



# MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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## SNAPSHOTS OF A BLOCK: 1–19 MT ALBERT RD



This first block of Mt Albert Rd, between New North Rd and Allendale Rd, is in the heart of our suburb. Recently, three blocks of townhouses have replaced the houses at numbers 1A, 5 and 7, and the area is zoned for more intensification. Of course, this is not the first major change. This article tells a few stories about the land, the people, and the houses they built and lived in in earlier years. It is a tribute to changing Mt Albert, past, present and future.

### **1862: 1 Mt Albert Rd *Allendale***

Mt Albert Rd from New North Rd to Ferner Ave was the eastern boundary of Edward and Elizabeth Allen's 99 acre farm. They purchased the land in 1862 from Robert Johnson, and either built a new farmhouse or extended Johnson's existing house, naming it *Allendale*. It is still there, hidden down the right of way behind the new townhouses at 1A–1D: its story is told elsewhere. In 1880, Allen subdivided the farm, keeping this block up to Allendale Rd between Mt Albert Rd and the Ballast Line (DP 133). In 1897, well after his death, his daughter Annie Schnackenberg subdivided the remaining land (DP1139). *Allendale* has had many owners since then.

### **1893: 19 Mt Albert Rd/15 Allendale Rd *Kohanga***

In 1893 John Edward Astley and his wife Katrina (Rina), Annie Schnackenberg's daughter, purchased the section on the corner of Allendale Rd (NA66/5). They erected a large villa, named *Kohanga*. From October 1906, this was the home of John's brother Frank, his wife Muriel (daughter of Wesley Spragg), and their young family. Frank and John were Directors of the Astley Tannery in New Lynn, and the family were members of the Methodist Church. Frank and Muriel lived the rest of their lives in *Kohanga*: Frank died in 1955, aged 82, and Muriel in 1970, aged 90. This land, known as Astley's Corner, was subdivided by the family in the early 1970s and *Kohanga* was pulled down. There are now seven modern dwellings on the Astley land.

### **1903: 15B Mt Albert Rd *Edburton* / *Netherton***

In March 1903, George Alexander Hardwick purchased the undeveloped paddocks between *Allendale* and *Kohanga* (NA66/87). He had a villa built, which he named *Edburton* after a small village in Sussex near where he grew up: it survives down the right of way at 15B Mt Albert Rd. Hardwick had immigrated in his 20s, and farmed with his

brothers at Wharehine, near Port Albert. He spent three years in California, then returned, buying land at Mauku and Birkenhead: his occupation was variously recorded as “Settler” or “Gentleman” or “of independent means.” In November 1902 – just before he purchased this land – he was lucky to survive the disastrous wreck of the steamer *Elingamite* on the Three Kings Islands. The steamer was returning from Sydney. Hardwick was one of the older passengers on the ship, and was one of 11 men on a small raft which ended up on Big King. After two days in awful conditions, the survivors were rescued.

A stalwart of St Lukes Anglican Church and the Mt Albert Lawn Tennis Association, Hardwick gave generously to community and patriotic causes. He kept a horse and a few chickens, and leased out a paddock for horse grazing. Hardwick never married. He lived in Mt Albert until 1922, supported by a live-in “Lady Housekeeper,” first Grace Lambe until late 1904, and later her sister Jessie. He suffered from kidney disease for the last several years of his life. Accompanied by Jessie Lambe, he travelled to England in 1922 for six months, but died just after his return, aged 73. The house had been sold while he was away, and after his death, his sister Emily subdivided the remaining land into five empty sections, which quickly transformed the streetscape.

*Edburton* was purchased by Ernest John Dugmore, a gem-setter, and his wife Lizzie on 7 September 1922. Dugmore had been a top soccer player, and in 1909, when the Mt Albert Association Football Club was formed, he was elected to the first Committee. He knew Hardwick through this club. The Dugmores moved to their long-term home at 65 Taylors Rd after a year.

In February 1924, Robert Henry Fisher, a solicitor, purchased the house (NA364/73), and renamed it *Netherton*, after his childhood home on the Hauraki Plains. This had been the name of the Fishers’ previous house in Dominion Rd too: it was common for people to take their house nameplate with them when they moved. Tragically, his wife Laura died in June the same year, aged just 46. Robert died suddenly in 1937, aged 60: he collapsed while watching a wrestling match at the Town Hall. Their son George lived here until 1944, marrying Barbara Bates soon after his father’s death, and they had three children while living here. Robert’s older sister, Frances (Fannie) Bridgman, lived here from 1924 to 1937. There was another connection with the former owner: Fannie’s widowed sister-in-law, Ann Bridgman, was housekeeper for George Hardwick’s sister and executor, Emily, for 40 years. Fannie’s daughter Myrtle was married to Thomas Angus White, who had many relatives in Mt Albert.

## **1924: 5 Mt Albert Rd**

William Phoenix Ogilvie, “Gentleman” (a title still used in the 1920s by retired businessmen), purchased the sections that became 5 and 7 Mt Albert Rd from Emily Hardwick in April 1924 (NA391/62). He was given his distinctive middle name by Dr Philson who attended his birth in 1858:

he was born in a burning hotel during the massive fire that destroyed much of central Auckland, and his mother had to move buildings twice during labour to avoid the flames. Despite this early brush with flammable goods in the central city, Ogilvie had been a very successful draper, founding Ogilvies Fashions Ltd in Queen St. He was a foundation member of the Baptist Tabernacle, where he taught Sunday School and was an elder. In 1921, after the death of his first wife, he had married Helen (Nellie) Hunter Heggie, who had been a theatre sister in Aberdeen, and was working as a private nurse in New Zealand. This bungalow was built for them, and was a new start for the recently married couple. He lived here until his death in 1947: Nellie left in 1958. This house was demolished in 2024 to build townhouses.

## **1925: 7 Mt Albert Rd**

This back section, was purchased by Susan Rennie McNaughton from William Ogilvie in June 1925 (NA391/62). Susan and her husband Henry (Harry) McNaughton were in their late 50s when they moved into their new bungalow. She was a teacher, member of the Ladies’ Guild and Mothers’ Union of St Lukes Church, and a foundation member and first president of the Mt Albert Croquet Club. Harry had been a blacksmith in his younger days, and his occupation was given as “foreman” from the 1920s onwards. In 1920, he had been President of the Mt Albert Bowling Club. Susan died in 1936, and Harry stayed in the house until his death in 1955. It was demolished in 2024 at the same time as 5 Mt Albert Rd, and townhouses have been erected on the site.

## **1924: 9 Mt Albert Rd**

This bungalow was built in 1924 by Norwegian builder Jacob Peter John Karlsen and his Scottish wife Catherine (Kate). The section was purchased in Kate’s name on 10 April 1924 (NA391/63): putting the family home in the wife’s name was a common practice, as it protected it from creditors. This was a sound move, as, like many builders, Karlsen was declared bankrupt for a few years when building work dried up during the Depression. The Karlsens had met and married in Southland in 1917, and had three children, two being born while they were in this house. They were active in Christian groups, and Kate was very musical, and was a member of the Mt Albert Branch of the Womens’ Christian Temperance Union. They lived here until 1941 when they moved around the corner to 14 Allendale Rd.

## **1924: 11 Mt Albert Rd**

Annie Taylor Small purchased this section on 14 September 1923 (NA378/2), and the house was built soon after. Born in Wanganui, prior to moving to Mt Albert she had been living in Mt Eden with her parents and unmarried siblings. After the death of her father and sister in 1922, she set up home here with her mother, Aimee (or Amy) Small. Annie Small was a popular teacher at Avondale School for twenty years, and retired in 1927 on a pension, at age 50. Her mother died in 1929, and Annie sold the house in 1934.

**1924: 13 Mt Albert Rd**

This section was purchased on 4 April 1924 by builder John Innes Oag and his wife Martha (NA391/33). The couple had emigrated to New Zealand from Liverpool on the *Corinthic* in 1907 with their two young children. Oag worked as a draper in New Lynn, but changed direction and became a builder. By 1924, he was building houses with his new son-in-law Harry Stafford, and this house was built by them during 1924. In 1928, Oag and Stafford formed another company, Garden Homes Construction Co, and they were prolific local builders during the late 1920s and early 1930s, building many houses in the Pasadena Estate in Point Chevalier. John and Martha Oag, and their upholsterer son Innes, lived in this house until they moved to Mt Eden in 1934.

**1924: 17 Mt Albert Rd Hazeldean**

On 14 November 1923, Frederick and Minnie Wiltshire purchased this section (NA383/77), and had the house built. Frederick Wiltshire was born in Semington, Wiltshire where he worked as a farmer, and came to New Zealand on the *Tongariro* in 1910, aged about 23. He married Auckland-born Minnie Shugg in 1916, and up to 1919 they had a fruit farm at Ramarama. They had lived in Maybeck Rd for a few years before buying this section. Frederick variously described himself as a farmer or gardener. When they left in 1936, they held an auction where all their furniture and household goods were sold. The house has a nameplate "Hazeldean."

*There were no more new houses built on this block for nearly 30 years.*

Every house, every family, every person has a great many stories. This article barely scratches the surface. I am grateful to Lisa Truttman's book *The Maunga at Mt Albert*, to Sue Bramley for information about the Lambe family, and to Barbara Francis for information about the Bridgmans. I would love to hear from anyone with corrections and information about these people and houses.

The aerial photograph is a detail, with annotations, from: Mount Albert, Auckland. Whites Aviation Ltd: Photographs. Ref: WA-57147-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22716877. It was taken 9 April 1962.



**EVENT REPORTS**

**Christmas Party. Sunday 23 November 2025.** We had a great turnout for the Christmas Party. It started with chatting and fruit punch, followed by a varied musical programme delivered by mezzo soprano Catrin Johnsson and pianist Rachel Fuller, including some hearty Christmas sing-alongs. We then shared a slap-up afternoon tea. Photo shows Judith Goldie and Anne McKenzie.

**Picnic in Alice Wylie Reserve. Saturday 13 December 2025.**

A very relaxed group gathered in the Reserve to chat and share a happy afternoon together. We enjoyed watching the doggy antics of Bosco and Rafe. Our now-traditional Magnum ice creams went down a treat.

**MAHS DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Saturday 7 March. 2–4pm. Members' Show and Tell. Senior Citizens' Hall, Rocket Park. Theme: Crown Lynn or other Pottery and Tableware.** We invite Members to share a story about an piece of pottery, china or other tableware in your life. Each talk will be 3-5 minutes long. All welcome, to listen or to share.

**Sunday 19 April. 2–4pm. Guest Speaker event at Ferndale.** We are awaiting confirmation on who will be our speaker, and will let you know by email and on our website very soon. Save the date!

*\$2 donation for catering would be appreciated.*

**HISTORICAL WALK THROUGH THE EASTERN PARKS OF MT ALBERT & SANDRINGHAM**

This walk takes about 1 ½ hours. There are several cafes along the route, and toilets are available in Rocket Park, Gribblehirst Park and Westfield St Lukes Mall.

*Start at Rocket Park, corner of Wairere Ave.*

**1. Mt Albert Memorial Hall**

In 1957 the Council announced its intention to build a war memorial fountain. The Mayoress, Clarice Anderson, led opposition to this, then a fundraising drive for a hall, undertaken mainly by women of the suburb. Designed by Bart Gillespie and Colin West, built by Wilson Moodie & Gillespie, a modernist practice, the new hall opened in 1963.

*Walk down the west side of the Hall and Leisure Centre. Follow the path around the building to Selcourt Rd.*

**2. Market Garden, Plant Nursery and Tennis Courts**

The area behind the Hall was home to the Selwyn Nursery up to 1954. This sold flower and vegetable seedlings, and fruit. Prone to flooding, in 1938 a concrete culvert was built to push Meola stream underground. Selcourt Rd was named after the Selwyn Tennis Court.

*Turn left and take the footpath through the park to Asquith Ave (“The Track”). At the end, take a sharp right turn and walk towards the city along Asquith Ave.*

**3. Asquith Ave cutting**

Once called Old Whau Rd and later Avondale Rd, the road looped around a scoria hill until 1883 when Mt Albert Road Board cut through the hill. The plaque on the wall saying a chain-gang of Irish military deserters did this work in the 1860s is incorrect. For research disproving this myth, see:

<https://timespanner.blogspot.com/2012/07/street-stories-24-asquith-ave-not-chain.html>

*Cross St Lukes Rd on the pedestrian crossing and go down the steps straight ahead to Malvern Rd. Turn left and enter Fowlds Park.*

**4. Fowlds Park**

The land was used as a rubbish tip known as Morningside Dump; in 1921 “rats, flies and noxious odours” at the dump made headlines. In 1932, Fred Tschopp, an American landscape architect, transformed it with a modernist planting scheme, and in 1933 it was Fowlds Park in recognition of Sir George Fowlds’ contribution to the district: note the gateway. Protestors gathered here in 1981 before they marched on Eden Park to protest against the Springboks tour. The Park is home to the Mt Albert Rugby League Club, Auckland Irish Club and Rocky Nook Bowls.

*Continue along Rocky Nook Ave to New North Rd, then turn right. Pause under the railway bridge.*

**5. Morningside Railway overbridge**

Built 1912–1913, it replaced a dangerous level crossing on New North Road and permitted the extension of the tramline from Morningside to “the terminus” at the Mt Albert shops, which was completed in 1915. This extension of public transport was followed by a massive subdivision and building boom. When the western line was double tracked by 2010, a second set of supports was installed under the overbridge.

*Continue along New North Rd and cross at the traffic lights. Walk to the end of Sainsbury Rd.*

**6. Mt Albert Primary School**

Opened in 1940, it is characterised by airy classrooms. It was built in an old quarry (you can see how high the rocky land once was on the corner of Taylors Rd). Before the Sainsbury Rd location, the School was located in School Road, Morningside for about 60 years.

*Cross Morningside Drive and walk down Bournemouth Ave. Enter Gribblehirst Park via Cabbage Tree Swamp Drive.*

**7. Cabbage Tree Swamp (now called Gribblehirst Park)**

This was originally a Maori food basket, known as Ngā Awhina. It suffered regular flooding. In 1953 the Queen’s Coronation was celebrated in Gribblehirst Park, and this was where news of Edmund Hillary summiting Everest was announced. Walk to the right past the Eden Rugby Football Club, and look at Our Shed and the Gribblehirst Community Hub, and the remnant of lava rock forest.

*Follow Cabbage Tree Swamp Drive to Sandringham Rd and turn right. Turn down Watson Ave, and enter the Park.*

**8. Warren Freer Park**

This is the home of the Ramblers Softball Club, and rugby is also played here. It was named in 1981 for the Labour MP for Mt Albert 1947 to 1981. Freer was the Minister for Trade & Industry, and Minister for Energy Resources 1972–75.

*Cross St Lukes Rd at Cornwallis St and walk west to Wagener Place. Cross the road and go past the shops of the St Lukes Mega Centre to the carpark at the western end.*

**9. Roy Clements Treeway**

Roy Clements was a teacher at Mt Albert Grammar School 1969–1994. He worked on the restoration of Meola Creek during the 1970s and 80s. From the 1980s, with student and community help he led clearing and planting work to turn a strip of rocky weedy land owned by the Education Dept into a small forest and wetlands. See:

<https://www.mtalbertinc.co.nz/man-behind-urban-forest/>

*At the end of the Treeway walk, turn right and walk along Alberton Ave. Rocket Park is across the road.*

Walk developed by Cathie Hutchinson

# Historical Walk Through The Eastern Parks Of Mt Albert & Sandringham

