

# Three Kings Heritage Trail

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Local sites of heritage and  
cultural significance

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or visit [aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)



Cover Image: Showing residents walking in the grounds of the Ranfurly Veterans' Home, June 1924. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 1-W1827.

Pay out, Mt Roskill Road Board, 6 March 1931. Relief workers outside Mt Roskill Road Board office, 861 unemployed relief workers, total wages for week £1684. Auckland Council Archives MRB 027/1g.

# Three Kings Heritage Trail

This trail will take approximately two hours to walk.

## Introduction

The Three Kings Heritage Trail was created by the Puketāpapa Local Board to recognise local sites of heritage and cultural significance, and to provide accessible information to the public on the area's fascinating history.

Three Kings, which was formerly part of the Mt Roskill Borough, is rich in Māori and European history. There are many significant places, people and activities that have contributed to its unique heritage.

The trail encompasses natural landmarks such as Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta (Three Kings) and the nearby tuff ring, Arthur S. Richards Memorial Park and St Andrews Reserve. A number of other heritage sites and buildings also feature on the trail, and help to paint a picture of the area's distinct history, in particular its development from a semi-rural district to a thriving, populated suburban area during the early 20th century.

The map at the end of this brochure shows a suggested route for exploring the trail on foot. This route can be walked in about 2-2.5 hours, or you can visit any one of the sites of significance at any time, at your own pace.

You can find more comprehensive information on **Walk Auckland**, an app that can be downloaded free to your smartphone. If you are at one of the heritage trail sites, simply scan the QR code on the interpretive sign, and the fuller version of the story will be revealed.





Showing the pump house at Three Kings, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 921-56.

## 1. Three Kings Pump House

Three Kings Reserve, 1011 Mt Eden Road

Between 1902 and 1915, the district's water supply was obtained from the reservoir at One Tree Hill. In 1911, Mt Roskill Road Board called in water-diviner, Rev Harry Mason, to locate a site in Three Kings that would provide a good local water supply. He identified this site, and in 1915 the board built a pumping station here to service the district.

Following a typhoid outbreak in Mt Albert in 1922, the pump house was forced to close. The building was later converted into Mt Roskill's first community hall, where social gatherings and local theatrical productions took place.

During the 1950s, the Auckland Boxing Club used the building. In 1958, the Mt Roskill Municipal Band was granted sole use of the facility. The building was restored by Mt Roskill Borough Council in 1988 and today it is used by the Auckland City Brass.

## 2. Concrete Villa (private residence - do not enter)

520 Mt Albert Road

The distinctive home at 520 Mt Albert Road was built between 1908 and 1914 on land purchased by local resident James Preston in 1908. Preston, who was well known in the Auckland horse racing scene, served on the Mt Roskill Road Board from 1918 and also chaired the local school committee for nearly two decades.

The home was originally built as an Edwardian plastered masonry villa, distinguished by a pitched iron roof and single veranda out the front. A room was added within the roof space in 1954. The verandas to the east and south were also thought to have been added at this time. Although it has been modified, the home retains evidence of its original design and materials.



Concrete Villa, 520 Mt Albert Road, June 2016. Photograph by Rachel Ford.

### 3. Former Mt Roskill Fire Station

(private residence - do not enter)

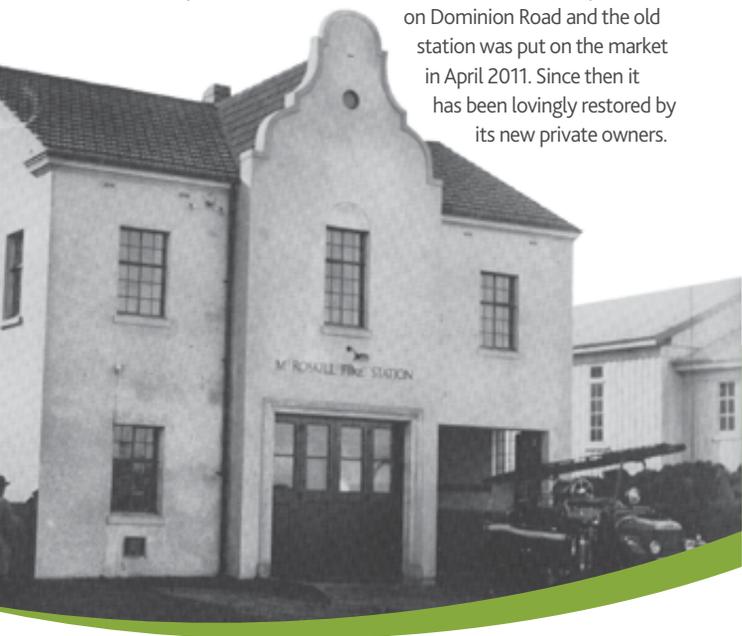
504 Mt Albert Road

The original Mt Roskill Fire Station was built on Mt Albert Road in 1927. Designed by Gerald E. Jones and Arthur Palmer, the station was constructed from reinforced concrete and cost £3111 to build. It was formally opened on 10 December 1927 by Sir Maui Pomare, the acting Minister of Internal Affairs.

The station's generous ground floor housed two fire engines, and the gates were 'fitted with modern automatic trip-action releases'. In the upper floor was a spacious social hall with an adjoining boardroom and mess rooms. Living and sleeping accommodation were provided for the officer in charge and two firemen. Alterations were made to the living area in 1959, and there is evidence of an earlier extension to this part of the building.

In 1970 the property was subdivided by the Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board leaving less than half of the original site. By 1980, the station also served as the district's ambulance base.

On 11 September 2009, a new \$4.9 million station was opened on Dominion Road and the old station was put on the market in April 2011. Since then it has been lovingly restored by its new private owners.



Mt Roskill Fire Station, c.1928-29. Auckland Star. Auckland Council Archives MRB 027/5gh.



Former residence of Keith Hay, June 2016. Photograph by Rachel Ford.

### 4. Keith Hay House (private residence - do not enter)

403 Mt Albert Road

This home was built in 1945 by the former Mayor of Mt Roskill Borough (1953–1974) Keith Hay. 'Keith the builder' was a successful businessman with a 42-year-long parallel career in local politics. He was influential in making cheaper building materials such as native pine permissible, and a supporter of low-cost housing initiatives in the area. Under Hay's entrepreneurial leadership, the semi-rural district of Mt Roskill grew to become the country's largest borough.

Several additions and alterations were made to the Hay home in the 1950s, including the addition of a second storey. In 1977, Hay's house was transferred to the Zion Bible Training Centre and further modifications were made.

In 1985 it was used by Rodney Funeral Home Ltd and then later, the Salvation Army. The house was sold to a private owner in 2002.



Grinter building, 503-507 Mt Albert Road, June 2016. Photograph by Rachel Ford.

## 5. Grinter Building

503-507 Mt Albert Road

The Grinter brothers purchased and flattened a hilly corner site on the corner of Mt Albert and Hayr roads in 1928 to build the district's first service station and several shops. They operated the Three Kings Service Station on this site for close to 50 years.

The Grinter Brothers were prominent early developers in the area and their service station is associated with early bowser service station design and retail development in the Three Kings area.

The space above the row of three shops was originally occupied by one of the Grinter women, but became the electorate office of Labour MP Phil Goff in 1998.

## 6. Three Kings Congregational Church

513 Mt Albert Road

The Mt Roskill Congregational Church was built in 1907 on land gifted to the Congregational Union of New Zealand. This was the first church building in the district and was initially intended as a Sunday school hall and church.

In 1946, the name was changed to Three Kings Congregational Church. As one of the first community buildings in Three Kings, after the opening of the nearby Veterans' Home, it served as an important public meeting place during the early 1900s. Some residents of the Ranfurly Veterans' Home attended the Sunday services.

Over the years, the church building has been modified several times. In 1913, a lean-to was added to the southern side of the building to accommodate three new classrooms. Further alterations took place between 1955 and 1957, including an extension to the Mt Albert Road side of the building. In 1982, more alterations were made to the original church rooms.

In 1980 the church purchased a house and property adjacent to the building for use by the church community. In 2010, the house was demolished to make way for a modern church centre building and car park.



Three Kings  
Congregational Church  
[tkcc.org.nz/aboutus](http://tkcc.org.nz/aboutus)

Congregational Church, Mt Albert Road,  
1975. Auckland Council Archives  
MRB 009/82.



Women's Suffrage Memorial,  
537 Mt Albert Road, June 2016.  
Photograph by Rachel Ford.

## 7. Women's Suffrage Memorial

537 Mt Albert Road

Rose Park, on the corner of Warren Avenue and Mt Albert Road, was formerly the site of the first store in Three Kings. A store was established here in 1903, mainly to service the nearby Veterans' Home, and later became a post office and telephone bureau.

A suffrage memorial within the garden was unveiled on 19 September 2013 on the 120th anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand. New Zealand was the first nation in the world to grant women the right to vote in 1893.

The memorial was commissioned by Puketāpapa Local Board and designed and made by local industrial craft specialists, MVS Studio. The design is an abstract interpretation of the camellia flower, which is an important symbol of the suffrage movement. The names of the local women suffragists who signed the petitions to Parliament that eventually succeeded in bringing about the vote are inscribed around the base. The names of all women elected to both local and central government representing the Mt Roskill community, including former Prime Minister Helen Clark, are also inscribed on plaques that form part of the memorial.

## 8. "Coleraine" Logan Manor

(private residence - do not enter)

1 Warren Avenue

Built in 1905 for the artist and sculptor Michael Coughlan Dignan, this grand home is characterised by its Italianate-style façade. While the architect is unconfirmed the style and detailing of the home bears similarities to the nearby Pah Homestead, designed by Thomas Mahoney, where Michael Dignan's immediate family lived in the 1890s.

The home at 1 Warren Avenue was one of a group of buildings associated with the early development at Three Kings in the early 1900s. Originally known as Ranfurly Terrace, the avenue was later renamed after a former town clerk, J.Y. Warren.



1 Warren Avenue, June 2016. Photograph by Rachel Ford.



Showing a group of veterans with Captain and Mrs H Goodwyn-Archer on the front steps of Ranfurly Veterans' Home, November 1905. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 1-W1499.

## 9. Ranfurly Veterans' Home

539 Mt Albert Road

Following the end of the South African War (or Second Anglo-Boer War), the Governor of New Zealand, the Earl of Ranfurly, proposed that a home and hospital should be built for veterans who had fought for the British Empire. It would also serve as the official national memorial to the Second Anglo-Boer War.

Lord Ranfurly called on the public for donations to help fund the construction of the building. His campaign raised about £8000 and the Auckland Veterans' Home officially opened on 10 December 1903. Lord

Ranfurly laid the foundation stone for the building, which was later named after him.

The home has been modified and extended several times over the years, the first time in 1910. Between 1921 and 1923, a further £1200 was spent on renovations.



Ranfurly Veterans' Home, November 1905. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 1-W892.

A new wing opened on the site on 2 December 1953, with a second under construction at the time. By February 1961, a new, three-storey accommodation block had been built on the site, and further additions were made in 1997.

In 2011, the Ranfurly Trust finalised an agreement with a privately owned retirement village to jointly redevelop the site. Plans included a 60-bed Hospital and Home, the refurbishment of Ranfurly House and a retirement village of 170 apartments. The new Ranfurly Hospital and Veterans' Home was completed in November 2013. The first block of 27 apartments was completed in November 2015 and the second block is due for completion in 2016.



Ranfurly Home for war veterans, Mt Albert Road, Auckland War Memorial Museum. PH-NEG-2504A- B1077.



Pay out, Mt Roskill Road Board, 6 March 1931. Relief workers outside Mt Roskill Road Board office, 861 unemployed relief workers, total wages for week £1684. Auckland Council Archives MRB 027/1f.

## 10. St Andrews Reserve

### 282 St Andrews Road

Due to its location on the eastern edge of the volcanic tuff ring of Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta (Three Kings), this former block of Crown land contained soils unsuitable for farming, and as such, it became the responsibility of the Waste Lands Board in 1855.



Mt Roskill Road Board office, c.1940s. Auckland Council Archives, MRB 027/1h (1).

In the 1880s, the introduction of a provincial government tree-planting reform saw the land repurposed as a series of plantation reserves.

In July 1902 the Mt Roskill Road Board (later Mt Roskill Borough Council) built an administration building on the eastern end of the reserve. When the new borough council's municipal building opened on the corner of Mt Eden and Mt Albert roads in 1957, the old admin building was adapted as the Three Kings Social Centre. The building was an important meeting place for local residents, in particular during the Depression years when it served as a centre for relief workers. The building was demolished in the late 1970s after becoming dilapidated.



Mt Roskill Borough Council office, post 1947 (likely c.1950s-60s). Auckland Council Archives, MRB 027/1h (3).

## 11. Three Kings School

944 Mt Eden Road

The district's first school opened here on 6 May 1879, with a roll of 44 students. Initially it was a large single classroom, with a fireplace and entrance porch, and a separate teacher's residence. Being the district's first community space, the first schoolroom was the centre of the district's social activities.

An additional schoolroom was added in 1885 by J. Rowe, and in 1891, four more rooms were built onto the front of the schoolhouse. A further two rooms were added in 1912 to accommodate the rapidly growing school roll. The school roll peaked at 642 in 1950, before the opening of other schools nearby saw a gradual decline in numbers. In 2016 the school had approximately 550 students.

In 1943, the name of the school changed from Mt Roskill School to Three Kings School, which better represented its actual location.

In 1935 and 1936 a new block of buildings was built on the Mt Albert Road side to replace the original schoolrooms. Despite several alterations over the years, it remains one of the few Auckland schools on its original site.



Three Kings School, Auckland War Memorial Museum, PH-NEG- C10538.



Official opening of Mt Roskill Council Chambers, 15 June 1957. Auckland Council Archives MRB 027/2aa.

## 12. Mt Roskill Borough Council Building

560 Mt Albert Road

This site on the corner of Mt Eden and Mt Albert roads was earmarked for a municipal building from as early as 1911 when Mt Roskill Road Board put forward a proposal to build a hall in honour of King George V's coronation. The board commissioned Onehunga architect J. Park to draw up plans, but the hall was never built.

Between 1923 and 1956, a number of other unrealised designs were prepared for the municipal offices. In 1948, Mt Roskill Road Board became Mt Roskill Borough Council and finally, from 1956 to 1957, the council led the development of the first-ever municipal chambers on the site.

On 29 September 1956 Mayor Keith Hay laid the foundation stone for the new building, which was designed by local architect Stephen G. Wright and housed the council chambers, mayoral office and administrative departments. It was officially opened on 15 June 1957.

Since then, the original building has seen several alterations and additions, and as such, it is the 1957 aspect of the building that is of heritage significance.

In 2012, the building was closed due to weathertightness failures. However, a planned renovation commencing in 2016 will see it restored to its original 1957 footprint and reinstated as the 'home of local government'.

## 13. Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta

113A Duke Street

Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta (Three Kings) is one of the largest and most complex of the 50 volcanoes that make up Auckland's Volcanic Field. It erupted about 28,500 years ago, forming three prominent volcanic cones — Highest King, East King and Big King — possibly a fourth smaller cone and a group of smaller scoria mounds. The nearby tuff ring, a roughly circular formation of solid rock, was also produced by the eruption.

Commercial quarrying of the Three Kings complex began in earnest in the 1870s, and by the late 1900s, the peaks were reduced to just one, the Big King, which remains today. Prior to quarrying, all three volcanic cones were terraced pā.

The name Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta means the 'belt of Riukiuta'. Riukiuta was the navigator of the Tainui canoe who settled in the area, and Ngāti Riukiuta was the local hapū. Te Tātua could have described the formation of the hills around the pā, or the nearby tuff ring. The name is also figurative, referring to the alliances of the different iwi who lived here. These people were of Tainui through Riukiuta, of Arawa through Ihenga-Ringaringaware and his brother Huarere, and of Ngāti Awa through Titahi.

The pepeha (motto) of the hapū was Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta, the girdle of Riukiuta, because they were bound together by a belt of ancestral unions. Another version of its origin says the Three Kings hills were the stronghold of several brothers whose alliance was called Te Tātua.

Volcanic rock was used by Māori to line the terraces on the pā defences. It is for this reason that Te Tātua is sometimes called Ngā Pare Toka a Rauiti, the rock headband of Rauiti, brother of Riukiuta.



Looking east from Mt Albert towards One Tree Hill (left background), Three Kings (right background), November 1926. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 1-W744.



Arthur S. Richards Memorial Park, June 2016. Photograph by Rachel Ford.

## 14. Arthur S. Richards Memorial Park

43-57 Parau Street

The Department of Housing Construction purchased this block of land from the Wesley College Trustees following the migration of the Wesleyan College building to Paerata (South Auckland) in the early 1920s.

When the first major state housing development was planned for the area during the late 1930s and the 1940s, the land was earmarked by the Crown as a recreational reserve.

One of the reserve's most prominent features is a magnificent collection of large, mature trees, which include oaks, gums, pōhutukawa, tōtara, magnolias and a Norfolk pine. The park is also abundant in bird-life, including magpies, domestic pigeons, rainbow lorikeets, tūi and ruru (morepork).

In 1956 it was given the name Arthur Richards Memorial Park in honour of the former Roskill MP who played an important role in the land's conservation as a park. In 1984, at his daughter's request, an 'S' was inserted into the name to distinguish him from other family members with the same Christian names.



Showing the front view of Wesley College, Three Kings. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 7-A227.

## 15. Wesley Training College

54 McCullough Avenue

A monument cairn was unveiled here on the approximate site of the original Wesley Training College buildings on 20 September 1941, to mark the centenary of the Methodist Church in New Zealand. Rev W. A. Burley, the president of the NZ Methodist Conference, officiated the memorial.

Established on this site in 1848, the Wesleyan College provided education and training to mostly Māori students. From 1850 the institution was partly funded by the government to serve as an industrial school for European children as well. It was one of Auckland's earliest religious institutions.

The monument, which was erected by the Department of Housing Construction, is thought to incorporate stone salvaged from the former buildings.

The structure is situated within a large section of Crown land purchased from the Wesley Mission Trust in 1939, for the development of the earliest planned state housing area in Mt Roskill.

To get to the final stop on the tour, you could take the alternative summer route (shown on the map) through Robinson Reserve to walk right over a section of the tuff ring. It's also worth heading up to the top of Big King to take in the fantastic views.

## 16. State housing and quarrying

### Three Kings Reserve

In 1939, the first Labour Government purchased land from the Wesley Mission Trust for the development of the earliest large, comprehensively planned state housing area in Mt Roskill.

From here you can see the Upper Wesley Estate, the first housing block to be developed on the former school grounds of the Wesley College. Up to 500 new homes were planned for the hilly piece of land and construction work took place between 1939 and 1941, with new shops established during the same period.

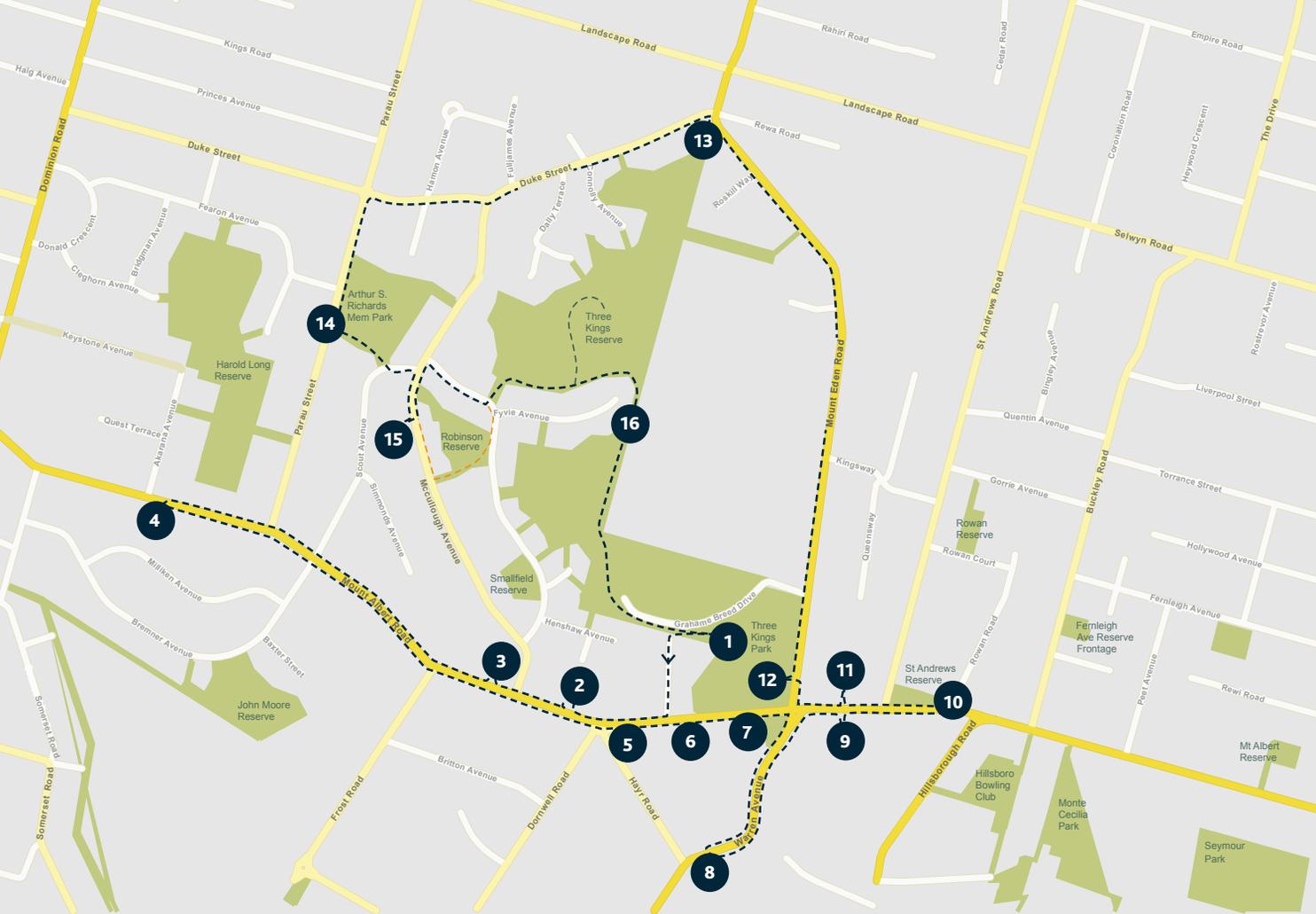
From here you can also see into the quarry, and take in the changes to the landscape from over a century of intensive quarrying.

The scoria of the volcanic cones was recognised as a good material for building and roads, and commercial quarrying became the key industry in the area in the 1870s. William John Conelly was among the first to establish a quarry in the area in the mid-1870s. The enterprising Winstone brothers, George and William, bought the Conelly quarry in 1924. Their company, later renamed Winstone Aggregates, was purchased by Fletcher Building in 2000 and still exists today.

Quarrying activity was fast and furious and as much as 80 per cent of the original site, including two of Three Kings, was destroyed at a rapid rate. Quarrying continued into the early 21st century and tense relationships between quarry operators and the local community was an important local political issue.



Three Kings shopping centre on skyline from Three Kings quarry, 1973. Auckland Council Archives MRB 025/4ac.



# Three Kings Heritage Trail

## Legend

- Three Kings heritage trail
- Detour to the summit
- Alternative summer route

1. Three Kings Pump House
2. Concrete Villa
3. Former Fire Station
4. Keith Hay House
5. Grinter Building
6. Three Kings Church
7. Women's Suffrage Memorial
8. "Coleraine" Logan Manor
9. Ranfurly Veterans' Home
10. St Andrews Reserve
11. Three Kings School
12. Mt Roskill Borough Council Building
13. Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta
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15. Wesley Training College
16. State housing and quarrying

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