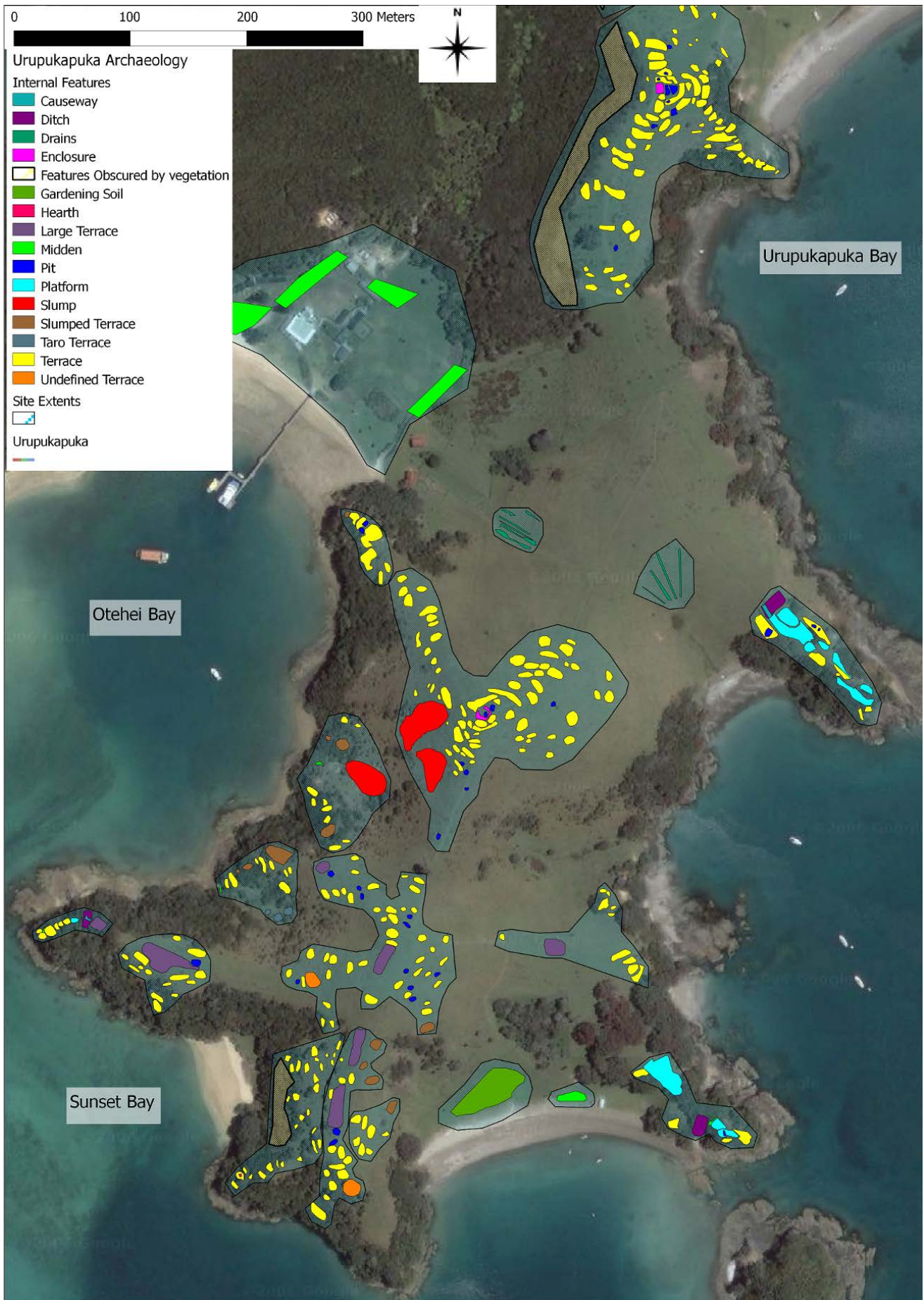


Figure 11: Map of Urupukapuka Island's southern peninsula showing archaeological sites as recorded in 2009 (A. Blanshard, M. Goddard).

Endnotes

¹ Allen, H 2010.

² Blanshard, A., Goddard, M. 2009.

³ The Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park 1989:29

⁴ Salmond, A. 1991 (For detailed accounts).

⁵ *Op cit*: The Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park

⁶ Department of Lands and Survey 1984:11

⁷ *Op cit*:The Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park

⁸ For further history and images of Zane Grey and his time in Otehei Bay: *Angler's Eldorado: Zane Grey in New Zealand*. Auckland: Heinemann Reed: 1990.

⁹ *Op cit*:Department of Lands and Survey:136

¹⁰ Based upon general construction and materials. Urupukapuka Island Woolshed, report for the Department of Conservation, Cochran C, Conservation Architect.

¹¹ Cochran C, Urupukapuka Island Woolshed.

¹² Burgess, S. 2004.

¹³ *Op cit*: Blanshard, A., Goddard, M. 2009.

¹⁴ *Op cit*:Department of Lands and Survey

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Moturua Island also has evidence of early Maori occupation. Site Q05/682

¹⁷ *Op cit*:Blanshard, A., Goddard, M. 2009

¹⁸ McCoy, M. 2009.

¹⁹ Badar, H. 2010:10.

²⁰ *Op cit*:Allen, H.

²¹ Bruce, I. 2004..