

## ***Whanganui District Plan – Plan Change 63 (Historic Heritage).***

***Archaeological Advice - Submissions 1, 2 and 11.***

***Commissioned by: Whanganui District Council.***

***Author: Ivan Bruce, Archaeological Resource Management - March 2025.***

***Attention: Scott Flutey, Heritage Planner, Whanganui District Council.***

The following report is intended to provide feedback on Submissions 1, 2 and 11 made by each properties owners on Plan Change 63 (Historic Heritage; and provide recommendations on whether to retain these properties on Appendix K of the District Plan. I am writing to provide a summary of the field findings from the recent site visits and background research.

The assessments were carried on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2025. My evidence is based on a review of archival reports, historic aerial imagery; the NZAA site recording scheme (ArchSite accessed 2025); and non-invasive archaeological field survey.

### ***Submission 1: Philippa Ivory – 250 Roberts Ave - Site #441 – Walker’s Redoubt.***

- Location: The property is located on the northeastern side of Roberts Ave and to the northeast and downslope of the location of the former Mt Jowett Trig. The property is rural residential.
- Land use and existing Infrastructure : The property contains a dwelling, garages shed, with established driveway and gardens. The remainder of the property inspected was under grass when inspected the proposed archaeological site location was under closely grazed grass, presenting good conditions for identifying surface archaeological sites.
- Archaeological record: No archaeological sites have been recorded at this property on the NZAA site recording scheme (ArchSite – accessed March 2025). No historic land plans that I am aware of record evidence of either Māori or European occupation at this location prior to 1900. The historic aerial images do not show clear evidence of surface archaeological sites. A review of historic newspaper reports suggest that a redoubt was established somewhere in the vicinity of Mt Jowett in 1868, but the exact location is far from clear. The position was known as Walker’s Redoubt. Local historian Maxwell Smart produced research indicating that the site was situated on the Mt Jowett Trig, (located on the other side of Roberts Ave from the position of Walkers Redoubt indicated as Site #441 in the proposed district plan). Smart’s notes acknowledge that

he holds that no records of earthworks in this area. The site is noted by Nigel Prickett in his review of 19<sup>th</sup> Century New Zealand war sites, but this research also notes the site is not located. No evidence of this site was noted during the site visit.

### Recommendations

- Remove this site from the Whanganui District Plan, on the grounds that there is no archaeological evidence for this site to be included.
- In this case I would point the WDC planning staff to the current direction of the ArchSite Board of Governance, the NZAA Central file keeper will not accept site records unless physical archaeological evidence is presented. I consider this is a useful standard that the WDC might adopt in this case.
- While there are historic records alluding to a redoubt having been constructed somewhere in the vicinity, this evidence is sketchy and does not clearly indicate the site location to the degree of certainty required to include this site on the proposed district plan.

### Submission 2: James Dickson – 62 Jurie Vale Road – Site #254 – Pits

- Location: The property is located on the relatively steep flanks of an unstable hillside, poorly suited to pre-contact Māori occupation and land use, which would have required the construction of terracing to facilitate house platforms or storage pits.
- Land use and existing Infrastructure: The property was predominantly under grass at the time of the site visit, presenting good surface visibility for recording archaeological sites. The property is accessed by a driveway and contained an established dwelling and sheds. A stormwater pipe, with a visible riser was noted in the immediate vicinity of the archaeological site #254 as scheduled on the district plan, indicating that the area of the scheduled site had been modified by civil earthworks in the recent past.
- Archaeological record: No archaeological sites have been recorded at this property on the NZAA site recording scheme (ArchSite – accessed March 2025). No historic land plans that I am aware of record evidence of either Māori or European occupation at this location prior to 1900. The historic aerial images do not show clear evidence of surface archaeological sites, such as pits, in my opinion.
- Results of Field inspection: No evidence of an archaeological site was recorded on this property because of this visit. Surface depressions and undulations in the vicinity of the location marked as pits in the proposed plan, show no distinct sign of being Māori storage pits and I'm inclined to consider these are result of the civil works undertaken to place the storm water line. No other corroborative field evidence was noted.

### Recommendations

- Remove this site from the Whanganui District Plan, on the grounds that there is no archaeological evidence for this site to be included.

### Site 2: Bill Simmonds – 20 Dickens Lane – Site #367

- Location: The property is situated on a long dune ridge running parallel to and north of Dickens Lane and contains one archaeological site, recorded on the NZAA site recording scheme as R22/548.
- Land use and existing Infrastructure: The eastern half of this property contains an existing dwelling, garage, shed space and drive access. The western half is currently undeveloped, and the dune ridge contains a recorded archaeological site. The site is in fair condition, under grass and grazed. The property to the west of the Simmonds has been extensively developed and the ridge containing these pits has been cut down significantly to create a building platform, as a result there is no likelihood that these pit features will extend into that property.
- Archaeological record: The site comprises five storage pits, lying transverse along the summit of the same ridge. These were very clear to surface inspection and the NZAA site record for this site has been updated, with photography and a minor correction to the grid reference. This is attached to this record. There is no argument that these pits comprise an archaeological site and I note that the landowner has known of the site prior to the NZAA site record being created, and actively avoided damaging the site during his tenure, for which he should be commended.

### Recommendations

- The site should remain scheduled in the Whanganui District Plan.
- The site grid reference should be altered to that indicated in the updated NZAA site record.
- The extent of this site should not extend beyond the boundary of the Simmons property to the west.

Any background sources aerial images, NZAA site records, and land plans consulted during this research can be provided to support this memo if requested.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Ivan Bruce



# Site Record Form

NZAA Site Number:	R22/548	Site Coordinates (NZTM)	
Imperial Site Number:		Easting:	1772170
Site Type:	Pit/Terrace	Northing:	5581670
Site Name(s):		Source:	On Screen



**Finding Aids to the Location of the Site:**  
Access via Dickens Rd, Wanganui, 70 m NW from road end and on an undeveloped sand ridge between houses. Currently in pasture.

**Brief Description:**  
Row of five pits, in paddock on sand ridge

**Condition of Site when last visited:**  
Fair

Site Periods:

Indigenous pre-1769

Ethnicity:

Maori

Site Features:

Pit

Associated Sites:

Description:

Updated 18/03/2025 (Field Visit), submitted by: IvanBruce\_ArchSite, visited 13/03/2025 by Ivan Bruce

A line of five open storage pits excavated into a narrow sand ridge. The pits appear uniform in size, each measuring approximately 3m long by 2m wide, with the long side placed transverse to the ridge. Each pit is separated from the other by a baulk of approximately 2m. The pits have been left open, but have become largely backfilled by natural processes, and now are no more than 0.5m deep. The sand ridge is narrow and may have been flattened to create level ground for the pits. No other surface evidence was noted.

Updated 06/08/2015 (other), submitted by annettasutton  
Grid reference (E1772170 / N5581670)

A row of 4-5 pits. These pits have been identified from the 1942 series aerial photograph RN 380/11 and Google Earth images.

Part of this site probably still exists in a farm paddock. The dune area on the NW side of the pit site is a road reserve and may have been leveled and developed, which may have destroyed at least some of the pits.

The site intersects with a paper road reserve.

The area was known historically as Pickwick, now described as Otamatea.. The Maori name for the area was Taihorenui.

Condition Notes:

Updated 18/03/2025 (Field Visit), submitted by: IvanBruce\_ArchSite, visited 13/03/2025 by Ivan Bruce

The pits are becoming subdued, but are under no immediate threat.

Updated 06/08/2015 (other), submitted by annettasutton

Some pits at this site may not have survived.



