

Heritage Matters

Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho



What are the Heritage Matters chapters about?

These chapters explain how the Proposed District Plan- Decisions version protects the Far North's historic and cultural heritage. This includes important buildings, places, landscapes, trees and sites that tell the story of the district's past.

Together they cover:

- **Historic heritage** – buildings, structures, sites and objects that have historical or cultural value.
- **Heritage area overlays** – whole areas where there are clusters of important heritage places that need to be managed together.
- **Sites and areas of significance to Māori** – places of cultural, spiritual, and historical importance to tangata whenua.
- **Notable trees** – individual trees or groups of trees that are important for their heritage, cultural, ecological, or amenity values.

These chapters are about protecting what makes the Far North unique, while still allowing people to use and develop their land. In most cases, everyday activities can continue as normal, but rules apply if work could damage or affect important heritage features.

Overall, the aim is to:

- Protect important heritage for future generations.
- Recognise the strong history of Māori and European settlement in the district.
- Maintain the character and identity of towns, landscapes and communities.
- Ensure development is carried out in a way that respects heritage values.

Heritage Matters in the Proposed Far North District Plan – Decisions Version (PDP-DV) works alongside national legislation, including the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Heritage Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act, which also protect heritage (including archaeological sites, regardless of whether they are listed in the plan or not).

What does the Proposed District Plan – Decisions Version (PDP-DV) do?

The PDP-DV:

- **Allows everyday activities to continue** – this includes things like routine maintenance of buildings, normal land use, and minor works that do not affect heritage values.
- **Manages activities near or affecting heritage features** – Resource consent may be required where work could affect:
 - Historic buildings, structures and sites.
 - Heritage areas and townscapes.
 - Sites and areas of significance to Māori.
 - Notable trees.
- **Requires care when working around heritage features** – Rules often include requirements such as:
 - Keeping a setback (distance) from heritage sites.
 - Using appropriate materials or colours.
 - Following accidental discovery protocols if something is uncovered.
 - Using qualified professionals (such as arborists or heritage experts).
- **Protects the most sensitive heritage from damage or loss** – Activities like demolition, destruction or major alteration of important heritage features are:
 - Strongly restricted, or
 - In some cases, not allowed (prohibited).
- **Ensures cultural values are recognised and respected** – for sites and areas of significance to Māori, the PDP-DV:
 - Requires consultation with tangata whenua in some cases.
 - May require cultural impact assessments.
 - Focuses on avoiding or minimising harm to cultural and spiritual values.
- **Provides a framework for assessing resource consent applications** – where consent is needed, the plan guides how proposals are assessed including:
 - Effects on heritage values.
 - Design, location, and scale of development.
 - Whether impacts can be avoided, reduced or managed.

Overall, the plan aims to protect important heritage while still enabling appropriate use and development, so that the Far North's history, identity and cultural values are retained for future generations.

What has changed from the Operative District Plan (ODP)?

The PDP-DV introduces a more structured, consistent, and up-to-date approach to managing heritage.

Key changes include:

- **Clear structure and format** – Heritage provisions are now grouped into dedicated chapters, aligned with the National Planning Standards, making the plan easier to use.
- **Separate but connected chapters** – Historic heritage and heritage area overlays are now managed in separate chapters, with clearer links between them.
- **Improved mapping and identification** – Heritage areas have been reviewed and, in some cases, expanded based on technical assessment. Overlays are now more consistently mapped and named.
- **Updated heritage lists** – Scheduled heritage resources have been reviewed using current criteria to ensure protection reflects their significance.
- **Clearer and more targeted rules** – The plan better explain what activities are permitted and when consent is needed with protection tailored to the importance of each heritage resource.
- **Better recognition of cultural values** – There is stronger integration with the *Sites and Areas of Significance to Māori* chapter, including clearer direction on cultural values and when cultural impact assessments may be required.
- **More consistent overall framework** – Terminology, mapping and plan structure have been standardised.

When do I need a Resource Consent?

You need a resource consent if your activity does not meet the permitted activity rules. This is more likely if your project goes beyond minor or routine work, or could affect heritage, cultural values, or notable trees.

- Consent is typically required if you:
 - Work on or near heritage sites (e.g. altering buildings, earthworks nearby, or installing infrastructure).
 - Carry out building works or earthworks within Heritage Area Overlays that do not meet standards.
 - Affect sites and areas of significance to Māori without meeting permitted conditions or required approvals.
 - Undertake high-impact activities like demolition, forestry, or mineral extraction in protected areas.
 - Work near notable trees in ways that damage, remove, or significantly alter them.
- Minor maintenance is usually permitted, but anything that changes appearance, form, or impacts values will likely need consent.
- In general, if your proposal cannot meet specific standards (like setbacks or protection requirements), or may affect heritage or cultural values, you will likely need a resource consent.

What do I need to know?

- Check if heritage rules apply to your property – they apply if your site includes or is near:
 - A scheduled heritage building, site or object.
 - A heritage area overlay.
 - A site of significance to Māori.
 - A notable tree.
- Most everyday activities are permitted – routine maintenance and normal use can usually continue, as long as you meet the relevant provisions.
- More significant works may need consent – you may need consent if your work:
 - Changes the appearance of a heritage building.
 - Affects the character of a heritage area overlay.
 - Involves earthworks near heritage features.
 - Impacts a notable tree or a cultural site.
- You need to meet specific standards – this may include:
 - Setbacks from heritage features.
 - Using appropriate colours or materials.
 - Protecting tree rootzones.
 - Following accidental discovery protocols.
- Other approvals may still be required as you may also need approval from Heritage New Zealand if archaeological sites could be affected – even if the activity is permitted.