Figure 42. Aerial photograph of stone rows at Okoropunga. Note that the walls terminate at irregular intervals on the hillslope. Photo: K. Jones, DOC.

Figure 43. Plan of part of the garden system with stone rows, modified soils and borrow pits in relation to uplifted beach ridges, Okoropunga. Based on plan in McFadgen 1980b.
be artificially deepened, would not be a different colour, and the uneven surface contours noted on gravel-added soils would most likely be absent. McFadgen’s conclusions are important to his wider explanations that the rows themselves were gardens and that the intervening spaces were uncultivated. More recently, some of the evidence at Okoropunga has been reinterpreted by McFadgen as possible tsunami damage and sand deposits left after the water rushed back out to sea (McFadgen 2003: 35). However, this is, as yet, unproven.

The modified, gravel-added soil was stratigraphically later than the stone row and extended across a row (McFadgen 1980a: 7). This indicates that more than one gardening technique was in use here through time.

The extent to which Okoropunga is typical of the garden complexes on the southern Wairarapa coast is unknown. There was no evidence in the Palliser Bay gardens for soils modified by the addition of gravel, and although there are modified soils at Okoropunga, they are not present over the entire site. While debate about the importance of these gardens, or the amount of modification (and therefore labour) put into gardening, is useful, the emphasis should be on defining variability within the region and the value of gardening, rather than focusing on issues such as whether gardens were formed on the stone rows or the intervening ground.

Okoropunga is a reasonably intact, large, well-presented garden site on the south Wairarapa coast.

7.4 PU KAR OR O, WAI RAR A PA

7.4.1 Location

On the south Wairarapa coast, c. 1 km to the north of Okoropunga. Like other garden sites on the Wairarapa coast, it is situated on the coastal platform. The site is a Maori Reserve.

7.4.2 Condition

The site is in very good condition. The coastal platform is in pasture grass with no fences dividing the area into smaller paddocks. Sheep are grazed and numbers are kept low. A farm track is evident through part of the site and has damaged stone rows. There is coastal erosion occurring on the platform at the northern end of the main site, which has exposed an occupation layer of ovens and oven rake out.

7.4.3 Description

There are a number of garden and other occupation features present in the area. The main southern part of the reserve is identified as T28/42 and consists of stone rows and pits; this covers an area of c. 5 ha. There are five beach ridges, of which the inner three (C, D and E) have been uplifted. Rock stacks are also present. Rows are present over ridges C, D and E and there are regular depressions interpreted as gravel quarry pits present on beach ridge B (Figs 44 and 45). Unlike most of the Palliser Bay sites, the rows at this site are relatively short in
Figure 44. Aerial photograph Pukaroro, Wairarapa coast (T28/42), showing stone rows, possible borrow pits and house sites, and uplifted beach ridges. Photo: K. Jones, DOC.