

**Archaeological monitoring of Stormwater Upgrade
Works: City Park Services, Kari Street Nursery,
Kari Street, Auckland**

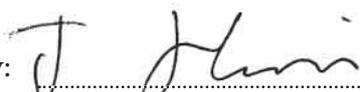
**report to
Auckland City Council**

Jaden Harris

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Archaeological monitoring of Stormwater Upgrade Works: City Park Services, Kari Street Nursery, Kari Street, Auckland

Auckland City are upgrading and replacing the stormwater system at City Park Services, Kari Street Nursery. Numerous archaeological sites relating mainly to prehistoric and contact period Maori settlement are recorded in and around the Auckland Domain. These include a pa recorded in the location now occupied by the Auckland War Memorial Museum (R11/105) and a traditional pa recorded in the area occupied by Auckland Hospital (R11/1404). Most of the other recorded sites are all located wholly within the lower grounds of the Domain and are mainly small midden and occupation sites. No Maori sites are recorded within the nursery grounds or in the vicinity of Kari Street. No archaeological assessment was carried out prior to the project commencing but the New Zealand Historic Places Trust requested that earthworks be monitored by an archaeologist and any stratigraphy recorded.

Archaeological Monitoring

The site was visited by archaeologists Matthew Campbell, Beatrice Hudson and Jaden Harris on 19 April 2010 and the nature of the project and the earthworks required detailed by the project manager. Monitoring of earthworks was subsequently carried out by archaeologist Jaden Harris on 22 April, 3 May, 13 May, and a final site inspection made on 19 May 2010. While the stormwater line itself runs from the nurseries main office buildings down to Grafton Mews, beside the Auckland Bowling Club, the actual earthworks required were minimal.

The first excavation was for the installation of a new manhole and catchpit at the head of a small natural gully, which stormwater runoff had previously flowed down uncontrolled. The profile of the excavation revealed a deep layer of fill 1–1.5 m deep, overlying natural blue/grey clay. The fill was made up of mixed clay and soil, with large pieces of concrete and other build-



Figure 1. Brick and concrete building rubble in the profile at the end of the stormwater trench running from the main office (scale 1 m).

ing rubble. A trench was dug from here across the vehicle track to another new catchpit on the other side and the profile was the same.

The next stage involved the excavation of an approximately 2 x 2 m square 1.8 m deep at the edge of the carpark off Grafton Mews, so that the line for the stormwater pipe could be drilled up through an area covered by trees to connect with the natural gully. Under the asphalt the fill of the excavation consisted of 1 m of mixed hard fill and clay, with natural blue/grey clay below. The work for the pipeline up the gully did not require any other open excavation and this stage of the works was not monitored further.

The main stage of the project where it was thought possible that some archaeological stratigraphy may be encountered was where a new trench had to be excavated from the corner of the office building to where the drain enters an open concrete swale running down beside a vehicle track. Only part of the approximately 20 m long trench was open at the time it was inspected but building rubble was encountered in the first third and then mixed soil and clay fill overlying natural blue/grey clay towards the office. Where the drain enters what is to be an open concrete swale the trench did not extend to the base of the fill and building rubble was still visible in the profile (see Figure 1). The rubble consisted mainly of bricks and concrete. The area where the office and other main nursery buildings are is level and it is likely that this is the result of a deliberate cut and fill operation in the past.

The source of this building material is from the demolition of the old Auckland Hospital Building in 1964 (Figure 2), which means that the levelling of this area occurred at or after this date. The building was designed in an Italianate style by architect Philip Herepath as a replacement for an earlier wooden building and construction began in 1875 (*Daily Southern Cross* 17 May 1875). The new hospital was a substantial three-storied building with the foundations and main part built of bluestone and the lighter partitions of brick (*Daily Southern Cross* 1 September 1875).

One whole brick, measuring 220 x 105 x 75 mm, was noted amongst the rubble with a shallow impressed mark: W. HUNT/AUCKLAND. The brick has been produced in an automatic brick making machine and was very regular in form. William Hunt operated brickworks at Avondale

Figure 2. Deposition of building rubble from the Auckland Hospital Building, 1964. The corner of the office building where the stormwater trench finished is visible at the far left of the photo. Photo courtesy John Stevenson, City Park Services.



from 1881–1887 (bickler.co.nz/bricks/index.php). The known operating date of William Hunt's brickworks does not fit with the construction of the main building and so the brick probably derives from an associated building or slightly later addition. An early photograph of the new hospital dating to around 1883 shows the building standing alone, but by 1900 the hospital is made up of a more complex arrangement of buildings (Figures 3 and 4, both views are taken from the Domain side looking towards Mt Eden). Most of these structures were probably demolished at the same time as the main hospital building in the 1960s.

At the time of the final site inspection on 19 May the only excavation work left to finish was the trench across Grafton Mews to connect into the existing main stormwater network. The trench was started on the side nearest to Grafton Road and at a depth of 1.5 m the base of the imported hard fill had not yet been reached. No further monitoring was carried out.



Figure 3. Auckland Hospital c.1883 (www.aucklandcitylibraries.com).



Figure 4. Auckland Hospital c.1900 (www.aucklandcitylibraries.com).

Results

No archaeological sites or other features of archaeological interest were uncovered during excavation work other than the rubble from the old Auckland Hospital Building. While of some historic interest, this material is no longer in context and does not constitute an archaeological site under the Historic Places Act 1993. In general the entire area of the nursery appears to have been highly modified in the past and no natural soil profiles were observed in any of the excavations monitored. The presence of building rubble in the excavations at the head of the gully and up by the buildings suggests that a large amount of material has been brought in to contour the area in the past. The most likely source of this fill is from the demolition of the old Auckland Hospital buildings in 1964.

Considering the nature of the disturbance it is unlikely that any natural stratigraphy remains intact in the general area – in each case the natural subsoil/clay had already been cut down before being filled over and no original topsoils were observed. The natural topography of the nursery site, sloping down into a gully, would also have made it unattractive for prehistoric settlement.