

Araiteuru Recreation Reserve

Historic Heritage Assessment

Kauri Coast Area Office

Melina Goddard
2010



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Araiteuru: Historic Heritage Assessment

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2010

Cover image: Lookout point at Araiteuru showing the north head and the remains of the old
signal station

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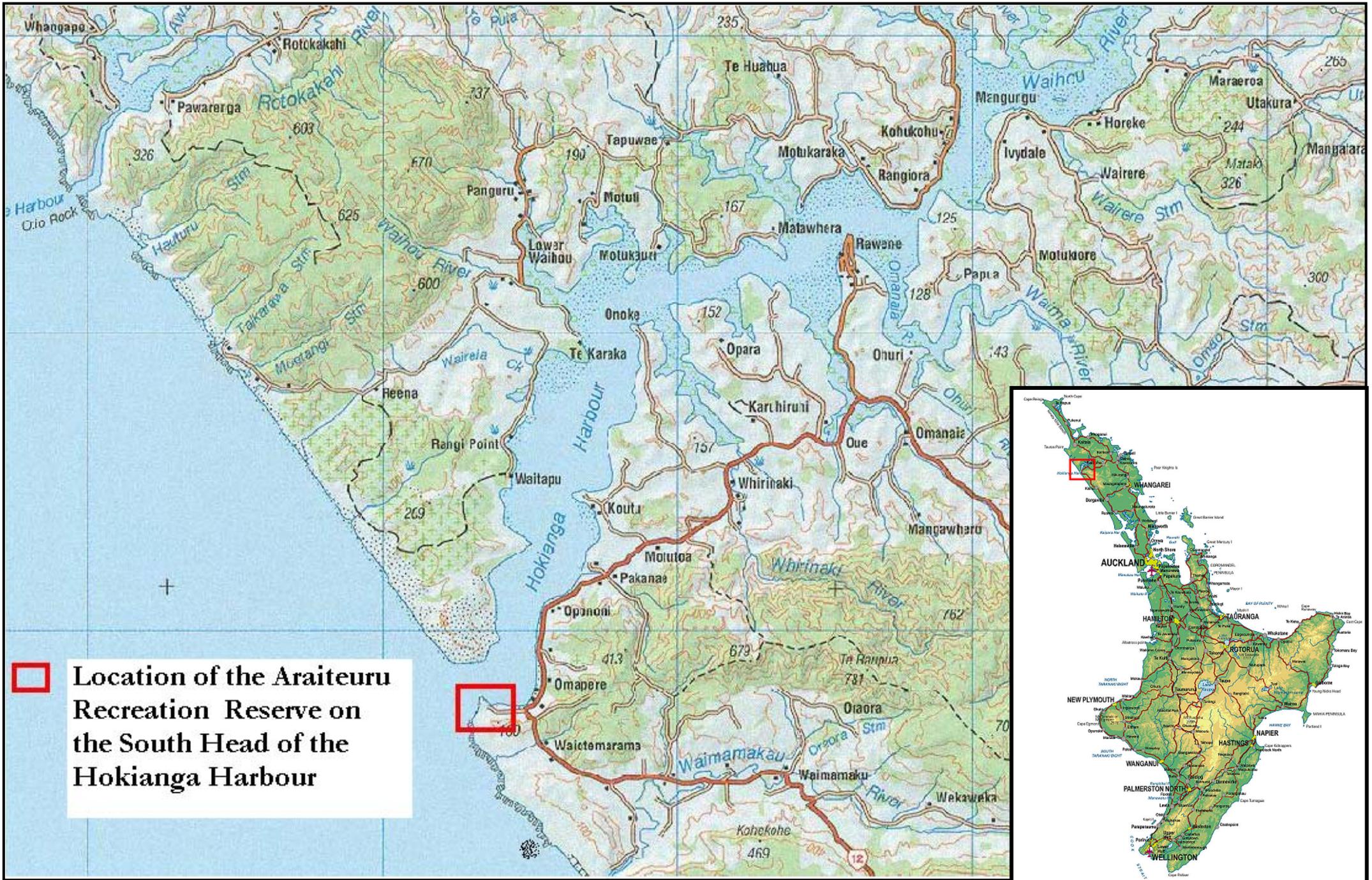
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**Location of the Araiteuru
Recreation Reserve on
the South Head of the
Hokianga Harbour**

Site Overview

Araiteuru is located on the South Head of the Hokianga Harbour and is rich in history and tradition dating back to the arrival of the early Polynesian explorer Kupe, who according to some Maori traditions was the discoverer of New Zealand. The headland from the 1830's to the 1850's also operated as a signal station for ships entering the harbour. This history is represented in the physical remains such as archaeological sites, and the signal station, and in the stories and legends attached to the site. Araiteuru is listed as a wahi tapu, tauranga waka and whare wananga site and is of great cultural significance to Maori. The signal station is an important part of Hokianga's early pioneering history, and the reserve has high scenic values.

Land status: *Recreation Reserve*

Administered by: *The Department of Conservation, Kauri Coast Area Office*

Access by: *Signal Station Road*

Visitor numbers: *80,000 per year (as at 2007)*

Heritage status: *Wahi Tapu site protected under the Historic Places Act 1993; The Conservation Act 1987; The Reserves Act 1977*

Site area: *14 hectares*

Functional location number: *DN-61-400-5000*

History Description

In Maori tradition the name Hokianga 'or returning place' refers to the departure of an adventurer named *Kupe*, Hokianga.¹ In some accounts *Kupe* is said to have left pets (*Mokaikai*) to live at the Hokianga Heads called *Araiteuru* and *Niua* or *Ninewa*, later described as *Taninwa*, and the south and north heads are so named. *Araiteuru* and *Ninewa*'s role was to protect *Kupe*'s interests and guide travellers to the Hokianga.²

Further Maori traditions also talk of houses of learning located on the north and south heads. These were occupied by *Ruanui* and *Nukutawhiti* who were said to have followed *Kupe* to the Hokianga where they then settled. In local tradition *Ruanui*'s house was at *Araiteuru* on the grass slopes above Martins Bay, a spring beside the track is said to be associated with him. A variation on tradition indicates that it was *Nukutawhiti* who lived on the south side of the harbour while *Ruanui* was on the north.³

Later tradition also talks of a priest of the two heads, *Te Waenga*, who is described by several early European visitors. Below is one of these accounts from the Reverend Samuel Marsden, an early visitor to the Hokianga:

Monday, October 4th.--We rose early this morning with an intention to examine the entrance into the river (Hokianga) it blew very fresh. The priest said we should have his war canoe, and he would accompany us and prevent the winds and waves from rising. As soon as breakfast was over, the priest, Mr. William Puckey, and a very fine crew of native young men launched the canoe, and we set off for the Heads which were about four miles distant. Ta-man-bena (Te Waenga) told me not to be afraid; he would not allow the winds and waves to rise. There are two large rocks at the Heads in which the gods of the sea reside, according to the opinion of the priest and the inhabitants on the banks of the river. The

priest said he would command the gods to be still and not to disturb the sea till we had made our examination and sounded the shoal and channel⁴

In the early European period Araiteuru played a key role in the shipping and timber trading which had begun by the early 1800's. From 1832 the entrance to the harbour became notorious for shipwrecks when crossing the bar. As a result of this a signal station was located on the tip of Araiteuru headland and operated from the 1830's to the 1950's (fig 1).⁵

The station was originally established by John Martin, a harbour pilot who purchased land at Araiteuru, his wife *Kiriroa* or Kate was the daughter of *Te Waenga*.⁶ At the station a flagstaff was used to hoist signals to ships to direct them in taking the bar.⁷ In 1951 it was closed due to a decline in shipping and trading in the Hokianga.⁸

Fabric Description

The Fabric of Araiteuru is defined by the fourteen recorded archaeological sites within the reserve (see appendix 1). The sites represent pre-European Maori occupation and there are scattered remains from the headland's time as a signal station. Archaeological sites represented by the Maori occupation are shell midden, storage pits and terraces. European occupation is represented by house terraces and physical remains of the signal station itself. Further subsurface remains that probably exist are also part of this overall fabric.

The remains of the signal station in the reserve were recorded in 1991 as part of a ground survey. On the tip of the headland is a horizontal Kauri beam that is resting on four timber posts and is connected to the circular concrete, metal and timber base that once held the signal mast (Fig 2). The Kauri beam supported the yard arm which ran up and out in both directions from the signal mast forming a T. On it were displayed a series of balls at various heights that instructed ships where the movable channel was currently located.

There is a hollow next to the base of the signal mast measuring 1x2m where a small shed was located (see appendix 2). The only remnants of the shed are five timber planks resting on the ground surface (see appendix 3). Scattered on the headland are also vertical timber posts, and the original split post and batten fence that enclosed the former signal station is still in place (see appendix 4, 5).

The 1991 ground survey of the signal station also recorded the remains of a shed and length of heavy chain on the southern side of the headland, and five timber stanchions and additional steel cable (see appendix 6). Although some steel cable was found the other features previously recorded were not relocated in the ground survey in 2011 owing to the thick vegetation cover which now flanks the headland (see appendix 7).

Further remains from the signal station occupation are located on the slopes above Martins Bay which is to the east of the headland (see appendix 8). The remains are house terraces (one possibly the harbour master's house c. 1850). An historic road, a boat shed terrace (1850) and boat landing/slipway. Also on the slope are fruit trees likely to be associated to the historic settlement: fig, peach and apple. Along the beach there are scattered timber posts in the banks and sand and also various metal parts. There are

numerous photographs in existence that show the station, and various plans and blueprints of structures associated with the settlement, all recorded in the Marine Department files.



Figure 1: The signal station at Hokianga Harbour 1910-1919 (*Alexander Turnbull Library*)



Figure 2: The remains of the signal station as seen today with inset of concrete mast base of the flagpole and yard arm (M Goddard 2010)

National Context

The first recorded European to enter the Hokianga Harbour arrived in 1819; by the 1830's the Hokianga was the heart of New Zealand's timber industry and rivalled the Bay of Islands as the most important European settlement in New Zealand.⁹ The signal station at Araiteuru played a key role in guiding the ships to and from the Hokianga Harbour. In New Zealand there are numerous examples of signal stations, for example those at the Hokitika river entrance built in 1865 and the Adderly Head signal station in Canterbury which was established in 1876. The legend of Kupe and his pet or taniwha, Araiteuru, are an important aspect of the Hokianga's oral history, and can be linked with the wider traditions of this early seafarer.

Cultural Context

Culturally, Araiteuru is strongly representative of the Maori and European occupiers of the site. The Maori history that is tangible, as seen in the archaeological sites and in tangible, in the traditions attached to the site. Araiteuru played a key role in the country's early shipping and pioneering history, and as one of the earliest places to be settled by Europeans in New Zealand.

Historic Significance

Araiteuru is historically significant for the traditions associated with the site. They are part of New Zealand's early cultural history. Araiteuru is nationally significant as one of the country's earliest signal stations,¹⁰ and it is also regionally significant in the Hokianga's early settler history.

Fabric Significance

The fabric significance of Araiteuru is the 14 archaeological sites that are recorded here. These are associated with the Maori and European occupation of the site. The Maori sites are represented by terraces, pits and midden and these site types are common throughout the Hokianga and New Zealand but are still of importance to the people associated with this site and with New Zealand's history. The remains of the signal station represent one of the earliest in the country and the only known station in the Hokianga. Therefore the fabric remains are regionally significant. The signal station elements are dated to pre-1800 and these in addition to the Maori sites are protected under the Historic Places Act 1993. The remains of the signal station are scattered, damaged and incomplete, however these are still valuable and there is still the ability for public interpretation.

Cultural Significance

The cultural significance of this reserve is immense. Araiteuru is listed as a wahi tapu, tauranga waka and whare wananga site and is of great cultural significance to Maori.¹¹

The site is of significance to Ngapuhi, Te Roroa and Te Wahapu o Hokianga Resource Management Committee.

The later history attached to Araiteuru involves early settlers who helped shape New Zealand's early formative history. John Martin was one of the original early settlers of the river and he and the other original settlers all had Maori wives. Those settlers who stayed in the Hokianga contributed their names and descendants to the Hokianga's present population.¹² Throughout this history Araiteuru connects its people to their heritage and provides a collective sense of identity.

Management History

- 1832 John Martin set up the first signal station here after he purchased some land at Araiteuru.
- In 1870 Araiteuru was reserved for the “purposes of the general government”, and was continued to be used as a flag signal station.
- The signal station itself was the property of the Hokianga Harbour Board until 1964 when it was transferred to the Hokianga County Council. By early 1966 the signal station had not been in use for many years.
- 1969 the flagpole and yard arm, first erected in 1938, were removed by the council and re-erected at the Opononi sports ground. Today the flagpole is located at the RSA in Opononi and the yard arm is at the Paikia café.
- In 1970 the council began the task of establishing Araiteuru as a recreational reserve. The Marine Department considered that there might be a resumption of the headland for coastal navigation purposes in the form of a lighthouse or another signal station.
- In 1972 a draft report on coastal reserves outlined reasons as to why Araiteuru could be better utilised as a recreation reserve.
- In 1976 the Minister of Lands revoked the reservation for the “purpose of general government” over Araiteuru and reserved the area for “recreational purposes”.
- In 1976 a preliminary report on the future of Araiteuru was produced by Department of Lands and Survey, Whangarei.
- 1977 South Head Hokianga, management plan. Report prepared by D.M.L Francombe, D. Elton.
- 1986 Historical background and archaeological survey of south Hokianga signal station, draft report, Department of Lands and Survey, Auckland.
- In 1991 site record form O06/410 for the signal station reported that the signal mast is now a flagpole at the RSA at Opononi and the yard arm is at the Panorama Tea rooms, Pakia Hill.
- Geological report by Mark T Mitchell Ltd 2002. Consulting Geotechnical engineer. Hamilton New Zealand.
- In 2010 a report was prepared by Awhi Nathan and Andrew Riddell ‘Araiteuru recreation reserve walkway development’.

Authority applications granted by the Historic Places Trust:

- # 1995/081 for logging pines and macrocarpa trees from archaeological sites O06/438-442, from the slopes above Martins Bay. A condition of this authority was that a plan of the archaeological features be carried out.
- #1999/54 to improve drainage on a historic terrace O0/438 (Slocombe 1999).
- 1999/54 file note by Slocombe on archaeological monitoring of the removal of fill from an existing drain on a terrace, site O6/438
- New carpark proposal planned in 2002 and modification of walking path picnic area, recreation platform. Done by Framgroup.
- #2004/233 for the carpark and track upgrade. At the signal station settlement. O0/438
- #2006/257 was to construct a new carpark on land adjoining the reserve close to site O06/409, pit site (Burgess 2005).
- 2011/130 for the track upgrade and walkway development

Management Documentation

Current DoC management file numbers: *HLA-01-03-01 NLKC-1 01/01/2005; HLA-01-03-10 NLKC-1 30/06/2003*

Heritage assessment: *yes docdm 694979*

Baseline inspection: *1977 South Head Hokianga, management plan. Report prepared by D.M.L Francombe, D. Elton. 1986 Historical background and archaeological survey of south Hokianga signal station, draft report, Department of Lands and Survey, Auckland.*

Management Recommendations

- Interpretation of the signal station would be beneficial. The remains of the station, that is the mast and yard base, can be interpreted with an image of the functioning station and a basic description. Interpretation would provide information on educate and reveal the historic values of the site and assist in its future preservation.
- Elements of the signal station are pre 1900 and are therefore protected under the Historic Places Act 1993 and the Conservation Act 1987. This also includes the Maori archaeological sites and every effort should be made to protect and preserve them.
- Getting in touch with Joan Maingay would be beneficial as she can provide accurate distribution maps of the archaeological sites of Araituru.

Sources

Elder, 1932 (ed.) *The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden*, chapter III.

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Lee, J., 1987. *Hokianga*. Hodder and Stoughton, Auckland.

Polack, J.S. 1974. *New Zealand, being a narrative of travels and adventures*, vols I and II. Cappers press reprint, Christchurch.

Taylor, M., 2010. Archaeological Assessment of Proposed improvements to walkways at the Araiteru Recreation Reserve, South Hokianga by the Department of Conservation. Archaeology North Ltd, Wanganui.

Images

Hokianga Heads and harbour taken from the end of Signal Station road by the Northwood Brothers between 1910 and 1919 *Alexander Turnbull Library*.

ID:1/2-002749-F



Appendix 1: Location and distribution of archaeological sites on Araiteuru as recorded in ARCHSITE



Appendix 2: Hollow where the signal station shed was located as seen in fig 1 (MGoddard 2010)



Appendix 3: Timber planks next to shed hollow likely to be associated to the shed (M Goddard 2010)



Appendix 4: Part of the original split post and batten fence that enclosed the signal station (M Goddard 2010).



Appendix 5: Two vertical posts associated to the signal station (M Goddard 2010)



Appendix 6: Metal cable located on the headland tip

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION		NZAA METRIC SITE NUMBER 06/410.
SITE RECORD FORM(NZM260)		DATE VISITED 17 October 1991
NZMS 260 map number 006	NZMS 260 map name Waipoua	SITE TYPE Signal Station
NZMS 260 map edition	Edition 1, 1987.	SITE NAME : MAORI * OTHER
Grid References		
Easting	2,5440/00	Northing
	6,62970,0	

Appendix 7: The physical remains of the signal station located on the headland tip as recorded in 1991 (ARCHSITE)



Appendix 8: Martins Bay where the houses of the signal station master and family, boast shed and slipway was located. Today only terraces of this occupation are visible taken facing east (M Goddard 2010)

Endnotes

¹ Lee. J. , 1987

² Lee. J., 1987:13

³ Taylor. M., 2010:9

⁴ Elder 1932:188-191, 193 and Pollack (1974:61-64)

⁵ Ingram 1977

⁶ Lee. J., 1987

⁷ Lee. J., 1987:62

⁸ Taylor. M. 2010:10

⁹ Harrison. M. 2007:5

¹⁰ This is based on Hokianga being one of the earliest settlements in the country

¹¹ Appendix 1F, Schedule of Sites of Cultural Significance to Maori, of the Far North District Plan MA11.11

¹² Lee. J., 1987:152