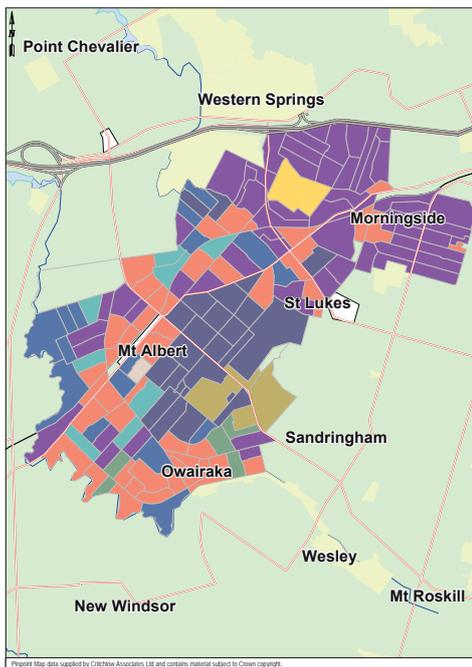


including St Lukes and Owairaka



Mt Albert is a land of considerable contrasts. Magnificent family homes from the 1920s sit regally on the slopes of its namesake mountain, while elsewhere uninspiring grey blocks of 1970s flats are a blot on the landscape. Mt Albert was only the second suburb of Auckland to be settled and is historically significant. Alberton is a beautifully preserved example of the houses of the colonial elite from a more genteel era. But stroll down the main street to the shopping area and you'd think you were in the New Territories – it's heavily dominated by cheap Asian food stores and internet cafés. There are moves afoot to smarten up the main street and local businesses and residents are becoming vocal in their protests. Mt Albert has beautiful views, great access to the CBD, motorways and excellent schools; let's hope it gets the retail it deserves.



For colour key, see page 230

Population Profile

Population	20,055
% Aged Under 15 Years	18.85
% Aged Over 65 Years	7.84
% European	51.77
% Maori	6.96
% Pacific Peoples	10.70
% Asian	25.34

Who Lives There?

Mt Albert has always been a good, solid suburb, great for raising the children. With tertiary institutions Unitec and the A.I.S. St Helens as draw-cards, there is a substantial student presence.

The suburb has become popular with ex Ponsonby and Grey Lynn dwellers who want bigger sections for the kids but still want to be fairly close to the CBD, or with people who yearn for Mt Eden but can't afford the payments.

This is a culturally diverse suburb with Polynesians, Indians, Sri Lankans and Chinese. Asian movement into Mt Albert is steady.

Interestingly, well assimilated Asians are moving into more traditionally Kiwi suburbs – One Tree Hill, Onehunga and New Lynn. There’s also a Somali community in Owairaka.

Typical Homes

Most houses were built during the 1920s to 1940s and many of these gracious bungalows remain spruced up and beautifully renovated.

There has been a fair amount of infill housing so there are also units and modern townhouses, and a development opposite Westfield St Lukes shopping mall which has injected 282 apartments into the market.

St Lukes’ housing reflects the lifestyles of the inhabitants. Many locals live in townhouses and smaller apartment-style accommodation. Renovated villas and bungalows are available as well; however, they tend to be scarce, and smaller, with only two to three bedrooms. Owairaka has more modest housing, with current state and ex-state homes.

Amenities

Schools ★★★★★

Mt Albert is well served with schools. Popular Gladstone Primary School is one of the largest primary schools in New Zealand.

Many children from Mt Albert go to Kowhai Intermediate in Kingsland for years 7 and 8, and then progress to the impressive Mt Albert Grammar which recently became a co-ed

school (though not in the classrooms). It is one of the 12 biggest schools in Auckland and has a strong tradition of academic and sporting excellence. A unique feature is the School Farm and Horticulture unit offering student’s agriculture based learning programmes.

Hebron Christian College and the Catholic girls school Marist College are also in the neighbourhood. For a full list, see page 270.

Shops ★★★

Mt Albert’s main street is now dominated by Chinese signage and internet cafés. Shining stars in Asian shopping options include the 955 Centre, Lim Supermarket, and Blissful Foods. Just off the beaten track is Alberton Fine Foods. Valiantly continuing with its daily muffin bake is the Trinité of Silver café in the old Post Office.

If your tastes are more homogenised, there’s Westfield St Lukes mall where you’ll find plenty of shops, a big food hall, a cinema complex and more car parks, although we’d like to know at which time of the day you can ever get one. Around the corner, Briscoes and Carters are well patronised and across the road there’s a collection of bulk retail style shops for appliances, bedding etc.

Leisure ★★★

There are plenty of family-friendly amenities. The Philips Aquatic Centre in Alberton Ave is very popular, with its wave pool, waterslide and baby pools.



Hebron Christian College

Rocket Park in Wairere Ave is well used by young (the playground) and old (the community centre). For walking, you can't beat the volcanic slopes of Owairaka (otherwise known as Mt Albert). For walking while hitting a small white ball with a stick, there is the public Chamberlain Golf Course (gets a bit crowded sometimes and you can't book a tee time).

A couple of new-ish dining experiences are the Sal Rose (Italian) and the Pyrenees (French).

Also in the area are many sports clubs and recreational facilities. Other green areas include Owairaka Park around the Mt Albert summit, Alan Wood Reserve, Unitec's landscaped grounds and many others.

Real Estate

Trends

There are apartment blocks still being built, and they're all upmarket. The huge St Lukes Garden development is very near completion. With 282 units, sales have been for \$350,000 and up, to a mix of buyers of all ages and ethnicities. The classy brick-clad St Lukes development, Tremont – whose promoters claim the area will be "the next Newmarket" – has 106 two and three-bedroom apartments of all sizes and views priced from \$410,000 to \$726,000. Entry level in these suburbs would be a terrace house on the outskirts for about \$300,000. Houses in-zone for Gladstone Primary are at a premium. The Golden Triangle, on the northern slopes of Mt Albert is highly sought-after at \$1.3million to \$1.5million per home.

Smart Buy

House prices in areas with good schools and a reputation for being solid community suburbs, with good amenities, may ease off at times, but they'll never plummet. There are also good investment opportunities with the increase in apartments – what tenant wouldn't want to live across the road from a mall, on various bus routes and a couple of gear changes to a motorway?

Best Streets

Mt Albert's Golden Triangle, with its leafy streets and elevated views, has the most valuable properties, including Stilwell Rd, Summit Dr and surrounding streets.

At a Glance...

House Prices

Unit

Bedrooms 
Price \$520,000

Terrace house

Bedrooms 
Price \$500,000

Ex-state house

Bedrooms 
Price \$690,000 - \$790,000

Villa or bungalow

Bedrooms 
Price \$850,000 - \$1,100,000

Renovated villa or bungalow

Price \$1,100,000 - \$1,300,000

In the Golden Triangle

Price \$1,500,000 - \$2,200,000+

Average Rents

Apartments

Bedrooms 
Price \$430/wk

House

Bedrooms 
Price \$600/wk

Bedrooms 
Price \$770/wk

Travel Times

CBD by car peak 20 min
off peak 10 min
by bus peak 25 min

North-western motorway 5 min

Airport 30 min

Mt Albert has excellent public transport, with regular buses, and the train running through Mt Albert on the Waitakere route.