

# Council Archives

Auckland begins at the Archives



## Welcome

The purpose of this newsletter is to update you on upcoming events and share information with you about new services, resources and additions to our collections.

In this issue, we tell you about three new family history index databases, our 'Ask an Archivist Day' and share part II of Flushed Out – The secrets of the public toilet.

We also share the story of the Whau Bridge traffic tally of 1920 and discover a mysterious beauty behind the back of a map of Tuakau.

[Read more about the Archives](#)

## Issue 19

DECEMBER 2020

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## New family history index databases

There are three new family history index databases available to search via our website, thanks to our hard-working volunteers.

### Glen Eden Town Board Valuation Roll Database 1926-1935

This is a full transcription of the Glen Eden Town Board property valuation roll for 1926 to 1935, the earliest surviving valuation roll for Glen Eden Town Board held by Auckland Council Archives. It is searchable by name only. The occupier and owner address fields have not always been filled out, and often only a general location is given. The description of the property being valued is given as a legal description.

### New Lynn Borough Council Rate Books Database 1930-1931

This is a full transcription of the New Lynn Borough Council rate book for 1930 to 1931, the first rate book for the newly formed borough. It is searchable by name and by description of the property. The description of the property being valued is usually given as a legal description, sometimes including a street name or estate name.

## Auckland City Council Building Permit Cards Database 1908-1920

Auckland City kept two sets of building permit index cards – one set was arranged by street name, the other set by the property owner's name. The street index cards were fully transcribed by Archives staff during the first COVID-19 lockdown, with additional data from the nominal cards added if available. The database contains almost 13,500 entries and is searchable by name of owner, name of contractor, street name and year.

The index cards were used by council staff to find building permits and building permit plans, many of which are now in Auckland Council Archives series AKC 338 (Auckland City building consents microfilm), AKC 339 (Auckland City building permit plan aperture cards), AKC 305 (Auckland City building permits) and AKC 336 (Auckland City building permit rolled plans). Even where the permits and plans have not survived, the index cards provide evidence that a permit was issued, though it should not be assumed that all applicants would have proceeded with the work they had received a permit to complete.

Street Eden Crescent				
1910.-11				
DATE	NO.	OWNER	CONTRACTOR	PARTICULARS
30.18.10	1372	Hronfeldt	Mt Gillin R.	Store & Wash-house.
21.5.11	2631	Grayson Myles	Adams	Stable in wood.
18.9.11	3868	Clayton St	No. 2 St	Shed W.C.
25.6.12	3579	Cargen Proprietary	Rich & Jefferys	Direct residential flats in reinforced concrete
12.7.12	3905	Scott A.	Spayson W. A.	Direct motor garage
16.7.12	3905	Pierce	Nelson W.	Direct shed.
7.5.13	4185	Grayson Myles	Rich & Jefferys	Direct addit. to factory in wood
16.5.13	4120	Hachon W. St.	Whitely J.	Direct addit. to stable in wood
25.8.13	5031	Rich Miso	Balden Geo.	Direct partition & enclosure in wood.
15.12.13	5350	Charitable Aid Bd.	Green R.	Direct end of dwelling with iron
31.1.14	5437	Green St.	Green St.	Direct addit. to dwelling in wood.
5.10.14	6290	St. of England.	Parrett J. J.	Direct shed in wood.
30.11.14	6688	Selth Miso	Rich	Direct bridge between 2 & 4.
7.6.16	7073	Langston Miso	Box & Co.	Direct repairs to dwelling
12.2.17	10020	Green St.	Green St.	Direct additions to dwelling
17.10.17	10919	Thomas	Beatty Jf	Direct Repair Shed

Permit card from series ACC 431/1  
Auckland City Council Building Permit  
Cards City A-L with permit number 3879  
highlighted.

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Auckland Council Archives Family History Indexes

Auckland City Council Building Permit Cards Database 1908-1920

Your search found 1 record(s).

Search Results	
Result	1 of 1
Name of Owner	Cargen Proprietary Limited
Name of Contractor	Rich & Jefferys
Street Name	Eden Crescent
Date	26.06.1912
Particulars	Direct residential flats in reinforced concrete
Permit Number	3879
Archives Reference	ACC 431 Item No: 1 Series Title: Auckland City Council Building Permit Cards Record Title: Building Permit Cards City A-L

While every effort has been made to transcribe the records correctly, early handwriting is not always easy to decipher so there may be some errors in the databases. Where a transcriber was unsure, a question mark is used to indicate uncertainty (?). Where personal and company names have been abbreviated these have been left in their original abbreviated form. Place and street names however have been written out in full. We have not attempted to correct any errors that may have been made when the records were originally written up. We have, however, put the correct spelling of an obviously misspelt word in square brackets.

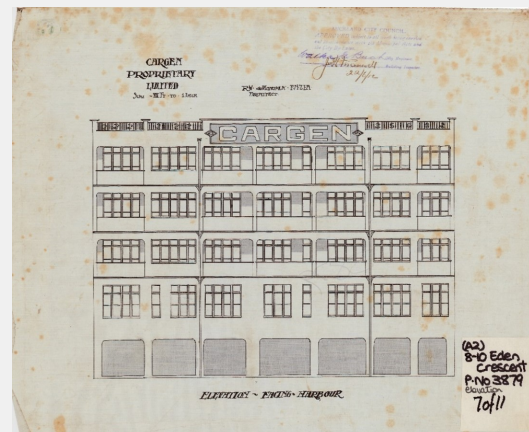
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Entry for permit number 3879 as it appears  
in the family history database.



8-10 Eden Crescent, permit number 3879,  
sheet 8 of 11 (Auckland Council Archives,  
AKC 336/977).



8-10 Eden Crescent, permit number 3879,  
sheet 7 of 11 (Auckland Council Archives,  
AKC 336/977).

## Archives comes out of the basement



*Maria Gin from the Records team and Owen Gordon from the Archives team at the Records and Archives roadshow in the Staff Café at 135 Albert St.*

The Corporate Records and Archives team recently hit the road, setting up shop for the first time in Council cafés across the region to mark 'Ask an Archivist Day'. This event has been an annual feature of the international archives calendar since 2006 when it was created by the Society of American Archivists as a way of connecting with customers and raising awareness of the profession.

It was a great opportunity for Auckland Council staff, many of whom regularly use our services, to meet the wider team in an informal setting and chat about the work archivists and records managers do in protecting and making accessible records in all formats, find out more about why archives are so important, and ask any questions they might have about the storage, maintenance and disposal of the many records they create during the course of their daily work at council.

This type of outreach plays an important role in helping to demystify the work we do. As Vicky Spalding, Senior Archivist, explains, 'We're hidden away from sight most of the time. As a result, our work is not well understood. Often when we receive queries by email they arrive after being forwarded on from one team to another before they finally get to us. We want that to change'.

Want to know more about Archives? No matter how big, small or silly your questions might seem, we'd love to hear from you.

Email the team on [archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).



## Flushed Out – The secrets of the public toilet, Part II

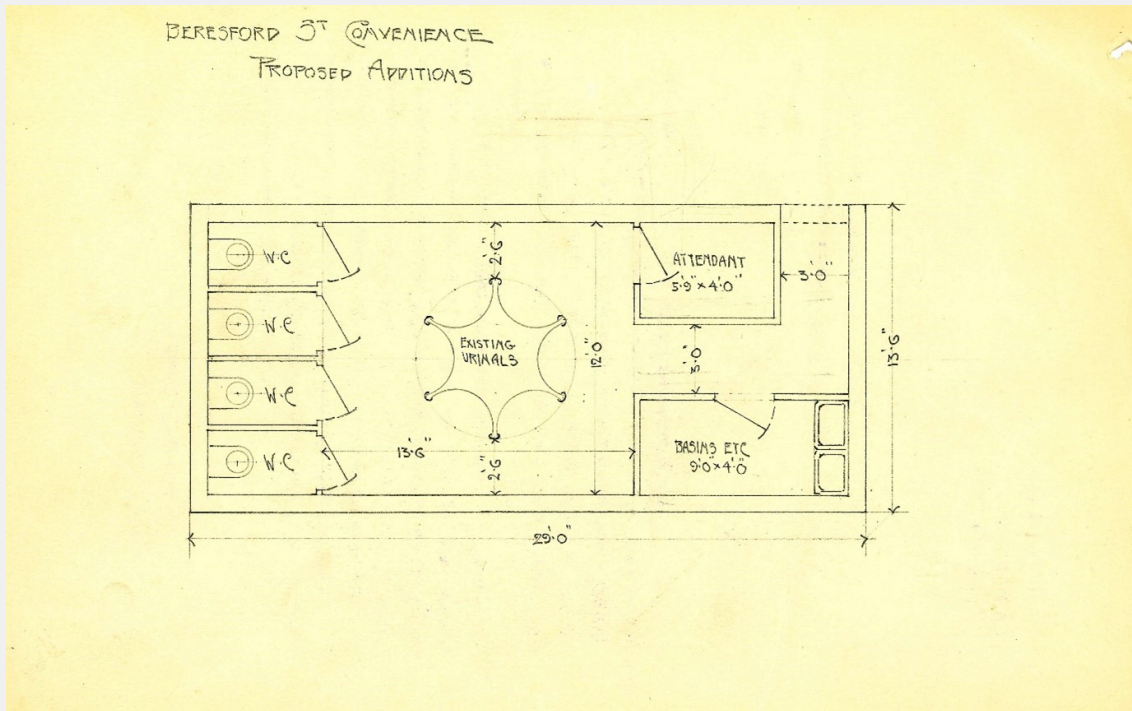


Figure 1: Floor plan of proposed alterations, 1914. ACC 219/247d

Auckland Council Archives took part in the Auckland Heritage Festival this year with *Flushed Out – The Secrets of the Public Toilet*. The exhibition was displayed at Te Atatū North Community Centre from 22 September to 31 October. We received great feedback from members of the public who were walking through the centre while we were installing it. One elderly gentleman told us about his memories of public toilets as a maintenance worker for Auckland City Council. He said that he had really enjoyed the exhibition and that it had made his afternoon.

One of the new stories told in this exhibition was about the Beresford Street men's conveniences. The first conveniences at this location were constructed in 1906 and consisted of urinals in an above-ground building. Shortly after their construction, the council started to receive complaints. The Pitt Street Methodist Church trustees wrote that the conveniences at the rear of their church were 'abused by all sorts of casuals and drunks coming in from the streets and depositing filth etc.' The trustees suggested this problem could be resolved if the council enlarged the Beresford Street convenience like others in the city and that 'there would then be no excuse for these vagrants trespassing on the church property at all.'<sup>(1)</sup>

In September 1914, Mr Bush, Auckland City Council's chief engineer, advised the town clerk that the Beresford Street convenience consisted of six urinals and to install toilets would require reconstruction of the building. He stated that four toilets, two handbasins and accommodation for a caretaker could be provided for £300 and that building would be constructed in brick.

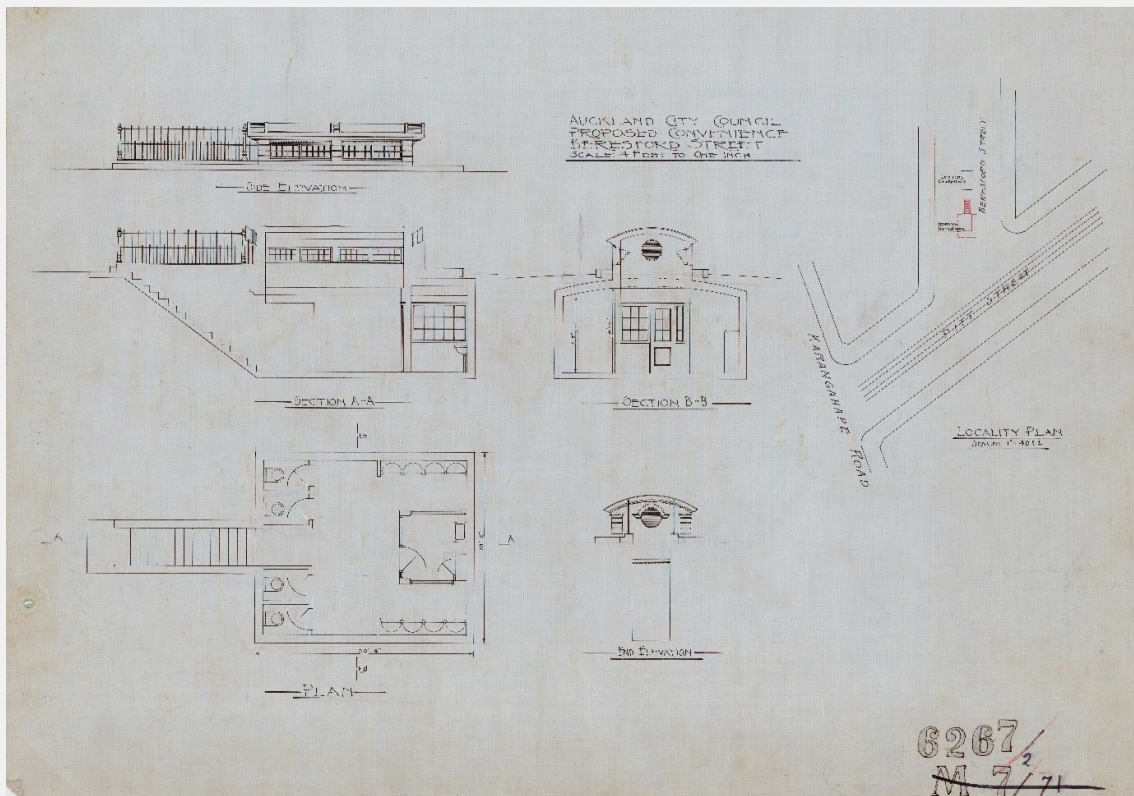


Figure 2: Proposed convenience Beresford Street, 1925. ACC 015/6267-2

Despite improvements to the building, the complaints continued. People complained it was an eyesore and attracted undesirable behaviour. On 1 March 1918, the council received a letter from Reverend Warner of the Congregational Church in Pitt Street regarding the unsatisfactory position and condition of the toilets in Beresford Street. The Reverend stated that church members found it offensive and were having to find other ways to church to avoid the convenience. He asked, 'could not the place be put underground, or better still removed altogether and the splendid open space better utilized?' (2)

The Auckland Gas Company wrote to the council in June 1925 to complain about the conveniences. The company explained their show rooms were directly opposite the toilets and that they have 'a large number of ladies attending our demonstration classes and showrooms and have had a number of complaints regarding the unseemly behaviour of those using this convenience.' The company went on to say, 'our salesmen report they have frequently seen happenings that are anything but conducive to the welfare of the public in this vicinity.' (3) The Auckland Gas Company requested that the conveniences be removed.



Mr Bush expressed concern that if this toilet building was removed, then it could lead to requests for other conveniences to be removed. He advised that the conveniences were well located from the point of view of the public and were in good condition and he could not justify the expense of putting the conveniences underground. It was felt that issues with behaviour should be reported to the Police so they could investigate.

As a result of the Auckland Gas Company complaint and countless others, the Works Committee decided to build underground instead of removing the conveniences. The Committee requested Mr Bush to produce plans and estimates for building an underground convenience. In July 1925, a plan was submitted for an underground convenience to house four toilets, eight urinals, an enclosure for the caretaker and two handbasins with an estimated cost £1150. The Council resolved to adopt the plan and carry out the work in the following year. Work on the underground convenience commenced on 4 June 1926.



*Figure 3: Beresford St bar and café, AUC 2012 178*

The Beresford Street toilets were eventually closed on 27 May 1993 at the request of the New Zealand Police. This then left the council the problem of what to do with an unwanted toilet building. In 1994 the Hobson Community Board considered the issue of the Beresford Street

toilet block. The options were to leave the building closed and unused, demolish it or find alternative uses for it. The Council called for expressions of interest in occupying the building and received eight submissions. Two proposals were considered by the Community Board, one was for an architectural studio and the other was for a bar and café. (4)

Mr Steven Marinovich submitted the bar and café proposal. He stated that he wished to preserve the building as a civic landmark and make the site an attractive amenity for Aucklanders. His proposal was accepted subject to condition that cost of street stopping and re-zoning of the land be paid for by Marinovich. Street stopping had to be done because the toilet was on a street and under the Local Government Act while provision for facilities under roads were allowed, it did not allow for uses that would impede vehicles from using the road.

The toilet building was leased and later sold to Steven Marinovich. It is an example of adaptive re-use with its conversion from a toilet space into a café and bar. The former Beresford Street underground toilets have been demolished as part of the Central Rail Link project. The above ground structure was removed and will be recycled as a café in Niue. (5) The former toilets will be the site of the new Karangahape railway station.

1. Convenience Beresford St, 1913-1978 (Auckland Council Archives, Auckland City Council Works Department subject file, ACC 219/247d)
2. Convenience Beresford St, 1913-1978 (Auckland Council Archives, Auckland City Council Works Department subject file, ACC 219/247d)
3. Convenience Beresford St, 1913-1978 (Auckland Council Archives, Auckland City Council Works Department subject file, ACC 219/247d)
4. Beresford Street, Pitt St, Freemans Bay, 1994-1998 (Auckland Council Archives, Auckland City Council Property Group files, AKC 201/137g)
5. <https://www.cityraillink.co.nz/news-january-2020/beresford-square-works-have-begun>

## The Whau Bridge traffic tally of 1920



*The new reinforced concrete Whau Bridge, July 1932 (Auckland City Council Works Department classified subject file on the Whau Bridge, 1920-1956, Auckland Council Archives, ACC 219/380b)*

Printed sheets of an Auckland bridge traffic tally preserved in Council Archives were recently transcribed by volunteers. They provide a snapshot of the burgeoning city and were part of a protracted process that led eventually to the construction of a new two-way bridge jointly funded by several Auckland local authorities.

A 175-foot long wooden bridge built in 1870 spanned the Whau creek that separated Avondale from New Lynn on Great North Road, the main highway from Auckland to Helensville and Northland. Many of those crossing the bridge into Auckland were transporting manufactured goods such as bricks and pipes or agricultural products like meat, fruit, vegetables, and wine. The bridge was also used by traffic heading to or from Auckland's largest cemetery at Waikumete, which had opened in 1886 and was operated by Auckland City Council (the railway connecting Newmarket with Waikumete station was often preferred for transporting bodies). Travelling at night, carts took night soil (solid human waste) for processing into manure at the pouquette works in New Lynn. Other travellers included those making country excursions to Titirangi and the North. By 1920 it was described as 'the "front door" to the North'.

In 1887 control and management of the Whau Bridge was vested by the Minister for Public Works in the Waitemata County Council. Three years later, a new warrant gave the council 'exclusive care, control, and management' of the bridge, but reapportioned costs of management and maintenance between the council and eight Auckland road boards, borough or city councils that were also held to enjoy its benefits. The interested local bodies were the road boards for Avondale, Mt Albert, Point Chevalier, Arch Hill, Mt Eden, and Eden Terrace, Newton Borough Council, and Auckland City Council. Waitemata County was responsible for half the costs and the other half divided between the other authorities. The highest proportions



were to be borne by Avondale Road Board, apart from Waitemata County the nearest local body to the bridge, at 12½ percent, closely followed by Auckland City Council at just under 10½ percent. An enquiry that preceded the new warrant sought evidence from representatives of the responsible local authorities and admitted:

‘Neither the evidence given... nor the arguments used by the various speakers, seem to afford any clear guiding principle as to the mode in which the cost of maintaining such a bridge as the one across the Whau creek should be apportioned amongst local bodies situated at varying distances from the bridge, or as to the distinction which it may be fair to draw between Road Boards and Municipal Corporations in respect to liability. It is easy to say that they ought all to contribute in proportion to the benefits which they receive from the bridge, but an accurate application of this principle appears to be a matter of impossibility. Proximity to the bridge is perhaps the leading feature to be considered and this seems to have chiefly formed the basis upon which the assessment hitherto in force was framed. But the proportion thus established may be modified by other considerations, such as the greater length of road leading to the bridge which one district may have to maintain as compared with another. With respect to towns although they may be in receipt of larger revenue than country districts, and although they may supply the great majority of the passengers who cross the bridge... yet on the other hand, the towns incur a heavy expense in keeping their streets in repair, and these streets are open to the country people, and are in fact an important element in their prosperity’.

Newspaper advertisements invited tenders for reconstruction of the Whau Bridge early in 1902 and by August 1902 newspapers reported completion of a new wooden bridge. It was less than five metres wide with a narrow roadway and permitted only one-way traffic, slowing journeys to and from Auckland City. Although intended for light traffic, two heavy water mains bringing water from the Waitakere Ranges into the city were subsequently placed along one side of the bridge without additional strengthening and were joined by 1914 by a gas main. Traffic vibration frequently damaged the water mains.

A Whau Bridge Commission was created in 1920 at the behest of Waitemata County Council to report on the construction of a new bridge and apportionment of costs. The wooden bridge was then acknowledged to be ‘obsolete and dangerous’. Discussion supported construction of a wider bridge, perhaps with capacity to include a tramway. To determine a fair apportionment of costs for a new bridge, it was decided to take a tally of traffic across the existing bridge in both directions. Tallymen were authorized to stop and question those travelling across the bridge between the hours of 7am and 7pm from 30 August to 12 September 1920 inclusive. Tally books contained five columns to record the names of the owners of vehicles crossing the bridge, the owners’ place of business or residence, the districts from which the vehicle came and to which it was going, and a brief description of the type of vehicle and its load. While motor lorries, motor cars and taxis comprised the largest groups of vehicles travelling from or to the city, the tally also recorded bicycles, motorbikes, and wagons drawn by two, three or four horses and spring carts drawn by a single horse. Unsurprisingly, bicycles were more frequently recorded for those moving shorter distances, for instance between Avondale and New Lynn. A little over 6,300 vehicles passed over the bridge during the tally, an average of 485 per day. A wide range of goods went across, including bricks, cement, pipes, furniture, timber, firewood, lime, hay, cordials, wine, meat, pig food, fruit and fruit trees, honey, vegetables, leather, and sheepskins.

A new warrant in 1921 transferred care, control, and management of the Whau Bridge from Waitemata County Council to New Lynn Town Board. New Lynn Town District had been constituted in 1910 and became independent of Waitemata County two years later, having formerly been part of its Titirangi Riding. Revised apportionment of costs aligned reasonably closely to the usage recorded by the traffic tally saw Auckland City Council paying 27½ per cent, Waitemata County Council and New Lynn Town Board 25 per cent each, Avondale Road Board 15 per cent, and the remainder by the borough councils for Mt Albert and Mt Eden. It was decided to repair the bridge by providing a new pile and hardwood decking to avoid the considerable expense of building a new one and ensure that no vehicle should be allowed across carrying more than a four-ton load. At weekends an inspector was often employed to signal vehicles across the bridge and limit congestion.

In 1929, New Lynn achieved borough status and its council complained that proposals to build a new Whau bridge had led to 'interminable delays which... have been justly subject to severe criticism on the part of the public'. A traffic tally at the bridge was undertaken that year to determine division of costs for a new bridge between the responsible local bodies, Avondale Road District having amalgamated with Auckland City since the last tally. It found that as many as 860 vehicles might cross the wooden bridge in an hour, in part because concreting of Great North Road between Avondale and Henderson in the mid-1920s had greatly increased the volume of vehicles. In 1932, the current three-span reinforced concrete bridge was completed that at last allowed more than one line of traffic across the Whau creek between Avondale and New Lynn.

Sources:

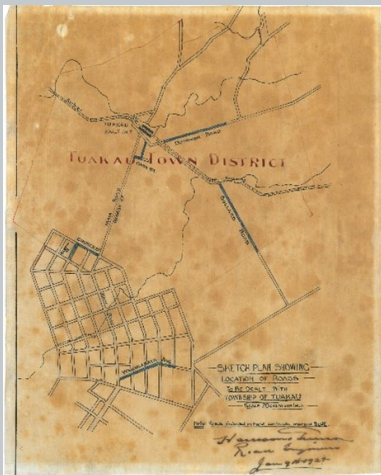
Auckland City Council Works Department classified subject file on the Whau Bridge, 1920-1956 (Auckland Council Archives, ACC 219/380b)

Auckland City Council Town Clerk's Department subject file on the Whau Bridge, 1927-1957 (Auckland Council Archives, ACC 275 box 130 record no 27-429)

Waitemata County Council classified subject files on the Whau Bridge, 1890-1929 (Auckland Council Archives, WMCO A05-3, I05-4969, I05-4970)

Lisa Truttman, 'The "inherently rotten" Whau Bridges (1855-1930)':  
<https://timespanner.blogspot.com/2008/10/inherently-rotten-whau-bridges-1855.html>

## A mysterious beauty



While going through a carton containing committee minutes, Keith Stuart, Senior Archivist at Auckland Council Archives' South office in Manukau came across a framed map of Tuakau on waxed linen dated 9 January 1924. He decided to take the map out of its frame and put it in a protective, inert clear Mylar sleeve.



Surprisingly, behind the map was a piece of carbon paper and beneath that was this stunning picture.

Can you help us to identify the woman in this picture?  
Contact us on [archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).

### Find out more

**Phone** 09 890 2427

**Email** [archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:archives@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

**Website** [www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/councilarchives](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/councilarchives)