

Typical Homes

A typical home here is one you can't see from the road, because it's set far back, behind tall, mature trees and vast expanses of paddock. Lifestyle blocks and equestrian properties are very popular. Small acreages of less than 2ha are hard to find. In Brookby, a group of 1970s houses makes it obvious when that farm was carved up for housing. Clevedon has some century-old villas and cottages. Apart from having a certain graciousness and spaciousness in common, the style of homes is actually very diverse.

Amenities

Schools ★★★

Schooling options are limited. Brookby and Clevedon both have high-decile full primaries, but Whitford children have to head elsewhere for schooling. Many of primary-age travel to Howick and its burgeoning surrounds – Point View School is a popular choice. There is a Montessori pre-school and a kindergarten in Whitford.

Unsurprisingly, given the real estate prices around here, many opt to send their children to private high schools. In fact, there's a bus service to Pakuranga's co-ed St Kentigen College. Some parts of Whitford are zoned for Botany Downs College. For a full list, see page 270.

Shops ★★

Whitford retailers provide the basics for locals (petrol, groceries, saddlery) and the non-essentials for tourists (gift shops, an olde worlde restaurant and a café/bakery). There are no shops at Brookby. At Clevedon, there are more horsey and touristy stores (including antiques), but also a wider range of shops, including an organic food store.

Leisure ★★★★★

For most people out this way, life revolves around horses. Polo at Clevedon is a major event for the stirrped set and an opportunity

to wear big hats for the rest of the locals. There's also a pony club at Whitford, and an equestrian centre in Brookby. And whether you're on horse, foot or mountain bike, the numerous trails through the Whitford Forest are a great place to burn off some kilojoules. Other sports are catered for too, with clubs for bowls, lawn tennis and cruising yachts. Whitford Park Golf Club is a lovely parkland course and maintains over 50 hectares of native trees. The challenging and picturesque Formosa Country Club, near Beachlands, is another option for golfers.

Duders Regional Park is an historic and beautiful seaside farm with numerous tracks for walking and riding. It's a popular spot with birdwatchers and picnickers, and the adjacent beach is a haven in summer.

Ardmore Airport is close by for the flying set. There is also a 100-acre space at the Clevedon Showgrounds, where you can enjoy anything from junior soccer to model-airplane flying. There's a new restaurant, a new up-market bar in the local hotel and an increase in the number of vineyards which all add to the appeal of the place.

Real Estate

Trends

There are no signs of money being tight in Whitford. A traditional home on 0.6ha with right-of-way water access sold for \$2million recently. Another with similar access on 2h fetched \$3.5million. The cream are luxury homes and land with \$10million price tags.

The area of Ara'kotinga has mainly 4ha blocks with bush views for about \$1.8million. It's hard to find a home of the sort of quality most Whitford residents expect for less than \$2million and most often that's without sea views!

In Clevedon village \$550,000 to \$600,000 will buy a basic three-bedroom home on 800m². \$1.1million will buy you 4ha of land with an older house. A grander home with landscaped grounds and equestrian facilities will cost \$2million.

There are also signs that Asian investors are buying up land for its future value, although they're not necessarily considering living in the area. A proposed Wairoa River Maritime Village development north of Clevedon village continues to meet with disfavour by the locals.

Best Streets

Here they do things differently – you're looking at best peninsulas rather than best streets. Clifton Rd or Broomfields Rd are quite simply the places to be.

Local Hero: The Auckland Polo Club



The Auckland Polo Club has its home on the Clevedon-Kawakawa Bay Rd. Founded in 1899, it's the largest (with 40-plus members) in New Zealand, and one of the longest established. Although New Zealand polo doesn't have quite the elitism that the sport is known for internationally, it's still a rich person's sport, and makes great sightseeing for lesser mortals. There is polo at Clevedon every summer weekend from November to the end of March, but it's the New Zealand Open, held each February, which is the glamour event on the polo calendar.

At a Glance...

House Prices

Small Cottage

If you're lucky \$600,000+

1Ha lifestyle block with house

Bedrooms 

Price \$1,300,000+

Average Rents

As with sale prices, rental prices are difficult to gauge.

Small cottage

Bedrooms 

Price \$350/wk

House

Bedrooms 

Price \$900/wk

6ha land for horse grazing \$150/wk

Travel Times

From Whitford:

CBD peak 55 min
off peak 35 min

Motorway 12 min

Airport 25 min

Botany Town Centre 10 min

The Pine Harbour Ferry service (13 return trips a day) from Beachlands (10 km away) is a boon for those who need to get to the CBD every day but don't want the stress of driving and parking. The ferry timetable is at www.pineharbour.co.nz. Howick & Eastern buses also serve this area.