



**Assessment of Heritage Values,
the Boat Harbour,
Kaiti Beach, Gisborne**

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1. Introduction

Eastland Port Ltd. is planning to carry out substantial redevelopment and upgrading of its port facility, identified as the 'Eastland Port Twin Berth Development'. The area occupied by the port has a long and rich history of human occupation and use, and the proposed work has the potential to affect an area known as the 'Boat Harbour' which has historic and cultural associations and potential heritage values.

The purpose of this report is to provide a description and heritage values assessment. Heritage assessment criteria were reviewed to determine appropriate assessment criteria. Historic documentary sources were searched for information about the Boat Harbour, including but not limited to:

- The archives of the Tairāwhiti Museum, Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairāwhiti, Gisborne
- On-line resources including Papers Past, Te Ara , and The New Zealand Electronic Text Collection (Victoria University Library)
- Various published sources and unpublished reports.

Formal consultation with Ngāti Oneone was not included in the project brief however Nick Tupara kindly provided information about the cultural significance of the area.

2. Definitions and criteria

The potential for natural features, as opposed to places formed or constructed by people, to be of cultural or historic heritage value is recognised in New Zealand's heritage legislation, and in heritage charters promoting best practice in heritage conservation and management. Natural features and places are recognised as a fundamental aspect of Maori heritage, and may include features associated with traditional activities (eg springs, trees, swamp, caves, etc) or a tribal landmark (eg mountain, river, lands, sea/lake, village, etc) where no human activity is evident¹.

The Resource Management Act (1991) defines historic heritage as those natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures, deriving from any of the following qualities: archaeological, architectural, cultural, historic, scientific, technological; and includes:

- historic sites, structures, places, and areas;
- archaeological sites;
- sites of significance to Maori, including wahi tapu;
- surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources.

In the International Council on Monuments and Sites New Zealand Charter² cultural heritage value means possessing historical, archaeological, architectural, technological, aesthetic, scientific, spiritual, social, traditional or other special cultural significance, associated with human activity.

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may enter any historic place or historic area in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero³ if it is satisfied that the place or area has aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.

While heritage legislation and other instruments recognise the potential for natural features and places to possess heritage values, in practice most organisations with historic heritage responsibilities focus on places created, built or modified by people, such as archaeological sites, buildings, and other structures, which are a direct manifestation of human activities in the landscape. Values and criteria such as archaeological, architectural, scientific, technological and aesthetic relate to these physical 'made' aspects of heritage places.

Criteria have, however, also been developed for assessing the cultural and historical heritage value of waterbodies, which are a natural feature. In 2004 the Ministry for the Environment

¹ <http://www.heritage.org.nz/protecting-heritage/maori-heritage>, accessed 28 November 2017.

² ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value (ICOMOS New Zealand Charter 2010), available at <http://icomos.org.nz/charters/>.

³ <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/about-the-list>, accessed 28 November 2017.

produced a technical paper reporting on progress to determine potential waterbodies of national significance, as part of the government's Programme of Action for Sustainable Development for New Zealand – Section 3.1, Quality and Allocation of Freshwater⁴. The Ministry for Cultural and Heritage provided criteria for determining water bodies of national importance in relations to cultural and heritage values. To be of cultural and historic heritage significance, waterbodies must exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- an association with extant heritage objects, structures, sites or places
- an association with past activities or events
- an association with a particular community or the public at large.

In addition, three categories of values were identified: physical, historical and social. These three principal values capture the range of qualities and values used to assess heritage significance. Although Maori cultural values were not included as a specific project within the water bodies of national importance project, the relationship between Maori and water was recognised as being nationally important.

⁴ Available at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/fresh-water/water-programme-action-potential-water-bodies-national-importance/3>.

3. The Boat Harbour

3.1 Historical references

References in historical documents to the landing on the eastern side of the Turanganui River begin with Captain Cook's journals, and can be traced through to the end of the nineteenth century, when a case was being made for the establishment of a memorial to his stepping ashore in New Zealand for the first time. Historic plans for the development of the port also document the Boat Harbour at the time of various surveys. The background to the establishment of a National Reserve also includes observations about the condition of the Boat Harbour in the later part of the twentieth century. The main references are provided below.

Captain Cook's journals

Captain Cook first landed ashore on Sunday 8th October, and made several trips ashore over the next four days. On Sunday 8th his journal records being "Anchored on the N.E. side [Tūranganui-a-Kiwa, Poverty Bay] before the entrance of a small River...I went ashore with a Party of men in the Pinnace and yawl accompanied by Mr Banks and Doctor Solander. We landed abreast of the Ship and on the E. side of the River just mentioned".⁵

Cook went on to name Poverty Bay, and recorded in his journal that "boats can go in and out of the river [Turanganui] at any time of Tide in fine weather; but as there is a Bar at the entrance, on which the Sea Sometimes runs so high that no Boat can either get in or out, which happened whilst we laid here; however, I believe that Boats can generally land on the N.E. side of the river."⁶

E F Harris's Biography of Captain John Williams Harris

'Not the least interesting feature of the diary is the recounting of incidences gathered from the natives with reference to Captain Cook's landing at Poverty Bay...On the 8th, the Endeavour anchored off the Turanganui River, and a party landed in the evening on the east side at the boat harbour or in the creek...'⁷

Whaling operations

Mackay says about Harris's whaling operations "As the site of the tryworks proved too far within the Turanganui River, a move was made after the 1837 season, to Waikahua, on the other side of the river and adjacent to the spot where the Cook Memorial now stands"⁸.

⁵ Reed, A. H. & A. W. (eds). *Captain Cook in New Zealand*. AH & AW Reed, Wellington.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Mackay, J.A. 1949. *Historic Poverty Bay and the East Coast, Gisborne*. JA Mackay, Gisborne.

⁸ Ibid.

Mackay further notes that he moved about to other places but returned to Waikahua in 1848, and then his employee Billy Brown (upon leaving Harris's employ) whaled at Waikahua.

Gisborne Harbour Plans

Spedding's report on the Turanganui River includes the results of archival research which located a surveyed chart at National Archives of the river prepared in 1877 that shows 'Boat Harbour dry at low water'⁹. This appears to be the first mapped and formal reference to the feature.

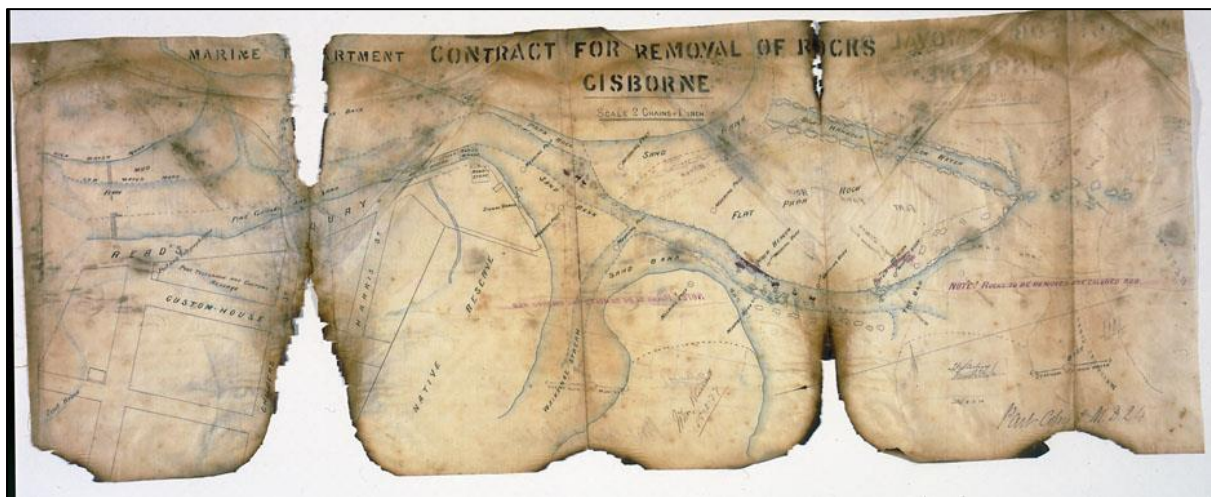


Figure 1: Marine Department surveyed chart of the Turanganui River, 1877, also showing the boat harbour (top right of plan) (Collection of Archives New Zealand, Wellington).

Mackay notes "Reporting on the port in 1880, Sir John Coode....recommended that a solid breakwater pier should be built off, but slightly to the east of, Boat Harbour..."¹⁰ The physical feature – a natural gut in the rocky papa coastal shelf, rock is shown, but not named on the 1888 plan of Gisborne harbour¹¹. Maori Point, located nearby is identified. There is some possibility that the natural feature started being called the 'Boat Harbour' in the 1870s when proposals were made for the secure harbour to be constructed in this area (not within the river), as shown on the 1888 plan.

⁹ Spedding, M. 2006. *The Turanganui River, A Brief History*. Department of Conservation, Gisborne: Figure 19, p. 38.

¹⁰ Mackay, 1949.

¹¹ Gisborne Harbour Plan 1888, reference 8542, Tairāwhiti Museum, Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairāwhiti.

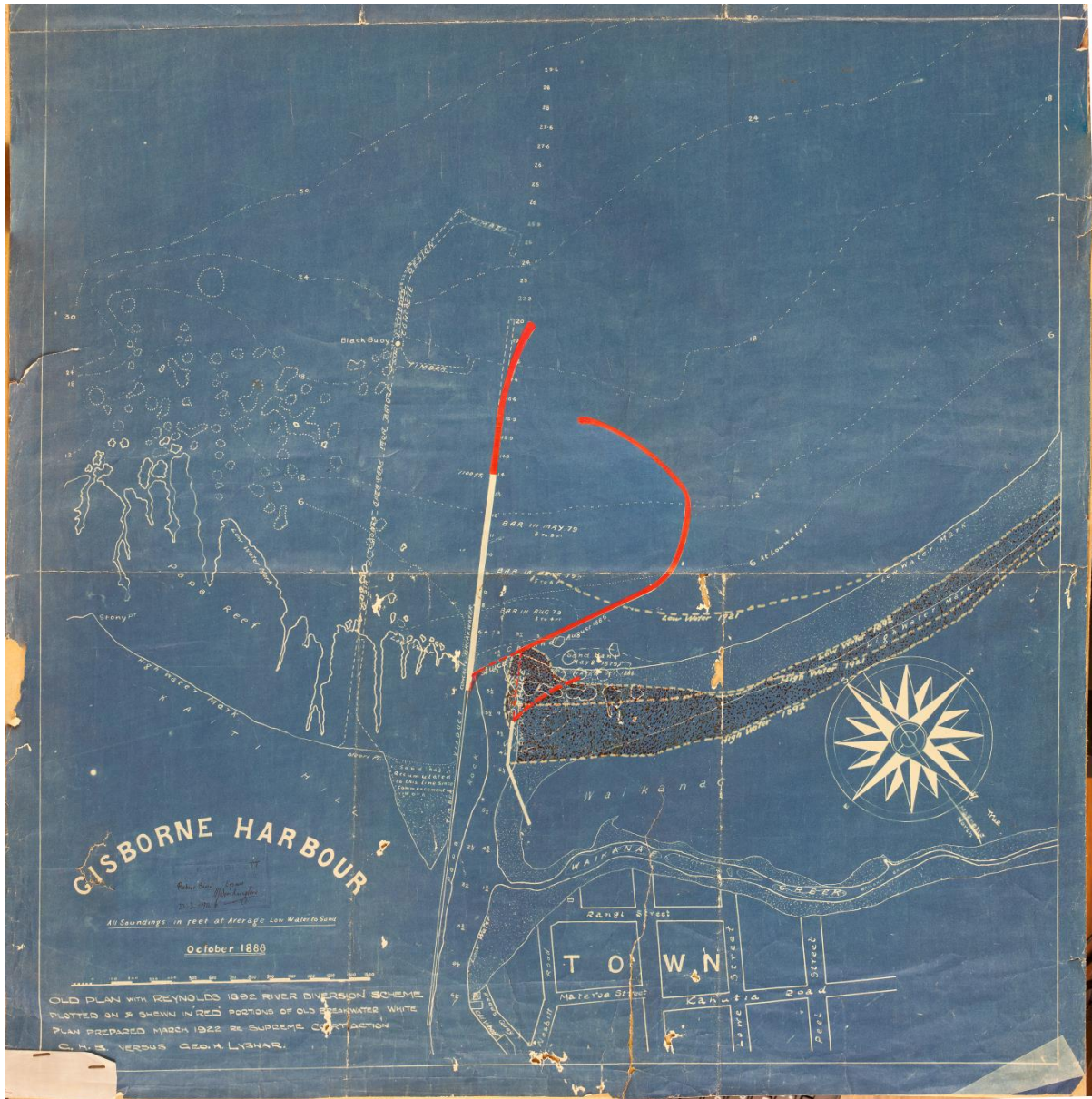


Figure 2: Gisborne Harbour Plan 1888 (Collection of Tairawhiti Museum, Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairawhiti, No. 8542).

Cooks Landing Memorial and Reserve

In 1888 Archdeacon William Leonard Williams made a presentation to the Auckland Institute, which was subsequently published in the Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute, about the incidences related to Cook's first landing¹³. Williams noted that 'the place of landing was evidently what is now commonly called the boat-harbour, immediately on the south east side of the mouth of the river...'¹⁴. He included a sketch plan that showed the boat harbour and identified it as Cook's landing place (Figure 4). Williams later became a member of the 'Cook Committee' which was instrumental in raising funds for the erection of the Cook Landing Memorial, which was unveiled in 1906 amidst street parades, speeches, navy personnel, and a haka party.

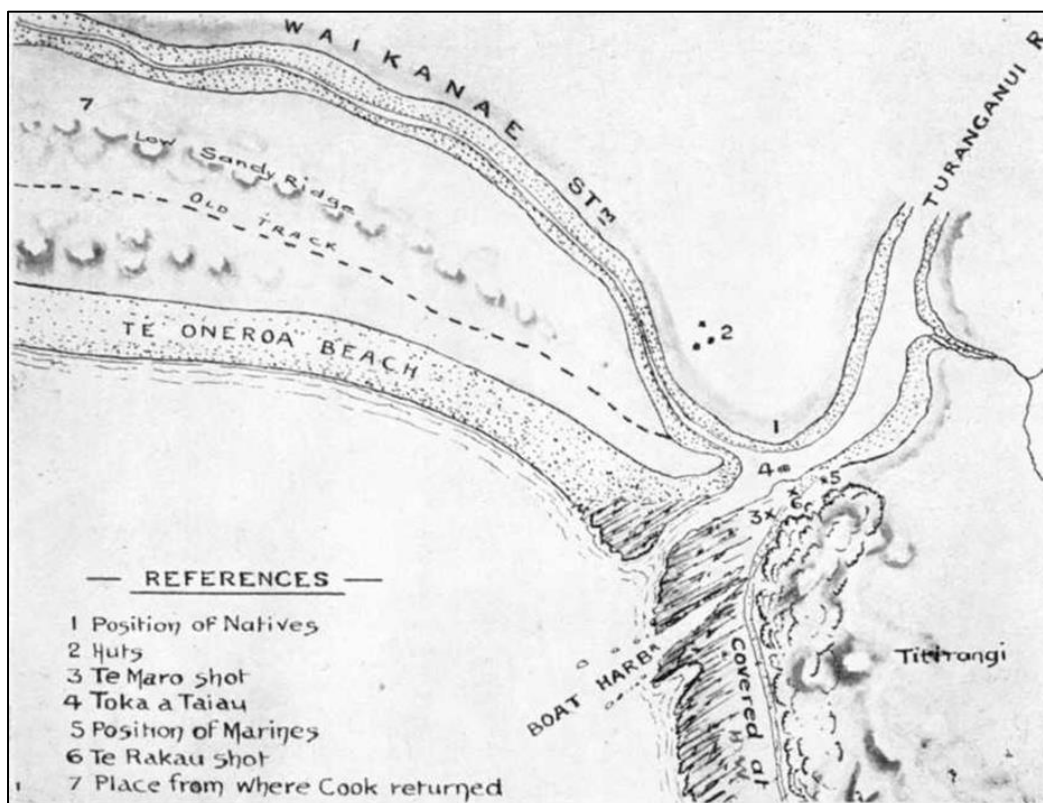


Figure 4: Drawing by Williams showing his reconstruction of the location of the events that took place after the arrival of the Endeavour, in the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, 1888, Plate XXXIII.

¹³ Williams, W.L. 1888. Locale of Incidents during Captain Cook's Visit to Poverty Bay, 1769, *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, Vol XXI, Art. L. pp 389-397

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p 391



Figure 5: 1906 unveiling of the monument (Photograph from the collection of Tairawhiti Museum, Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairawhiti).



Figure 6: Cook landing re-enactment, 1906 (Photograph from the collection of Tairawhiti Museum, Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairawhiti).

Spedding noted that: 'By the 1950s reclamation was beginning to undermine the integrity of the site. In 1906 ... it was 80 feet from the sea. By 1959 the distance was 250 feet. In 1959 the local committee of the Historic Places Trust first met. They put a case to the Gisborne City Council that an area surrounding the monument and a strip of land between the monument and the sea be set aside as reserve. Reclamation continued, but the Trust were successful in negotiating with Council and Harbour Board to have a reserve of 1 acre 22 perches set aside in 1966'. The idea of a visual link between the monument and the sea was first suggested in the 1960s and finally established in 1974¹⁵. This 'cone of vision' from the monument, however, does not align with the Boat Harbour. In 1990 the reserve was designated a National Historic Reserve, the first on the New Zealand mainland, with care and management vested in the Department of Conservation.

Historic photographs reproduced below show the changing nature of the foreshore in relation to the boat harbour over the course of the 20th century.



Figure 7: View across the Cook Landing Memorial, prior to the development of the port circa 1920. The line of rocks to the left of the monument marks the outer extent of the boat harbour (Photograph from the collection of Tairawhiti Museum, Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairawhiti).

¹⁵ Spedding, 2006, p. 29.



Figure 8: Aerial view of Turanganui River mouth looking inland, 1920, with the boat harbour visible at the right of the photo (Photograph from the collection of Tairawhiti Museum, Te Whare Taonga O Te Tairawhiti).



Figure 9: Aerial view, 1942, showing developing reclamation between the boat harbour and the Cook Landing memorial (www.retrolens.nz).



Figure 10: Aerial view, 1982 showing further expansion of reclamation between the boat harbour (top of image) and the Cook Landing memorial (www.retrolens.nz).

3.2 Current condition

Today the majority of the Boat Harbour is buried under the Southern Log yard reclamation. A small portion of the most seaward end of the feature is visible at low tide, but is not usually exposed above the sea surface. The remaining portion of the feature is visible on aerial photography (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Aerial photograph, 22 January 2016, with western edge of Bot Harbour visible beyond the log yard (Google Earth).

4. Assessment of heritage values

4.1 Association with extant heritage objects, structures, sites or places

The Boat Harbour is a natural feature, with no physical association with any extant heritage place, such as an archaeological site, building or structure. No references, or evidence, in any historical records could be found of deliberate modification of the feature, such as removal or realignment of rocks.

Although not directly linked to any other heritage place, the boat harbour is part of a complex of heritage places at the mouth of the Turanganui River related to the voyaging history within Turanganui a Kiwa; and the first contact between Maori and Captain James Cook and his crew of the Endeavour on 8th October 1769. The implications of this are discussed below.

4.2 Association with past activities or events

The Turanganui River is associated with significant Maori voyaging traditions and European voyaging history¹⁶.

Maia landed his waka 'Te Ikaroa a Rauru' at Puhi Kai Iti. Puhi Kai Iti is the landing place on the true left bank of the river and is encompassed by Wai Kahua. All the Turanganui a Kiwa people have whakapapa links to Maia, so this place is important to them all. Ngati Oneone are the kaitiaki of this place. Since the time of Maia, Wai Kahua has been used as both a landing and departure point for waka, adjacent to the river entrance¹⁷.

The first meeting between Captain Cook and Maori in 1769 is a seminal event in New Zealand's history. The Boat Harbour is thought to have been where Cook's party landed and made their way ashore. Cook's visit was however marked by tragedy as misunderstandings resulted in the death and injury of at least nine Maori.

4.3 Association with a particular community or the public at large

4.3.1 Tangata whenua

The landing place Puhi Kai Iti is encompassed by Wai Kahua. Wai Kahua is a physical place, but it is also a spiritual and metaphysical concept. It represents a vision of the sea around the mouth of the Turanganui River, and the water of Poverty Bay. The currents and tides of Wai Kahua guard the entrance to the river. When they combine with the activity of Pipitaiari, a taniwha that inhabits the mouth of the river and the bay, they become a tohu (sign) of weather and sea conditions that may be either favourable or hazardous for anyone setting out to travel or to gather food; and also a portent of events. When Cook arrived, Wai

¹⁶ <http://www.teha2019.co.nz/our-stories/heritage-sites/landing-site-turanganui-a-kiwa/>, accessed 28 November 2017.

¹⁷ Nick Tupara, pers. comm, November 2017.

Kahua was active. He was led to the landing place of Maia, by the action of Wai Kahua. Wai Kahua is a place of intense spiritual and cultural significance for the people of Turanganui a Kiwa¹⁸.

4.3.2 Public and community associations

The Cook Monument is a Category One Historic Place in Heritage New Zealand's Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero¹⁹. The extent of the listing includes the land described as 'Lot 1 DP 7903 National Reserve (Cook Landing Site) NZ Gazette 1990, p.3923 and the structure known as the Cook Monument thereon and its fixtures and fittings'. The place was originally registered under the Historic Places Act 1980, and the listing was upgraded in 2011. Excerpts from the listing state:

The place where the first land based Aotearoa New Zealand encounter between Maori and European occurred, is commemorated by the Cook Monument, located within the Cook Landing Site National Historic Reserve. This is the first national historic reserve on mainland New Zealand and this unique reserve status underlines the place's outstanding significance to all New Zealanders.

On 9 October 1769 Lieutenant James Cook and some of the men from the ship Endeavour came ashore on the east side of the Turanganui River, becoming the first Europeans to set foot in New Zealand. After the initial Maori settlement of New Zealand, the event commemorated by this monument is arguably the most significant in New Zealand's history, a date that marked the beginnings of huge change to the lives of Maori.

The wider landscape of the Cook Landing Site has national and international cultural and historical significance as a place of arrivals, navigation and of meetings. It is an area that represents a network of sites, interconnected and linked with stories, events and people.

Although the port developments have compromised this wider historical and cultural landscape, it is still present and of significance, both to Maori and Europeans. The Cook Monument has historical significance because it stands at the place where the first European explorer set foot on New Zealand soil, marking the end of the isolation of New Zealand from significant European contact and opening the way for European colonisation and development, and the beginning of an irreversible change of Maori history. It is associated with Captain James Cook, who is widely regarded as one of England's greatest maritime explorers. Poverty Bay is the area first sighted and explored by Cook during his first voyage to New Zealand.

The monument and the Cook Landing Site have important ongoing commemorative values. The monument has high symbolic and community value, being funded by a national

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3473>, accessed 28 November 2017.

subscription which included fund-raising by New Zealand school children, and the monument and surrounding reserve continue to be the centre of regular commemorations and celebrations, giving it very high commemorative value.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The Boat Harbour is associated with significant Maori voyaging traditions and European voyaging history, and forms part of a heritage landscape at the mouth of the Turanganui River that is of outstanding cultural and historic heritage value.

It is recommended that Eastland Port Ltd. actively engage with Ngati Oneone and Heritage New Zealand to facilitate appropriate recognition of the cultural and historic heritage value of the area. Further modification or burial of the remaining visible portion of the boat harbour should be avoided during proposed redevelopment of the port facility.

References:

Mackay, J.A. 1949. *Historic Poverty Bay and the East Coast, Gisborne*. JA Mackay, Gisborne.

Reed, A. H. & A. W. (eds). *Captain Cook in New Zealand*. AH & AW Reed, Wellington.

Spedding, M. 2006. *The Turanganui River, A Brief History*. Department of Conservation, Gisborne.

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