



# Tapeka Pa Heritage Assessment



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June 2012

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Cover Image: Tapeka Pa, looking north from Tapeka Beach.

## *Site Overview*

Tapeka Pa is located on the Tapeka Point Historic Reserve, north of Russell in the Bay of Islands. The pa and reserve are administered by the Bay of Islands Area Office in Kerikeri. The pa is accessed by a DOC walking track at the cul-de-sac at the end of Du Fresne Place. The reserve consists of Lot 109 DP 61182 which is 3ha in size, and an esplanade reserve on the coastal fringe from the northern end of Tapeka Road to the south western end of Rewa Place consisted of Lots 107, 108, and 110 DP 61183 totalling 3.2ha.

The pa is located on a steep headland and is surrounded on three sides by water. The southern slope between the pa and Du Fresne Place has been developed as a residential subdivision over the last thirty years. The pa itself consists of a series of earthwork terraces and defensive ditch and bank fortifications.

A map of Tapeka Pa has been produced by geo-referencing and overlaying the most accurate archaeological site map in a Geographic Information System along with recent aerial imagery and other geographic data; the location of features is approximate only but provides a picture of the archaeological features in the context of the surrounding landscape (Figure 2).





Figure 1: Tapeka Historic Reserve and Tapeka Pa.



## *History Description*

Tapeka has been translated as “To wrap around” as in wrapping a cloak around oneself. Captain Cook put in at Tapeka in 1769 and was invited to inspect the pa and Marion Du Fresne named the point, Point of Currents due to the strong swells in 1772. The traditional history records that in the time of Hongi Hika’s father Te Hotete following a battle, between Ngapuhi and Ngare Raumati which culminated in a naval engagement of duelling waka, a canoe was destroyed on the rocks below and the defeated Ngare Raumati sought refuge on the pa.

When the Rev. Samuel Marsden arrived on his first trip to the Bay of Islands in 1814 the pa was occupied by the Chief Tara of Ngati Manu, from whom Marsden sought permission to take timber from the Kawakawa River.

The pa was painted by Augustus Earle in 1827 in two separate paintings; one a landscape from the saddle below Maiki/Flagstaff Hill and the other from the beach at Tapeka showing the artist conversing with Hongi Hika and his family. His paintings show the pa proper abandoned, but a whare and fenced plots on the slopes below, in the case of the first painting, and pataka or raised storage platforms on the slopes in the second painting.

Following the Girls War in 1830, Pomare II/Whetoe and the Kororareka chief Kiwikiwi ceded the Tapeka Peninsula from Tapeka Point to Orongo and moved south to Otuihu (King 1992: 140). The land was sold to Samuel Stephenson in 1836 for goods latter estimate to be worth £39.. The original deed of sale states:

*“This Indenture made the second day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-six Between Riwa otherwise Manu of Kororarika in the Bay of Islands in the Island of New Zealand a Native Chief of the said Island of the one part and Samuel Stephenson late of London in the Kingdom of England but now of the Bay of Islands in the Island of New Zealand aforesaid Merchant and Trader of the other part Witnesseth that for and in consideration of Two ¼ Casks of Gunpowder, four Blankets, fifty-six pounds of Lead, one bag of Shot, three hundred pipes and one Iron pot of the value of Thirteen pounds of lawful money of Great Britain in hand paid by the said Samuel Stephenson to the said Riwa otherwise Manu at the time of the sealing and delivery hereof the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged he the said Riwa otherwise Manu hath given and granted and by these presents doth give and grant and confirm unto the said Samuel Stephenson and his heirs All that piece or parcel of land called Tapeka situated lying and being on the East side of the Harbour or Bay of Islands in the Island of New Zealand aforesaid bounded on the East North and West by the said harbour or Bay of Islands and on the South East by low flat land belonging to the above mentioned Riwa otherwise Manu and on the South by a piece of land called and known as Trapp’s land. To have and to hold all and singular the same land hereditaments and premises, together with the appurtenances thereunto belonging to him the said Samuel Stephenson his heirs and assigns to the only proper use and behoof of him the said Samuel Stephenson his heirs and assigns for ever. And the said Riwa otherwise Manu and his heirs all and singular the said land hereditaments and premises with their and every of their rights members and appurtenances unto him the said Samuel Stephenson and his heirs against him the said Riwa otherwise Manu and*

*his heirs shall and will warrant and for ever defend by these presents. In Witness whereof the parties aforesaid have hereunto set their hands and seals at Kororarika in the Island aforesaid the day month and year first before written.*

*The mark of the Chief Riwa otherwise Manu x.*

*Samuel Stephenson*

*Signed sealed and delivered (no stamps being used nor any to be obtained) in the presence of—*

<i>George</i>	<i>Greenway.</i>
<i>Willm.</i>	<i>Stewart.</i>
<i>Thos.</i>	<i>Wing.</i>

*Receipt. £13 . 0 . 0. Received the day and year first within written of and from the within named Samuel Stephenson the sum of Thirteen pounds being the consideration money within expressed to be paid by him to me and being in full for the absolute purchase of the land and premises within particularly mentioned and described. The mark of the Chief Riwa x otherwise Manu.*

*Witness—*

<i>Geo.</i>	<i>Greenway.</i>
<i>Willm.</i>	<i>Stewart.</i>
<i>Thos.</i>	<i>Wing.</i>

*Peaceable possession taken and delivered. Be it remembered that on the day and year first within written peaceable and quiet possession and full seisin of the piece or parcel of ground land hereditaments and premises within mentioned to be granted and enfeoffed by the within named Riwa otherwise Manu to the within named Samuel Stephenson and his heirs and assigns were openly had and taken by the within named Riwa otherwise Manu and were by him delivered to the said Samuel Stephenson his heirs and assigns according to the purport and true intent and meaning of the within written Indenture in the presence of us whose names are hereunto subscribed as Witness*

*thereto.*

*The mark of the Chief Riwa x otherwise Manu.*

*In the presence of—*

<i>Geo.</i>	<i>Greenway.</i>
<i>Wm.</i>	<i>Stewart.</i>
<i>Thos. Wing.</i>	

*A True Copy.*

*Henry Kemp.“*

Berghan (2006: 277-78) provides a summary of Stephenson's claim to land at Tapeka from Old Land Claim file 445. On 15 December 1840, Stephenson forwarded in his claim to the Colonial Secretary for consideration. On 28 October 1841, Stephenson appeared before the Old Land Claims Commission and provided details of his claim and Riwa gave evidence acknowledging the original transaction and the payments made. Stephenson also noted that he had spent £5-6 on buildings and stockyards. On 1 November 1841, George Greenway testified to being a witness to the original transaction.

On 2 May 1842, Commissioners Richmond and Godfrey recommended an award for 15 acres to be issued. The award was confirmed by Governor Hobson and gazetted on 24 August 1842. However, notification in August 1843 of the disallowance of the 1842 New Zealand Land Claims Ordinance meant that this award had to be recalculated under a formula for valuing pre-1840 payments that had been originally contained in the 1841 New Zealand Land Claims Ordinance. As a result, the Stephenson's award was amended and a new award was gazetted on 6 September 1843 which appears to have been for the same amount of land. In 1843 he had his claim surveyed as illustrated on Old Land Claim 229 on the western side of the peninsula and the point. Old Land Claim 91 shows the claim of W. D. Brind on the eastern side of the peninsula.

On 22 October 1844, a grant for 25 acres 3 roods was prepared for the Tapeka claim and a second purchase, also from Riwa. There is no evidence that this claim was investigated by the Bell Commission following the Native Lands Act of 1857. A later summary of claims merely records that the grant issued in 1844 remained valid.

Stephenson built a house there behind the existing Norfolk Pines in the late 1830s (the pines were planted to celebrate the births of his three sons). The Stephensons abandoned the house after the northern war of 1845-46 and moved to Kororareka and the house became a school under Mrs Woolley in the 1860s, the building being known as known as Prospect House. It survived until 1910 (King 1992: 189).

During WW1 a lookout was established on the Point to watch for German raiders following the escape of Baron von Luckner (King 1992: 119). In September 1936 the Fraser Rock or Tapeka Light began operating, named after the Engineer Secretary of the Whangarei Harbour Board (King 1992: 187). Tapeka was finally joined to Russell by road in early 1942 as the Bay of Islands was fortified following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. The subdivision of the area began in 1968 with the point and pa reserved from development. By 1978 the subdivision was encroaching on the lower slopes of the pa.

A track was constructed from the Right of Way Easement which provided access from the new subdivision, to the northern end of the point in 1981. This narrow track is generally a 1.2m wide grass track cleared regularly by scrub bar, with wooden steps across the defensive earthworks to combat erosion installed in 1992. Sections of the track run immediately adjacent to steep cliffs and drop offs



Figure 2: Entrance of the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Augustus Earle 1827. NLA pic-an2820777.



Figure 3: The wounded chief Honghi & his family, 1827. lithographed and published by R. Martin & Co in 1838 (ATL PUBL-0015-02).



## *Fabric Description*

Tapeka is a classic defended headland pa, consisting of multiple transverse defensive ditches and banks dividing the headland, with earthworks terraces and platforms or tihi on the two highest points of the headland. The pa was first recorded archaeologically by J. D Osbourne in 1967 but no detail was provided. The site record form was updated by Lady Aileen Fox in 1976. She provided a narrative description and a sketch plan just as the land below the pa was being subdivided. The current NZAA designation is Q05/1.

The site was remapped in 1992 by J. Robinson of DOC using plane table and alidade. The site is defended by three lines of transverse ditch and scarp earthworks. Halfway along the narrow ridge there is a rectangular tihi or summit platform on a natural high point. A larger and higher knoll with a tihi and terraces looks down over vertical cliffs at the northern end of the point. There is littler internal terracing suggesting there wasn't a large permanent population but rather the pa may have functioned as a lookout or refuge, with an associated undefended kainga on the lower slopes and flats behind the beach below.

Today the site is covered in a thick mat of kikuyu grass with a fringe of coastal vegetation including pohutakawa. The headland is windswept and exposed from every direction.



Figure 4: Tapeka Pa, looking north from Tapeka Beach.

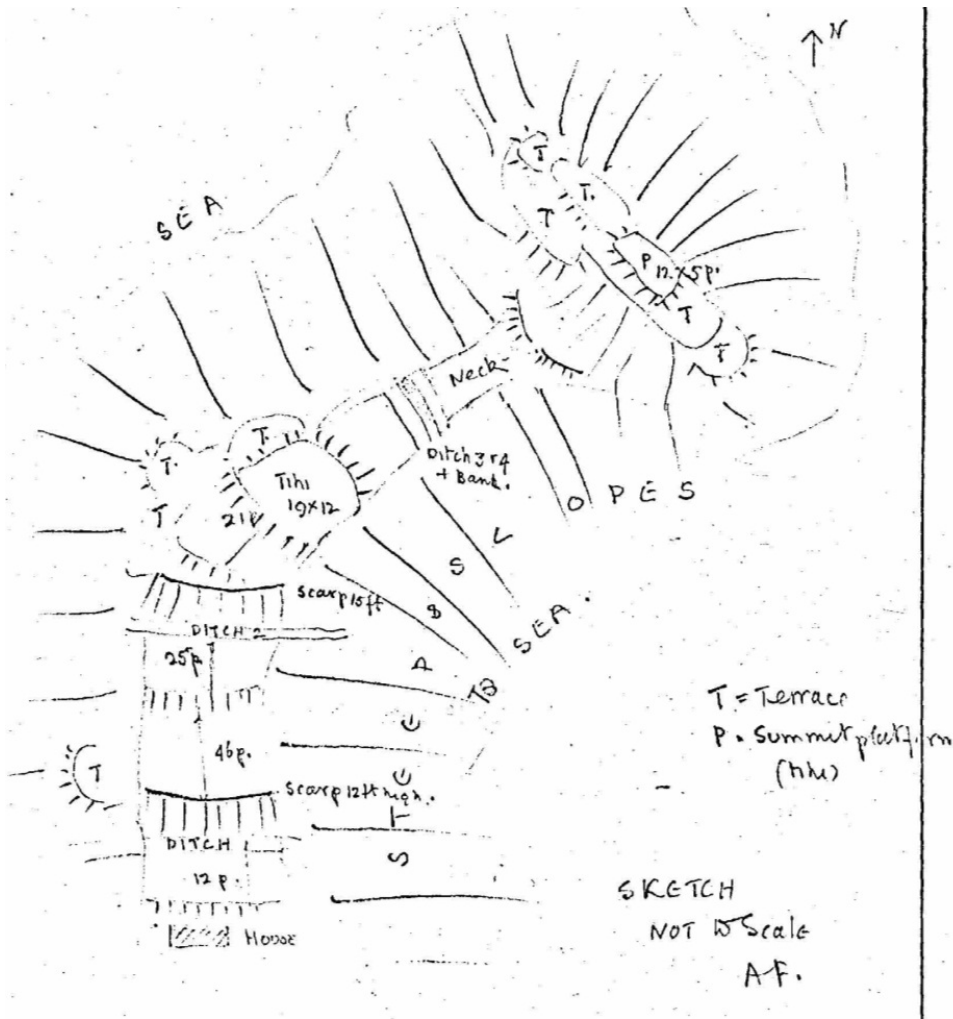


Figure 5: Sketch of Tapeka Pa by A. Fox (1976; not to scale).

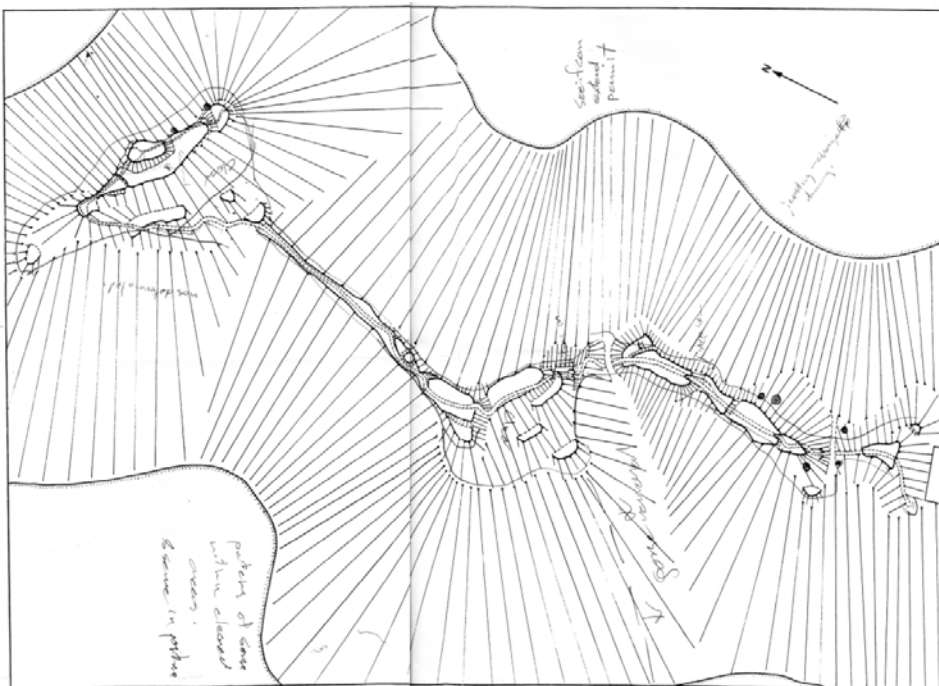


Figure 6: Plane table and alidade map by J. Robinson (1992).





Figure 7: Looking north up track from Du Fresne Place to pa.



Figure 8: Looking south across outer ditch and bank.





Figure 9: Looking south over steps up second bank.



Figure 10: Looking northeast from central tihi to northern tihi.





Figure 11: Erosion on eastern side of headland.

### *Cultural Connections*

A number of iwi and hapu of Ngapuhi and those they succeeded in the Bay of Islands have connections to the pa.

### *National Context Sources*

There is no national context source available in order to provide a comprehensive basis for assessing the national (representative) significance of Tapeka Pa as a pre or proto-historic Maori archaeological pa. However general references for pa and kainga include Davidson (1982, 1984) and area studies of pa in the upper North Island including Irwin (1985) and Sutton (1993, 1994) and Sutton, Furey and Marshall (2003). Furey (n.d.) has also produced a Northland Archaeological Resource Statement, which summarises the archaeology of the region, its values, and the threats that it faces (This document was prepared for the Department of Conservation and remains in draft form and limited circulation.)

### *Historic Significance*

Tapeka Pa is significant in part due to its association with named ancestors and key events in the proto-historic period as Ngapuhi established themselves in the Bay of Islands, and in particular

the growing power of Te Hotete and his son Hongi Hika. It is also located on one of the early European land purchases, that of Samuel Stephenson, dating to 1836.

### ***Fabric Significance***

Tapēka Pa is significant as a largely intact example of a pre-or protohistoric Maori Pa that is typical of the east coast of the northern part of the North Island; a large central headland pa with multiple defensive works (ditches, banks, artificially steepened scarps and naturally steep slopes and cliffs) associated with a nearby kainga on the lower slopes and behind the beach below (as illustrated by Earle). The site is strategically located on a prominent point in the Bay of Islands, with 360° views. In turn its commanding position is visible from many parts of the Bay.

The pa site is in average condition although features have been modified by vegetation growth, visitor activity and natural erosion. Terrace scarps and defensive ditch and banks which are crossed by the walking track are suffering on-going erosion, with on-going erosion and “one-off” slips taking their toll on the steep slopes either side of the main ridgeline.

### ***Cultural Significance***

Tapēkapa Pa is significant to a number of iwi and hapu of Ngāpuhi. Pa sites are also generally considered wahi tapu.

### ***Management Recommendations***

Tapēkapeka Pa is in good condition and does not require much in the way of active management. The features on the main ridgeline are relatively stable with the exception of the human induced erosion on the steeper sections of the walking track over the ditch and bank defences and terrace scarps. Natural erosion in the steep slopes below the top of the ridge are on-going and are likely to be uncontrollable.

#### Monitoring

Quarterly monitoring should be undertaken with photo points established on the defensive earthworks and terraces where the track crosses these features, and on a selection of other points.

#### Vegetation Management

The existing regime of vegetation management along the track and on the pa should be maintained by DOC staff. The thick kikuyu that covers most of the features is likely to be the best cover to preserve the features beneath.

#### Interpretation

The HAMS costed specification for remedial work and improvements at Tapēkapeka Historic Reserve stated that appropriate location and historic interpretation signage was needed. The existing Estate signage at Du Fresne Place is small, poorly located and does not provide any information about the reserve, the pa, or the risks on the track and should be replaced. At a



minimum new signage should indicate the nature of the pa, appropriate conduct, risks on the track and contain a map of notable features.

There is no detailed information about Tapeka available on the internet, apart from visitor information and a précis of the traditional history of the site. This Heritage Assessment and other public documents should be made available on the DOC website.

### Track

The first section of mown grass track rising from Du Fresne Place to the pa is steep and prone to being slippery and muddy after rain. The old box steps and staircase over the defensive ditches and scarps originally date to 1992 and are in poor condition and should be replaced. In general the track is either steep, narrow, slippery and passes very near the edge of 50m high sea cliffs and requires a complete redesign.

## *Management Chronology*

~1800 Ngare Raumati shelter at Tapeka following their defeat by Ngati Rehia/Ngapuhi under Te Hotete.

1827 Augustus Earle paints the pa, Hongi Hika and himself. Pa is not occupied but lower ground is.

1836 Land sold to Samuel Stephenson.

1967 Pa recorded by J. D. Osborne.

1968 Taken as a reserve contribution by Bay of Islands County Council during subdivision of Tapeka.

1978 Recorded by A. Fox.

1981 Management vested in the Bay of Islands Historic and Maritime Park.

1987 Management vested in the Department of Conservation.

1992 Plane table and alidade map. Steps over defensive earthworks built under HPT Authority 1992-55.

2005 Ratepayers Association plants pohutakawas on reserve.

2011 Slips adjacent to houses on Du Fresne and Rewarewa Place due to heavy rain.

## *Management Documentation*

The key document is the HAMS costed specification (2000).

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Not Consulted

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