

Rich Pickings: Abandoned Vessel Material Reuse on Rangitoto Island, New Zealand

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This investigation into abandoned vessels and baches (holiday homes) on Rangitoto Island, New Zealand, addresses to what extent archaeological signatures inform the adaptive reuse of discarded watercraft material in local communities. A review of archaeological, archival and oral history data is undertaken to achieve several aims. These include determining the material available for salvage at the time of abandonment, what cultural site formation processes are visible at the individual vessel sites located in the ships' graveyard at Boulder Bay and locating and recording the reuse of abandoned ship material in Rangitoto's three bach communities: Beacon End, Rangitoto Wharf and Islington Bay. Finally, community behaviours towards abandoned vessels are identified and discussed and this information is used to update understandings of post-depositional site formation processes acting on abandoned vessels. This research is archaeologically significant as it contributes to the theme of discarded watercraft reuse, an understudied area which has the potential to reveal meaningful interpretations about human behaviour. Furthermore, it is significant as the behaviours and attitudes of a disappearing community with a strong community identity and a history of reusing material are recorded.