What is Cultural Heritage?

The knowledge, activities and remnants of people and communities...

Maungarei - Mount Wellington, Panmure

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What is cultural heritage?

Cultural heritage is central to our present and future identity. Our culture is the system within which we live now. Heritage is the part of our culture that we have inherited or retained from generation to generation. Our cultural heritage includes physical artefacts and places such as historic buildings, archaeological sites and artefacts. It can also include verbal, language and traditions.

The Auckland Regional Council (ARC) promotes the preservation and protection of Auckland's cultural heritage. These are historic places and areas that are significant to us because they are associated with ancestors, cultures and our past.

Examples of these places include:
- Archaelogical sites
- Historic buildings, places, depots and archives
- Places of special significance to Maori, including historic, cultural and historical importance
- Trees or plants with historical or cultural significance
- Cemeteries and burial places
- Geographical and other natural heritage
- Historic and cultural landscapes and areas
- Places, sites and areas that are significant and associated with heritage.

Our cultural heritage is valued because it is a record of our cultural and historical development. It is a legacy for future generations and provides a basis for understanding our identity and heritage. It is also an important source of pride and a basis for continued development.
Archaeological sites

There are over 9,000 recorded archaeological sites in the Auckland region. These sites are identified by ground surveys or through aerial research and are recorded in the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) Site Record File. Approximately 80% relate to Maori occupation and settlement.

In the Auckland region, as in much of the North Island, the most noticeable archaeological sites are earthwork fortifications or pā. Pā vary greatly in size, from the impressive and complex earthworks of the volcanic cones, to very small refuge pā consisting of a narrow headland cut off from the mainland by a defensive ditch and bank. Even more numerous than pā are occupation sites and food storage areas. Earthwork terraces and storage pits can be found both within and outside pā and are sites where everyday activities took place. Evidence of cultivation can sometimes be seen in the form of shallow drainage features on slopes which mark garden plot boundaries. Other evidence of cultivation includes stone mounds, stone rows, and garden soils which have been modified through the addition of gravel, midden or charcoal.

Middens are the most common archaeological site type and they represent some 70% of all recorded Maori archaeological sites. Middens are places where food remains, such as shells and animal bones, ashes and charcoal raked out of cooking fires, and worn out or broken implements were discarded. Midden sites provide us with information about early inhabitants, the resources they used, their lifestyle and the environment in which they lived. In addition, various dating techniques can provide information about what season of the year or how long a site was occupied. They can even tell which month of the year different shellfish species were gathered.

Archaeological sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Site</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological sites</td>
<td>9,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic, buildings, places, objects and structures</td>
<td>2,912 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritime places and areas</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic trees and other botanical sites</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14,067</td>
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</tbody>
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*Includes 564 historic places recorded in the Waitakere Ranges, some of which may also be recorded in other categories.
A large variety of historic buildings or structures can be found throughout the Auckland region. The majority of these sites can be categorized as residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, transport and communication sites.

In the early years of settlement, isolated communities established local industries to exploit the resources this region had to offer. Industrial sites include mines, quarries, kauri gum workings and timber mills. Today the remains of these early industries and industries are to be seen in the form of smelters, potteries, brickworks, lime kilns, kauri dams, flour mills, breweries, creameries and dairy factories.

A number of important historic sites and structures were constructed in response to threats of war. Sites relating to the New Zealand Wars include earthwork redoubts, blockhouses, stockades, camps and battlefields.

Late in the 19th century, in response to perceived threats from Russia and then Japan, extensive coastal defence fortifications and anti-invasion defences such as defences, anti-tank barriers and anti-aircraft guns were established around the Port of Auckland and at other potential landing areas.
People have lived in and used the coastal marine area since Māori first settled New Zealand about 700 to 800 years ago. The sea provided a wealth of food resources and the primary means of transport and communication. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Auckland region has a rich maritime heritage that contributes significantly to the character and identity of the region.

Our maritime historic heritage includes places associated with Māori settlement and tradition, historic buildings, wharves and jetties, shipyards, lighthouses and beacons, seawalls, outer defence installations, shipwrecks and hulks.

Reported historic places
This category includes places mentioned in historic places of an historic nature concern. It also includes places in historic conservation in national documents or heritage in a category as having significant historical associations.

Historic trees and other botanical sites
Ekeka and kawa are examples of plants grown by Māori that can sometimes still be found growing on old settlement sites. Sometimes such places may be the only surviving example of a historic element or landscape.

There are several sites marked by historic elements, such as the Auckland Harbour Light (1885) and James Bay Light (1876). Some sites are gardens and collections associated with historic houses, and areas or estates remains also have historic value.

Historic wharves and maritime heritage

Ships' wrecks and maritime heritage

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What is the state of cultural heritage resources in the Auckland region?

Auckland’s continued popularity as a place to live has meant that many of our historic places are under threat. This is particularly the case in the coastal environment where pressures are greatest. In spite of the value historic places and areas have for us, they are being depleted and continue to be threatened by development. The increasing value of property, especially in central Auckland, removes the pressure to redevelop historic buildings, destroy archaeological sites and remove heritage trees.

Even though there are an estimated 12,000 historic places currently recorded in the CHI, about 75% (375,000 hectares) of the Auckland region remains to be surveyed. Many sites are reported, but have not yet been formally recorded and assessed.

Our heritage places are a personal reminder of history that can provide a connection between the past and the present, help to build a sense of place, and contribute to an individual’s sense of place.
The ARC is undertaking regular monitoring of a selection of archaeological sites, built structures, botanical sites and maritime historic resources that are scheduled in the Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal (2004), or are located on regional parks.

The ARC aims to raise awareness, advocate, integrate and monitor places of cultural heritage value in partnership with the regional community.

The "Our History" local history booklets and "Our Heritage" poster series have been developed to provide information, celebrate our heritage and promote cultural well-being.

The preservation and protection of New Zealand’s historic heritage is primarily promoted by the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Historic Places Act 1993. These statutes provide the legislative mandate for local authorities to be actively involved in identifying, protecting, and managing historic places and areas. Through the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (2004) the ARC has a directive to provide the public and tāngata whenua with information on heritage issues and heritage sites within its region.

The ARC is developing projects, working with local authorities, iwi and other heritage agencies with the following objectives:

• To promote a diverse and representative range of the Auckland region’s land-based cultural heritage for present and future generations.

• To develop proposals that will ensure the recognition, protection and viability of places of cultural significance in the quality and diversity of the landscapes of the Auckland region.

In response to these objectives, the ARC has researched and evaluated historic heritage sites for the coastal environment, and has developed a schedule of significant sites for preservation and protection in the Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal (2004). District councils are also promoting the protection and preservation of historic sites through their District Plans. Approximately 18% of the sites recorded in the Auckland region have been afforded some level of protection in regional and district plans.

The ARC is preparing conservation plans for heritage buildings and structures on Auckland regional parkland. Recent work includes re-painting the Brook homestead (Åhuriri Regional Park), restoring the Vine farmhouse at Lagoon Bay (Mahurangi East Regional Park) and the historic farm precinct at Scandrett Regional Park.
More information:

Visit the Auckland Regional Council website to find out about cultural heritage places you can visit and other brochures in this series.
- www.arc.govt.nz

Other agencies with cultural heritage responsibilities:
- New Zealand Historic Places Trust
  - www.historic.org.nz
- Department of Conservation
  - www.doc.govt.nz
- Ministry for Culture and Heritage
  - www.mch.govt.nz
- ICOMOS - International Council on Monuments and Sites
  - www.icomos.org.nz
- New Zealand Archaeological Association
  - www.nzarchaeology.org