

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCREENING: FRIMLEY PARK

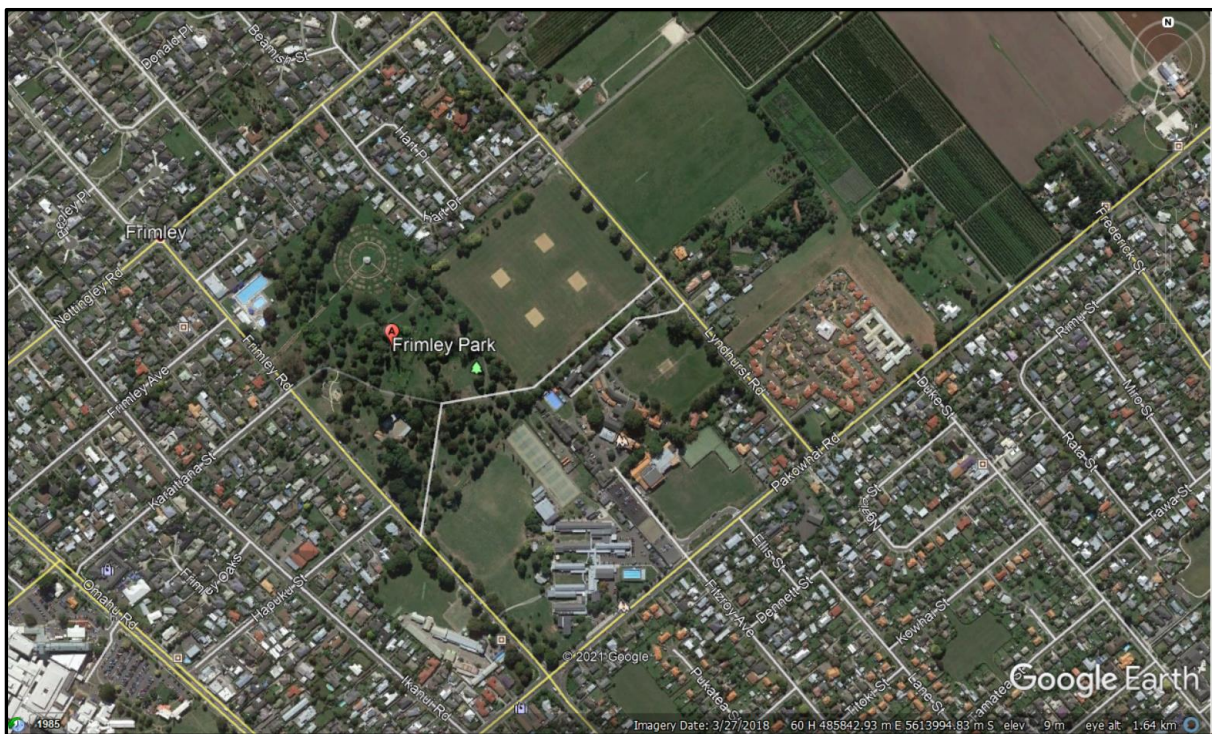
### LEGISLATION

Under the current legislation (HNZPTA 2014) all archaeology is protected. This includes both recorded archaeology (that which we know is present) and unrecorded archaeology (that which remains to be formally identified).

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL RISK SCREENING

#### BACKGROUND

Archaeology Hawke's Bay Ltd was approached by Alex Mabin (HDC – Parks & Reserves) to provide archaeological advice regarding the ongoing management of Frimley Park, Hastings, Hawke's Bay. Whilst there were no recorded archaeological sites within the Park it does lie within a wider environment of potential cultural and archaeological importance.



Excerpt from Google Earth Pro showing Frimley Park in its wider urban environment.

A cursory consideration of the area in question confirmed that the nearest currently recorded archaeological site is V21/390 – Stonecroft Homestead, approximately 1 km northwest.

Recorded site V21/401 – a late 19th or early 20th century villa lies ca. 1.8 km south of Frimley Park. There are several additional recorded archaeological sites within ca. 2.5 km of Frimley Park, all of which relate to the pre-1900 European associated occupation of the wider Hastings area. Whilst there was no immediate and obvious archaeological risk associated with the Park, as a Park Management Plan was being proposed HDC have requested that an Archaeological Screening of the Frimley Park environs be undertaken to provide advice and guidance for it’s long term management, including the management of any identified or potential archaeological risk areas.

PROPOSED WORK

*Location:*

The site considered herein is Frimley Park, Frimley, Hastings, Hawke’s Bay. It lies in the northern area of Hastings and comprises an area of 19.173 ha largely bounded by residential development to the northwest, west and southeast, with open grassland to the northeast. It is currently zoned as Green Space and houses an assortment of amenities and infrastructure including an outdoor pool complex, sports fields, a rose garden, picnic furniture, petanque court, playground and toilet facilities. The Park also features a large number of significant trees.



Frimley Park within it’s immediate environment (Source: HDC Intramaps)

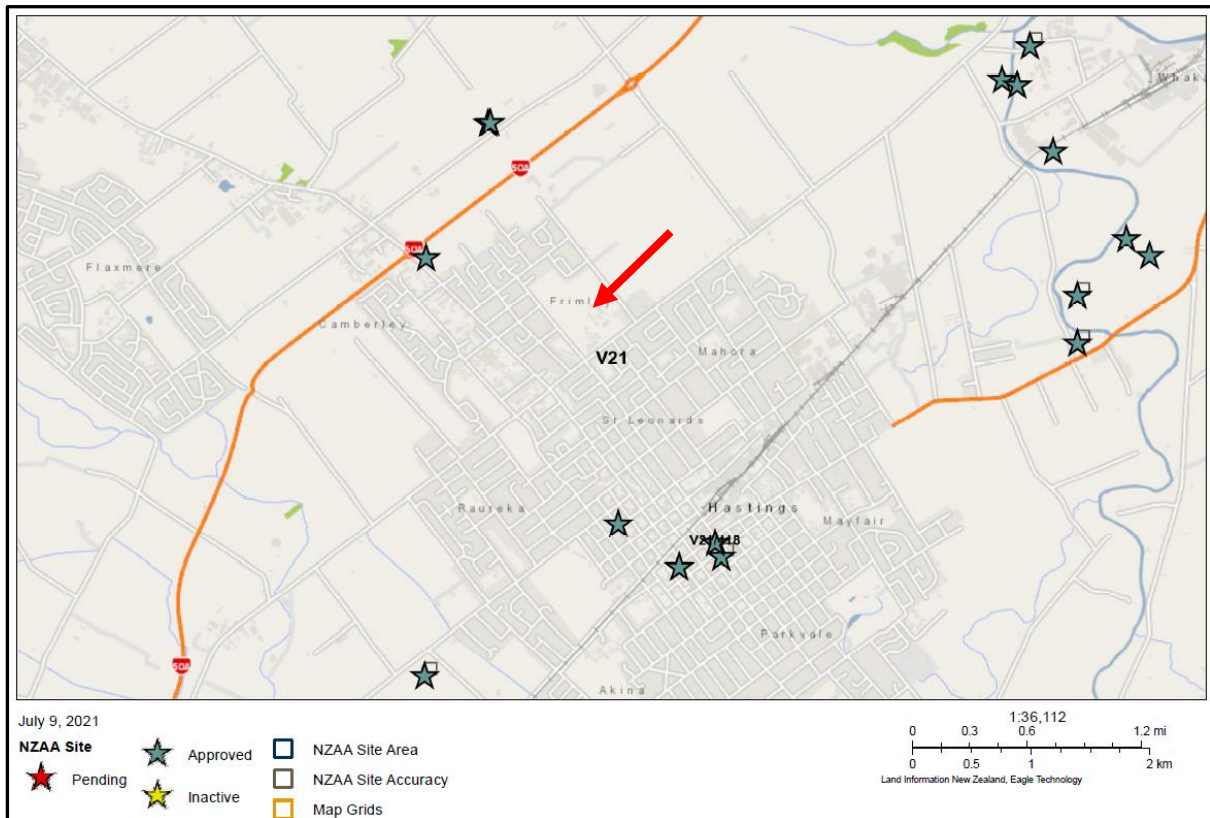
*Proposed work:*

There are no current specific proposed works for Frimley Park, however as a Recreation Reserve it is available to be leased or utilised for a range of activities that fit within the rules outlined for HDC Parks and Reserves. At present Frimley Park is governed by a generic Reserve Management Plan, but a specific Frimley Park Management Plan is currently being prepared. Therefore, it has been seen as an ideal opportunity to ensure that any areas of archaeological significance or risk are clearly identified and factored into the future management and activities within the Park.

This screening process is intended to determine if and to what level there are archaeological risks associated with Frimley Park, and to provide a recommendation as to how best to manage or mitigate any such risks.

**RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGY**

There are currently no recorded archaeological sites in the immediate area of Frimley Park, the nearest site being V21/390, Stoneycroft Homestead located ca. 1km to the northeast. Within approximately 2.5 km of the park there are six recorded archaeological sites, all relating to the pre-1900 European occupation of the Hastings area. There are currently no recorded archaeological sites of Māori association within the wider (2.5 km) environs. However, within the broader Heretaunga landscape there are a number of recorded archaeological sites of Māori association including pā, occupation and horticulture associated sites. It is important to note that during the relatively recent (2019) Whakatū work, several sites were identified at considerable depths below the current ground surface (> 1 m). This suggests that the archaeology of the wider Heretaunga Plains may in many places be obscured by flood deposits.



Frimley Park (arrowed) within the wider archaeological landscape.

According to the HDC District Plan there are no items of cultural interest identified within Frimley Park at present, although this may change during the proposed Management Plan process. There are however a number of significant trees recorded within the HDC District Plan.

### AERIAL & HISTORIC IMAGES

The earliest Retrolens publically available aerial images for the area date to 1945 and are of exceptional quality. The image selected clearly identifies a natural feature of paleochannel meandering along the westerly extent of what is now Frimley Park and the adjacent schools. There are several large depressions associated with this but it is unclear if these are natural features associated with the watercourse, or are made features associated with activity occurring in the vicinity of the water course. The wider landscape at this time is largely rural and is dominated by grazing with pockets of horticulture.

By 1964 the wider landscape is becoming much more residential in use, the schools are becoming established and modifications to the ground surface appears to have destroyed or obscured the evidence of the possible paleochannel and associated features across both the school and park areas. Also by this time the previous buildings evident in the 1945 imagery have been removed and the park is beginning to take on a form and layout similar to that seen currently. A 1969 image shows the park laid out largely as it currently is, and that the pool complex has been constructed.

Later images are present in Retrolens but unfortunately the quality of these is poor, and little change can be noted beyond the increasingly residential nature of the wider area.



A Retrolens 1945 aerial showing the full extent of Frimley Park (red dash) with an apparent paleochannel (indicative dashed yellow route) and associated large depressions (red arrow) (Source: Retrolens).



An excerpt from a Retrolens 1964 aerial showing Frimley Park (indicative red dash) within its increasingly residential environs – note evidence of paleochannel has now disappeared (Source Retrolens, image oriented to match previous).



An excerpt from a Retrolens 1969 aerial showing that the pool complex had been built (arrowed).

Historical images including early plans and sales documents from the Napier MTG were scanned. Unfortunately none were found to relate directly to or contain useful information for this screening.

#### SITE VISIT

A site visit was undertaken by Gaylyne Carter (AHB) on 15 July 2021. Conditions were overcast but otherwise fair. The park area was assessed via a pedestrian inspection of the ground surface. In particular evidence of modifications to ground surfaces, exposures of soil profiles and vegetation anomalies were sought. No invasive test pits or augers were undertaken as it was not considered to be of any value at this time.

It was apparent that the main park area is a heavily modified environment in terms of ground surface and ornamental plantings. There were indications that extensive earthwork has recently occurred in the form of the installation of water reservoirs, this can be seen in Google



Earth Pro imagery from 2020. No archaeological sites or features have been added to the NZAA Site Record Database in association with this work to date.

No evidence of archaeological features or materials were noted during the site visit. No occupation or activity indicators such as burnt stone, shell, or charcoally soils were noted in the exposed surfaces around the mature trees. Nor has any such material been reported during any of the construction and landscaping activity that has occurred in recent years.



Ongoing water reservoir associated construction area



View across sports field area.



Formal gardens within Frimley Park.



General view of typical Frimley Park landscape.

## WIDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS

There have been limited archaeological investigations in the Hastings and wider Heretaunga Plains area, and those that have occurred have primarily been associated with realignments of waterways and road construction. Although river corridors are well recognised as focal points for Māori having provided transport routes as well as valuable resources, the identified archaeological record along Heretaunga Plains river corridors is largely limited to the pit and occupation sites of the higher ground.

In regions such as Waikato there is an increasing awareness of the potential for significant archaeological landscapes to be present within the lower reaches of the river corridors. These landscapes are often flagged by the presence of large 'borrow pits' a feature of the horticultural activity of several regions including Waikato. Hawke's Bay does not seem to have these borrow pits outside of a few isolated examples such as at Clifton. Without these 'borrow pits' or other obvious surface indicators there has to date been little to drive archaeological investigations within the flood plains and river corridors.

The rivers of Hawke's Bay are also renowned for their migratory forms, many of the river courses seen today are 20th Century realignments. These reflect efforts to control the flow and reduce the flooding that features heavily in the latter 18th and early 19th century accounts of life in the Heretaunga region in particular. Assumptions that archaeology does not exist or survive in these areas is being challenged with recent finds. For example as part of the Whakatū Arterial Project several hearth and oven sites have been added to the archaeological record. Most of these features were located immediately below the existing topsoil, however V21/465 was identified 150 cm below the modern surface, overlain by a silty deposit 60 – 80 cm thick, presumed to be flood deposition from the Karamu Stream. Occupation of these sites appears to date from the 1600s through to the 1800s, as is typical for the (limited) Hawke's Bay scientifically dated occupation sites, with V21/465 falling into the earlier bracket as would be expected with the silt overburden.

Given the recorded flood history of Te Ngāruroro Awa and Te Karamu Stream the recognized alluvial silt overburden resulting from frequent past flood events may have rendered invisible from the surface features such as pits and garden features that might otherwise be expected to be detected on historical aerial photographs or from surface inspection.

## CONSTRAINTS & LIMITATIONS

It is entirely possible that there are wahi tāpu or other knowledge that may directly affect this archaeological risk assessment that are not yet identified within the District Plan or other consulted sources and to date have not been considered. It is assumed that tāngata whenua will be consulted with during the proposed Management Plan process. Should information be presented that may have archaeological implications it is recommended that this be considered and advised upon by a suitably qualified archaeological professional, and if necessary the recommendations made herein revised accordingly.

This document is a high level risk assessment intended to provide broad guidance only, it does not constitute a full archaeological assessment of effects.

Note that a low level of archaeological risk does not equate to no archaeological risk.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

Frimley Park is located within an area that is likely under recorded in terms of wider archaeological significance. There are a limited number of recorded sites in the area, and these primarily date to the European associated occupation from the mid 1850s. However, there is emerging evidence that earlier, Māori associated occupation evidence could survive buried beneath 300 - > 1 m of alluvial flood silts.

The evidence from aerial imagery suggests that there may have been a paleochannel and possibly associated activity evidence along the western edge of Frimley Park and the school grounds. More broadly across the park there is a possibility that archaeology does survive, potentially at some depth (>500 mm) below current ground surfaces. However, there is no direct evidence from this screening as to whether or where archaeology might be found.

## RECOMMENDATION

As there are currently no specific proposals for work to be undertaken in Frimley Park, the recommendations provided here relate more to the ongoing management of the park for archaeological risk than to the specific risks posed by any particular proposal.

There are currently no recorded archaeological sites within Frimley Park, nor have there been any indicators of unrecorded archaeological sites identified or reported to date. Potentially the area with the greatest inherent archaeological risk is near the possible paleochannel on the western edge where evidence of fishing, gardening and other activities may still survive subsurface. However, at present there is no direct evidence that such activities were occurring, or that any evidence of them survives. Evidence for other resource gathering or processing activities such as postholes, pits and hearths could theoretically lie preserved beneath the alluvial silts across the wider area of the park. Again there is no evidence to date suggesting that this is the case, or if so that they are within 500mm of the current ground surface (as would be encountered during planting and other minor earthworks noted around the park).

Therefore it is recommended that from an archaeological perspective Frimley Park be managed under an Accidental Discovery Protocol (ADP) approach in the first instance. This

would be sufficient for all minor earthworks across the main park area such as plantings and other earthworks < 300 mm in depth. Any future proposal that potentially affected the western side of the Park, or more extensive excavations for building foundations, access roads or service installations should be subject to a project specific screening to determine whether an ADP remains an appropriate management approach on a case by case basis.

It should be noted that due to the flood history of the area it is very possible that isolated objects including taonga such as adzes or koiwi tāngata (human remains) could have been deposited anywhere in the park environs. Such objects whilst not archaeological sites per se, are of significance and require reporting and managing under archaeological protocols and cultural tikanga. Therefore any proposed management plan should include guidance around process and procedure should such objects be encountered during earthworks including planting.

At the appropriate juncture AHB would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the preparation of an Archaeological Accidental Discovery Protocol and other related guidelines for inclusion in a Frimley Park Management Plan. As previously noted should any new information relating to pre-1900 activity within the Frimley Park environs come to light during the Management Plan process the recommendations presented to date should be reviewed by an appropriately qualified archaeological professional.