

The Waitaha Pā of Puāri

Puāri was the name of an early Waitaha settlement on the banks of the Avon River – it is said that this settlement stretched as far back as Bealey Avenue in the years between 1000 and 1500 – the river was used for traditional food gathering (mahinga kai). Historians have found many treasured artefacts (taonga) in this region.

Burial Place (Urupā) for the Puāri Pā

The burial place was situated where the old public library and old police station stood prior to the Canterbury Earthquakes. It has been recorded that as late as 1853 the remains of Māori ancestors were seen laid side by side in rows. Burial places (urupā) have been found in all parts of Christchurch including Market Square and Cathedral Square. This is an important spiritual and cultural element to be aware of as you work on this site.

The Poupou

The Poupou in Market Square was erected as part of the 1990 commemoration of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. It is six metres high and carved out of a giant trunk of totara by local master carver, Riki Manuel. It is rich in symbolism with the main theme, food gathering (see tool box card), which brought the tribe to this area – on this are carved figures of Ngāi Tahu Waitaha people. This is a visual reminder of the history and spiritual significance of this area to Māori something you are now co-creating with the restoration of the beautiful town hall to its former glory.

Cabbage Trees Tī Kōuka

The cabbage trees (Tī Kōuka) that are visible along the banks of the Avon have been there for centuries. They once stood as beacons so travellers could find their way across the Canterbury Plains. For Ngāi Tahu, these trees were a resting place and where rituals were performed for travellers to go on in safety. These trees were considered tapu. The cabbage trees that are visible at Victoria Square are considered the grandchildren of the original Pūari Tī Kōuka.

Questions

- *Can you locate any of the sites above from your workplace?*
- *Why is it important to know where these sites are?*
- *What can you do, while you are working around these sacred places, to ensure that they are treated with respect?*