

Memo

To: Dr Ann McEwan
From: TJ O'Connell
cc: n/a
Date: 20/12/2023
Re: Mōkihinui Midden is (NZAA Site Number L28/1)

Purpose

The purpose of this archaeological appraisal is to determine the nature and form of Mōkihinui Midden archaeological site (NZAA Site Number L28/1) and to provide comment on associated archaeological significance. This appraisal is a desk-based exercise and does not constitute a full archaeological assessment of the site.

This appraisal does not include an assessment of Māori cultural values. Statements are made as to the location and nature of archaeological sites and their archaeological values. There are no statements on the cultural significance of the study area nor are the views of tāngata whenua represented in this appraisal. An assessment of cultural significance will not necessarily correlate with an assessment of the archaeological significance of the area as it will refer to a different value set.

Location

Mokihinui Midden (NZAA Site Number L28/1) is located at Mōkihinui, a lightly populated locality on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island. The find spot is located on the southern side of the Mōkihinui River's mouth about c. 220 m from the bank of the river (Figure 1).

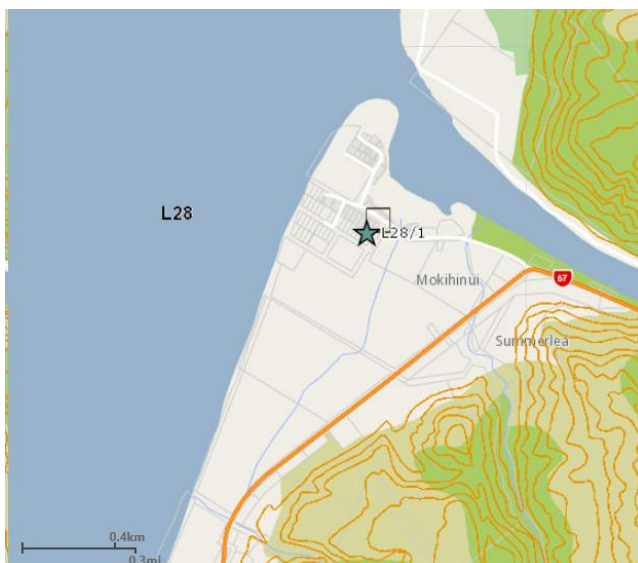


Figure 1. View of map showing the recorded location of Archaeological Site L28/1 (green star) as per the New Zealand Archaeological Associations database of recorded archaeological sites known as ArchSite.

NZAA Site Recording Scheme

Mōkihinui Midden is recorded as an archaeological site in the New Zealand Archaeological Associations database of recorded archaeological sites known as ArchSite (Site Number L28/1). The site record form indicates that several adzes were found in this area, which was subsequently recorded as a shell midden. Summary details of information contained within the site record form is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary detail from NZAA Site Record for L28/1.

Site ID	NZTM	Type	Detail
L28/1	E 1511246 N 5402120	Artefact find	<p>The artefact find spot was recorded in 1987. Finder aid describes the sites location lying to the south of the road to the Mokihinui Camp Ground and is in a paddock to the west of the first house to the south of the road. The site record form further elaborates that the site is about 60 m west of Colemans house at Mokihinui, with Coleman senior having made the discovery of artefact material at a depth of about 4 inches under the surface.</p> <p>The location was visited by R. Hooker and P. McGahan of D.O.C. Westland in 1987. The purported find spot is described as being on a raised 1-2 m piece of land that is grassy with low clumps of gorse in the grass. The raised land extends about 60 m from the fenced boundary to the west. It is reported in the site record form that other locals in the area questioned Colemans account suggesting his reporting of the discovery was a ploy to halt their plans for land development. Five test pits were excavated in the general location though no archaeological material was reported. The file keeper of the time R.G. Lawn noted his opinion that the presence of an archaeological site could only be proved through further excavation though no details of such investigation is noted.</p>

<p>NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION SITE DESCRIPTION FORM</p> <p>Map Number L28 Mokihinui Map Name Map Edition 1st 1976 N.Z.261 Grid Reference 212638</p>		<p>SITE NUMBER L28/1 <i>S176/1</i></p> <p>SITE NAME: MAORI OTHER RECEIVED</p> <p>SITE TYPE Occupation: <i>2 DEC 1987</i></p>
<p>(This form may be used for recording any descriptive information or other supplementary information on the site, or for maps and drawings.)</p>		

Figure 2. Sketch map included in the site record form for L28/1.

Ka Huru Manu

Ka Huru Manu (the Ngai Tahu Cultural Atlas) was consulted. It identifies Mōkihinui River as a culturally significant water way. The atlas also depicts a coastal travel route running close to the study area. These cultural sites indicate to the Māori occupation and use of the wider study area in the past.



Figure 3. Section of the map accessed through Ka Huru Manu, showing the coastal route (green line) and Mōkihinui River (a culturally significant waterway) near the study area (red circle).

Historic Maps & Aerial Imagery

19th century maps and survey plans were consulted. Available plans included SO 2045 dating to 1875, SO 974 dating to 1863, SO 64 (n.d.), SO 947 (n.d.) etc. None of the maps or plans consulted included indicators or markers to suggest for the presence of an archaeological site. A 1950's aerial image that shows the project footprint was consulted. No indicators for the presence of a Māori archaeological site in the general location of L28/1 was discerned.

Sumner Museum

Email correspondence from Sumner Museum dating to 2019 indicates that the artefact material recovered from Mōkihinui was not a pounamu adze head but rather a grey stone from D'ville Island. The emails note that the recovered adze came from garden of Ernest Coleman who had a small farm near the camp site. This was confirmed by Roger Duff then head of Canterbury Museum.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Recorded archaeological evidence for Māori sites on the West Coast are primarily located along river and coastal locations. For example, such evidence is present at Buller, Karamea, Oparara, Kohaihai, Heaphy, Little Wanganui, Fox, Kararoa, Mawhera, Haast Rivers and Serendipity Cave (Anderson 1982: 104). With the exception of 'Mōkihinui Midden' (NZAA Site Number L28/1) there is a dearth of recorded archaeological sites in proximity to Mōkihinui River. This is probably due to a lack of archaeological survey in the area rather than an indication of Māori archaeological sites not being present.



The exact find spot of the grey stone adze discovered by Coleman is not clear. Subsequent test pitting in the general location did not reveal evidence for presence of an archaeological site. While it is to be expected that there are unrecorded archaeological sites of Māori origin present in the local landscape, given its position close to both the river and coastal location, in this instance, without further investigation, namely site visit and invasive ground testing, the presence of an associated archaeological site cannot be positively confirmed. In the absence of such evidence, it is unclear if the find location possesses archaeological values or constitutes the legal definition of an archaeological site. As such, there is little current evidence to indicate that Mōkihinui Midden site (NZAA Site Number L28/1) is of significant archaeological value.