

# BLOCKHOUSE BAY HERITAGE WALKS



VILLAGE AND BEACH WALKS



# BLOCKHOUSE BAY HERITAGE WALKS

Two trails are included in this brochure, each taking approximately one hour to walk. They explore different themes in the historic development of the area.

## BLOCKHOUSE BAY HERITAGE WALKS



### Blockhouse Bay Village walk:

This walk features places in the village including Armanasco House, (an early farmhouse), the library, school, tearooms, early shops, and churches, as well as murals and sites which represent aspects of Blockhouse Bay's history.

### Blockhouse Bay Seaside walk:

This walk includes Te Whau Point, site of Te Whau pa. It also includes the sites of early seaside shops and kiosks, cottages and baches, the boat ramp, sea wall, changing sheds and yacht club.

A further coastal walk in Blockhouse Bay starts at Gill Crescent. Called 'Te Ara o Tiriwa' – The Pathway of Tiriwa, it follows a coastal trail from Gill Crescent in Avondale South Domain along the beach front and cliff lines of the coast to Green Bay and up Portage Road to Craigavon Park. Look for the signage panel located beside the school carpark in Gill Crescent.

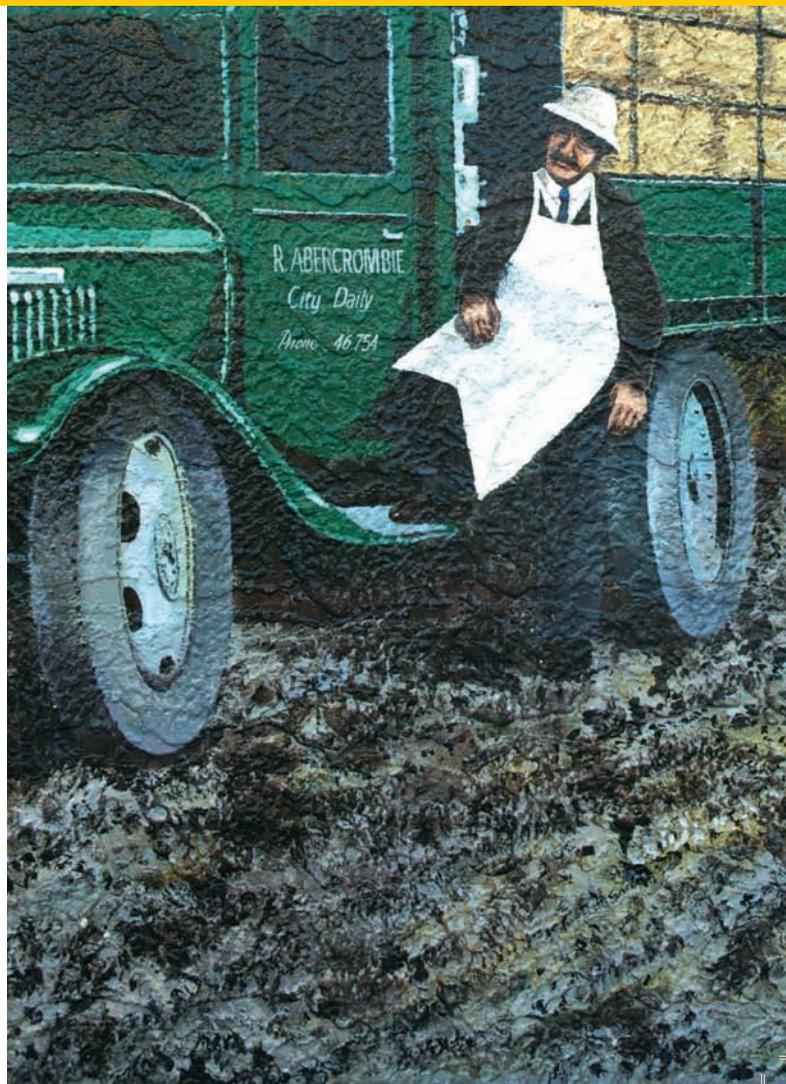
**Cover image:** View at low tide from Sandy Bay across to Te Whau Point.

**Photo:** Dan Davis

### Acknowledgements

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*Privacy: These walks are along public roads and contain historical information about places in the area, most of which are private property. Please respect the privacy of local businesses and owners.*



## BLOCKHOUSE BAY→



**Military barracks at the Whau in the 1860s with six soldiers in the foreground and others on the verandah.**

AUCKLAND INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM C16556.

Blockhouse Bay is one of the special districts of Auckland, tidy and compact, contained virtually in a square. The Southern boundary is on the coast of the Manukau Harbour, to the east is Mt Roskill, to the North there is Avondale, and to the West, New Lynn and Titirangi.

Before 1882 the area was known as Whau South, then as Avondale South, then in 1948 it became Blockhouse Bay.

The headland at the beach is still called Te Whau point, and in pre-European times was the site of a Maori Pa. There are several middens and terraces visible now, but with erosion over time, all other signs of occupation are destroyed, however Te Whau Point is still regarded as an important archaeological site.

The Reverend Samuel Marsden in 1820 was one of the first Europeans known to have explored the coastline on the Manukau, looking for a water way joining both harbours.

In 1838 two missionaries Colenso and Wade trekked through the Whau South area hoping to find a Maori settlement, but the site on Te Whau Point had been abandoned for many years. They remarked that the area was open and barren heaths, dreary, sterile and wild, with some pockets of native bush with a lot of scrub and bracken fern.

In the 1860's the land wars in Taranaki had begun to escalate and with fears that the Waikato tribes would invade Auckland, a series of military defences were planned. Colonel Thomas Mould, Royal Engineers, was given the task of planning the locations of the eleven defence posts, including the strategic position at Whau South, on a 12 acre site running down to the beach and overlooking the Manukau Harbour.

The Te Whau Blockhouse was completed on 1st July 1860, at a cost of £435, 13 shillings and 11 pence, and was issued with a stand of 200 arms, comprising infantry muskets, cavalry carbines, revolvers, swords and bayonets. It was manned by military regiments and later by local militia, but no shot was ever fired in battle. The prime duty of the soldiers was to keep a constant watch towards the Manukau Harbour heads for sign of any warring waka approaching from the west so that an early warning could be given. After fire severely damaged the wooden blockhouse it was demolished in October 1886.

Today access to the Bay with good roading is no distance at all from the City, but in 1860 supplies had to come by boat from Onehunga and were landed on the beach at high water for the soldiers to carry up the hill to the Blockhouse.

For many years, circa 1878, there were discussions and plans for building a canal which would follow the line of the old Maori Portage, (now known as Portage Road), joining the Manukau and Waitemata Harbours. This plan was never followed up; it was vetoed by the business people at Onehunga who felt they would lose trade as boats would go straight through the canal to Auckland.

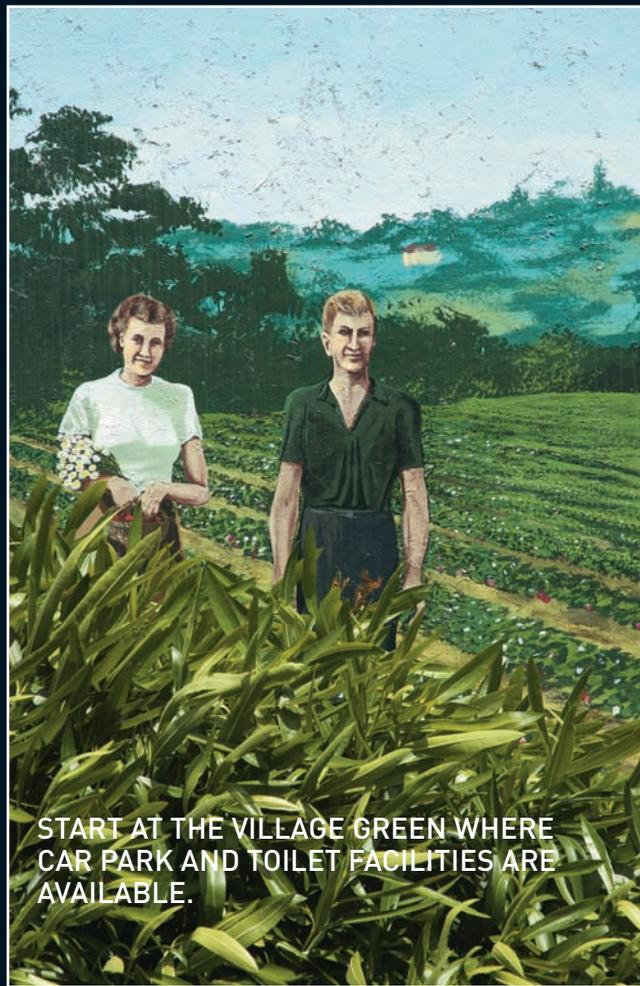
Gum diggers were the next to pass through this area, leaving very little signs of their occupation, just shallow pits where they had been digging and small piles of kauri gum flakes from where they sat at night, cleaning and scraping the gum to get a more marketable product.

The district was slowly settled, the first industry was the Francis Gittos Tannery in 1884, and in 1906 the first strawberry crop was harvested, and the Bay became a major supplier for the Auckland market. Small farms, orchards, flower growing, all provided income for the early settlers and the beaches at both Sandy Bay and Blockhouse Bay were a major attraction for city folk who camped all summer, enjoying wonderful swimming, fishing, and abundant shell fish, with many city families building holiday homes at the Bay. In those early years, the beach was the focal point for community activities, with carnivals and picnics and was the only available ground for the local sports clubs to play on.

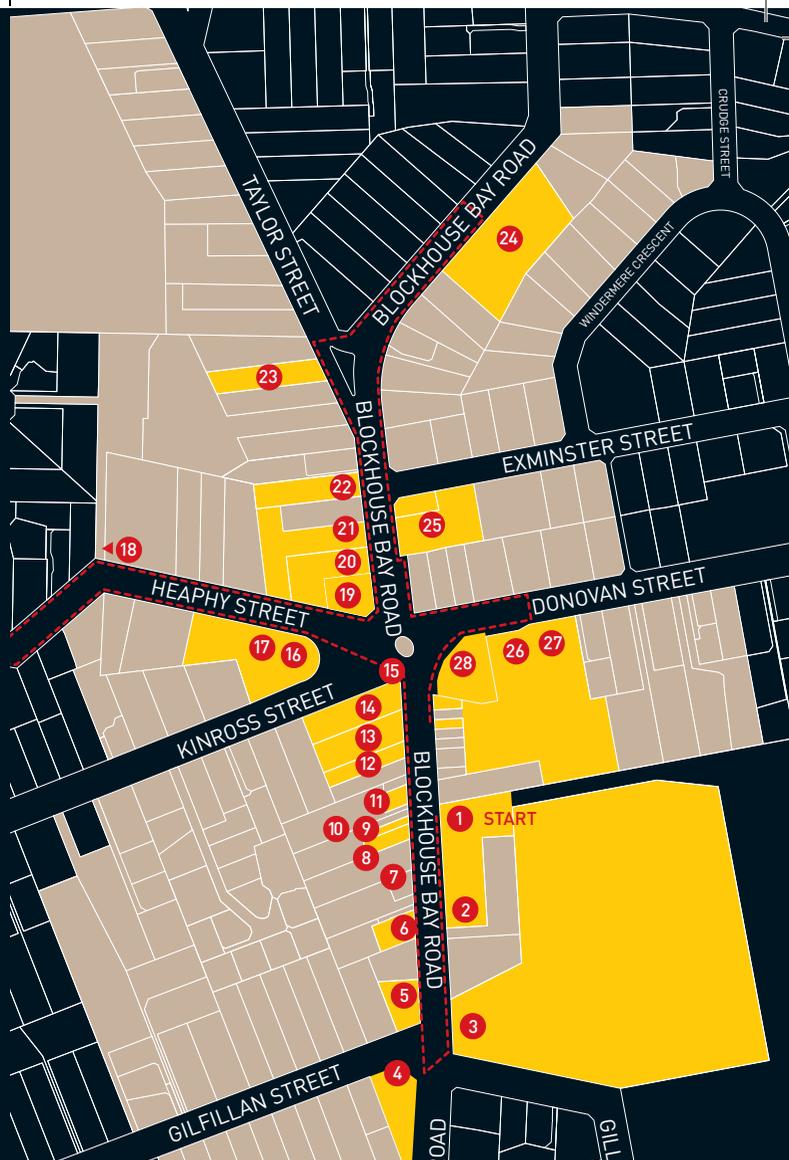
In the 1950s, after World War II, the big blocks of land began to be subdivided, and Blockhouse Bay went from being a sleepy country area to the thriving suburb it is today.



# BLOCKHOUSE BAY VILLAGE WALK



START AT THE VILLAGE GREEN WHERE CAR PARK AND TOILET FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE.



## BLOCKHOUSE BAY VILLAGE WALK

1. Armanasco House/Village Green
2. Library
3. Primary school
4. Site of information panel
5. Bissetts tea rooms
6. Heritage mural
7. Domain dairy
8. Heritage mural
9. Butcher's shop
10. Heritage mural
11. Heritage mural
12. Site of first post office
13. Site of first shop in village
14. Site of McMurray's store
15. Heritage murals
16. Site of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd
17. "Spirit of Blockhouse Bay"
18. Hilltop School administration building
19. Pohutukawa Garage
20. Medical centre
21. Armanasco house site
22. Site of Catholic Church & Presbytery
23. Gasometer site
24. Green Bay Mission Hall (baptist church)
25. Community Hall
26. Site of the Kosy Theatre
27. Site of Francis Gittos house
28. Heritage murals

## BLOCKHOUSE BAY VILLAGE WALK→

1.



### 1. ARMANASCO HOUSE 572-578 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

One of the earliest houses in Blockhouse Bay, this kauri farmhouse was originally built in 1890 at 497 Blockhouse Bay Road by Italian immigrant Stephano Armanasco. It was relocated one hundred years later in 1990 onto the Village Green where after 18 months of hard work by local volunteers, with injections of money from Portage Licensing Trust and Avondale Community Board, it re-opened on 21 March 1992 as a community facility. In 2008 the house became the base for the Blockhouse Bay Historical Society Inc.

*Cross the carpark and walk south along Blockhouse Bay Road past the library.*

2.



### 2. LIBRARY 578 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

Previously the Blockhouse Bay area was serviced by a mobile library. After repeated requests, including a 'sit in' protest at a Council meeting, the locals were successful and their library was opened on 25 February, 1995.

3.



The original Blockhouse Bay school building built in 1909 still remains within the school grounds.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

### 3. PRIMARY SCHOOL 584 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

View early primary school buildings from the footpath on Blockhouse Bay Road near the corner of Gill Crescent. **(Please do not enter the school grounds without an appointment).**

Close to the entrance from Blockhouse Bay Road is the **original two roomed school building**, built in 1909 for 15 children, as a 'side school' under the supervision of staff from Avondale Primary School. In 1920 the school was officially opened with its own staff and named Avondale South School, with a third room added in 1922, then named Blockhouse Bay Primary School. In August 1957 the three original rooms were re-sited to allow for additional classrooms built alongside, and the original rooms, though altered, are still in use.

Adjacent is the 1925 **dental clinic** (called the 'murder house' by children) which was opened with Nurse Benn in charge. This was one of the first purpose built clinics in the Auckland Province. Some time before 1938 the little clinic was moved further up from the side of the old road (Powditch Road) which was then realigned and renamed Gill Crescent. The dental clinic ceased to operate in October 2008.

The **Performing Arts Centre** features a lobby with heritage school photographs and a wall commemorating all pupils who served in World War II. It was opened on 30 March 2007 by Prime Minister Helen Clark. The exterior of the building can be viewed from the carpark adjacent to Armanasco House.

*Cross road to read Blockhouse interpretation panel on corner.*



## BLOCKHOUSE BAY VILLAGE WALK→

8.



### 8. HERITAGE MURAL 537 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

Painted by artist Louis Statham, July 2005, showing Mervyn Abel husking corn on the family farm in Heaphy Street circa 1913.

9.



### 9. BUTCHER'S SHOP 533 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

This butcher's shop dates from circa 1930, purpose built by George Forman. It had sawdust on the floor, a huge round wooden butcher's block to chop the meat on, and a steel rail with hooks for hanging up the cuts of meat. There was a cool room at the back. The white tiles are still on the front, with the word "butcher" outlined in black tiles. This shop was a great asset for the housewives giving them the opportunity to choose from a wider selection of fresh meat, instead of buying the limited selection offered by an itinerant trader travelling the district with his horse and cart.

10.



### 10. HERITAGE MURAL 533 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD, AT SIDE

Painted 2003 by Louis Statham, this mural depicts the strawberry gardens which covered an extensive area of the Bay which was the major supplier for this crop from 1912 to 1960. The mural shows grower Mr Bill Woods, senior, and his daughter-in-law Jean, circa 1946, in their Exminster Street gardens, with a typical kauri pioneer cottage in the background.

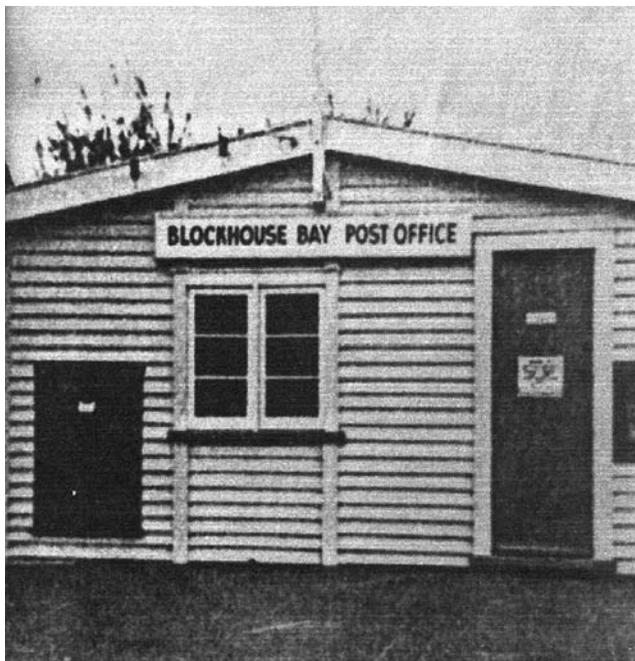
### 11. HERITAGE MURAL 527 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

Painted 2003 by Louis Statham, this mural shows general-carrier Roy Abercrombie with his truck, in an unformed Taunton Terrace, on 25th July 1938.

11.



12.



The first purpose built Post Office in Blockhouse Bay built in 1947.  
BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

## 12. SITE OF FIRST POST OFFICE 519 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

The postal district for the area became Blockhouse Bay (it was previously Avondale South) in 1944. In 1947 the Post Office Agency was transferred from the local grocery store and opened as an official Post Office with all services, in a war time ex army wooden hut, the Postmistress was Mrs. Jeffries.

This temporary building was replaced by a purpose built brick building which was officially opened 24th August 1962 by Mr Kinsella, Post Master General, with a plaque unveiled at the opening, which has since been lost. The Postmaster was Maurice Challoner. The Post Office closed in 1989, being replaced with a Post Shop.

13.



The first small shop in Blockhouse Bay built in 1917. The 1922 photograph shows the second owners, Mr & Mrs Wood, outside their isolated country store.  
BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

## 13. SITE OF FIRST SHOP IN VILLAGE 513-515 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

The first shop in Blockhouse Bay was located where the National Bank is now. The original land title is dated 1885 for all the land in this part of the village. It was sold by Mr Eastwood to Stefano Armanasco in 1907, and then in 1917 to Mr Fowler who built the tiny grocery and general store here, with living accommodation behind.

The business changed hands several times until in 1927 the McMurray family took over and opened the first post office agency here. In 1930 the shop was enlarged to cater for a huge range of merchandise, and a concrete magazine for storing petrol installed on the street frontage beside the only strip of bitumen in the Bay. They sold petrol in four gallon tins. In 1936 the only public telephone was situated outside their store. The McMurrays moved their business in 1937 and the barber shop opened here. In the 1960s the first chemist shared the building, taking over the whole building in 1970 and closing in November 2006. The old building was demolished and New Zealand's first sustainably designed branch of the National Bank opened here in 2008.

## BLOCKHOUSE BAY VILLAGE WALK →

14.



McMurray's Store, built in 1937.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION, PROVIDED BY THE WINCHCOMBE FAMILY.

### 14. FORMER MCMURRAY'S STORE BUILDING 507-509 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

In 1937 the McMurray family built this large modern shop, with living accommodation upstairs and an extensive storage basement. A hand petrol pump was installed at the side, and the Post Office Agency was located in a corner of the store. It was leased in 1943 to the Winchcombes, who in October 1949 converted it into a self-service grocery, only the third in Auckland at that time. It closed as a grocery when Foodtown Supermarket was built in 1973.

*Walk around the corner and turn left onto Kinross St. The murals are on the base of the walkway beside the corner building.*

### 15. HERITAGE MURALS CORNER OF KINROSS STREET

This set of murals, painted in 2006 by Louis Statham, shows a series of seven scenes depicting pioneer life in the Bay include:

- Pioneer Armanasco family in 1904 looking at view over Manukau Harbour
- Woods' country store in the Bay 1922.

Beach scenes include:

- The bridge at the bottom of Endeavour Street
- Two local girls, the Mitchell sisters, rowing their dinghy
- Shellfish gatherers
- Communal smokehouse
- Locals with their boats at full tide.

*Cross on pedestrian crossing to Spirit of Blockhouse Bay*

15.



16.



Church of the Good Shepherd, 1898.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

### 16. SITE OF THE CHAPEL OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD 2-4 HEAPHY STREET

The 'Spirit of Blockhouse Bay' is located on the site of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

In 1867 Bishop Selwyn provided the site for an Anglican church in Blockhouse Bay, but it was not until 1896 that construction started, with a budget of £101 for materials. Built by locals Messrs Penman and Herbert, the whole community assisted with the work. The little church was designed to accommodate 50 people. Consecrated on 31 August 1898 as the "Chapel of the Good Shepherd" by the Anglican Primate, Archbishop Cowie, it was renamed in 1900 "St. Saviours" and this tiny building was in use as the Anglican Church until 1961.

As early as 1955 the Auckland City Council was aware that the little church had been built not on church owned land but on a site designated as a public road. In 1974, as an alternative to demolition, it was transported to MOTAT Museum.

17.



### 17. "SPIRIT OF BLOCKHOUSE BAY" 2-4 HEAPHY STREET

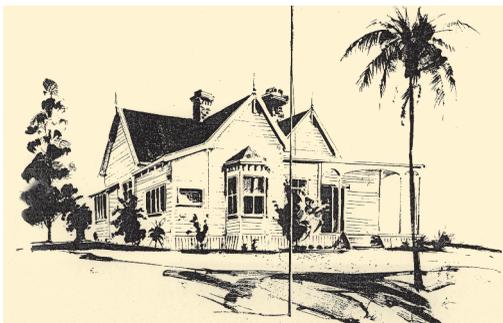
In August 2002 on the vacant piece of land where the first Anglican church had stood, the "Spirit of Blockhouse Bay" was opened as a visual gateway to the village and as a tribute to the area's maritime history associated with the Manukau Harbour. A Time Capsule was buried on the site. At this time, the maritime theme was continued in the Village Mainstreet, with the installation of sails, curved seats and street paving.

*Cross Heaphy Street - (you can do extra walk down to 37 Heaphy Street, or continue north along Blockhouse Bay Road).*

### 18. HILL TOP SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING 37 HEAPHY STREET

In 1886 the Rev. Alexander McKenzie bought the 21 acre site called "Pinelands" which bordered the 6 acres owned by the Armanasco Family, this formed the area known as Windy Ridge. The house was built 1906 by local builder Percy Adams. In 1912 Robert Abel, who was a well known businessman in the City and also very active in the community life in the Bay, farmed this land. When Robert Abel died age 98 years in 1959, the Governors of Hill Top School for Girls purchased 1-1/2 acres with the original homestead used as a girl's school. In 1980 the back part was demolished and the school moved to the street frontage and sympathetically incorporated into the present administration building. The school closed in December 2008.

18.



Sketch of the home built in 1906, which has been used since 1959 as part of the Hill Top School for girls.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

19.



Pohutukawa Garage c1950s.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION, PROVIDED BY THE HINTON FAMILY.

### 19. POHUTUKAWA GARAGE 505 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

Now the location of the Caltex Service Station, this was the first service station/garage in the Bay, on land purchased from the Armanasco Farm in 1947, run by the Hinton brothers, Clarrie, Fred and Les. The business was started with a tent and a couple of petrol pumps. The first taxi service was operated from here by Clarrie. A big shed was relocated on to the site, replaced in 1952 with a single storey building, and in the 1960s further buildings were added.

The pohutukawa tree, after which the garage was named, had been planted by Mrs. Maria Armanasco in 1893, and grew in raised plot on the apex at the corner of Heaphy Street. The tree was felled illegally in 1963.

*Continue north on Blockhouse Bay Road.*

20.



### 20. MEDICAL CENTRE 503 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

Originally part of the Armanasco orchards, the section at 503 Blockhouse Bay Road was first sold in 1953 to Clarrie and Norma Hinton who relocated the original shed that was the first Pohutukawa Garage (next door) and then built their home where the car park is now. This was demolished in 1973 to build the Medical Centre, which was the first of its type in the Bay and was originated by the local G.P., Dr. Max Pearl, who moved into here from rooms at 3a Heaphy Street.

21.



The house built in 1890 for Stephano Armanasco on its original farm site.  
BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

## 21. ARMANASCO HOUSE SITE 497 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

The original land grant of 6 acres was taken up in 1886 by Italian immigrant, Stefano Armanasco. The kauri farmhouse was built in 1890, one of the first houses in the Bay. It was used as a school for a time in 1904. The land was extensively farmed, with orchards and glasshouses; in 1940s the first road frontage sections of land were subdivided off. In 1987 when the last family member died, the remaining property was subdivided and the family home was given by Brent and Maisie Lincoln to the local community who relocated and restored it on the Village Green. The site now contains residential houses.

*Walk down to apex of Taylor Street and Blockhouse Bay Road, site of gasometer.*

22.



1856, Onehunga Schoolroom converted to use as the Catholic Church in Blockhouse Bay, 1957-1978.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

## 22. SITE OF CATHOLIC CHURCH & PRESBYTERY 493 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

This is the site of the first Catholic Church of St. Dominic's that was on farmland owned by pioneer Armanasco family. In October 1956 the Catholic community purchased a 100 year old kauri building in Kitenui Avenue, Mt Albert (which had originally been built in Onehunga in 1856 as a classroom) transporting it to this site where the first Mass was said at midnight, Christmas Eve, 1957.

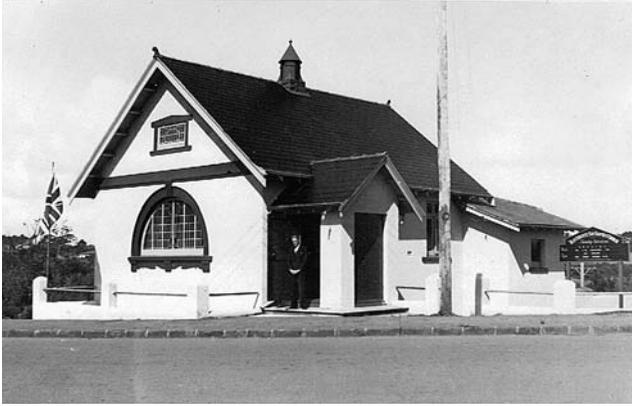
By 1978 the church was too small for the community it served and when the new parish church of St. Dominic's was built in Bolton Street, the old building was moved for the third time, going to North Auckland and converted into a house. The Presbytery was originally a house built in 1926 for the Kealey family, sold in 1960 to the Order of the Dominicans. In 1976 it became accommodation for any visiting clergy, and then later rented out.

## 23. GASOMETER SITE 211 TAYLOR STREET

On this site was a large, iron framed gasometer, self elevating with pressure from coal gas stored in the steel storage tank sitting on a large concrete pad. The gasometer went up and down according to the pressure. The gas, which was made and pumped through pipes from the Auckland Gas Company's Beaumont Street gasworks in Freeman's Bay, then went through pipes from the gasometer into local houses. The gasometer was located here from approximately 1920 until around 1980 when it was demolished.

*Cross road and walk on east side of Blockhouse Bay Road to Mission Hall.*

24.



Green Bay Mission Hall, built 1917-1918.  
BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

## 24. GREEN BAY MISSION HALL (BAPTIST CHURCH) 504-506 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

The foundation stone for the Green Bay Mission hall was laid in 1917 and it officially opened at the end of 1918. Built with funding provided by local trades people, the Hall operated as a church for all religious denominations and catered for local organisations such as Girls and Boys Life Brigades and the Sunday school. In 1928 it was used as an extension of the school, the children in Standards 3 & 4 had their lessons in the basement rooms. The interdenominational Church was sold to the Baptist Church in 1964, and the Mission Hall is still in use as the lounge for the adjoining Baptist Church.

The Mission Hall now has a Heritage B listing in the Auckland City District Plan.

*Turn back and walk south on Blockhouse Bay Road to Community Centre.*

25.



The Community Hall built in 1930, was replaced in 1977 by present Community Centre.  
BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

## 25. COMMUNITY HALL/ COMMUNITY CENTRE 522-524 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

The original building on this site was the Presbyterian St Andrews Hall, completed 3rd December 1903 as a Hall for Church services, and a venue for local events, the rent for an evening was six pence per night. It was used as the school from 1904 to 1909. It had various uses over the years, and in 1921 local builder Clarrie Jones opened it as a joinery factory by day and a boxing school at night. St Andrews Hall was destroyed by fire in 1928.

In 1930 the hall was rebuilt, and known as "The Tin Shed" because of its construction using corrugated iron. It was used for all community functions, concerts, prize-givings, dances, wedding receptions, and was also used as an Anglican Sunday School hall for many years. In 1938 it was offered for sale and the Blockhouse Bay Improvement Association purchased it so that local groups could continue to use it at a very low rental, with residents fund raising to maintain it.

The Tin Shed was demolished in 1977 to make way for the present Community Centre, the ownership of this was taken over by the Auckland City Council in 2007.

In the area behind this hall were extensive strawberry gardens, extending up Donovan Street to White Swan Road. The first trial in 1902 had proved successful, and by 1930 strawberries were grown all around the Bay, which became a major strawberry growing centre for Auckland. This industry continued until the 1960s when the farm lands were subdivided for housing.

*Turn into Donovan St., cross with pedestrian lights near the corner of Donovan Street to Foodtown car park.*

## BLOCKHOUSE BAY VILLAGE WALK→

26.



The Kosy Theatre, c.1953 with shops in front.  
BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

### 26. SITE OF THE KOSY THEATRE 19-29 DONOVAN STREET

The local theatre was on this site, built circa 1923 by Ole Guttormsen to show silent movies and fondly called "the Bug House" by locals. In 1934 "talkies" were introduced. In 1944 it was renamed "The Beverley" and in 1953 renamed the "Kosy Theatre" with shops built on the road frontage. The last movie was shown on 18th May 1968. All buildings on site were demolished January 1973 for a new Foodtown Supermarket and carpark.

### 27. SITE OF FRANCIS GITTOS HOUSE 19-29 DONOVAN STREET



27.

Also on the site of the Foodtown carpark was a large villa built c1900 for Francis Gittos who established in 1884 the first industry in the Bay, a tannery on reserve land at the bottom of Lewis Street. The house was sold in 1920 to Tommy Goulton who ran the first bus service in a horse drawn wagon to the Mt. Albert tram terminus. (1 penny fare for children). The house was burned down and later the remaining stables and out buildings were demolished January 1973 for the carpark for Foodtown.

Francis Gittos house destroyed by fire in c.1939.  
BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

*Turn and walk back to corner and proceed south on Blockhouse Bay Road finishing at Armanasco House.*

28.



### 28. HERITAGE MURALS

On both sides of the service lane at the bend in Donovan St:

**1 Donovan Street** – painted 2003 by Louis Statham this mural depicts the pioneers Mr & Mrs Robert Crudge and Mr Joseph Morey walking along the clay track of Donovan Street, 1903. The second part of the mural depicts the 1953 street frontage of the Kosy Theatre in Donovan Street.

**View of Blockhouse Bay Beach** – painted by Louis Statham and commissioned in 2000 by Mr Errol Hooker, the proprietor of Hooky's Second-hand Books on site at that time, this was the first mural in the village, and shows a panoramic view of Blockhouse Bay beach.

**556 Blockhouse Bay Road** – painted by Louis Statham in August 2005 this mural shows the varieties of fish found in the Manukau Harbour.

28.



*Finish. Return to Armanasco House and carpark.*

# BLOCKHOUSE BAY SEASIDE WALK

THIS WALK COMMENCES AT THE CAR PARK AT THE BOTTOM OF ENDEAVOUR STREET. IT PROCEEDS AROUND THE BEACH TO TE WHAU POINT AND BACK TO CAR PARK AND UP PATH TO THE RIGHT TO BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD. WALK UP TO 607 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD. RETURN TO BEACH VIA WADE STREET AND ENDEAVOUR STREET.

Looking from the beach to the bridge at the foot of Endeavour St., with a child leaning on the railings c1910. Bantons shop was located just on the left side of the bridge close to where the current small pump station building is.

AUCKLAND CITY LIBRARIES 7-A9 801



## BLOCKHOUSE BAY VILLAGE WALK

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Site of the first shop in the Bay - Bantons | 8. Beach Seawall            |
| 2. Site of St. John's Hut                      | 9. Beach Kiosk site         |
| 3. Memorial Plaques                            | 10. 615 Blockhouse Bay Road |
| 4. Changing Shed and Toilet Block              | 11. 622 Blockhouse Bay Road |
| 5. Te Whau Point                               | 12. 620 Blockhouse Bay Road |
| 6. Yacht Club House                            | 13. Joan Stumbles Avenue    |
| 7. Boat Ramp behind boat shed                  | 14. 607 Blockhouse Bay Road |



## BLOCKHOUSE BAY SEASIDE WALK→

### 1. SITE OF THE FIRST SHOP IN THE BAY- BANTONS

Close to the carpark at the south end of Endeavour Street, the first shop in the bay was built by Charles Banton in 1912 to service campers on the beach. Built across the creek, beside the bridge, on the undeveloped reserve, it was at the mercy of the tides. (See historic photo on previous page). Due to the poor construction, the building was quickly undermined and collapsed. With the development of the reserve in 1932, the creek was piped.

*Start walk around beach*

2.



Members of the St John's Ambulance Brigade standing to attention in front of the St John's hut at Blockhouse Bay in 1953, during the opening ceremony.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION, PROVIDED BY THE KEALEY & LAY FAMILIES.

### 2. SITE OF ST. JOHN'S HUT

Approximately where the children's playground is now located was the St. John's Ambulance Hut. In December 1939, in a project financed by the Blockhouse Bay Improvement Club, Inc., a hut was moved to the beach to serve as a First Aid centre, manned by the local members of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. This was replaced at a cost of £850 with a brick hut with roughcast veneer, 20 feet x 10 feet built by members of the Division in their spare time with materials donated by various firms and individuals. Within an hour of the opening ceremony by the Mayor of Auckland, Mr. Luxford, in December 1953, three bathers received treatment for minor injuries in the room.

It was unused when in late 1990s it was demolished after extensive damage by vandals, and the children's playground erected on the same site by Auckland City Council.

3.



### 3. MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Behind the children's playground on a stump of a pine tree, a plaque commemorates the first European settler on the beach, Mr Charles Paice, who planted the pine trees in 1889. These pines have now reached the end of their life and are being progressively felled when necessary by the City Council. On the grassed hill behind the pine tree stump under the cabbage tree, another plaque commemorates Mrs Rachel Candy, nee Daveron, who planted native trees in 1920.

4.



### 4. CHANGING SHED AND TOILET BLOCK

Built in the mid 1930s just after the beach wall was completed, this is an excellent example of the architecture used for public facilities of this era. It contains changing rooms with cold water shower, toilets and shelter shed. This is the second mural painted in the shelter shed. The area behind this building was popular over the summer months with campers in the years 1900 to 1939.

## BLOCKHOUSE BAY SEASIDE WALK→

5.



### 5. TE WHAU POINT

Archaeological investigations have confirmed the site of a Pa on Te Whau Point. Five midden sites have been located between Blockhouse Bay and Green (Karakā) Bay which are thought to be associated with the Pa. The area was rich in sea food, particularly kina and gurnard, the Whau was also a favourite place to catch kuaka (godwit). Paramount Chief Kiwi of the Wai-o-hua Tribe lived at Maungakiekie with many Pa around this area but in summer would come to the Manukau to gather food. It is probable that about 200 people lived in the Pa itself during the food gathering season.

Excavations on the beach when the sea wall was being constructed in 1932, uncovered traces of habitation including bones, dating to the time of the Pa. Unfortunately, overgrowth by vegetation and serious erosion have now removed all traces of habitation on the Point.

During the occupation by the Military of the Whau Blockhouse, 1860-1865, the Point was used as a sentry post to watch for hostile war parties entering the Manukau Harbour, because of this it was known locally as "The Maori Lookout". Here in 1863 a sentry who was on duty with his bayonet fixed to his musket which acted as a conductor, suffered the first recorded lightning strike. The musket was destroyed and the sentry was unconscious for several hours.

The pines planted in 1890 on the Point were felled because of age and disease in c2000. In October 2003 massive land slips occurred, changing forever this historic site.

6.



The first Blockhouse Bay Yacht & Motorboat Club.  
BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION.

### 6. YACHT CLUB HOUSE

The present building is the third one to be built on this site. The original clubhouse was built in 1953 by members of the Blockhouse Bay Yacht & Motorboat Club. With large numbers of yachts competing in the regattas, this building

was inadequate and a second club house was built, again with club members' labour, on the present site over the water in 1967. The first club house, still on its original site but with the starting tower removed, was lengthened to provide housing for the club's rescue launch. The competition from organised school and sportsclubs, with Saturday work becoming the norm, saw the membership drop to critical levels. The Yacht Club disbanded in 1993. In 2002, the second club house was extensively altered and enlarged to be used as a community facility.

7.



### 7. BOAT RAMP BEHIND BOAT SHED

It became necessary to build the steel rail ramp so that the Blockhouse Bay Yacht & Motorboat Club's Rescue Launch could be launched into the channel at any state of the tide. The ramp had a wooden duckboard, now removed, to allow the crews to get aboard. The Rescue Launch, which was kept in the boatshed which was the original club house, was available on call for 24 hours 7 days a week, with local skippers who were conversant with the Harbour, and was part of the Airport Emergency Organisation Programme. Launching from this ramp was discontinued in around 1980.

*Return along beach*

## BLOCKHOUSE BAY SEASIDE WALK→

8.



### 8. BEACH SEAWALL

Constructed in 1932 with local labour on the Government Relief Labour Scheme, the wall is approximately 335 metres long, from the Endeavour Street end to the outlet pipe near Te Whau Point, where the wall terminated in a concrete ramp. There are 3 sets of rock steps down to the beach, and another ramp at the Endeavour Street end of the wall. The masonry rock work is of a high standard of construction and finish, with a sealed path on the top. With the wall completed, the surrounding area was back filled with over 6000 cubic metres from the re-contouring of unsafe cliffs, and filling from the development of Endeavour Street and Blockhouse Bay Road by the Auckland City Council, to create the reserve evident today. In 1960 a 35 metre extension to the wall and reclamation was added, built by members of the Yacht Club volunteering their labour, to provide all tide access to both their club house, and the steel rail launching ramp for the rescue boat.

This wall is scheduled in the Auckland City District Plan in category B.

*Walk up path on the east side at the foot of Endeavour Street, which leads up to Blockhouse Bay Road.*

9.



The Beach Kiosk in 1939 with the proprietors, local residents Mrs Wright and Mrs Gooch, outside.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION, PROVIDED BY MRS JOYCE COLE.

### 9. SITE OF FORMER BEACH KIOSK

At the apex of Endeavour St. and Blockhouse Bay Road, close to the beach was the site of the Beach Kiosk. Built in 1926 by Abe Miller, hot water and ice creams were sold to picnickers and campers. This Kiosk, which faced the beach, replaced Gordon's tiny store in their home at number 615 Blockhouse Bay Road. Photo shows local residents Mrs Wright and Mrs Gooch, the proprietors in 1939, outside the kiosk. It served the beach visitors for many years, until it was demolished in the 1970s.

*Walk up the road.*

### 10. 615 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

The original part of this house, constructed with double brick walls, is the oldest existing in the Bay and it is possible it was erected as a Government Store building circa 1860-65, as it shows in a photograph of the Te Whau Blockhouse. This land was transferred in a Crown Grant in 1868, and the house was then used by several owners as a holiday cottage, being enlarged over the years. In 1919 John Gordon added the little room at the left, as a little shop selling supplies to picnickers, which is shown in the 1920 photograph. In 1926 it became a permanent home for the Gordon family, with the property being subdivided in 1956.

10.



Early brick house thought to have been built as a Government Store as part of the Te Whau Blockhouse complex.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION, PROVIDED BY DR. GORDON MILLER

*Continue to walk up Blockhouse Bay Road.*

## BLOCKHOUSE BAY→

### 11. 622 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

This is one of the few remaining examples of a holiday “bach” on this part of the Auckland isthmus. Built in 1925 by Sidney Tucker this has survived from the days when the Bay was a very popular holiday destination for City dwellers. It is an excellent example of the type of wooden cottages erected in this area, mainly used as holiday homes up to the late 1930s, and although this cottage has been used as a permanent home from that date, the exterior appears to be substantially in original condition.

11.



### 12. 620 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

The original land Deed is dated December 1885 for all the large parcel of land down to the beach frontage of Sandy Bay. The first owner was Robert Dakin who built the cottage circa 1886, it was used as a holiday home until 1902 when the Kings made it their permanent home. They also had two baches they rented out and ran a very popular camping ground until 1939 when camping was prohibited by the Council.

This is an excellent example of colonial cottage architecture. The square, four paned windows, hinged at the top are typical of the early 1900s. Entry to the cottage was from an open verandah at the front, closed in at both ends. The front door opened into the living room and beyond this was another open verandah which gave an excellent view of Sandy Bay. Today the original part of the cottage is clearly visible

12.



from the road frontage, the open front verandah entrance has now been enclosed with glass doors and this frontage is certainly among the earliest of the few remaining original dwellings in the Bay. It has had extensive additions built on the rear of the cottage.

### 13. JOAN STUMBLES AVENUE/ACCESS TO TE ARA O TIRIWA

The late Mrs Joan Stumbles, who for 35 years lived in No. 620 Blockhouse Bay Road, was a local teacher and tireless worker for the betterment of her neighbourhood, and who led the community protests (unsuccessfully) against the visual pollution of the Bay with the installation of the pylons. The lane, leading down to Sandy Bay beach reserve, was named Joan Stumbles Avenue in her honour. From here you can link to Te Ara O Tiriwa - The Path Way of Tiriwa, coastal walk.

14.



Thom's Shop and Tearooms at 607 Blockhouse Bay Road.

BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION, PROVIDED BY MRS AUDREY THOMAS.

### 14. 607 BLOCKHOUSE BAY ROAD

In 1924 a grocery and general store and tearooms was built on this site by the Thom family, in what was then Wynyard Road, replacing a four roomed bach that had been there for three years. The site was carefully chosen – opposite the path to and from Sandy Bay and far enough from Blockhouse Bay for visitors to be thirsty. To the left of the front door was a shutter which pushed up to indicate that the shop was open. The ice creams, soft drinks and confectionery were sold from this part of the shop. Inside, on the left was a counter, behind which were all the grocery items and odds and ends necessary for camping. The tearoom was to the right of the front door with big windows that slid open to allow the smell of fresh baking to attract customers. These windows were considered very modern then. All the baking was done on the premises and proved very popular with campers and visitors. The family lived at the back of the building and were often begged to open the shop out of hours to provide some forgotten necessity. Today the outside from the road is virtually unchanged apart from the shop shutter. The original front door is still in use, but the interior has been extensively altered. With the outbreak of war in 1940 trade fell off sharply with no campers and fewer people going to the beach for the day. When the family's youngest son was declared missing, presumed killed, during the German invasion of Crete, the owners decided to close their business.

*Return to carpark at the foot of Endeavour St., use the footpath on the west side of Blockhouse Bay Road which links to Wade Street. Walk along Wade St. and left into Endeavour St.*

[www.blockhousebay.com](http://www.blockhousebay.com)

Sketch from Blockhouse Bay Beach, showing on the skyline the Te Whau Blockhouse surrounded by its stockade, giving it an unobstructed view of the harbour. This sketch was drawn in 1871 by John Philemon Backhouse.

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OLD BLOCK-HOUSE AT THE WHAU. HANGUNAU HARBOR, AUCKLAND, N.Z...

