

# Queens Gardens Walk

---

The quality and design of the **Pitt Memorial gates** **1** that mark the formal entry of Queens Gardens, are a mark of respect for Albert Pitt (1842–1906). He was commander of the Nelson Military district for 22 years, served on Nelson Provincial Council, and held senior posts in Government. He also founded a local law firm in 1879. The giant Canary Island Palms that flank each side of the entry were planted in the 1890s along with copper beech, redwood and Norfolk Island pine which make a dramatic backdrop to more recent plantings nearby. See a list of heritage trees in the gardens on an **information panel** **2**. This also has photos showing the development of the park since its opening in 1892.

The white marble **Boer War Memorial** **3**, commemorates those who died in the Boer war. This was New Zealand's first overseas military campaign (1899–1902) and the country was gripped by patriotic fervour and made a huge contribution to the war.

The **Eel Pond** **4** was once part of the Maitai River. In pre European times, Māori harvested eels, birds, berries, edible roots and leaves for food and flax and raupo for cords and bindings. The serpentine shape fitted well in the Victorian garden design.

In the 1990s an unknown urban artist created the **Dragon** **5** perched in the knobbly roots of swamp cypress on a man-made island.

The **Rainbow Bridge** **6** forms a dramatic side entrance to the **Huangshi Chinese Garden** **7** opened in 2007.

At the garden's centre a formal **Victorian Rose Garden** **8** encircles The Cupid Fountain. Box hedged beds contain a mix of colourful and scented rose varieties. Looking to your right across the Eel Pond is the **The Suter** **9**, one of New Zealand's oldest established art galleries on the site of the former Mathew Campbell School, set up in 1844. To the left of the Suter buildings, tall native beech and kowhai, much loved by birds, can be seen amongst extensive native plantings. The tops of other heritage trees on the adjacent Albion Square Historic Precinct can be glimpsed.

The **Sentinel sculpture** **10** by Dominique de Borrekens and Grant Scott appears to float on the pond. The artwork refers to the waka and ships bringing settlers to New Zealand.

The **rustic white bridge** **11** is a replica of the original built in 1895. It links the formal garden area to an informal woodland and lawn.

The **Dawn Redwood** **12** is now one of the largest specimens in the western hemisphere.

The **Rotary Water Wheel** **13** was erected in 2005 to commemorate 100 years of Rotary International. The Water Wheel sits in a small stream which is the remnant of the outfall channel from Nelson's first flour mill (1844–c.1885) located just beyond the fence. This mill race stream is still the main water supply for the Eel Pond.

The **Trask Memorial Gates** **14** on Hardy Street enhance the Victorian style of the Queens Gardens. Francis Trask was a city councillor, Mayor, and Legislative Representative; and his vision and efforts in the creation of the Queens Gardens are recognised here.



# Queens Gardens Walk

The Queens Gardens was founded to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> jubilee of Queen Victoria's coronation. Architect AFT Somerville designed the garden in 1887 which was formally opened in 1891. The Gardens have extensive Māori colonial and Victorian history and are an outstanding example of a Victorian ornamental public garden. Paths meander through groves of tall trees, many of them outstanding heritage specimens. Formal plantings and romantic woodland edge the serpentine Eel Pond. The Gardens have been special place for generations of Nelson people.

For more heritage walks, including a Huangshi Chinese Garden Walk, go to [www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz](http://www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz) (search phrase heritage walks). For extended heritage information and podcasts go to [www.theprow.org.nz](http://www.theprow.org.nz)

