

## APPENDIX 10: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT





16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Dean Foote  
Gisborne District Council  
Gisborne

By email:

Tēnā koe Dean

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVICE – PROPOSED FLOOD PROTECTION WORKS, TE KARAKA, GISBORNE DISTRICT**

As requested, we have carried out a desk-based review and field inspection to determine if archaeological site(s) may be affected by the proposed flood protection works at Te Karaka, Gisborne (Figure 1).

#### **Proposed work**

The proposed works will include earthworks for the realignment of the Te Karaka stopbank. While the new stopbank will follow the path of the existing stopbank on the eastern side of Te Karaka, the stopbank will be shifted further inland on the northern and eastern sides of the township (Figure 2).

#### **Archaeological sites**

All archaeological sites, whether recorded or not, are subject to the provisions of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. An archaeological authority must be obtained from Heritage New Zealand before any work occurs that may affect archaeological site(s).

There are 15 archaeological sites recorded within 1km of the project area (Figure 3). However, none of these sites are within the township of Te Karaka. The majority of sites in the area are pā and pit/terrace sites located in the surrounding hills overlooking the Waipaoa River. However, four sites are located on the flat land bordering the river (Y17/431, Y17/428, Y17/439, & Y17/459). All four of these sites were recorded by Kevin Jones during a 1985 survey of the area.

Y17/428 was recorded as the location of a few isolated oven features and two adzes identified during ploughing of a paddock east of the Waipaoa River. Y17/431 is a large area of horticultural soil on a river terrace to the southeast of Te Karaka. The horticultural soil was 150mm-250mm thick, found 0-250mm below the surface. Y17/439 was recorded as a 250 x 60m area of cultivated soils and ovens. The cultivated soil had gravel inclusions and was typically found 150mm below the topsoil, in a 150-250mm thick layer. Y17/459 was recorded as an oven found 250mm below the surface.

As they are all sub-surface, none of these sites have been revisited since their initial recording.

### **Desk-based Review**

The township of Te Karaka is located 25km inland, on a river terrace within a bend on the southern side of the Waipaoa River. This river terrace is flat, with only one small area of raised land on the northeastern side of the township (Figure 3). The works will be confined to the river flats, with a break formed in the stopbank on either side of the elevated landform. There is very little information about the soils in Te Karaka available, however, the wider terrace appears to be made up of gleyed clay and silt loam soils, inferior for gardening and occupation compared to some of the better drained river terraces to the south and east (Pullar, 1962).

Historic survey plans (Premise.co.nz) were searched for any evidence of unrecorded archaeological sites. No evidence of unrecorded archaeological sites within the project area was found on any survey map.

The earliest available historic photograph of the project area was taken in 1949 (SN225 640 2) and shows Te Karaka in the early stages of development (Figure 4). The surrounding river terrace had been developed, largely into pasture. Between 1949 and the present-day little changed, save for further urban development and the construction of additional roading. No potential unrecorded archaeological sites were observed using historic aerial photography.

LiDAR data from Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) was processed and manually inspected for visible archaeological sites. Figure 5 is a DEM image of the project area showing works to be confined to a low-lying river terrace. Though there is an area of

raised land on the northeastern side of the terrace, the stopbank does not intersect with this landform. No evidence of unrecorded archaeological sites was identified within the project area using LiDAR models.

## **Field Inspection**

A field inspection of the project area was conducted by Eliza Thompson (InSitu Heritage) on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025. This inspection was completed as a pedestrian walkover with intermittent test pitting within the project area.

Fifteen test pits were excavated across the site (Figure 6). The location of these test pits was chosen based on accessibility and aimed to be representative of any variation within the project area. Test pits largely focused on the northern and eastern extents of the project area, as the western alignment follows the path of the existing stopbank.

Test pits 1-5 revealed 100mm topsoil overlying compact grey silt (Figure 7). Test pit 6 was made up of 100mm topsoil overlying 200mm of grey-brown silt, over compact light grey-brown silt. Test pit 7 was 100mm of topsoil over compact grey-brown silt. Test pits 8-11 had limited topsoil and comprised of grey-brown compact silt. Test pits 12-15 were made up of 100mm of topsoil overlying compact light grey-brown silt.

## **Advice & Recommendations**

The possibility of unrecorded buried archaeological sites occurring in the project area cannot be absolutely excluded. However, the probability of intact unrecorded sites being encountered during the stopbank works is unlikely. There are no recorded archaeological sites within the immediate vicinity of the project area, and most recorded sites in the surrounding landscape are on elevated land.

The sites recorded on river terraces along the Waipaoa River have typically been found at shallow depths within 150m of the river's edge. These sites are found on well-drained, fertile soils, which are not present within the township of Te Karaka. Much of the stopbank work will be done on previously disturbed land (as on the eastern side of Te Karaka), or at a greater distance from the river than garden/oven sites are typically found (as on the northern side of Te Karaka). Furthermore, test-pitting did not identify any sub-surface archaeological deposits. All these factors combined make it unlikely that archaeological material will be encountered during works.

1. No recorded archaeological sites will be affected by the proposed works. The likelihood of encountering intact unrecorded archaeological features during the proposed works is assessed to be very low, due to unfavorable soils and flooding risk.
2. Given this very low probability, having an Archaeological Site Discovery Protocol in place during all earthworks will provide sufficient safeguard to ensure that if archaeological deposits are encountered, they are appropriately managed and recorded.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this advice. A copy of this letter has been shared with Heritage New Zealand so that they are aware of the advice provided.

Nāku noa nā

Reviewed by:



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Lynda Walter  
Director | InSitu Heritage Ltd

cc. Dr Rachel Darmody, Senior Archaeologist, Lower Northern Region, Pouhere Taonga Heritage New Zealand.

## References

Pullar, W. (1962) Soils and Agriculture of Gisborne Plains. N.Z Soil Bureau Bulletin 20, Wellington.

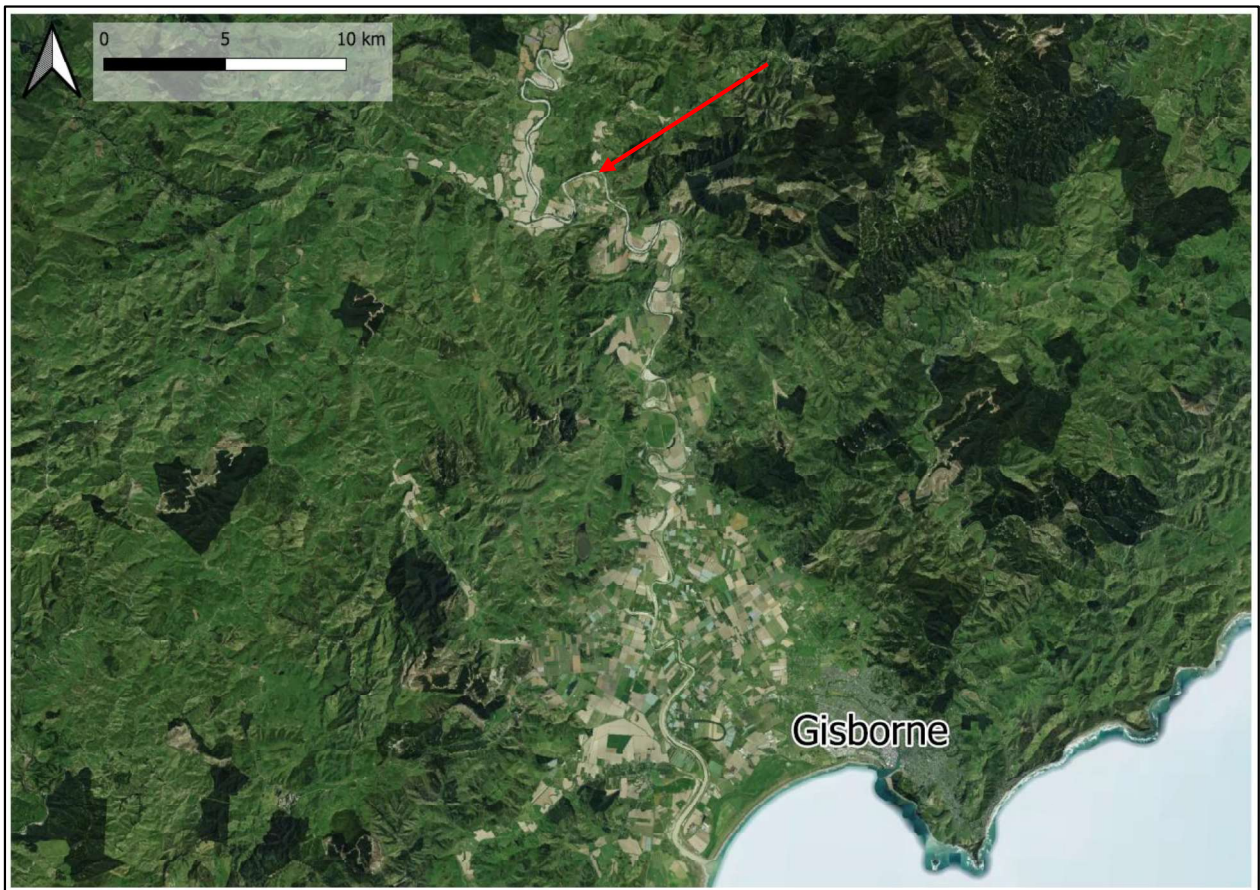


Figure 1 – Location of Te Karaka (red arrow), Gisborne District. Source: LINZ.

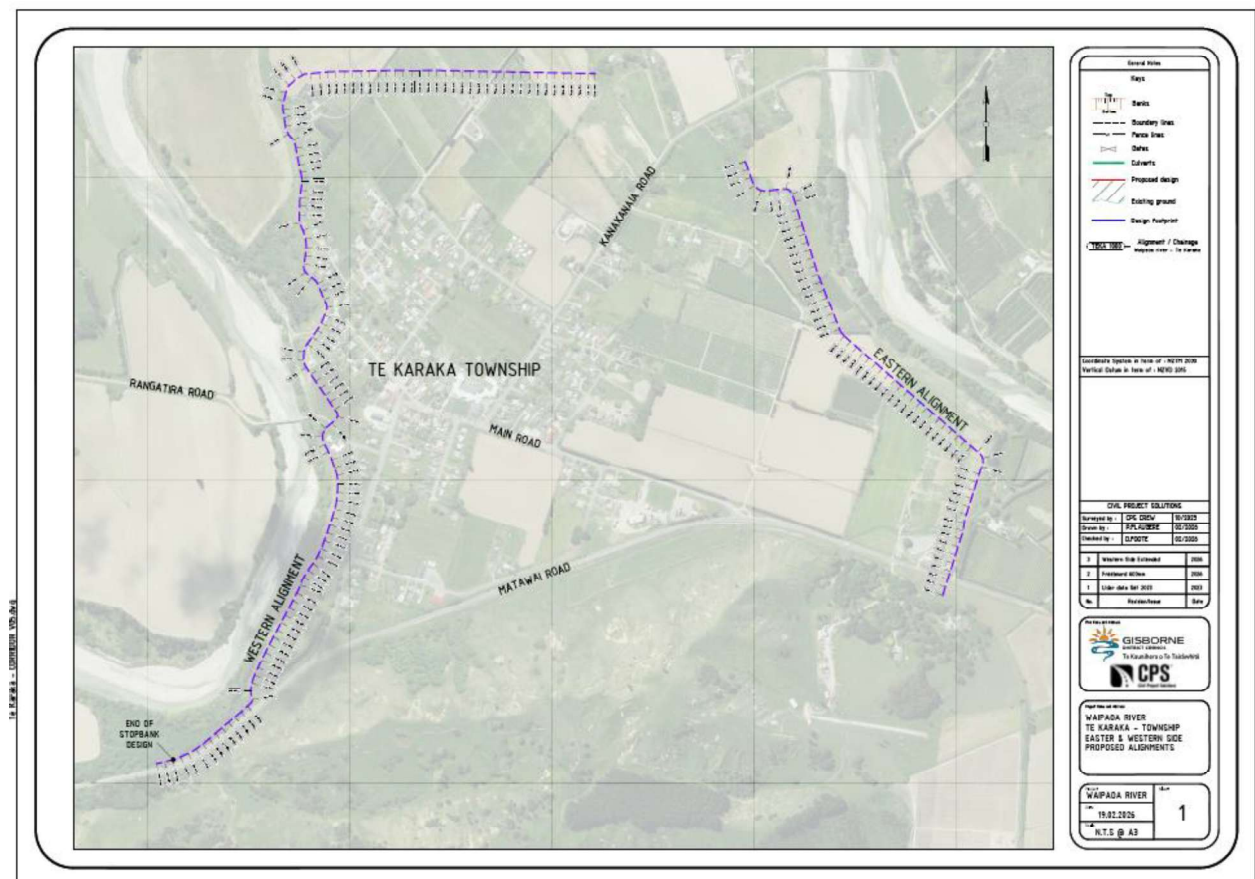
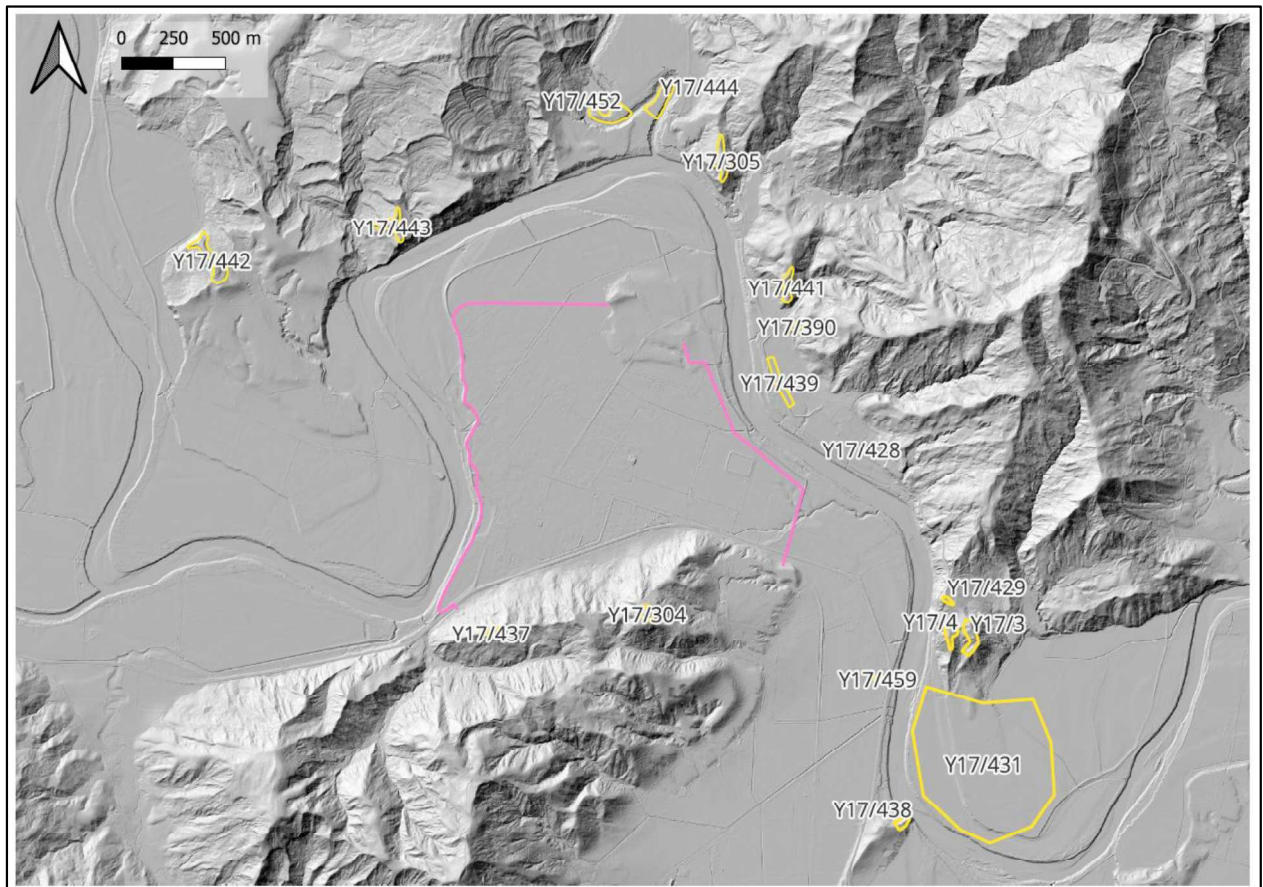


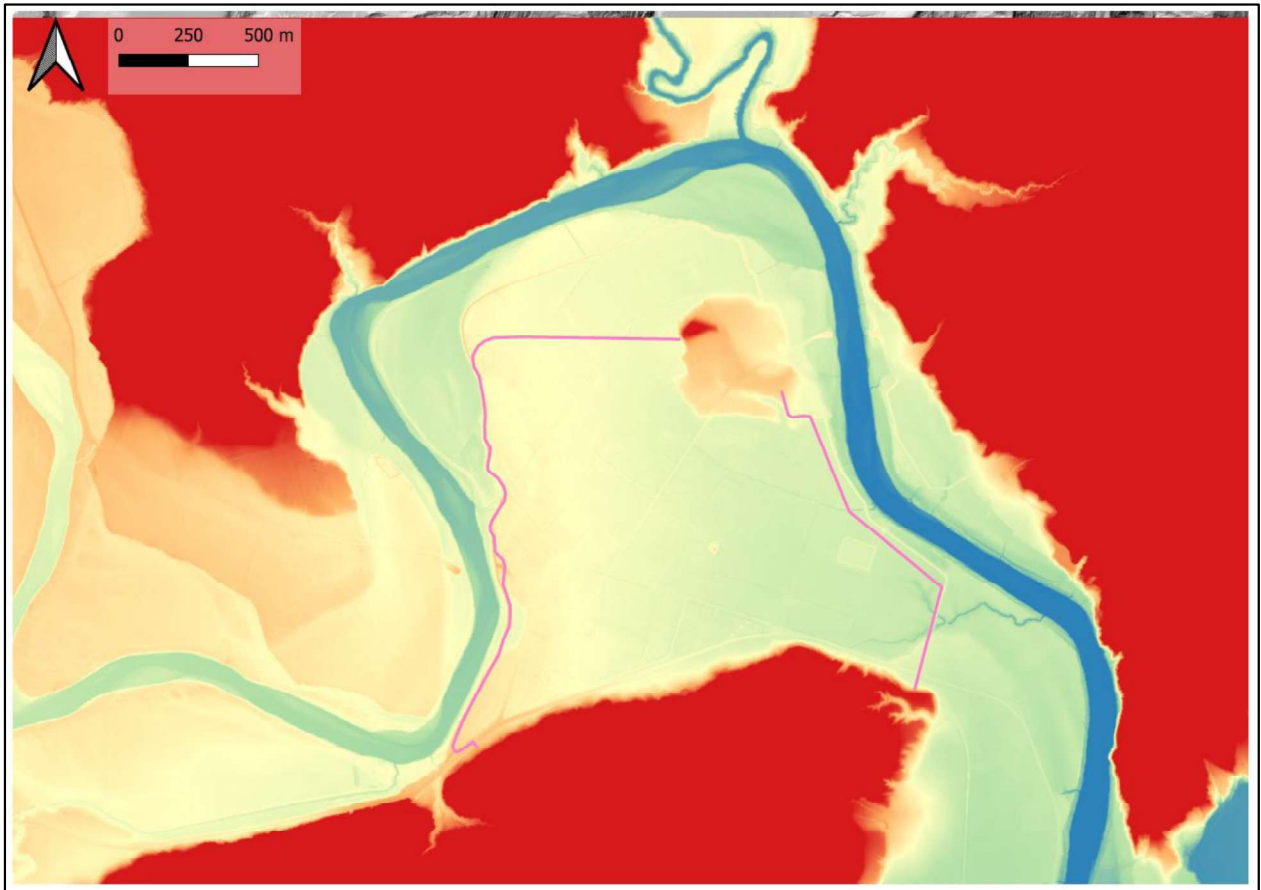
Figure 2 – Plan for the realignment of the stopbank at Te Karaka. Source: Gisborne District Council.



**Figure 3** –Hillshade map showing recorded archaeological sites (yellow polygons and labels) within 1km of the project area (pink polygon). Note the majority of sites are on the surrounding hills. Source: LINZ & Archsite.



**Figure 4** – SN225 640 2 from 1949 showing the early development of the Te Karaka township. Source: Retrolens.



**Figure 5** – DEM image where low ground is represented by blue, and high ground by red showing the project area (pink polygon) to be confined to very low-lying river terraces. Source: LINZ.



**Figure 6** – Map showing the location of test pits (blue triangles). Source: LINZ.



**Figure 7** – Photos of test pits. Top left: Test Pit 1, Top right: Test Pit 7, Bottom left: Test Pit 8, Bottom right: Test Pit 14. Source: InSitu Heritage 2025.