



# **706 Manaia Road, Manaia: final report (HNZPTA authority 2021/331)**

**report to  
Ani Mikaere  
and  
Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga**

**Hayley Glover, Arden Cruickshank, Lucy Arrell and Ella Ussher**

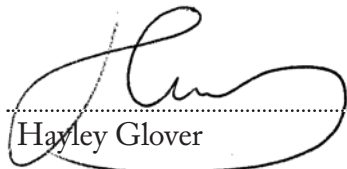


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Hayley Glover, Arden Cruickshank, Lucy Arrell and Ella Ussher

## Introduction

Ani Mikaere has built a house platform and driveway on her property at 706 Manaia Road, Manaia, Coromandel Peninsula (Lot 1 DPS 59575). An archaeological assessment was undertaken by CFG Heritage (Glover 2020) that recorded four new sites in the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) Site Recording Scheme (SRS): midden deposits S11/1207, S11/1208 and S11/1209, and a potential platform S11/1210). Ani Mikaere applied to Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) for an archaeological authority under section 44 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 to undertake the works. Authority 2021/331 was granted on 11 January 2021.

## Background

Manaia is situated on the west of the Coromandel peninsula, approximately 10 km south of Coromandel township, at the mouth of the Manaia River, which flows north from the Coromandel Ranges.

The land was gifted to Ngāti Pukenga by Ngāti Maru as recognition for the assistance given by Ngāti Pukenga during the musket wars (Monin 2010). While the exact origins for the name Manaia are unknown, the name is old and could be a reference to Hawaiki. Other possible origins relate to a Ngāti Maru chief named Manaia, the tupuna figure Manaia, and the beaked bird design, manaia whakairo, which the harbours of Manaia and Te Kouma resemble (Mikaere and Ashby 1999).

Manaia is predominantly located on Early Miocene andesites and breccias of the Beeson's Island Volcanics, with Jurassic greywacke siltstones and sandstones, and Manaia Hill Group conglomerates underlying these (Diamond 1981). Streams have deeply dissected the rock, forming steep, narrow ridges (Diamond 1981). Around Manaia, the coastal margin has sunken, forming the Manaia Harbour, as well as the Te Kouma and Coromandel Harbours (Diamond 1981; Edson 1976). Soils around the property are well drained, and primarily include the Marua clay loam and the Whitianga silt loam. Mangroves grow along the coast of the harbour.

Prehistoric vegetation was likely podocarp and mixed hardwood forest including kauri, rimu and tōtara, with a dense understorey including kohekohe, pūriri and ponga (Diamond 1981). There would have been swamps on the alluvial flats with limited amounts of flax and raupō, and with mānuka, nīkau and cabbage trees fringing the swamps (Diamond 1981).

### *Pre-European Māori*

Manaia was known to be rich in resources, and served as a storage area, as said in the proverb, “Ko Manaia, he pātaka kai,” which means “Manaia the food store.” (Mikaere and Ashby 1999, Monin 2010). Agriculture took place on the fertile river flats, and this subsist-



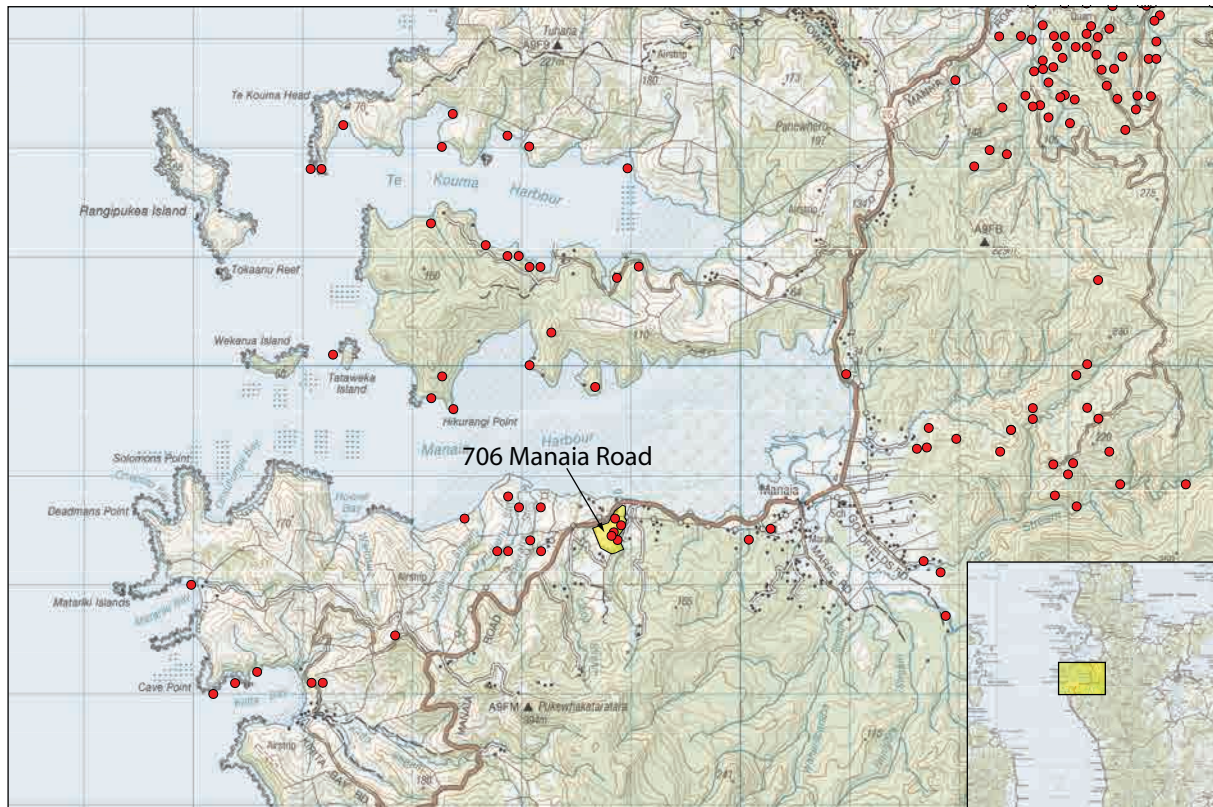


Figure 1. Location of 706 Manaia Road and surrounding archaeological sites.

ence was supplemented through fishing, and through hunting and gathering in the forests surrounding the Manaia valley (Mikaere and Ashby 1999).

### Colonial history

In the 1850s Coromandel iwi were heavily involved in trade, supplying the Auckland market with fish, pork, poultry, fruits, vegetables, and firewood. Europeans would also pass through Manaia to trade at this time (Mikaere and Ashby 1999).

In 1867 gold was discovered in the Coromandel. Shortly after this the lands around Manaia were found to be gold-bearing and immediately became subject to government attention (Mikaere and Ashby 1999). Land at Manaia was leased to the Crown for gold mining and the mining population rapidly grew, displacing Māori in many local industries (Brookes 2016, Mikaere and Ashby 1999). Various miner's rights were taken out, but there was no consistent mining in the Manaia land block until gold-bearing quartz deposits were found in 1884 or 1885 at the head waters of the Manaia River, near Paekihauraki Creek (Slane and White 1980). After this, newspapers reported that the discovery of gold at Manaia was "...one of the most important discoveries made on the Thames Goldfield" (*Feilding Star*, 28 May 1889: 138). In spite of this, subsequent mining operations in the Manaia gold field were unsuccessful and little gold was produced (Slane and White 1980; Thames Guardian and Mining Record 1872; Waitangi Tribunal 2006).

### *Archaeological background*

Edson's 1976 survey of the West Coast of the Coromandel Peninsula identified and recorded 85 new sites, primarily pā, pits and terraces, but did not cover Manaia. However, his report includes the result of analysis of aerial photographs from 1945 and 1971, which depicts some sites in Manaia that are not recorded in the SRS.

The only reported systematic survey of sites in the area took place from 1976 to 1979, as Diamond (1981) and a team of three carried out a survey along the coast from Thames to Manaia with the aim of recording pre-European Māori archaeology. They recorded 175 new sites but the study did not cover all of Manaia. The majority of sites were pits, terraces, middens and pā.

Whilst little survey or archaeological investigation has been done around Manaia, where surveys have been undertaken the recorded sites are dense. As a densely settled and long-established Māori settlement, it is highly likely that sites exist in similar densities in un-surveyed regions, but have not yet been located and recorded.

## **Methodology**

Earthworks took place on 22 February 2022 and were monitored by Arden Cruickshank of CFG Heritage Ltd. All topsoil from the driveway area was stripped by a hydraulic excavator in shallow spits to allow for the identification of any subsurface archaeology.

At one of the larger midden deposits (S11/1208) the entire area was stripped to the upper surface of the midden deposit, then two trenches were dug through the midden, each approximately 7 x 1.2 m.

## **Results**

During earthworks, subsurface in situ midden was encountered across three sites (S11/1207, S11/1208, S11/1209) and it was found that one site (S11/1210) was a modern feature with redeposited midden only. Five samples were taken across the property for future analysis.

### *S11/1207*

This is the northernmost midden deposit at the base of the hill. A cut was made into the eastern bank for the construction of a retaining wall. In situ midden was visible for a distance of 15 m and was approximately 200 mm thick. A 10 litre bulk sample was taken from this site.

### *S11/1208*

Topsoil stripping in this area revealed a large in situ midden deposit following the course of the driveway, and lensing out towards the northwest as the slope fell away, exposed across an area of approximately 18 x 7 m. Two trenches 7 m long x 1.2 m wide were cut through the deposit in order to determine the depth of the midden. The midden ranged from 150 to 250 mm thick, and a firescoop (Feature 1) was identified at the base of the southern trench. The firescoop had a diameter of 650 mm and was 100 mm deep. A 10 litre bulk sample was taken from Feature 1, and another 10 litre bulk sample from the midden in the northern trench.





Figure 2. Results of archaeological monitoring and locations of samples taken.



Figure 3. Midden eroding out of cut slope at S11/1207. Photo scale = 1 m.





Figure 4. View north of midden exposed at S11/1208. Photo scale = 1 m.



Figure 5. Cross section of midden at S11/1208 with Feature 1 in the foreground. Photo scale = 1 m.



*S11/1209*

This site was separated into two areas based on visual differences observed during topsoil stripping. Area A is the southern deposit, measuring about 14 x 7 m, which was up to 200 mm thick and appeared to be dominated by tuangi (*Austrovenus stutchburyi*). Area B, the northern deposit, was primarily comprised of pipi (*Paphies australis*) and was also up to 200 mm thick. It measured approximately 20 x 10 m in area. A 10 litre bulk sample was taken from each area.

*S11/1210*

This site was recorded as a potential platform with redeposited midden visible on the surface. During excavation for the driveway, mottled modern fill was exposed with some intermixed and heavily crushed redeposited shell midden. The platform was likely a modern construction for the adjacent telegraph pole and is not archaeological. No samples were taken from this site.



Figure 6. View north of exposed midden at S11/1209 (Area B). Photo scale = 1 m.





Figure 7. Clean modern fill at S11/1210. Photo scale = 1 m.

## Analysis

Five 10 litre bulk samples were retrieved from site and taken for further analysis.

### Faunal

Midden samples were analysed by Lucy Arrell of CFG Heritage. Midden was wet sieved through a 4.5 mm screen before drying, and was then sorted to primary classes (shell, stone, charcoal and bone). Shell was analysed using conventional methods with species identifications based on Morley (2004). Shell with no diagnostic portions was classified as residue.

A comparison of diagnostic to non-diagnostic fragments by weight shows that a large proportion of shell was crushed and fragmented in all samples, likely due to post-depositional processes such as trampling and redeposition from farm works.

The composition of the sample taken from the firescoop (Feature 1) in S11/1208 is notably different from the other samples, as a large proportion of the sample was comprised of stone, including fire cracked hāngī stones and pumice.

All samples were primarily comprised of pipi (*Paphies australis*) and tuangi (*Austrovenus stutchburyi*), with a variety of additional species appearing in small amounts, likely representing by-catch. S11/1207 and Area B of S11/1209 had larger quantities of pipi than tuangi, while S11/1208 (both samples) and Area A of S11/1209 had higher proportions of tuangi. Both pipi and tuangi are found in sheltered sand and mud substrates around the mid-tidal level, and would have been available nearby at the Manaia Harbour, only 250 m north of the study area.

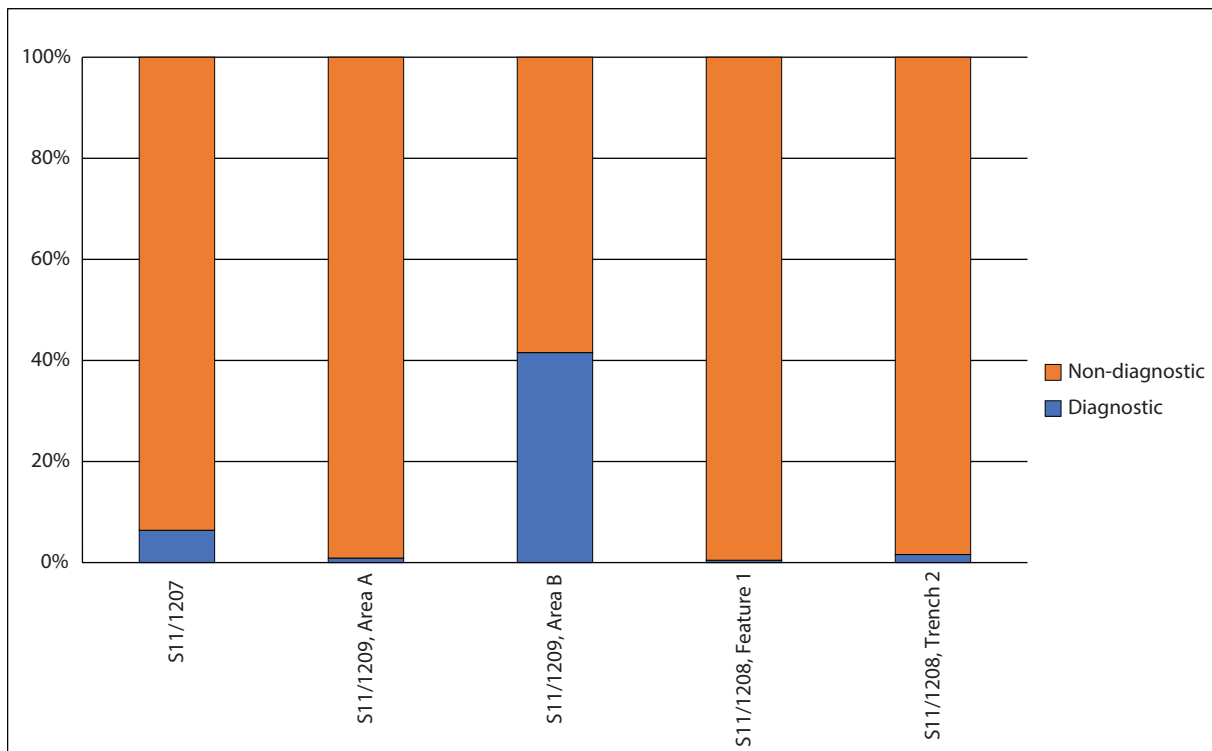


Figure 8. Comparison of diagnostic and non-diagnostic shell by weight.

Table 1. Shell by MNI.

Taxon	S11/1207	S11/1208 Feature 1	S11/1208	S11/1209 Area A	S11/1209 Area B
Pipi ( <i>Paphies australis</i> )	101	22	89	58	285
Tuangi ( <i>Austrovenus stutchburyi</i> )	56	41	211	149	146
Cats eye operculum ( <i>Lunella smaragda</i> )			7	1	1
Mud snail ( <i>Amphibola crenata</i> )					14
Ribbed slipper shell ( <i>Crepidula costata</i> )	1				
Turret shell ( <i>Maoricolpus roseus</i> )	2				
Small tusk shell ( <i>Antalis nana</i> )				1	
Whelk sp. ( <i>Buccinulum</i> sp.)				1	
Speckled whelk ( <i>Cominella adspersa</i> )				2	
Mud whelk ( <i>Cominella glandiformus</i> )		2			
Horn shell ( <i>Zeacumantus lutulentus</i> )		2	1		
Oyster borer ( <i>Haustrum scobina</i> )			2		
Land snail	4				
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>432</b>



Two very small fragments of unidentifiable fish bone were identified in the sample from S11/1208 but no diagnostic material was found for further analysis.

### Charcoal

Charcoal was analysed by Ella Ussher of CFG Heritage following the methodology outlined in Chabal et al. (1999), Théry-Parisot et al. (2010) and Dotte-Sarout et al. (2015), although the sample sizes were lower (50 fragments) than recommended (200–400 fragments).

Charcoal from both the flotation and wet sieving of each bulk sample was analysed. Three bulk samples were collected from two sites, S11/1208 and S11/1209. A sample was analysed from the northern trench dug through the large midden deposit at site S11/1208, as well as from the fire scoop (Feature 1) below the midden. A further sample was analysed from Area B at site S11/1209.

The samples taken from T2 and F1 at site S11/1208 were very similar. Both were dominated by small trees and shrubs (75%). Small amounts derived from broad-leaved species. Feature 1 also contained horopito (*Pseudowintera colorata*), often used for medicinal purposes to ease stomach and skin complaints.

Area B from site S11/1209 followed a similar pattern, with most charcoal deriving from small trees and shrubs (58%) with broad-leaved canopy species making up a further 26%, though the species differed to S11/1208.

Together these data, as well as that from both the sites together, suggest an environment of secondary regrowth dominated by hardy shrubs like manuka and broad-leaved species such as northern rata that utilise the carcasses of other trees to grow, within a coastal or lowland forest setting.

Table 2. Charcoal analysis results.

Taxon	Type	S11/1208		S11/1208 Feature 1		S11/1209 Area B	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Manuka ( <i>Leptospermum scoparium</i> )		21		20		17	
<i>Copsrosma</i> sp.		7		4		5	
Pate ( <i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i> )		2		9			
Raukawa ( <i>Raukawa edgerleyi</i> )	Small trees and shrubs					4	
Tutu ( <i>Coriara arborea</i> )		3	74		76		58
<i>Olearia</i> sp.				4			
Horopito ( <i>Pseudowintera colorata</i> )				1			
Kapuka ( <i>Griselinia littoralis</i> )						1	
<i>Hebe</i> sp.		4				2	
Karaka ( <i>Corynocarpus laevigatus</i> )		2					
Hinau ( <i>Elaeocarpus dentatus</i> )						1	
Northern rata ( <i>Metrosideros robusta</i> )	Broad leaf tress	2		2		10	
Puriri ( <i>Vitex lucens</i> )			14		8	1	26
Pohutukawa ( <i>Metrosideros excelsa</i> )		1					
Ngaio ( <i>Myoporum laetum</i> )					2		1
<i>Nothofagus</i> sp.		2					
Conifer ( <i>Podocarpus</i> sp.)	Conifer	1	2			1	2
Unidentified		5	10	8	16	7	14
Total		50		50		50	

### Radiocarbon dates

Charcoal samples from S11/1208 (Feature 1) and S11/1209 (Area B) were sent to the University of Waikato Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory. Both samples were consistent with each other and provided approximately the same dates, dating to the mid to late 18th century. The results are indicative of a single period of occupation, possibly repeatedly over a short period.

*Table 3. Summary of radiocarbon results.*

Site	Lab no.	CRA BP	Cal AD 68%	Cal AD 95.4%
S11/1208	Wk-56380	234 ± 15	1660–1680 (7%)	1660–1680 (14.5%)
			1740–1800 (61%)	1730–1810 (80.9%)
S11/1209	Wk-56381	235 ± 14	1660–1680 (8%)	1660–1680 (14.9%)
			1740–1800 (60%)	1730–1800 (80.5%)

### Discussion and conclusion

Middens are often (but not always) easily identifiable and visible markers for a wider archaeological site with associated features such as storage pits, fire scoops, post holes or other evidence of semi-permanent or permanent occupation. There is a noticeable absence of recorded sites around the project area considering the favourable conditions for pre-European Māori occupation. The exposure of midden during projects such as these works supports the likelihood that while archaeological investigations may have been few, there are pre-European Māori sites that remain in situ with archaeological value.

The shellfish collection patterns are generally consistent across samples, all being comprised largely of pipi and tuangi. While there are no previous excavations in Manaia itself for comparison, Bellwood and Witter's excavations at Te Kouma retrieved four midden samples. The results of their analysis also reports all samples being comprised primarily of pipi and tuangi, while less represented species varied in both abundance and variety (Bellwood and Witter 1967). Archaeological surveys in the area (Diamond 1981; Ritchie 1989) also report, without sampling any deposits, that the vast majority of midden deposits encountered are primarily comprised of pipi and tuangi, reflecting exploitation of the sheltered sandy shores and mudflats around the Manaia and Te Kouma Harbours.

Radiocarbon dates from both samples were consistent and likely reflect occupation during the mid to late 18th century. Charcoal samples were also consistent, with a predominance of small trees and shrubs representing secondary growth after forest clearance, though the sample from S11/1209 had a slightly larger proportion of broad leaved trees represented.

The archaeology encountered at 706 Manaia Road shows that, in spite of the lack of recorded archaeological sites throughout Manaia, evidence of pre-European Māori occupation and land use is present. The lack of recorded sites does not reflect a lack of surviving archaeology, but rather a lack of archaeological survey and investigation.

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## Metadata

Keywords	Manaia, Coromandel Peninsula, Midden, Fire feature
Authority number	2021/331
Authority holder	Ani Mikaere
NZAA site numbers	S11/1207, S11/1208, S11/1209, S11/1210
Address of works	706 Manaia Road, Manaia
Local authority	Thames Coromandel District Council
Iwi / hapū	Ngāti Whanaunga, Ngāti Pukenga, Ngāti Maru
Section 45 approved person	Arden Cruickshank
Feature types	Midden / oven
Fieldwork dates	22 – 23 February 2022
Archaeological site management reference	Cruickshank, A. 2020. 706 Manaia Road: archaeological works plan.
Title and author of report	Glover, H. and A. Cruickshank. 2023. 706 Manaia Road: final report (HNZPTA authority 2021/331). Unpublished CFG Heritage report to Ani Mikaere and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.