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**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSPECTION OF
MR MCKENNA'S PROPERTY, TAIPA**

**BY
JAMES ROBINSON
AND
JOAN MAINGAY**

**Department of Conservation
Northland Conservancy**

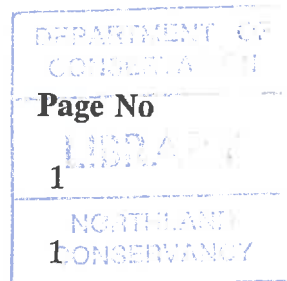
February 1991

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INTRODUCTION

A property at Taipa, owned by Mr L McKenna, was inspected for archaeological evidence by James Robinson on 3 February 1991. The section consists of 3.5 acres situated on the eastern side of Taipa Estuary adjacent to State Highway 1 (Fig 1). The land slopes gently up from the road then rises steeply to a ridgeline on the east.

Mr McKenna plans to erect a small Lockwood house and garage on the lower slopes overlooking the estuary and to construct a 70m long driveway to the buildings.

Several archaeological sites have been recorded in this area. A pa site N7/10 on the ridge end north of the property, pits on the ridgeline, and numerous midden on the slopes below. Patches of exposed shell, part of site N7/253, were noted on the property when this and adjoining land was surveyed in 1978 (see Fig 2 and attached site record form). The recent inspection was undertaken to determine whether the site would be modified by Mr McKenna's proposal.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSPECTION

The proposed driveway and the house and garage locations were examined for surface evidence.

There was nothing visible along the line of the driveway but midden had been exposed by stock erosion near to the house site and this area was relatively flat compared with the surrounding land. Although it was not a clearly defined terrace, the combined evidence suggested that it could have been an occupation site.

To determine whether this was a distinct possibility a series of test pits, a spade's width in dimension, were dug across the area where the house and garage are to be erected. Others were put in along the driveway to discover whether there were midden deposits on the lower ground. Where archaeological evidence was present this was exposed but not disturbed ie. holes were only excavated to the upper surface of deposits.

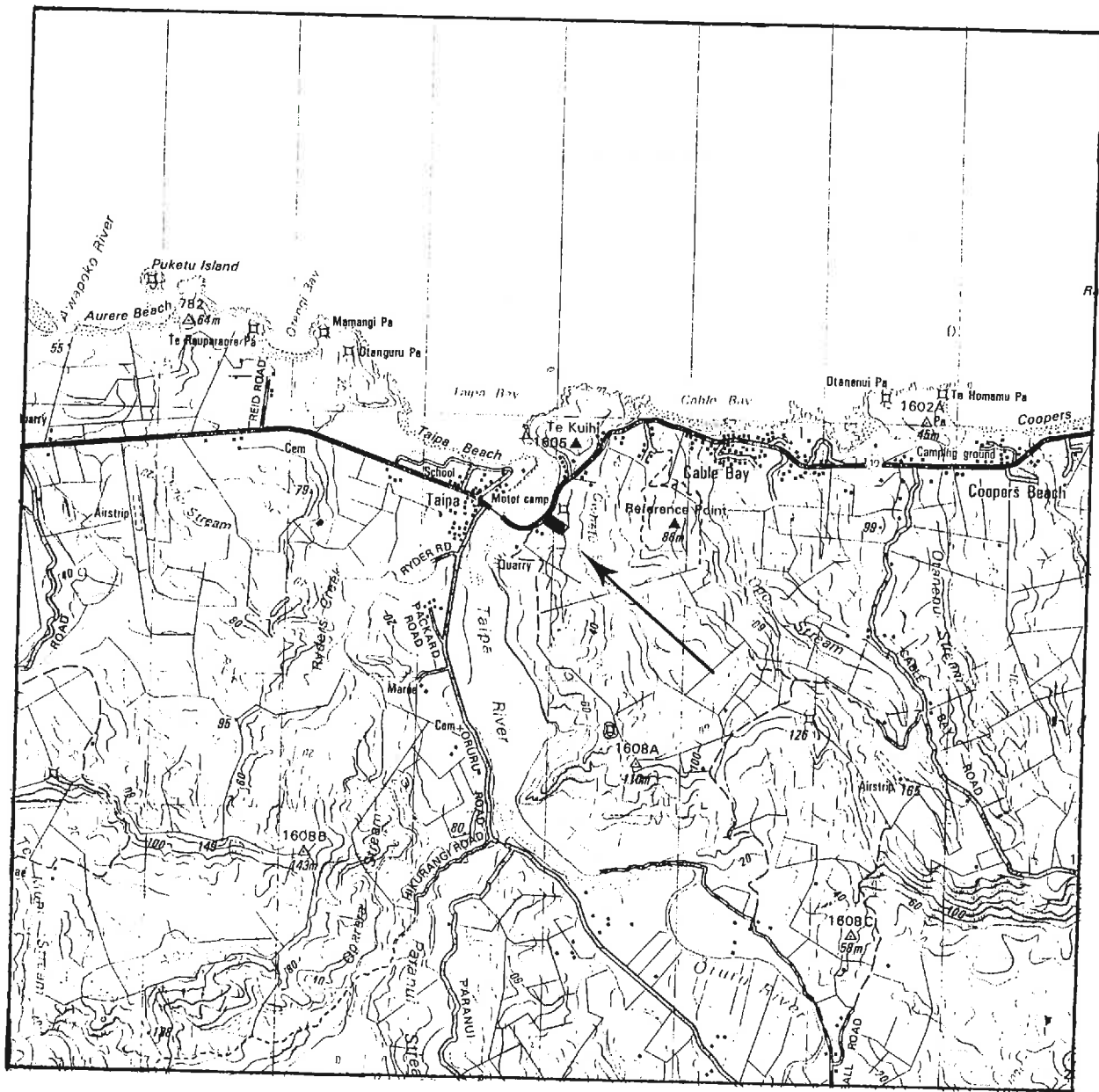
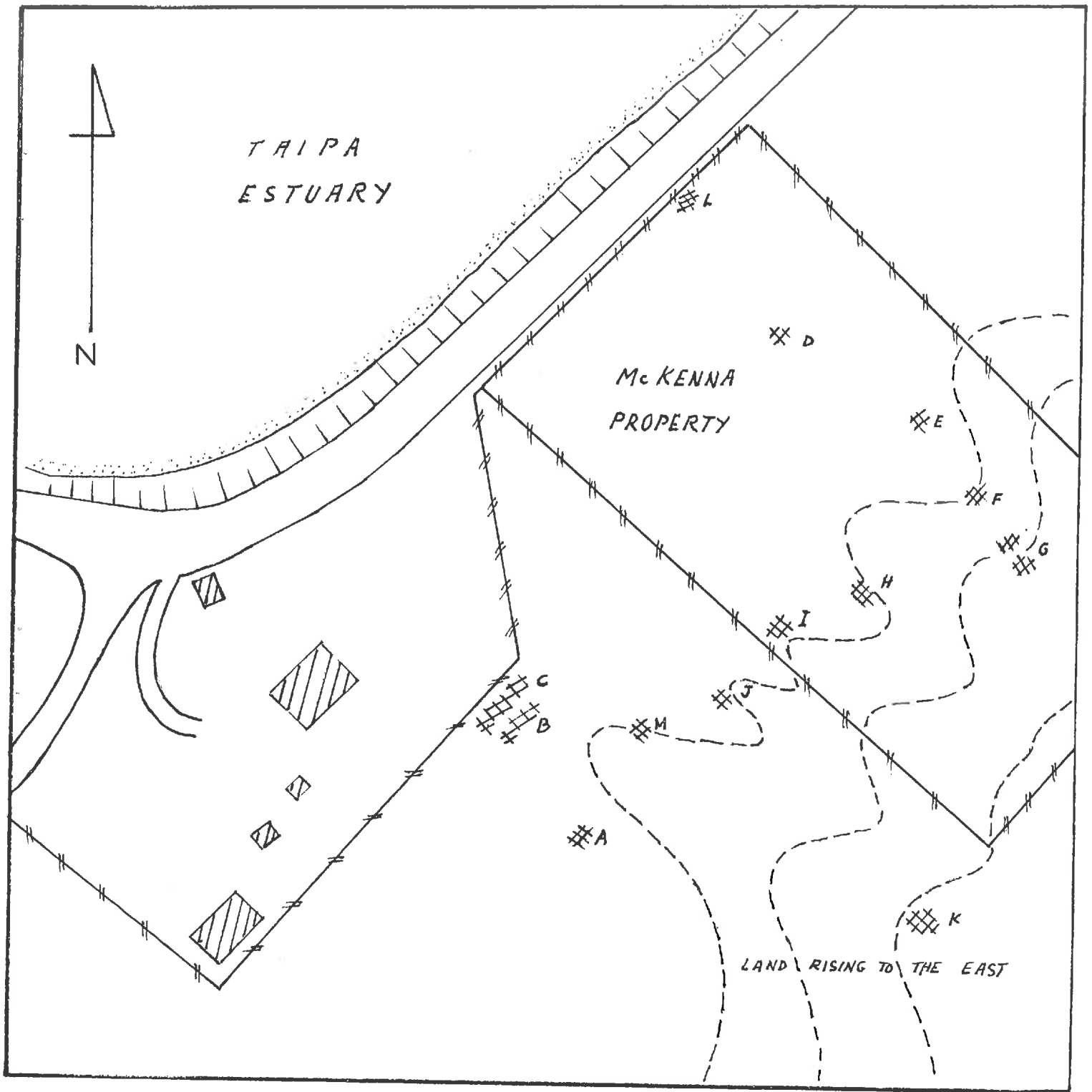


FIG.1 LOCATION MAP OF THE MCKENNA PROPERTY, TAIPA



- ⊗ SHELL MIDDEN
- ▨ EXISTING BUILDINGS

0 150M
 APPROXIMATE SCALE

FIG.2 SKETCH MAP OF SITE N7/253, Taipa

Test pits along the driveway revealed no archaeological evidence. In contrast, pits dug across the proposed house and garage site indicated that shell deposits cover approximately two thirds of this flattish area, they extend about 5m downslope to the north and north-west, and for an undetermined distance to the east (Fig 3).

The shell level is more even than the present ground surface and lies 10-20cm below it. It is composed mainly of pipi (*Paphies australis*), charcoal and ash, and is over 50cm thick in the area eroded by cattle.

DISCUSSION

The proposed location for Mr McKenna's house and garage appears to have been a Maori habitation site. Evidence from test pits suggests that it was deliberately levelled with shell to form a terrace of approximately 20 X 30m, and that during occupation shell midden was dumped down the slopes to the north and east. The extensive shell deposits continuing to the east could also indicate soil modification for gardens on these lower slopes.

Numerous midden throughout the McKenna and neighbouring properties suggest that the terrace was one of several small undefended sites on the hillside overlooking Taipa Estuary. They were probably associated with the pa and pit sites on the ridgeline above.

This was an ideal location for prehistoric settlement with abundant seafood resources in the estuary and extensive land suited to Maori agriculture on the west of the river.

EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The erection of a Lockwood house on Mr McKenna's property would entail drilling holes for the foundations and trenching for a drain to run behind the terraced area. Apart from levelling surface irregularities it would be unnecessary to excavate the section of

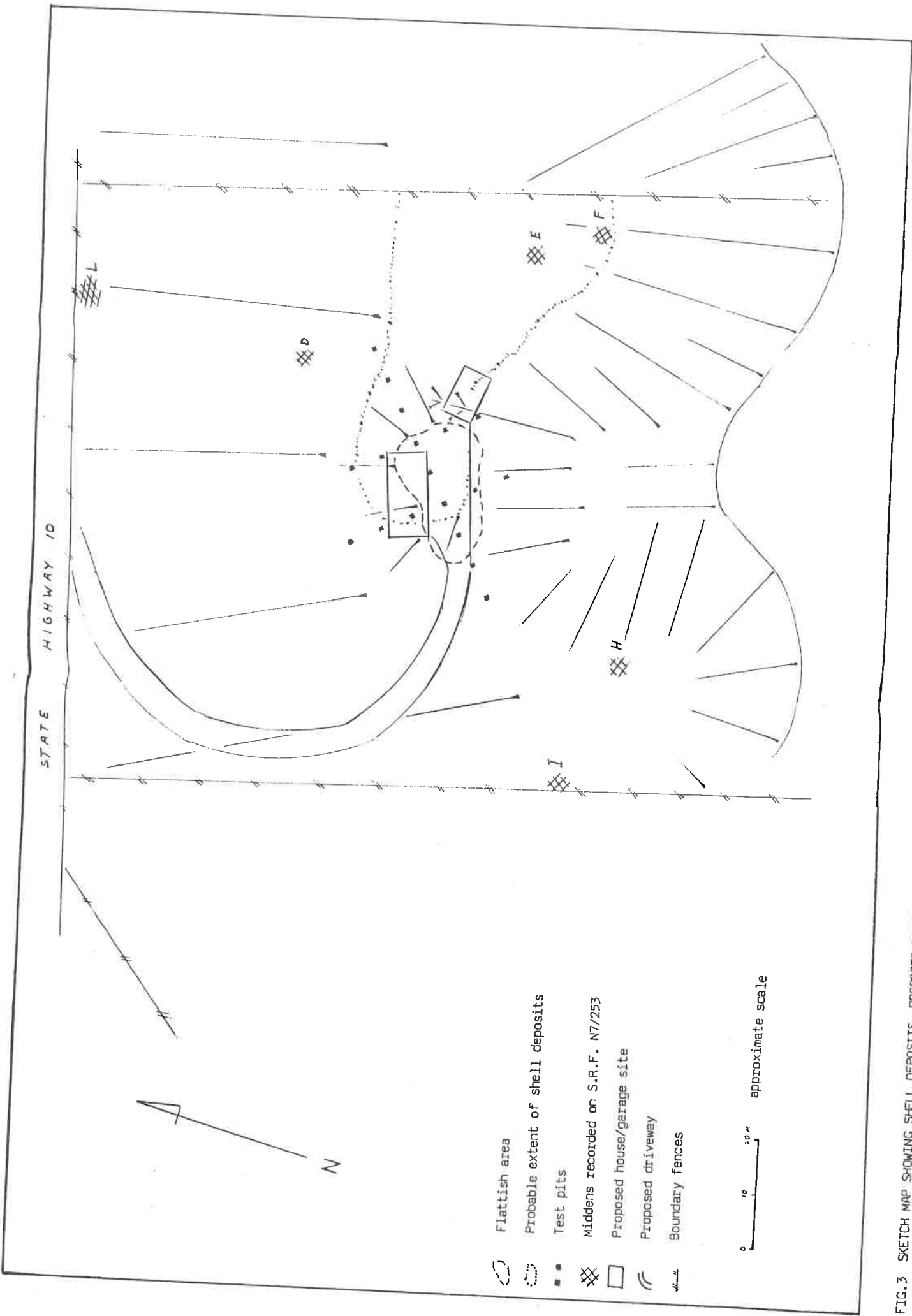


FIG.3 SKETCH MAP SHOWING SHELL DEPOSITS, PROPOSED BUILDINGS AND DRIVEWAY

driveway adjacent to the house and garage. Essentially subsurface disturbance would be limited to the house foundations and drain.

This would involve slight modifications to part of site N7/235, but given the apparent extent of the site it seems impractical to suggest an alternative location. Inevitably this would still result in some site disturbance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Mr McKenna should apply to the NZ Historic Places Trust for an authority to modify site N7/235.
2. Unless there are objections from the tangata whenua the application should be approved with the following conditions.
3. The section of driveway abutting the house and garage should be constructed by laying metal on the surface. Levelling of surface irregularities should be kept to a minimum.
4. An archaeologist should be present to monitor subsurface disturbance and record any exposed archaeological evidence.

SITE RECORD FORM (NZMS1)

NZMS 1 map number N7
 NZMS 1 map name Doubtless Bay
 NZMS 1 map edition 3rd 1972

NZAA NZMS 1 SITE NUMBER N7/253
 DATE VISITED November 1978
 SITE TYPE Pits/Middens
 SITE NAME: MAORI
 OTHER

Grid Reference Easting

9	7	5
---	---	---

 Northing

8	3	3
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1. Aids to relocation of site (*attach a sketch map*)
 Taipa Bay - site is on ridge between Taipa River and Owhetu Stream. Locality map attached.

2. State of site and possible future damage
 Pits very well defined; in gorse/scrub vegetation.

3. Description of site (*Supply full details, history, local environment, references, sketches, etc. If extra sheets are attached, include a summary here*)
 Three pits, side by side, on narrow ridgetop.
 Measured about 2 x 4
 2 x 4
 2 x 3 paces
 all about 30-40cm deep.
 Only small patch of mostly eroded midden on ridge top but something like 12 discrete, mostly small, middens on western slopes. Contents mostly cockle and pipi. See attached sheet written by Dr Challis.

4. Owner D.F. & N.E. Page Tenant/Manager
 Address Address

5. Nature of information (*hearsay, brief or extended visit, etc.*) Brief visit, Dr Challis and recorder.
 Photographs (*reference numbers, and where they are held*) No
 Aerial photographs (*reference numbers, and clarity of site*) 1860/3 Clearly

6. Reported by A. Walton Filekeeper *[Signature]*
 Address Date 24.10.75.

7. Key words

8. New Zealand Register of Archaeological Sites (*for office use*)
 NZHPT Site Field Code

<input type="checkbox"/>	Type of site	<input type="checkbox"/>	Present condition and future danger of destruction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local environment today	<input type="checkbox"/>	Security code
<input type="checkbox"/>	Land classification	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local body Mangonui County

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
SITE DESCRIPTION FORM

SITE NUMBER N7/253

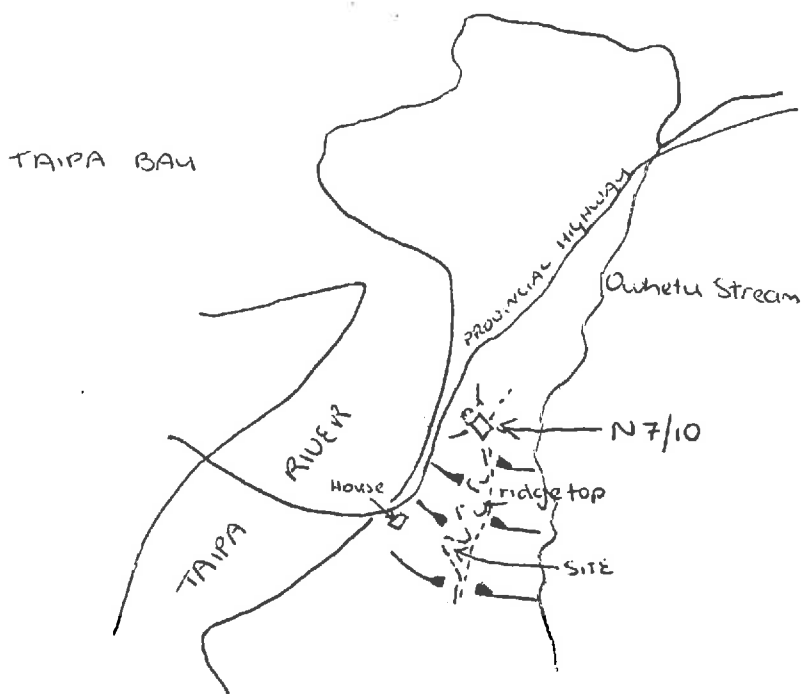
Map Number N7
Map Name DOUBTLESS BAY
Map Edition 3rd 1972
Grid Reference 975833

SITE NAME: MAORI
OTHER

SITE TYPE PITS

(This form may be used for recording any descriptive information or other supplementary information on the site, or for maps and drawings.)

LOCALITY MAP



Drawn from Air Photo 1860/2

NEW ZEALAND HISTORIC PLACES TRUST

Box 12255 WELLINGTON
TELEPHONES: Main office 724 141
Archaeology section 777 978



PLEASE REFER TO

→ HP 12/2/0/1

28 November 1978

EXAMINATION OF PROPOSED SITE OF HOTEL/MOTEL COMPLEX AT TAIPA, DOUBTLESS BAY

1. Location

The exact location of the proposed development was not known. However, the general area was found using the Senior Archaeologist's sketch map, and the house and adjacent paddock were briefly examined.

2. Evidence

The following notes apply to the points marked in the accompanying map.

- (a) Sparse surface matter of shell midden in stock track.
- (b) Dense shell midden in small exposure in stock track : layer 6cm thick, 5cm beneath the surface.
- (c) Sparse surface scatter of shell midden in disturbed soil.
- (d) Dense shell midden in pylon support exposure : layer 8cm thick beneath turf.
- (e) Surface scatter of shell midden exposed to stock track.
- (f) Superficial shell midden deposit.
- (g) Shell midden exposed by stock track.
- (h) Shell midden exposed by soil creep.
- (i) Shell midden exposed by soil creep.
- (j) Shell midden scatter.
- (k) Three pits side by side on narrow ridge, 2 x 4, 2 x 4, and 2 x 3 paces, all about 40cm deep.
- (l) Shell midden exposed by stock track.
- (m) Shell midden scatter.

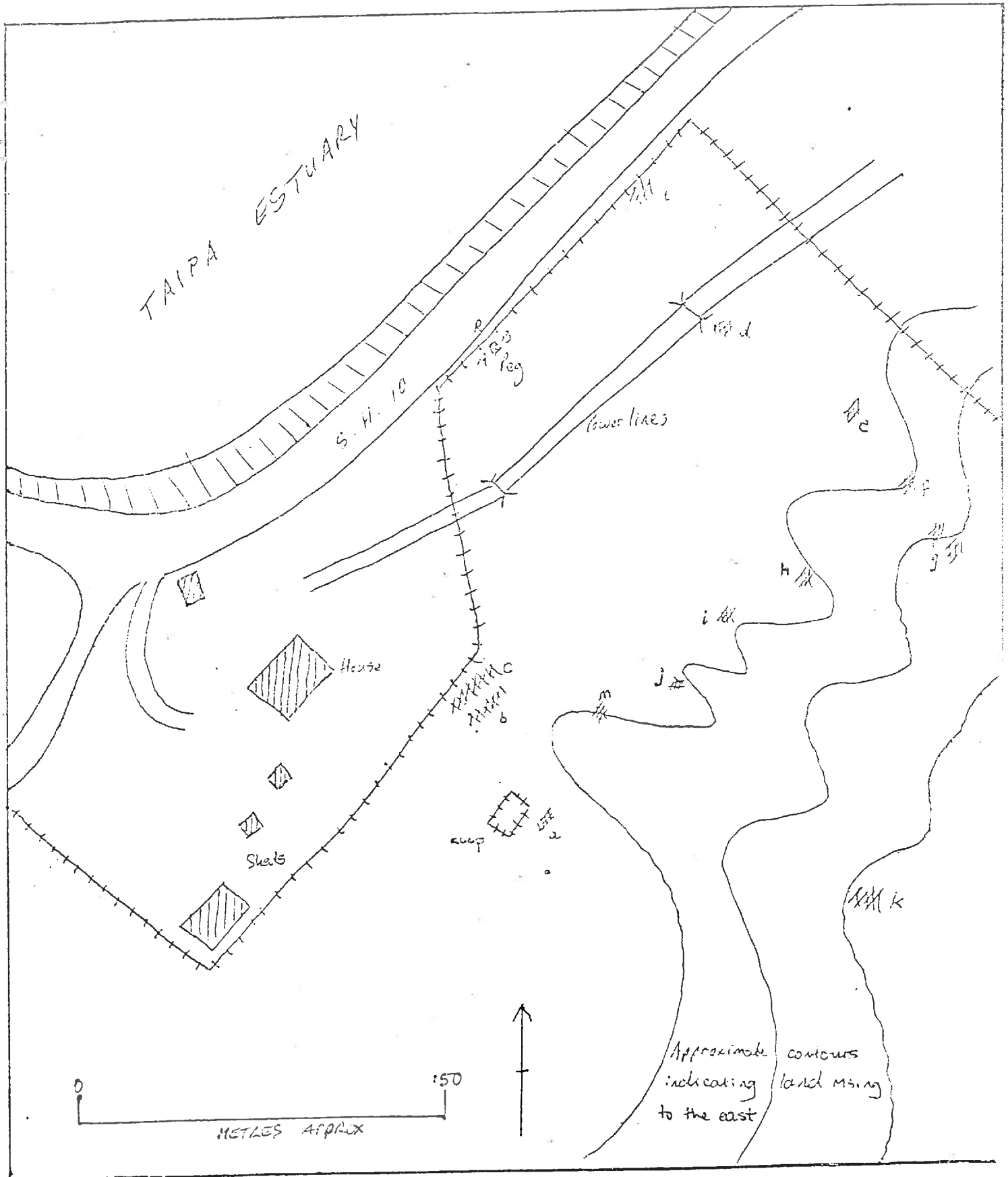
All shell middens appear to contain cockle and pipi of relatively small size. Most appear to be disturbed deposits in unstable ground. Undergrowth, scrub and grass were rank in places and visibility was limited to soil exposures. Most areas where the ground was disturbed showed shell midden.

3. Conclusion

The area contains many midden deposits doubtless reflecting the presence of adjacent unlocated settlement sites. All may be beyond the limits of the proposed development. No archaeological sites were found in the densely vegetated home paddock, an area which appears to have been thoroughly disturbed in the historic period.

A. J. Challis
Dr A. J. Challis

5 Pipitca Street, Wellington 1, New Zealand Survey Archaeologist



SKETCH MAP OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, TAIPA (WAIPANA)