

Tiwai Peninsula

preliminary cultural significance report

Photo credit: New Zealand's Aluminium Smelter (NZAS)



Murihiku
Regeneration

January 2021

Appendix B

TIWAI POINT MAORI SITE

This site of early Maori activity has, even at this early stage, yielded such a wealth of information of the early culture of New Zealand's history to the scientist to be described as one of the most important in the country.

The industrial complex under construction there shall, we hope, bring economic benefit to the country. Though these benefits are desirable and necessary, this site shall be known, long after the smelter has vanished, for its great historical value. To all who responded to our appeal to rescue the site, as was done so successfully, we are very grateful.

The decision to make it a national effort met with approval and with the team of trained personnel, and the willing band of volunteers, the excavations were completed in time. All who participated or contributed to this site-rescue will proudly say, "I was able to help at Tiwai". To the Maori Tribal Council who gave permission to the scientists to commence work, we sincerely extend our thanks. For them the decision was a difficult one. However, results have already shown the wisdom of their decision.

As was agreed before work commenced, all material from Tiwai will be housed in the Southland Museum, after completion of research work at Otago University and Otago Museum. This shall require additional storage space as it will be a basis for research in the future, and will be accessible to students whenever required.

The 3,000 stone artifacts, in the form of adze blanks, flakes, and hammer stones, collected by the Southland Museum have still to be sorted and catalogued. This collection which has, in the main, been exposed by the elements, and retrieved from the surface, cannot be compared with the material found "in situ" by the archaeologists but is nevertheless of great value. The Bluff Harbour area has been the site of Maori occupation for many hundreds of years, as further fieldwork by the Southland Museum has revealed a stone quarry and other sites previously unknown.

The Greenhills district has long been the hunting ground of "fossickers" of Maori relics from sites well known to interested people. Already a great many of these artifacts are included in collections in the Southland Museum and the Otago Museum and, no doubt, some remain in private collections. These hundreds of finished artifacts now assume greater importance when, as we think, they can be traced from the various districts of Southland, where they were found, to the workshop site of Tiwai.

With more intensive research by scientists, the origin of these artifacts will be established, and so reveal another page of our history.

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DIRECTOR