



City landmark: The Honeyfield Fountain in its former glory at the bottom of Dawson St on the Coastal Walkway. Photos: FAIRFAX NZ



Out of control: The stolen car driven by a 15-year-old that crashed into the Honeyfield Fountain at 2.30am on Saturday. Another 15-year-old youth was a passenger in the car.



Shocking sight: A pile of rubble is all that is left of the Honeyfield Fountain after the car ploughed into it. No decision has been made about rebuilding the fountain, which was restored in 2007.

Fountain wiped out in crash

Abrupt end to teens' joy-riding

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A stolen car with a 15-year-old at the wheel became airborne outside the New Plymouth police station before smashing into the city's beloved Honeyfield Fountain.

Police believe if the car had not

hit the fountain it might have ended up in the sea and the crash could have been fatal.

The two youths in the car were healthy enough to run a short distance from the scene before they were picked up by police.

The historic fountain outside the Govett Quilliam law firm on New Plymouth's Coastal Walkway was left in ruins after the car ploughed into it about 2.30am on Saturday.

Police say the stolen Honda City, occupied by two 15-year-olds under the influence of alcohol,

shot through a red light at the intersection at St Aubyn St, hit a bump in the road and became airborne before coming back down in Dawson St and crashing into the fountain.

One youth was taken to Taranaki Base Hospital with moderate injuries but the other was uninjured.

The driver was arrested and has been referred to Youth Aid.

Waitara Constable Grant Roper said speed and alcohol were factors in the crash.

The collision with the fountain

prevented the car from possibly ending up in the sea, he said.

"The fountain took the full force of the impact and stopped the vehicle going any further, either on to the rail tracks or beyond."

A member of the Honeyfield family expressed his outrage about the incident on the *Taranaki Daily News* Facebook page.

"This is just typical.

"People can't respect the heritage of New Plymouth. Hope he has to pay to get it repaired," Darren Honeyfield said.

A resident who lives near the

crash scene was shocked at the sight of the shattered fountain.

"It's dreadful.

"It's just a beautiful monument and it's not long been restored."

Mike Merrick, a former New Plymouth District councillor and a member of the Friends of the Honeyfield Fountain group, was devastated by the damage.

"I couldn't believe it, I still can't believe it."

But he was confident the damage could be repaired.

"The positive thing is that even though the damage is extensive,

it's repairable." A repair job would take some time and effort, but the public would want it to happen, he said.

New Plymouth District Council parks manager Mark Bruhn said it was too early to say whether the council would do a complete rebuild because costs needed to be investigated.

"We will be talking to police to see if there is any way of seeking reparation costs from the offender."

He said the council's insurance excess was \$100,000, and the last

time the fountain was restored in 2007 it cost \$49,500.

The fountain was donated to the city in 1907 by Alice Brown Honeyfield.

In 2004, New Plymouth District councillors Mike Merrick, Elaine Gill and Alex Matheson formed the Friends of the Honeyfield Fountain to raise the required funds for its restoration.

In August 2007, the restored fountain was unveiled by Levi Henry Honeyfield, the great, great, great, great nephew of Henry John Honeyfield, Alice's husband.