

including Northpark, Somerville, Pt View Park, Dannemora, Cumbria Downs and Burswood



Botany Downs and its cluster of satellite suburbs are the bridge between east and south Auckland. Jam-packed with big new retail developments and with kilometre after kilometre of seemingly cloned, brand spanking new, taupe homes, these are suburbs you either love or love to hate. Botany Town Centre is the heart of this still-new area and, although some of its charms have probably been surpassed by the even newer and even more impressive Sylvia Park shopping centre in Mount Wellington, it never sees a quiet day. Close proximity to established areas such as Howick and Pakuranga is a major bonus for residents here. It will take a little time for the landscaping to become mature and for the area to reach its aesthetic potential. In the meantime new arrivals seem content to put up with inevitable construction from the comfort of their sparkling new homes.



For colour key, see page 230

Population Profile

Population	38,820
% Aged Under 15 Years	21.80
% Aged Over 65 Years	8.24
% European	47.91
% Maori	3.56
% Pacific Peoples	2.33
% Asian	40.20

Who Lives There?

This is a racially mixed middle-class area with many immigrants – the variety of nationalities was obviously expected by those who dish out the street names: they include Billabong Pl, Kilimanjaro Dr and Napa Ct! Whatever the nationality, the family profile tends towards those with teenagers, established well-to-do families and retirees.

All are drawn to the variety and newness of the housing stock, excellent schooling and the shopping amenities. Many people have relocated here from more established parts of east Auckland, seeking low maintenance executive homes with desirable features such

as internal-access garaging, ensuites and walk-in wardrobes.

Typical Homes

Because this area was farmland just a few years ago, most of the houses are virtually new. Even those in Northpark, the older part of this area, may be only 20 years old. The modern brick-and tile, four-bedroom, one-level house dominates, although apartments are creeping in. There's a definite sense of the homogenous American suburban dream, although the reality of land prices and desire for big houses means that the sections are small.

The style of some of the more dramatic homes, where classical-style columns support two-storey-high porticos, seems ostentatious to some but appeals to others. The newness of homes here is appealing to some and off-putting to others and only time will tell how well this area will develop.

The Sacramento terrace housing development by Botany Town Centre was seen as innovative when it was first built, but became infamous as New Zealand's largest leaky home complex.

Amenities

Schools ★★★

Options are limited in Botany Downs itself but there are plenty of quality schools in neighbouring Howick and Pakuranga for this highly mobile community.

Botany Downs School is popular and Point View School has a new performing arts centre and IT suite with dedicated music and technology teachers.

Somerville Intermediate is decile 10 and has a roll close to 1000. At secondary level, Botany Downs College opened in 2004, and won an award from the NZ Institute of Architects, who described it as "a spectacular learning environment". On a smaller and less dramatic scale, Catholic high school Sancta Maria College also opened in 2004. For a full list, see page 270.

Shops ★★★★★

They sure know how to do retail around here whether it is at Meadowlands, or the Botany Town Centre which is mall and mainstreet, all wrapped up into one mega shopping experience. It feels a little as if you've stepped into a movie set but there's lots of architectural variety in the shop fronts, which should help it to age more gracefully. The centre includes an eight-screen cinema complex and is home to Manukau's flagship library. Biblio-purists might not approve, but it blends into its commercial habitat by being designed like a retail space, complete with café.

Leisure ★★★

Botany Downs will soon be rivaling Ponsonby Rd for the number of cafés per kilometre.

If shopping is your idea of leisure, then you won't put a foot wrong here. There is also 10-



pin bowling and ice-skating/ice hockey across from the Botany Town Centre.

All manner of land sports and maritime activities are available in nearby Howick. Lloyd Elsmore Park in Pakuranga has excellent recreational facilities, including a swimming pool complex. However, once Sir Barry Curtis Park is completed near Dannermora, it will probably trump Lloyd Elsmore completely. Over a 10-year period, the Council will spend \$32million developing the 92ha park.

Real Estate

Trends

Excellent schooling, quality housing and magnificent shopping facilities are the big drivers here. Burswood appeals to investors (and young people flatting).

First entry price for a brick and tile home is \$400,000 with the step up to Cumbria Downs where an executive home on a full site would range from \$600,000 to the mid \$700,000s. Somerville, on the seaboard side of Whitford Rd, delivers homes in the high \$800,000s to \$1million.

Botany Downs Secondary College is steadily increasing in desirability – so much so that some families who moved into the general area, with the expectation that the school was very close, were more than a little disappointed when they discovered they were actually out-of-zone. Point View Primary School is also highly-regarded.

The 190-acre Highbrook Business Park developing behind East Tamaki, is expected to generate 10,000 jobs and inevitably be the catalyst for elevated prices and increased settlement in the area for some years to come.

Best Streets

Fairfield Lane is sought-after because of its ambience – established and respectable – created by its large number of masonry homes. Also popular are John Brooke Crescent, Brook Ridge Rise and the elegant Anaheim Boulevard and Santa Ana Drive.

At a Glance...

House Prices

Unit

Bedrooms 
Price \$450,000 - \$540,000

House

Bedrooms 
Price \$750,000 - \$950,000

Executive house

Bedrooms 
Price \$950,000 - \$1,200,000

Average Rents

Flat

Bedrooms 
Price \$400/wk

House

Bedrooms 
Price \$530/wk
Bedrooms 
Price \$650/wk

Travel Times

From Botany Downs:

CBD peak 50 - 60 min
off peak 25 min

Southern motorway 10 min

Airport 25 min

The regular bus service takes about an hour from Botany Town Centre to the CBD. Another option is to bus to the Half Moon Bay ferry and get into town by sea.

Look Out



Only time will tell how well this area will mature. The newness of everything is quite attractive, but obviously won't last – there is a certain sameness to the area which might become claustrophobic for many Kiwis.