

EPSOM CAMPUS

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

DISCOVERY TRAIL

Te Ara Tūhura o Maungawhau

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EDUCATION AND
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SWIMMING POOL



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A-Block

This building (A-Block) contains the Faculty of Education and Social Work's main reception area and Student Commons. Opened in 1978, it is sited within the footprint of the original 1925 red brick building. It was originally the administrative hub for the Auckland Teachers College (Primary).



Foundation stone and plaques: A-Block

Mounted at ground level to the right of the main entry to A-Block are:

A plaque commemorating the opening of the re-established Training College's new building in Wellesley Street (central Auckland) on 11 November 1908 by The Hon George Fowlds, Minister of Education. The location was opposite Princes Street on the site now occupied by AUT University.

The foundation stone of the original red brick Auckland Training College building erected on the new Epsom Campus in 1925. The stone was laid by The Hon Sir James Parr, Minister of Education and Justice, on 18 March 1925.

A plaque commemorating the official opening of the current building by the then - Governor General, The Rt Hon Sir Keith Holyoake, on 21 February 1978.

A plaque commemorating the amalgamation of the Auckland College of Education and the University of Auckland and the creation of a new Faculty of Education on 1 September 2004.



Whauwhaupaku - Five Finger tree: Between A-Block and E-Block

Pseudopanax arboreus [Family: Araliaceae]

The whauwhaupaku is a small, bushy tree with glossy green fleshy toothed leaves arranged in fans of 5 (up to 7) leaflets that radiate from a central stalk, hence the common English name, Five Finger. The whauwhaupaku flowers from June to August and bares purple fruit in obvious clusters from August to February.



Tōtara tree: Between A & E Blocks

Podocarpus totara [Family: Podocarpaceae]

The leaves of the tōtara tree are prickly to touch. Its fruit are a green seed on juicy red base (on female trees only) in autumn. Once hollowed out, tōtara has been used to make waka, large carvings, bowls and framing for whare. Many birds, including tūi, korerū, korimako, kōkako and weka eat the fruit. The bark of the whauwhaupaku was used to make sandals and small water-carrying containers. Tūi, korimako, hihi, kākā, native flies and honey bees all collect the nectar. Possums chew the flowers and leaves and bite out the base of the leaf stalks.



Pōhutukawa Avenue

Metrosideros excelsa [Family: Myrtaceae]

The beautiful pōhutukawa trees that line Pōhutukawa Avenue lead towards the Memorial Gates in Poronui Street. This avenue of commemorative trees was planted on each side of the main driveway on Arbour Day 1935. They were dedicated to the teachers of the Auckland Province who died in World War I.

The pōhutukawa displays red spiky ball-like flowers in summer, which is why it is also known as the New Zealand Christmas tree. Tūi, korimako, silvereyes and bees (both native and introduced) visit the flowers for nectar. Māori used the timber from the pōhutukawa tree for weapons, paddles and traditional flutes.



Te Puna Wānanga: D-Block

Te Puna Wānanga is the School of Māori and Indigenous Education within the Faculty of Education and Social Work. Te Puna Wānanga has a national and international reputation with links to indigenous education across the world. Teaching and research is underpinned by a commitment to the sustenance of tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori and the revitalisation of te reo Māori. Te Puna Wānanga offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the field of Māori education. The Māori immersion teacher education programme Te Huarahi Māori prepares primary school teachers who are able to teach the curriculum through the medium of te reo Māori.



Te Aka Matua ki Te Pou Hawaiki Marae: C-Block

Te Aka Matua ki Te Pou Hawaiki officially opened on 19 November 1983. Forty years on, at the end of 2023, the marae and taonga from its wharehui Tūtahi Tonu will begin the move to a new site at the University of Auckland's City Campus, along with the entire Epsom-based staff and students of the faculty.

The marae and the campus sit on land acquired by the Crown from tangata whenua through negotiations amongst Ngāti Whātua rangatira and British officials in the early 1840s. By the time the Auckland Teachers Training College moved onto the land in 1926, the small adjacent maunga Te Pou Hawaiki had already been quarried away forming a large pit (now the car park). A sacred site to early peoples of Tāmaki, the Epsom Campus marae is located on its rim and named in honour of its history.

In 1974 a group of students put forward a proposal for a marae on campus. When Tarutaru Rankin became head of the newly formed Māori Studies Department in 1980, he set about turning the students' vision into reality despite official reluctance to fund such a project.

The wharehui Tūtahi Tonu came into being with the mostly voluntary labour of committed staff, students and members of the wider community. Carver Mark Klarich worked on the carvings for two years. When the marae opened in 1983, it did so with an unexpected groundswell of support and 100s of people attending the hui. It quickly became central to many campus events and remains in demand from staff, student and visiting groups alike.



Playing fields

Shared with Auckland Normal Intermediate School the smooth fields belie their origins. When overcrowding and structural cracks necessitated the College's move from its Wellesley Street premises, a number of local sites were considered and rejected. Meanwhile students traipsed between Wellesley Street and a draughty, cold ex-machinery house in the Auckland Domain. Hailing back to the Auckland Exhibition in 1891 the building had previously been used as a WWI casualty hospital.



Memorial Gates: Poronui Street

Originally marking one of two main entrances to the campus, the Memorial Gates were officially opened on 16 November 1932. A half-day holiday allowed Auckland teachers to attend. The gates, like Pōhutukawa Avenue, leading to it, were dedicated to the teachers of Auckland Province who died in World War I.

Donations came from New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) members. Auckland Education Board architect Alan Miller's design was constructed in Portland stone surplus to the Auckland War Memorial Museum's construction.

Unemployed stonemasons were engaged courtesy of a Great Depression work scheme. A 1953 campus plan shows that gates in the same style were envisaged for the Epsom Avenue entrances but were never built.



Kohia Centre: Gate 1

In 1977, as a result of recognising the need for more teacher resources, the Department of Education set up a pilot scheme in New Plymouth and Alexandra, and at the former kindergarten college in Arney Road, Remuera.

The Kohia Centre has a proud 40-year tradition of providing support for teachers in the Auckland region from the early days at Arney Road, Remuera, to the purpose-built facility at Epsom Campus.

It relocated to Epsom in 1983 and became Kohia Teachers Centre. The present Kohia Centre building was built in the late 1990s. Kohia has existed as an entity that provides service to the Faculty of Education and Social Work and the wider education community. Kohia provides a wide variety of professional development courses for teachers in the primary and secondary sectors. The Kohia store has operated for over 20 years with many teachers and educationalists purchasing texts and teaching resources when visiting Kohia or via Kohia's online store.

Kohia is the te reo Māori name for the New Zealand passion flower *Tetrapathaea tetrandra*. The plant was valued by early Māori because it burnt slowly when dry, enabling them to carry a spark from village to village. It is a slender climber with glossy leaves, greenish-white, sweet-scented flowers, and large orange berries, much sought after by birds and rodents.



The Pit (car park)

Now home to a three storey car park, this area was a scoria pit dug out in the late 1880's (Stage 1, 1997). Photographs show a jagged-edged cut close to the intersecting tracks of what would become Epsom and Marama Avenues. Slightly to the west the crater-shaped vent of Te Pou Hawaiki volcano is visible amid the scoria field. By mid-1920 the quarrying operation had reached its full extent consuming the volcanic vent. By then, houses lined adjacent streets.

Permanent roadways into the old quarry were later formed and in 1973 the pit floor, by then used for student car parking, was sealed. Local residents' complaints about student parking clogging their streets were not quelled for long. On-going resident concern prompted the construction and later extension of the multi-level car park. In the north corner of the lowest level of the car park the sealed entry to one of the earlier WWII structures referred to below can be seen.



Gate 3: The Bunker (air vents and entrance)

Gate 3 with its 1930s rock walls and established native trees was the original of the two main entrances to Epsom Campus. Unlike the Poronui Street entrance that now serves only Auckland Normal Intermediate School, its planned gates were never constructed.

To the west side of the driveway a wedge-shaped structure in thick concrete slopes out of the grassy berm. This was one of the main entrances to a massive underground structure constructed in top secret during WWII.

At the time the campus had been requisitioned as the Northern Districts Combined Headquarters for army, air force and navy. Occupying over 45,000 square feet of space, the military presence included communications and meteorological units. Early on, two underground emergency telephone exchanges and an air-raid shelter were built into the banks of the old scoria pit to the west of the driveway.

The bunker never served its purpose and was handed back to the Auckland College of Education in July 1976. Used for storage, it became a target for vagrants who gained entry on a number of occasions. In November 1982 a major blaze, likely lit by intruders, broke out in the bunker. A second, smaller fire occurred in 1988. While the upper level was largely destroyed some parts of the ground floor remained identifiable, despite serious charring. Since then the bunker has remained sealed and inaccessible.



Herbert A.E. Milnes plaque: B-Block

In November 1905, 32 year old Herbert A.E. Milnes was appointed principal of the Wellesley Street Normal School in Auckland. He was principal of the Auckland Teachers College from 1906 - 1917. Herbert Milnes devoted himself to the welfare of his students. He inspired in them great enthusiasm and laid a broad foundation for their professional life. He fell fighting in the great attack on Passchendaele Ridge on 4 October 1917 in World War 1.



WWI & WWII Memorial displays: B-Block

Until the mid-1970s these memorials were an imposing presence in the end alcoves of the original brick building's central library. From there they overlooked, and were a symbolic endpoint to an avenue of commemorative pōhutakawa trees planted along each side of the main driveway on Arbor Day 1935.

The larger World War I memorial was unveiled by George Fowlds (Auckland University College President) in 1926, less than a year after the red brick building was completed and first occupied the previous December.

Principal Duncan Rae unveiled the World War II memorial thirty years later during the college's 1956 50th jubilee celebrations. The blessing was conducted by former student, the Reverend Doug Starkey (1917-2003); orator, broadcaster and initiator of New Zealand's anti-apartheid movement.

The memorials commemorate staff, students and alumni who lost their lives in the 1914-18 or 1939-45 conflicts. Tragically, the memorials' creator, renowned local sculptor, Richard Gross, had to include the name of his own son on the second of these commissions.

After the demolition of the brick building, the memorials were lucky to survive more than a decade in storage. In the 1980s the late Peter Smith (Principal: Coordination/ Associate Principal 1984-1990) was instrumental in rescuing the badly damaged memorials, having them repaired and installed in the confines of the upstairs gallery of the college's new music auditorium. The World War I memorial's side-cabinets, flag staffs, decorative urns (to hold mānuka sprigs symbolising the link between past and present students), and about 300mm of its height were casualties of its time in exile.

The move of the memorials to the main foyer in 2009 and subsequently to their current B-Block location in the music auditorium foyer improved access and visibility. They have been joined in their new location by a separate brass plaque dedicated to charismatic and revered college principal, Herbert A.E. Milnes.



Kauri tree: C-Block

Agathis australis [Family: Araucariaceae]

The kauri tree is a coniferous tree found in the northern regions of New Zealand's North Island. It is the largest (by volume) but not tallest species of tree in New Zealand, standing up to 50 metres tall in the emergent layer above the forest's main canopy. The tree has smooth bark and small narrow leaves. It has round female cones containing winged seeds and male cones that are finger-shaped. Māori used the wood for large carvings and canoes, using branch wood for mallets, weapons and spades.



Phoenix Palms

Phoenix canariensis [Family: Arecaceae]

These three impressive phoenix palms were planted in the late 1930s on a small lawn between the new tennis courts and the rear section of the north wing of the original 1925 red brick building. They can also be seen clearly in historical 1959 and 1983 aerial photographs.



Tennis courts

By 1930, outdoor tennis courts had been laid out by the driveway from Gate 3, but there were still a lot of rocks on the site to be removed. In 1931, during the economic downturn, up to 400 men were employed to level the grounds under a local unemployment relief scheme. When they are not in use, students or members of the public can use the asphalt tennis courts for free. The tennis nets are always up.



Sylvia Ashton-Warner Library: L-Block

The Sylvia Ashton-Warner Library was opened in 1974. Supported by futuristic pre-cast concrete portals it originally abutted the pre-existing secondary hall (built 1957). The library replaced a 'home life' building incorporating sewing and cooking rooms (built 1950, extended 1954). The library was named after the poet, author, educator and alumnus of the College, Sylvia Ashton-Warner (b1908, d 1984). The Dennis McGrath wing (1940-2023) (named after the Principal appointed in 1986 to lead the newly reunited college) replaced the hall and was opened on 16 February 2001. The Jeff Thompson 'Drainpipes' sculpture adorning the east wall of the McGrath wing was added in 2002.



K-Block

A dining and kitchen block was added in 1952, however, it burned down 13 May 2013. The lower levels and an unusable lecture theatre remain. The area was redesigned into a student outdoor space with seating and shelter in 2014.



Nīkau Palm

Rhopalostylis sapida [Family: Arecaceae]

The nikau palm is the only palm species endemic to mainland New Zealand. Nīkau grow up to 15 metres tall, with a stout trunk, which is topped by a smooth, bulging crown shaft up to one metre long. The fronds are up to three metres long, and are closely set. The fruit is oblong and red when ripe. Nīkau produce flowers between November and April and fruit ripens from February to November, taking almost a year to fully ripen. Nīkau are a preferred food of the kererū.



Swimming pool

The former Auckland Teacher's College pool was opened by Minister of Education, Harry Attwood on 8 May 1931. The result of a lengthy campaign by Principal Rae, it was funded by Ministry and Education Board grants and a contribution from local schools. The landscaping including terraces, fernery and a fishpond, was carried out by relief workers. Students originally paid for the water used each year. In the late 1980s the original pool, by then leaking badly, was totally replaced on the same footprint.

The pool enclosure is one of the few pre-war campus features to survive the major redevelopments of the 1970s. It became the focal point of the new joint student centre and cafeteria building (K-Block) opened in 1976.

Between 1945 and 1973 the flat area to the east of the pool was the site of the men's hostel 'College (later 'Rae House'). Like a row of temporary classrooms along the top boundary of the pool, Rae House comprised ex-WWII military buildings. Its primary building was a former petty officers' dormitory relocated from a wartime camp in the Auckland Domain. A dining and kitchen block was added in 1952. Rae House gained some notoriety both for its cold, spartan conditions and for the periodic youthful 'shenanigans' among its up to 100 male residents.

The swimming pool was decommissioned in 2021 due to a significant leak.



Rimu tree

Dacrydium cupressinum [Family: Podocarpaceae]

The rimu is a very tall canopy tree that is found in forests throughout the North Island of New Zealand and the coastal areas of the South Island, predominately the north, east and south areas. Rimu is a well-known timber tree as well as being used in Rongoa, Māori medicine. Rimu has graceful weeping branches with scale-like overlapping leaves, which are prickly to touch. It's trunk is dark brown, and peels in large flakes. Rimu is a well-known timber tree. Its fruit is eaten by kākāpō, tūi, korimako, weka, kōkako and kererū, while its seeds are eaten by tree wētā, mice and rats.



The Caretaker's House

This two bedroom bungalow was built in c1928 as to provide on-site accommodation for a caretaker. The original 1924 plan for the south wing of the main building had included a caretaker's flat on the upper level. However, construction (minus the flat) did not occur until 1939. This bungalow was occupied by the caretaker until the 1980s and by the Student Learning Unit for many years. The campus archives contain plans for a more elegant two storey gabled 'janitor's cottage' in the arts and crafts style. Restraint apparently prevailed. The caretaker's house was taken out of commission in 2014.

WELCOME TO THE

EPSOM CAMPUS DISCOVERY TRAIL

Te Ara Tūhura o Maungawhau

The Epsom Campus, the main campus of the Faculty of Education and Social Work, was originally established in 1926. This campus has been the home of teacher education for almost 100 years.

To celebrate our past, and before we move permanently to the City Campus at the end of 2023, we have developed this trail to highlight some of the significant memorials and places of interest on the campus.

We hope you enjoy this trail, rediscover old memories and create new ones.

For greater detail about elements of the trail and a selection of archive photographs, visit: **auckland.ac.nz/discovery-trail**

Acknowledgment: Shaw, Louise. (2006) *Making a Difference – A History of the Auckland College of Education 1881-2004*.



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