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Maitai Flood Improvements: Hanby Park to Clouston Terrace

Amanda Young 22 August 2025

1.0 Introduction

Tonkin & Taylor on behalf of Nelson City Council have designed flood protection works along the Maitahi / Mahitahi / Maitai [Maitai] River from Hanby Park to Clouston Terrace. The work is a mixture of raising existing stopbanks, creating new concrete floodwalls, new retaining walls, raising Clouston Terrace, cutting out the bank to create flood ways and installation of stormwater pipes. The work will occur on both sides of the river but predominantly on the true left. An initial proposed cut on the Branford Park side of the river (the true right) will no longer occur.

Tonkin & Taylor have asked for archaeological assessment of the proposed work. The Maitai Valley has historical, archaeological and cultural significance.

The assessment is only concerned with archaeological sites and values. It does not consider wāhi tūpuna (sites of significance to Māori) except for those with archaeological values and in that case does not consider the cultural and spiritual significance of the sites. Cultural values are the province of Māori. These should be addressed by Te Tauihu iwi. It is understood that consultation with Te Tauihu iwi has commenced. Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kuia have prepared a Cultural Impact Assessment which I have been privileged to view. This emphasises the high cultural significance of the landscape.

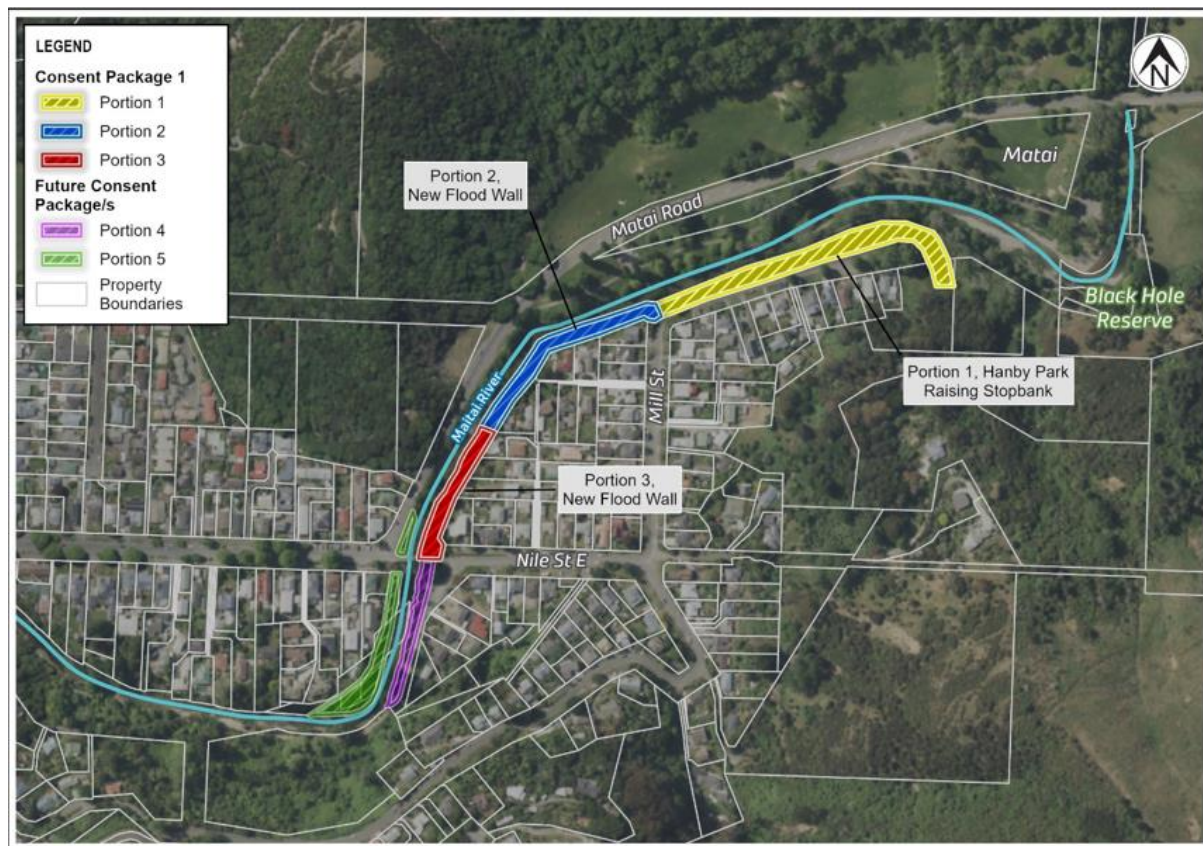


Figure 1: Maitai Flood Improvement project area (August 2025).

2.0 Statutory Considerations

The importance of Maitahi / Mahitahi / Maitai [Maitai] River and its tributaries to Māori is recognised by Statutory Acknowledgements for Ngāti Kuia, Rangitane o Wairau, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Toa Rangitira, Ngāti Tama ki Te Tau Ihu and Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Maui.

There are no recorded archaeological sites on Archsite within the project area.

There are no places within the project area that are scheduled on the Nelson Resource Management Plan [NRMP] Appendix 1: Heritage buildings, places and objects or Appendix 3: Archaeological Sites. Nearby places recorded on Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 will not be affected by the proposed work. Appendix 1 includes historic dwellings along Nile Street East. Appendix 3 includes MS58 Pa (Maitai Recreation Reserve), located by the NRMP on the hill above 102 Maitai Valley Road (the old Richardson house), over 400 m away and above the river. Further away is MS57 Lookout and wāhi tapu (Kākā Hill). The two sites were recorded in 1993 - 1994 by Lawrence as part of a Nelson City Council commissioned study for the NRMP. The description for MS58 Pa is “Site of Ngati Kuia Pa. From here they gathered food such as Eels, birds, and Forest Fruits. Whiro O Wira of Ngati Kuia

resided here. Buried on Kākā Hill.”¹ That for MS57 Kākā Hill is “TuMatakokiri used this hill as a lookout for raiding war parties. Site of Ngati Kuia burial grounds.”² No physical evidence of either site has been found to date.

NRMP Appendix 2: Heritage Trees schedules a landscape tree (*Platanus acerifolia* (London plane)) and a local woodland (W21) at Hanby Park.

There are no buildings or structures within the project area that are listed on the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangi Kōrero created under the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act* 2014.

3.0 Historical Background Information

3.1 Māori Use of the Area

The Maitai River was an important place for pre-European and historic period Māori (and is still highly valued). The catchment was a rich food and resource gathering area with forest, river and wetland resources such as birds, inanga (whitebait), harakeke (flax), rongoā (medicinal plants) and tuna (eels). Small clearings would have been created in the dense forest for cultivation, for example, J.D. Peart, an early twentieth century historian whose information came from interviews with local Māori, mentions cultivations on the south side of the Maitai³.

Kāinga and pahi (temporary shelters) to access these resources would have been occupied on a seasonal or temporary basis. Kāinga and fishing camps were along the sides of the Maitai and at the mouth. They included Matangi Awhio, Koputirana (located somewhere near the mouth of the river), a swan catching site and kāinga at Fennel Island (O27/54, on the seaward side of Neale Park) and evidence recorded as archaeological site O27/10⁴. Higher up the river was the pā recorded as MS58. There were other kāinga further upstream, for example, at the Mill Stream confluence with the North Branch of the Maitai and probably in the vicinity of Wilsons Flat.

¹ Lawrence 1994.

² Lawrence 1994.

³ Peart 1937:55-56.

⁴ O27/10, ovens and flakes, was uncovered during 1961 earthworks on the eastern side of the mouth of the Maitai River.

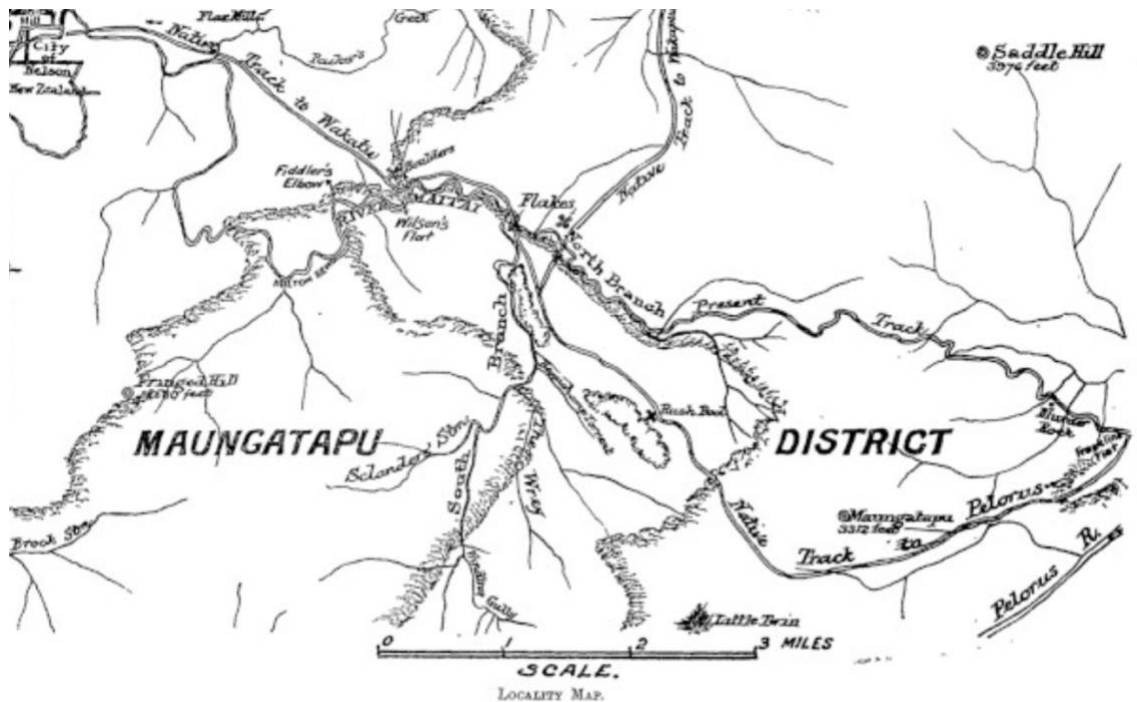


Figure 2: The Maitahi / Mahitahi ara as detailed by Skinner 1913. The project area is in the top corner.

The Maitai Valley was used as an ara (route) from Whakatu up to Maungatapu and the Bryant Range, then onto the Sounds, Marlborough and the Wairau Valley. The Maitai is within the Te Rohe Pakohe. It was a particularly important route to access the pakohe (argillite) and serpentine resources of the Nelson Mineral Belt. Staging kāinga were in the higher reaches of the river. The river was also an important source of pakohe, bringing boulders down from the Mineral Belt. These were preliminarily worked on the adjacent banks.

3.2 Post-1842 History of the Area

The early colonial settlers also used Maitai Valley to access the Mineral Belt and as a route through to Marlborough. The settlers initially followed the Māori track along the valley. The walking and bridle track was made into a dray road by 1867 and proclaimed as a road in 1874⁵. The present road in the lower Maitai Valley essentially follows the route of the old road.

The project area is just within the Nelson town area of the New Zealand Company. Adjacent was the Maitai Suburban District (Suburban East). The 1842 New Zealand Company Plan of the Town Nelson, approved by Tuckett the chief surveyor, shows the acre blocks to be allocated by ballot to paying settlers and investors. The 1842 survey plan also shows Native Tenths Reserves. Two of these are within the project area - Town Acre 191 and Town Acre 382. There are two “government” reserves also indicated within the area which were never used as such. Crown grants for the Maitai Valley were

⁵ Venner 2001:175.

issued from the 1850s but there were European settlers living there from 1842 when the sections were selected through the New Zealand Company settlement scheme⁶. Most of the houses adjacent to the project area were not built until the early – mid twentieth century. Prior to this, the land was cultivated and grazed as part of larger properties.

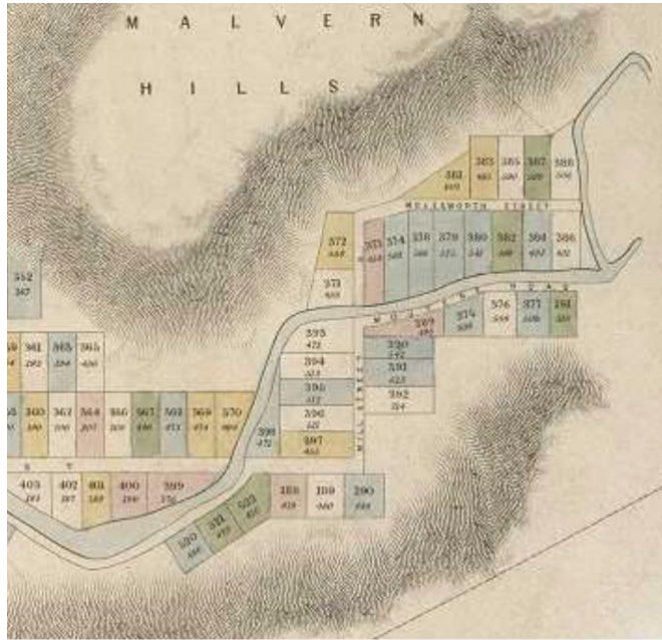


Figure 3 :The 1842 New Zealand Company Town Acre numbers. Some of the sections and roads are speculative.

Detail of “Plan of the town of Nelson approved by Frederick Tuckett, chief surveyor, 28th April 1842” (copy held at National Library). The sections coloured red indicate colonial reserves, blue sections sold, yellow Company’s reserves and green native reserves. No colour means unsold. The upper number on each section block is the number of the section; the lower number is the order in which it was chosen.



Figure 4: Nile Street East with the intersection with Maitai Valley Road in centre of the picture.

“Looking up Maitai Valley to Kākā from Cleveland Hill above Hunter-Brown's. 1902-1908.”

Kerr Collection, Nelson Provincial Museum 317288.

⁶ Venner 2001.



Figure 5: “Maitai River, view from Hanby Park” No date but the collection is dated 1930s -1970s. Nelson Provincial Museum, Ellis Dudgeon Collection. Photo Collection Reference Number 212180.

Branford Park was originally part of the Richardson family owned Maitai Run and brought by Nelson City Council under the Public Works Act in 1918. It was not named Branford Park until the 1970s. Hanby Park was named in 1912 after a local resident who was instrumental in Nelson City Council purchasing the area as a recreation reserve. Prior to this, the adjacent road was known as Moutere Street or the Mill Street extension⁷. When the council took over the land, they levelled it and sowed the area with grass⁸. A footbridge was put in⁹. This was washed away and re-erected many times until after being washed away in 1927 it was not replaced. Hanby Park became a very popular picnic park and swimming area. By 1917 a bathing shed and three spring boards had been erected near the footbridge and a well and pump installed to provide water. A deeper well and pumping station was dug in 1933 to supply water to the wider area.

The date of the first Clouston’s Bridge is not known. It was said to be old in 1888¹⁰. It was a footbridge until ca.1933 when after a flood destroyed the bridge it was re-built as a motor bridge. This encouraged the development of the sections on the east side of the river, particularly after “drainage” (sewerage) was installed.

⁷ Nelson Evening Mail, 17 February 1912.

⁸ Nelson Evening Mail, 1 May 1912.

⁹ The historical information is taken from newspapers at www.paperspastnatlib.govt.nz.

¹⁰ The Colonist, 7 November 1888.

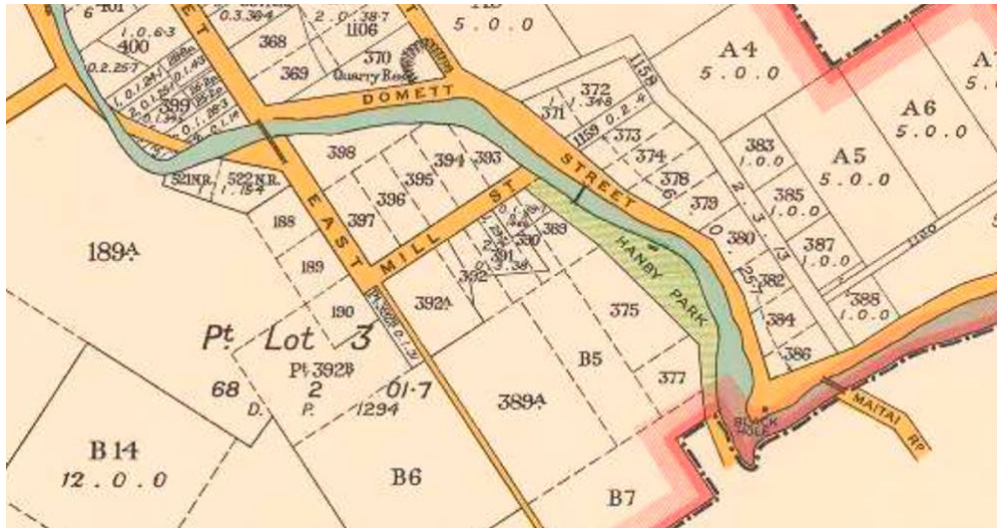


Figure 6: The project area in 1931. The Hanby Park footbridge over the Maitai is still shown. Plan of the City of Nelson and Tahunanui Town District. NZMS16. NZ Lands & Survey, Wellington. 1931 (www.natlib.govt.nz).



Figure 7: The project area in the 1940s (topofthesouthmaps).

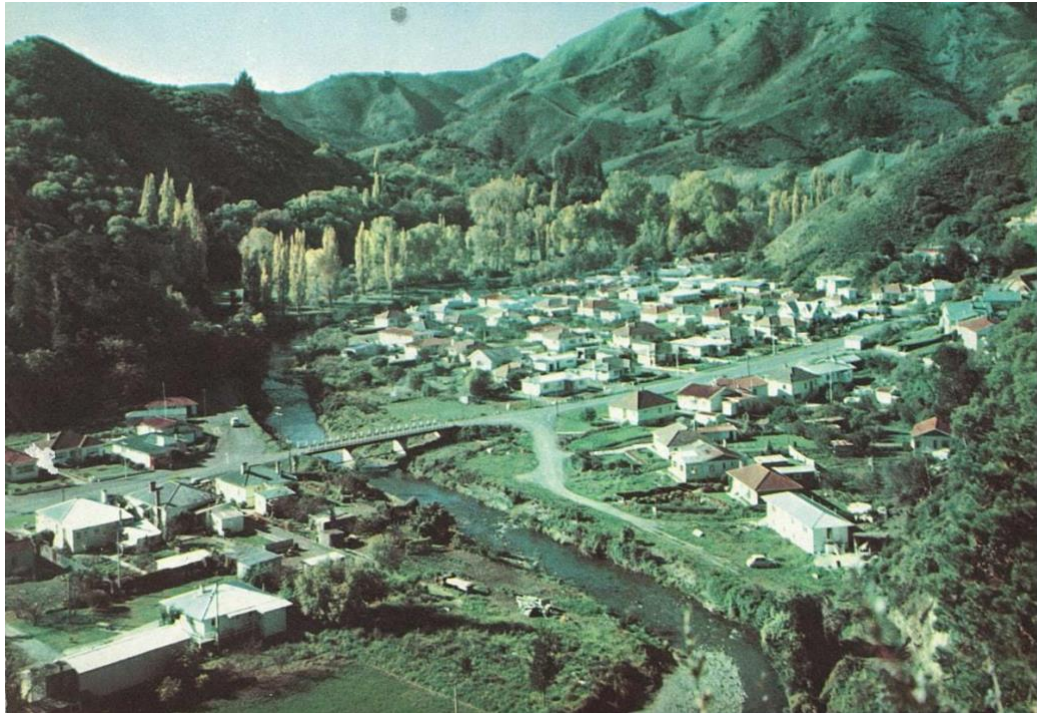


Figure 8: 1962. Posted on Facebook page Top of the South Island, New Zealand History by Ginny Brownlee, November 27 2018.

4.0 Archaeological Background

Archaeological work in the Maitai Valley has concentrated on sites relating to the exploitation of the Nelson Mineral Belt by Māori and in the historic period. This has included 1960s - 1980s intensive surveying and recording of pakohe exploitation sites by the Walls family and the Nelson Archaeology Group, and by Dan and Alison Witter as a consequence of the Maitai Dam construction. Mike Johnston, geologist and historian, has carried out research and fieldwork on sites associated with the exploitation of copper and chromite from the Mineral Belt including the Dun Mountain Railway. There has been some work in the lower and middle sections of the Maitai Valley. Survey, assessment and monitoring has occurred in the last twenty-five years or so by me for Nelson City Council and various forestry companies. This has included previous assessments for Maitai flood remediation work including walking the river at a number of locations. I have also carried out historical research and archaeological assessment for a proposed subdivision at Kākā Valley.

Known archaeological sites in the Maitai Valley are generally located within the Mineral Belt at the head of the valley; along established tracks or routes (both Māori and settler); and close to the river. Sites along the river include the working of pakohe boulders that have rolled down from the Mineral Belt. Other known sites are within the easier land of the valley where European settlers had farms, houses and small enterprises.

The nearest recorded archaeological sites are over 500 m away from the project area and represent colonial dwellings and activity. O27/326 Edendale and O27/326 Shearing Shed, sites associated with the Maitai Run, are to the north east in Kākā Valley; O27/328 Lightband tannery and house is in Nile Street to the west; and O27/325 is an 1880s villa in Domett Street. They will not be affected by the work.

The pā at the Maitai Recreation Reserve (MS58) and the Kākā Hill lookout and wāhi tapu (MS57) are not recorded on Archsite. The locations are uncertain and no physical evidence has been found (although the NRMP recorded locations have been visited a number of times over the years).

The nearest pakohe working sites are upstream beyond Smiths Ford¹¹. There are sixteen pakohe working sites where evidence of flaking and working of either river boulders or material brought down from quarries in the Mineral Belt has been found. At least one of the sites probably also represents a kāinga and there are likely to be further occupation evidence associated with the recorded pakohe working.



Figure 9: Recorded archaeological sites in the Nelson area. The red arrow points to the project area. The red oval indicates the nearest pakohe working sites.

¹¹ 4.4 km away in a straight line but much further away following the path of the Maitai.

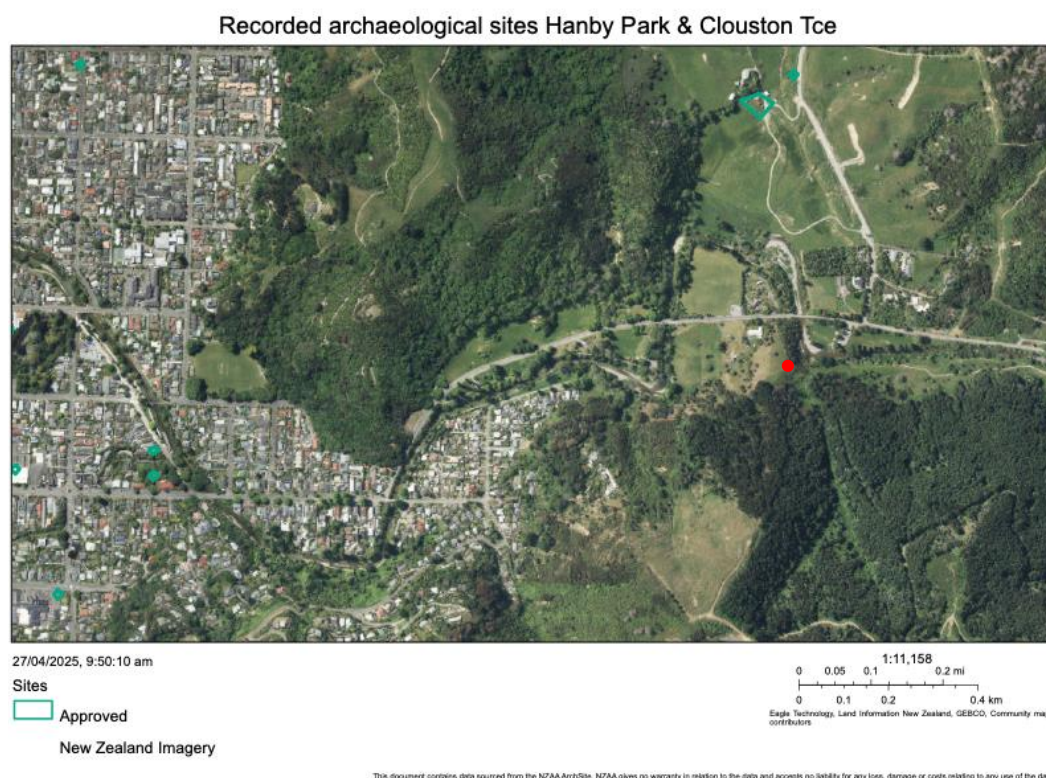


Figure 10: Recorded archaeological sites close to the project area (green marks). The NRMP location for MS58 is also indicated (red dot).

5.0 Site Visit

A site visit was made to the project area on Thursday 24 April 2025. Plans were supplied by Tonkin & Taylor. The banks of the river and location of the earthworks were examined. The river was running high and so only limited examination of the river bed was carried out. Visibility of the river banks varied from poor to good depending on vegetation, cladding and erosion.

No archaeological material was found.

The project area is an altered urban and semi-rural environment. There is a variety of previous attempts at flood and erosion control including stopbanks, gabions, stone walls and posts. There are paths along the river banks and evidence of previous bank modification including artificially flattened areas.



Figures 11-14: Project area from Clouston Terrace to Hanby Park (24 April 2025).

6.0 Assessment of Effects

The Maitai Valley was a well-used ara (pathway) for Māori as well as a rich food and resource gathering area. There would have been small cultivations carved out of the forest and kāinga, pahi or camps along the river banks. The Ngāti Kuia site recorded as MS58 would have been one such kāinga or pā. There may have been an associated tauranga waka (landing place). It is likely that the project area would have been used for resource gathering and as a through route. Most of these activities leave little physical evidence. Find spots of taonga is one indication. Evidence associated with a tauranga waka (landing site) or temporary camp could be an artificially formed surface or pulling out point, stone working and food processing evidence such as midden and hangi stones.

Historic settlement occurred in the wider area from the 1840s; however, there is no evidence of pre-1900 structures or buildings within the project area apart from Clouston's Bridge. There were early 20th century structures within Hanby Park including a well.

The project area has been modified by natural processes and human intervention. Contemporary newspapers report on flood damage and repair at Hanby Park, Clouston Terrace, Nile Street East and

the river side portion of Branford Park throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century¹². This has included filling in holes along the river bank, cleaning out the river bed, repairing slips and installing flood control structures. For example, a large flood in 1933 was said to have reduced Hanby Park to more or less a gravel bed as well as sweeping away Clouston's Bridge and a large part of the river bank¹³. In 1934 there was a large amount of river bank restoration and protection at Hanby Park. A discussion regarding access to Dennes Hole in 1915 and 1917 illustrates the changing nature of the river in this vicinity with accounts given of greater or lesser degrees of cutting in towards the Branford Park hills¹⁴. Nelson Photo News records large floods in 1962 and 1970. Within my recent memory there have been slips and erosion repaired along the walkways. Other work has occurred along the river banks to create paths, roads, a mountain bike jump park and flatten reserve areas.

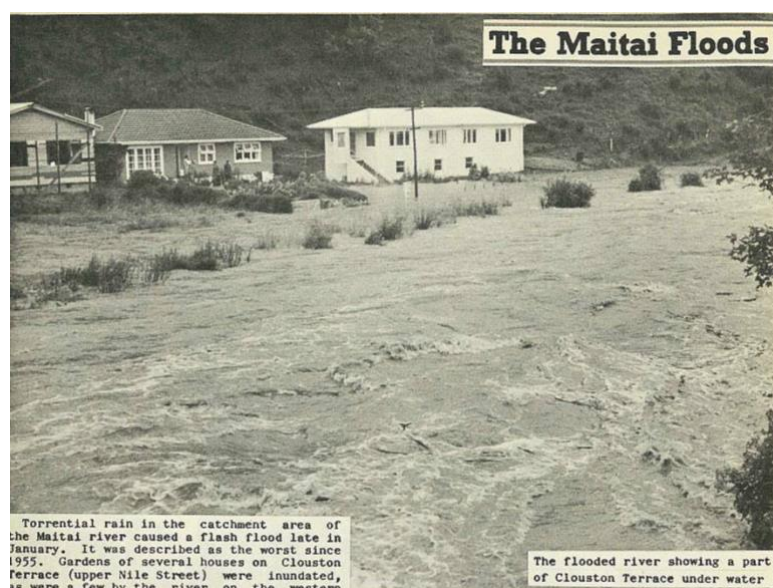


Figure 15: Nelson Photo News
No.16: 3 March 1962.

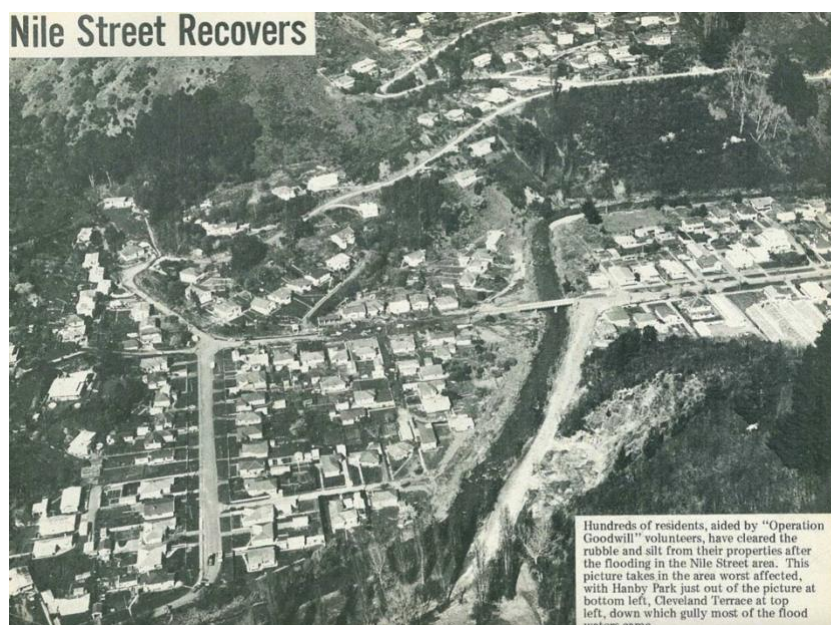


Figure 16: Nelson Photo News
No.120: 17 October 1970.

¹² www.paperspastnatlib.govt.nz

¹³ Nelson Evening Mail, 1 February 1933.

¹⁴ www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz

No archaeological sites were found during a site inspection, and none are recorded within the project area.

It is unlikely that in-situ archaeological evidence will be present within the project area. The project area is very modified (through natural processes and post-1900 activity). The type of pre-1900 activity that would have occurred in the area (Māori and colonial settler) and the type of physical evidence resulting from that use would be unlikely to leave much physical evidence able to survive floods, river changes, earthmoving and ground disturbance.

Any surviving archaeological or historical evidence within the project area is most likely to be historic artefacts and remains of structures such as the 1912 Hanby Park footbridge, a well or earlier version(s) of Clouston's Bridge. Find spots of Māori taonga are also possible. Historic artefacts and taonga may not be in a pre-1900 context. Other evidence such as midden and ovens are unlikely but cannot be entirely ruled out. Pakohe boulder working sites are unlikely. Although small stones of unworked pakohe have been found in the Maitai as far downstream as the Trafalgar Street bridge, no

It was mentioned in yesterday's issue of "The Mail" that the Dominion Museum had recently acquired a unique Maori paddle. Mr F. V. Knapp, of Alfred street, has one of similar make in his private collection. This is a short paddle 3ft 6in in length with a narrow blade 3½in in width and some 9 inches long. The shaft has the peculiar feature of a ridge on the back of the blade for about half its length which forks at almost right angles. The paddle was dug up in the Maitai Valley near Clouston's bridge, and was considered by the late Mr A. Hamilton, Director of the Dominion Museum, to be a rare and unique specimen.

larger pakohe boulders are known by this author to have been found this far down the river. All known working sites are much higher up the river.

Figure 17: An example of a taonga that was found in the area in 1931. No other information is known about the find.

Nelson Evening Mail, 23 June 1931.

7.0 Conclusion

The proposed flood improvements at Hanby Park and Clouston Terrace are unlikely to modify archaeological evidence. This opinion is based on the scope and location of the work, the extensive modification of the area (natural and man-made), archival research and prior archaeological work.

The possibility of archaeological evidence being uncovered during site works can be appropriately managed by a robust accidental discovery protocol¹⁵. All contractors on site who are involved in earthworks and ground modification should be briefed as to the archaeological and cultural values of

¹⁵ The standard Heritage NZ ADP is attached. The project archaeologist can be contacted in the first instance instead of the Heritage NZ archaeologist. Iwi are likely to have their own ADP.

the area, how to recognise archaeological and cultural material and the steps to be taken if it is encountered.

It is expected that iwi will also have particular requirements and tikanga protocols. Ngāti Kuia have specified their required process in the Cultural Impact Assessment.

As a reminder, all archaeological sites are protected under the provisions of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* in so far as that approval must be gained from Heritage New Zealand before an archaeological site can be modified, damaged or destroyed. This is the case regardless of the legal status of the land on which the site is located, whether the activity is permitted under the District or Regional Plan or whether a resource or building consent has been granted. The finding of taonga tūturu is subject to legal requirements outlined in the *Protected Objects Act 1975*. If pre-1900 and in an unmodified context they also fall under the archaeological provisions of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014*.

As general advice, if any archaeological material is uncovered during works (e.g. worked pakohe boulders, waste flakes, midden, hangi, taonga / artefacts, historic rubbish pits and bottle dumps, wells, historic structural evidence and historic foundations), work should cease in the vicinity of the remains and an archaeologist (and iwi if a Māori site(s)) contacted immediately in order to assess and record the remains. An archaeological authority under the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* will be required if archaeological material is uncovered (pre-1900 in-situ physical evidence of human activity) and cannot be avoided. This may result in delays to the site work.

Although outside the scope of this assessment, it is suggested that an arborist is consulted as to the potential effects on heritage and landscape trees and woodlands.

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Web based resources.

www.archsite.org.nz

www.heritage.org.nz

www.natlib.govt.nz

www.nelson.govt.nz

www.govt.nz/treaty-settlement-documents

www.nelsonmuseum.co.nz

www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz

<https://photonews.org.nz/nelson>

www.retrolens.co.nz

[www. shape.nelson.govt.nz](http://www.shape.nelson.govt.nz)

<https://smartmaps.marlborough.govt.nz/smmaps/>

www.theprow.org.nz

www.topofthesouthmaps.co.nz



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Accidental Discovery Protocol

This protocol does not apply when an archaeological authority issued under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 is in place.

In the event that an unidentified archaeological site is located during works, the following applies;

1. Work shall cease immediately at that place and within 20m around the site.
2. The contractor must shut down all machinery, secure the area, and advise the Site Manager.
3. The Site Manager shall secure the site and notify the Heritage New Zealand Archaeologist. Further assessment by an archaeologist may be required.
4. If the site is of Maori origin, the Site Manager shall notify the Heritage New Zealand Archaeologist and the appropriate iwi groups or kaitiaki representative of the discovery and ensure site access to enable appropriate cultural procedures and tikanga to be undertaken, as long as all statutory requirements under legislation are met (*Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act, Protected Objects Act*).
5. If human remains (koiwi tangata) are uncovered the Site Manager shall advise the Heritage New Zealand Archaeologist, NZ Police and the appropriate iwi groups or kaitiaki representative and the above process under 4 shall apply. Remains are not to be moved until such time as iwi and Heritage New Zealand have responded.
6. Works affecting the archaeological site and any human remains (koiwi tangata) shall not resume until Heritage New Zealand gives written approval for work to continue. Further assessment by an archaeologist may be required.
7. Where iwi so request, any information recorded as the result of the find such as a description of location and content, is to be provided for their records.
8. Heritage New Zealand will determine if an archaeological authority under the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* is required for works to continue.

It is an offence under S87 of the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* to modify or destroy an archaeological site without an authority from Heritage New Zealand irrespective of whether the works are permitted or consent has been issued under the Resource Management Act.

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