Introduction
Mill Stream Walkway traverses mainly Department of Conservation land which has been extensively modified since the onset of gold mining in the district in 1875.

The base of Union Hill became the site of a massive industrial complex - the "Waihi Mill" or "Waihi Battery". Constructed by the Waihi Gold Mining Company, commencing in 1888, it started processing ore from Martha Mine in 1890. At 90 stamps in 1894 it was the largest in New Zealand.

At the time of the Waihi Mill, our modern Eastern Stream was known as "Mill Stream". The stream was dammed just below Barry Rd, then channelled and flumed, taking it at first to the Waihi Mill, then the Cassel Tailings Plant, and later back to the Waihi Mill, to provide water power. The remaining water (if any) and surface run off further down the valley, was caught in diversion channels (or cut-off drains), to keep the water out of three large impoundments which the Company had established to save their tailings. These ponds stored the valuable tailings for possible future processing.

It was from these ponds that the Cassel Tailings Plant took their tailings (1894), and subsequently the Waihi Mill as it was closing down (1913).

The cut-off drain was continuous from the top pond to Clarke Street. Sections of Mill Stream Walkway follow this drain from south of the bamboo to the boxed steps, and the walkway crosses over, or through, all three tailings pond embankments.

Having hosted these extensive mining-related modifications and activities, and the power pylons bringing electricity to Martha Mine from Horahora on the Waikato River, the area has now become a tranquil place where the environment is nurtured.

Timeline
1887 The Waihi Gold Mining Company established.
1888 Waihi Mill (Battery) constructed on Union Hill in early 1888 to process ore from the Union, Rosemont, and Amaranth claims.
1888 Mill Stream dammed and the Mill Race constructed. Tailings saved in tailings impoundments.
1890 Martha Company's mine and plant purchased by the Waihi Gold Mining Company.
1894 The Cassel Tailings Plant started reprocessing WGMCo. tailings. The Union-Waihi Gold Mining Company was formed to work the Union-Rosemont-Amaranth section. Sinking of the New No. 1 shaft commenced.
1896 The Silverton Battery commenced crushing ore; railway and locomotive installed for hauling the ore a mile and a half to the battery.
1898 Union-Waihi Co. acquired the Silverton claim, together with battery (renamed Union) and tramway. Tramway connecting to New No. 1 Shaft built on Union Hill soon after.
1900 About this time the New Central Hotel was built.
1902 Mining stopped on Union Hill.
1909 At the Waihi Mill "two ferro-concrete agitator-vats, 13ft. diameter, 55 ft. high, have been erected" (four more in 1910).
1911 The Union Battery was closed down in February.
1912 Waihi strike.
1913 Waihi Mill closed, treating about 16,000 tons of sand tailings.
1914 Early in 1914 the company's hydro-electric power-installation at Horahora commissioned.
1921 The New Central Hotel was dismantled and moved to Rotorua.
1922 New Tennis Club formed.
1960s Waihi Borough tip at Kenny Street established. Mill Stream diverted into Speak's Quarry.
1970s Waihi Borough tip at Kenny Street closed.
1986 Mill Stream lowered under conveyor and channelled into Speak's Quarry by Waihi Gold.
2001 Waihi Walkways constructed first stage of Mill Stream Walkway, embarking on programme of environmental enhancement and restoration.
2007 Waihi Walkways extend Mill Stream Walkway.

Welcome to
Mill Stream Walkway
and its Historic Features
An easy grade walk (approx. 20 minutes)
Assisted wheelchair access - Kenny Street entrance only
Numbered markers identify many historic features
To learn more visit our website:
www.waihiwalkways.org.nz

Interpretation kindly sponsored by PowerCo and Vaster Ohinemuri Charitable Trust
In 1897 the stream was lowered to pass beneath the ore conveyor, and
the flush overflowed to Speak's Quarry. Previous to this, the stream passed beneath
the road in this smaller culvert, falling into the Quarry via this old water race. In
heavy rain this still occurs. Originally the stream passed through the gully
filled by the rubbish dump.

Old Municipal Rubbish Dump
Established in the late 1960s, and continued until
the Bulltown Road tip was opened (late 1970s). A
field covers this site now, created when waste
was spread here in the late 1970s or early 80s.
The New Central Hotel, Band Rotunda and
Cycle Track were important features of what was
the “Rec”, now Morgan Park.

Speak's Quarry
This quarry was named after the Speak family who lived on Barry Road
adjacent to the present Newmont conveyor. Mrs Speak is variously recorded in
the Ohinemuri Regional History Journals as running a fruit shop and/or a
sweet shop. The quarry is thought to have supplied early construction stone
 Steeped in the Waikino. Here the voltage was stepped down to 11,000 volts to
be transmitted to the mines at Waihi. This was the longest
electricity from the Waihi Gold Mining Company Horahora
transmission line in New Zealand at that time and great difficulties
had to be overcome to take power over some of the rugged
country across the Kaimai Range. Three solid copper wires each
about 10mm thick carried the current and these were supported on a total
469 steel towers erected between Horahora and Waikino."

Building Sites (on west of walkway) 8
One site of several early miners’ dwellings.

Waiahi Gold Mining Company Water Race By-wash 9
A by-wash for the race (1, 4) was created across the end of Baker Street,
and down the hill. The top section of the by-wash was constrained within
a wooden flume, but further down in an open ditch which still exists. It took
excess or unused water from the water race, to stop it from flowing.
The by-wash discharged into the drain behind Charlie's seat (part of the cut-
off drain system).

Cassel's Tailings Plant 15
The Cassel's Tailings Plant was established in 1894 (closed c.1896) to treat,
by the cyanide process, the accumulated tailings from the Waihi Mill.
Their water race collected water from Mill Stream and the Martha mine water
discharge, went past the end of Baker Street, and into the residential sections
towards Clarke Street. Pressure pipes then took the water towards the lower
tailings embankment.

The Waihi Gold Mining Company took over the Cassel Tailings Plant water
race when relinquished by the Cassel Company (c.1896) and built a
prominent wooden flume from the end of Baker Street across their tailings
ponds to the mill. The depression (informal roadway) in Morgan Park, beside
the driveway to the old house, marks the position of this race.

Cut-off Drain 5, 12
The ditch (5), the boxed steps, the drain west of Charlie’s seat (12) and the
deepest gorges are the remains of a continuous cut-off drain, designed to keep
water out of the impoundments. The lower part of this cut-off drain, now a
deep gorge, has become the present alignment of Mill Stream.

Power Pylons 7, 11, 13
The remains of three power pylons can be seen beside Mill Stream Walkway. These pylons were erected 1912-13 to bring
electricity from the Waiahi Gold Mining Company Horahora hydro-electric plant on the Waikato River to the mine on Martha Hill.
This was the first hydro-electric dam on the Waikato River.

From the book: "The Horahora Power Scheme, by Stan Rowe
and Barry McKey, 1997: “During this time an 80km transmission line
on steel towers carrying 50,000 volts was built from Horahora to Waiahi passing through the Hinuera Valley, Matamata, Turanga-o-moana and then crossing the Kaimai range through Waiongongomi and Waiahtawa valleys to
Waikino. Here the voltage was stepped down to 11,000 volts to
be transmitted to the mines at Waiahi. This was the longest
transmission line in New Zealand at that time and great difficulties
had to be overcome to take power over some of the rugged
country across the Kaimai Range. Three solid copper wires each
Company for £5,000 early in last year. Advantage was taken of the fine
weather to get the materials on the ground and erect the buildings and
necessary vats and machinery. The plant is situated near the river, and below
the place where the tailings are deposited.” Cassels recovered £25,000 in
bullion.

Union-Waihi Tramway from New No.1 Shaft, Union Hill. 16
Built by the Union-Waihi Company (1899, ceased 1902) to transport their ore
from the New No.1 Shaft (on Union Hill) to their newly acquired mill on
the Ohinemuri River (this was the old Silverton Battery, renamed the Union Battery).

This tramway exited a tunnel below the Union
tiphead, and negotiated a steep section as a self-acting incline. The present
roadway (on Union Hill) makes use of part of this formation. This section
joined the Silverton tramway at the wetland area of the Heritage Walk. The
alignment is still visible at the bottom end of Mill Stream Walkway; the flat
area between Clarke Street and the lower bridge.

View of HP Barry’s House Site (look east) 17
The house and extensive gardens of Mr HP Barry, Mining Superintendent,
Waiahi Gold Mining Company, stood where the present house stands. It was
lost to fire. Many of the original landscape features remain.

Note water race on hillside, it brought water to the Waiahi Mill. Note also the
masonry retaining work at both ends of the culvert under Clarke Street.