

Tahapa Reserves Guide



Image prepared by Sue La Roche on Auckland Council 2017 GeoMap base

Getting to Tahapa Reserves

There are two Tahapa reserves, **Tahapa East**, significantly larger at 2.7 hectares, is a pleasant, mainly open area with generous lawns, now dominated by the new shared pathway. The best access is from No 43 Tahapa Crescent where there are usually ample parking places. Alternatively, there is a wide concrete footpath from Harapaki Road just opposite Temple Street with a joining pathway from Tahapa Crescent between Nos 23 and 25 linking to the shared pathway. Meadowbank railway station with regular train services at 20 minute intervals is only a short level walk from the reserves. You might, of course, arrive on the shared pathway.



*December 2021 view of shared pathway through Tahapa East Reserve
from Waka Kotahi Project Update Video 21-12-2021*

As Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei leader, Pāora Tūhaere was supportive of the Government and was one of those who welcomed the European settlers in 1841. Tūhaere led a group known as Te Kotahitanga (unity of purpose) which aimed to achieve greater Māori control over Māori affairs while maintaining friendship to the Government.³

Tūhaere wanted to provide for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei housing and development programmes from the sale and lease of Māori land. He leased his Pukapuka No 2 Block to local farmer Thomas Cheeseman in 1864, and then sold it to him in 1868 for £500. At that time the Government retained 10% of the land sale money to establish Māori schools and hospitals. This fund was not used until 1862 when part of it was taken, not for hospitals or schools, but to build a bridge across the Pourewa Creek between Ōrākei and Remuera. The Crown met with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei in 1874 to discuss the allocations from this fund which included retrospective charges for the Ōrākei Bridge and fund administration.⁴



Part Sheet 4 of 1892 map of Eden County showing native reserves in Ōrākei
 Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections -NZ Map 4658

Thomas Cheeseman, the local farmer and Methodist minister who purchased the land from Pāora Tūhaere, continued farming the block until 1875.⁵ His son, Thomas Frederick Cheeseman, a celebrated NZ Botanist, became Secretary and Curator of Auckland Museum in 1874.

At Auckland Museum, Cheeseman placed emphasis on the preservation of Māori artefacts.⁶ Cheeseman senior, sold the Pukapuka No 2 block to a Mr Sellers in June 1875 who then transferred it to Thomas Morrin in October 1876.⁵ Morrin named the block “Meadowbank” after his family’s farm in Montreal, Canada.²

Thomas Morrin

Thomas Morrin had arrived with his brothers William and Samuel from Montreal in the 1860s, taking over an Auckland ironmongery business to become T S Morrin & Co in 1865.



Thomas Morrin 1899

Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections
Ref. AWNS -18990609-1-7

Thomas purchased a number of properties in the Auckland and Waikato regions, including over 30,000 acres of land at Morrinsville, the town named after him. At Morrinsville he laid out the town, built a blacksmith's shop, a bulk store and donated land for a school.

However, the 1885-1895 depression years caused the Bank of New Zealand to take over the land from Morrin and his partner John Studholme. There were various transfers and changes as Morrin got into financial difficulties and bankruptcy because of his many land dealings.

This led the Bank of New Zealand to take over the Pukapuka No 2 property in 1883.²

Thomas Morrin wanted to be seen as a wealthy member of Auckland society by displaying his social status with his large home and stud farm breeding horses at Wellington Park on the north side of Mt Wellington close to Morrin Road. However, Morrin's debts were mounting and by 1903 he needed to float his Wellington Park Stud farm as a public company.

A warrant was issued for Morrin's arrest after investigations into his Wellington Park Stud farm found irregularities in the company accounts. He was last seen in Queen Street on 27 February 1905 before the steamship "Zealandier" sailed for Sydney that evening. Despite detectives searching the ship before sailing, he was not found. It was later confirmed that he had boarded the "Zealandier" outside Rangitoto on his way to Vancouver where he died in November 1915 at age 75.²



**1896 subdivision of
Pukapuka No 2 Block**

Market Gardens

After the Government established the Assets Realisation Board in 1895 to manage Bank of New Zealand properties, the Pukapuka No 2 Block was subdivided into smaller lots. These were then offered for sale by auction in 1906. Lots 55 to 61 were sold or leased to Chinese market gardeners who continued to grow crops until the 1940s when the Government decided to use the area for State Housing.

Two deep gullies (seen on this 1930 picture) crossed by the railway and are surrounded by the market gardens. The gullies are now partly filled to form the Tahapa West and East Reserves.



View over market gardens and Purewa Cemetery in 1930

Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections Record ID 1370-U082-35

The aerial photo below taken in 1940, clearly shows Meadowbank Road crossing Ōrākei Creek leading to the market gardens alongside Pourewa Estuary. Purewa cemetery is above the gardens.



Retrolens: Photo No 17, Run No 65, Survey No SN146, date taken 24 April 1940.

<https://retrolens.co.nz/Map/#/Tahapa%20Cres,%20Meadowbank,%20Auckland,%201072>

Tahapa Subdivision



Planning for the Tahapa subdivision had commenced in the 1930s. Contracts for 180 houses were let in 1946 to Residential Construction Co, a division of Fletchers and other builders for the houses in the subdivision. House erection was very fast as shown by the aerial photo taken on 17 December 1947. The NZ Herald reported on 8 December 1947 that 160 of the 180 houses were now occupied. Construction preceded the approval of survey plans which were not registered at the Land Transfer Office until 1 March 1954.

The two Tahapa “Recreation” reserves were set aside by Government’s Housing Division, but when Auckland City was approached, they noted the areas were steep gullies covered in hawthorn, willow and gorse.

The Council demanded and were paid £4,050 to clean up these areas.

The possibility of using the gullies for rubbish dumps was considered.

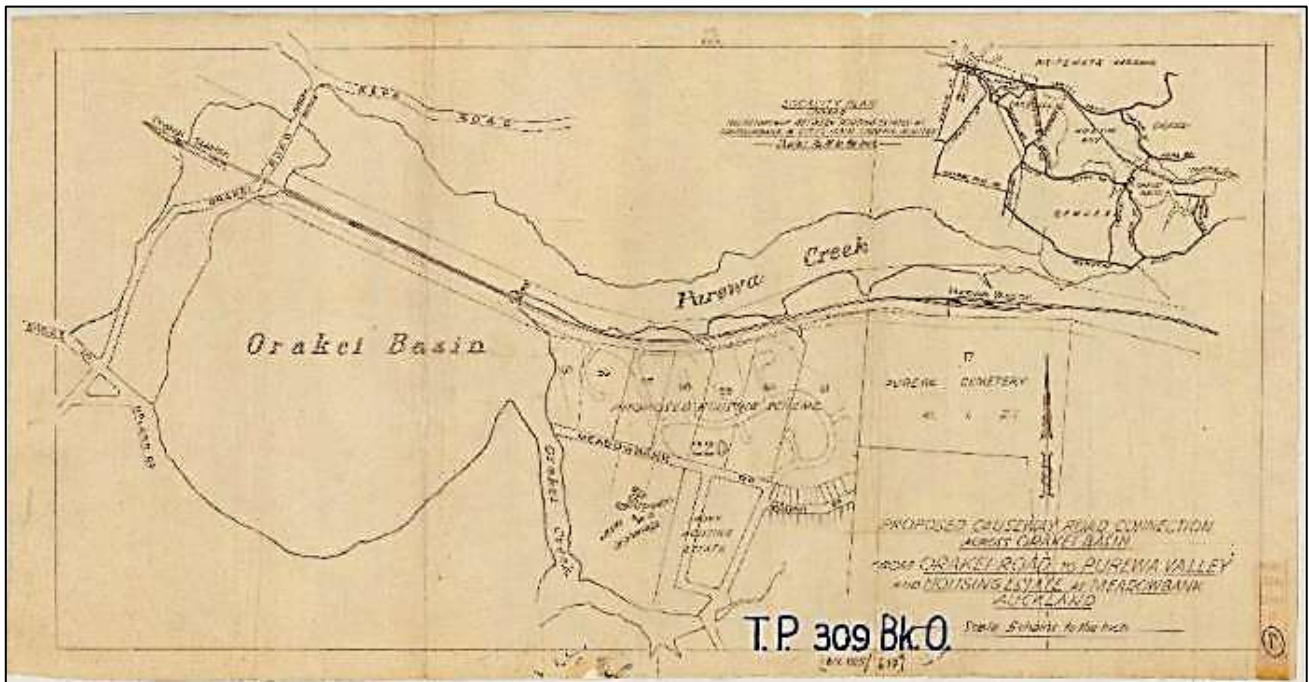


Whites Aviation Photo of Tahapa Subdivision – 12 December 1947
Turnbull Library Reference WA -1 1620-G

Roadway Proposal across Ōrākei Basin

Early on, the Meadowbank Progressive Association requested a roadway on the south side of the railway, crossing Ōrākei Basin to join Ōrākei Road. This would provide residents of Gowing Drive and Tahapa subdivision quick access to Tāmaki Drive and the City. Although the Council asked the Government to subsidise the roadway, the small sum offered by the Government was considered insufficient and the scheme was abandoned.

In addition, the land for the roadway necessitated taking some railway land. The Railways Department was reluctant to agree to this due to the future need for additional tracks. Although a roadway beside the railway and across Ōrākei Basin was never built, the new Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai shared pathway for pedestrians and cyclists could be considered as a better option by many.⁷

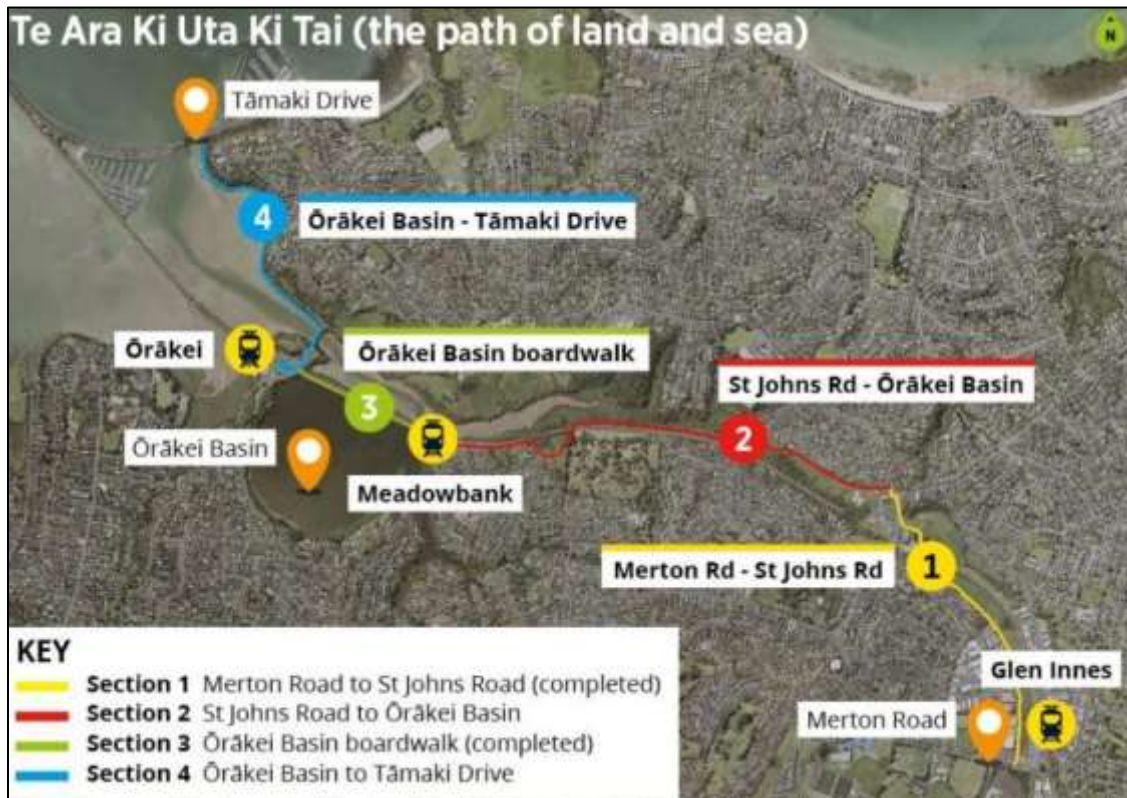


Proposed roadway to give residents quick access to Ōrākei and Tāmaki Drive
Auckland Council Archives

Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai Shared Pathway

This new shared pathway through Pourewa Valley is part of the overall scheme to benefit walkers and cyclists by connecting **Glen Innes with Tāmaki Drive**.

This will introduce many residents and visitors to a little known area that no doubt will develop into a show place as native plantings mature and planned connections to reserves such as Kepa Bush are built. Walkways alongside the north side of estuary already well used, will become better known. Bush walks alongside the Pourewa stream further eastwards are waiting to be developed.



*Te Ara Ki Uta Ki Tai - Waka Kotahi shared pathway from Glen Innes to Tāmaki Drive
Waka Kotahi Diagram*



*December 2021 view of shared pathway through to Ōrākei Basin
Waka Kotahi Project Update Video 21-12-2021*

References

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John La Roche, voluntary author, 2022