

Shaky Start

Sand drift became a major issue. When Rapaki street was surveyed, it appears to have been a flat grass area — until the high dunes on the river bank decided to move inland. Following are extracts from reports and they illustrate the serious problem the sand drift caused for the new village of Koitiata.

November 1924: *"... sand has drifted over sections 23 to 41 which are now practically useless for building or camping sites. Out of 41 sections surveyed there are only a dozen of any use ..."*

December 1924: *" The site where the township is laid out has as far back as the European Settlers in the district could remember been a grass valley and free from any serious encroachment of sand drift. The place has been a favourite camping ground for years past. During the last two years the position has changed and the sand has encroached on the seaward side of the township and is threatening to further encroach from this direction and from the north side."*

October 1928: *"... The township is in a bad way. All houses are practically buried except three cottages, two of which have been recently built further back from the beach."*

January 1930: *"... still six cottages intact (in village) and one re-erected on private land just beyond the boundary ... The high sand ridge between ... river and ... grass flats where the township was laid off (surveyed), has now been practically levelled by high winds".*

An extensive marram grass planting program began and a 1933 report states, *"... marram grass planted 3 years ago has grown well, ... but ... about 1/4 acre needs to be replanted, and we should plant a further 2 acres at the north-western end."*

April 1936 report by the County Council Engineer; *"The marram grass stabilisation work was found in excellent order and the township area is now considered thoroughly safe for building purposes ..."*



1920's

The photo above is from the 1920's and shows the sand drift problem. These sanded-up buildings were probably located around the sea end of Wainui street or in Rapaki street. It appears that they were adjacent to a track, possibly to and from the beach. Some of the sanded-up buildings from Rapaki street were relocated to Omanu street area. Others were abandoned or demolished.



1920's

Photo is from the 1920's. This house belonged to Bert Wainwright and was located in Rapaki street, where number 25 is today. Because of the sand drift, the building was re-located to 68 Wainui street in the late 1920's. There is a photo of the re-located building on page 13. Rapaki street is on the right under the sand drift.

KŌTIATA DOMAIN

Possibilities As Seaside
Resort

The following report on Kōtiata Domain (Turakina Beach) was submitted to to-day's meeting of the Rangitikei County Council by the Engineer, Mr S. A. R. Mair:—

With Councillor Stuart an inspection was made of Kōtiata Township. Messrs Waiwright and Wilkie also attended.

The marram grass stabilisation work was found in excellent order and the township area is now considered thoroughly safe for building purposes and reforestation. There are a few small blanks of a few square yards requiring planting, and this will be done during the winter.

The road down, owing to the abnormal weather, was found in worse condition than I have previously known it, and necessary repairs will be put in hand when conditions are suitable.

With the improved conditions obtaining at the township a demand is setting in for sections, and it is considered advisable to have the sections occupied on temporary lease and further allotments surveyed so that proper titles can be granted to present and future occupiers.

In the meantime the exact requirements of the Lands Department regarding the township sections is being obtained. When this information is to hand with the cost of the proposed survey, I propose to submit a more comprehensive report as to developmental work embracing all the available funds.

I feel sure, and Councillor Stuart concurs, that now the sections have been stabilised, if the road was improved and suitable trees planted, the sections would become very popular and would be a boon to the sea-loving public over a very wide area even beyond the confines of this country.

While the County Engineer was confident in his report, it appears that the section owners had other ideas.

In spite of all the plans and intentions, it was going to be a slow and shaky start-up for our village!

From the reports it looked like all of the Rapaki street area was going to be 'abandoned', and that is what happened. There was a long pause in the development of Koitiata between 1917 until the early 1950's. Until then only 3 of the village's surveyed sections in Koitiata had buildings on them, at 60, 62, and 64 Wainui street.

The aerial photo from 1942 (*next page*) and Rangitikei County Council maps, show another 10 or more buildings located on un-surveyed sections, and a few outside the designated township boundaries. No buildings are visible in Rapaki street in the 1942 aerial photo, or marked on any of the 1950 era RCC maps.

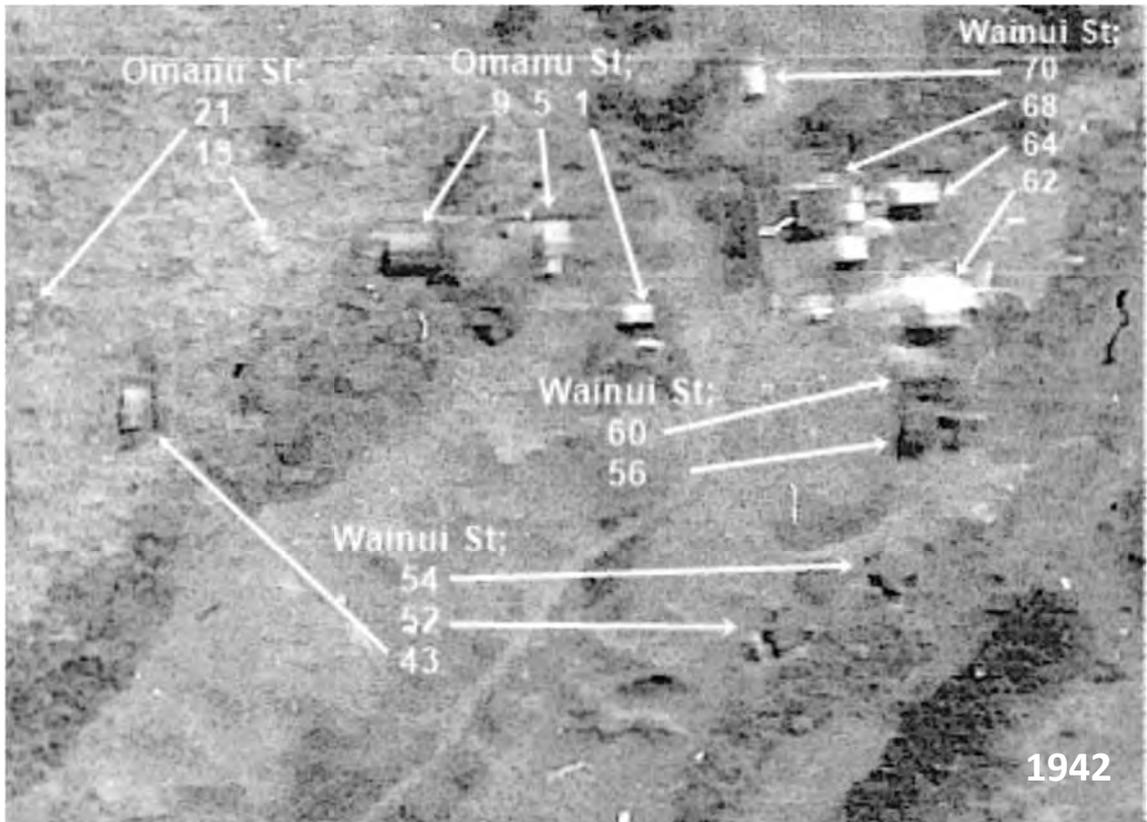


Bert Wainwright's house, re-built at 68 Wainui street, early 1930's, after being re-located from 25 Rapaki street because of the sand drift problem. See page 39 for a view of this house prior to sand drift and page 11 for view with sand problem.

1942



This aerial photo above was taken by RNZAF in December 1942. The localities of the buildings in the photo above are marked in the photo at top right on the next page. Current property numbers are used for locations. The track going into the village from the bottom of photo is now Wainui street.



Above are locations of buildings at left, using current street and address numbers.

The photo below is from the 1930's, in Wainui street. The buildings from left to right are; at 62 (Cameron), at 60 (Carter), at 56 (Heidrich/Kelly). They are marked in photo above. Closest bach is a good example of car case & malthoid construction.

