

GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank

ADDRESS 4 Waikaka Road, Willowbank

PHOTOGRAPH



(April 2022)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. H2 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 2553 / 1
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Section 59 Block I Chatton SD

GDC FILE NUMBER 3282868

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1911

ARCHITECT / DESIGNER / BUILDER NZ Railways Department / Public Works Department

STYLE Utilitarian

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Rectangular water tank mounted on X-braced stand; pylon style windmill with X-bracing.

MATERIALS / STRUCTURE

Timber, cast iron, concrete.

ADDITIONS / ALTERATIONS

Water vat replaced (1933). Rail line removed & highway realigned (post-1962 & c.1979). Windmill removed to Mandeville for conservation (c.2020).

SETTING

The Willowbank Railway Station windmill (currently removed) & water tank stand on the east side of Waikaka Road, between Morrison Road in the north and Waikaka Valley Road (SH 90) in the south. To the north-west, at the intersection of Waikaka and Morrison Roads, are the Waikaka Valley War Memorial and Presbyterian church. The scheduled setting encompasses the land parcel, which is a conservation reserve, on which the structures[s] are located.

HISTORY

After many years of advocacy, a branch railway line between Gore and Waikaka opened on 1 December 1908. In March of that year a meeting of settlers held at the Waikaka Valley School had determined that the local railway siding should be named Willowbank Station, after the farm on whose land it was to be located. In the following month tenders were called for station buildings at a number of locales on the Gore-Waikaka Railway, including Willowbank. The station comprised a shelter shed & 'ladies' room', goods shed, loading bank and cattle yards; a water tank and windmill were built in 1911 to provide water for the steam trains running on the line. The vat atop the tank stand was replaced in 1933. The Waikaka line closed in September 1962 and the tracks were subsequently removed. A number of community efforts to retain and conserve the water tank and windmill have been undertaken over the years (1975, 1984, 1989 and 2011); currently the windmill is not on site, having been removed to Mandeville for restoration by the Willowbank Windmill Restoration Committee.

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank have historic significance for their association with the development of local transport infrastructure and the movement of people and goods around and through the district that the branch line facilitated. Until its removal for conservation, the windmill was believed to be one of only two historic railway windmills in New Zealand, out of a cohort of over 100, still on their original site (HNZPT).

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank have cultural significance as a place of community identity and historic continuity. Repeated conservation projects undertaken since the mid-1970s attest to the esteem in which the two structures are held by the local community.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank have aesthetic value as utilitarian structures designed to be fit for purpose. The NZ Railways Department had two alternative water tank designs, one circular and the other rectangular, as at Willowbank. The windmill was also built to a standard plan, which was a key feature of the building programme of the NZ Railways Department, especially under the leadership of architect George Troup.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank have craftsmanship value for the quality of their construction; the windmill having been built at NZ Railways' Addington workshop.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank have contextual significance as local landmarks that once stood on either side of the Gore-Waikaka branch railway line. Along with the Waikaka Valley War Memorial and neighbouring Presbyterian church, these structures mark the heart of the Willowbank (Waikaka siding) settlement.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the structures post-date 1900, any potential archaeological significance of their site would likely relate to its earlier use and development.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Willowbank Railway Station windmill (currently removed) & water tank have overall heritage significance to Willowbank and to the district of Gore as a whole. The structures have historical significance for their association with the development of local transport infrastructure and cultural significance in relation to ongoing community efforts to maintain and conserve them. The Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank have aesthetic value as utilitarian structures designed to be fit for purpose and craftsmanship value for the quality of their construction. The Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank have contextual significance as local landmarks and markers of the historic settlement of the area.

REFERENCES

- *Mataura Ensign* 17 March 1908, p. 2; 28 November 1908, p. 3; 13 December 1913, p. 5.
- *Otago Witness* 2 December 1908, p. 58; 26 May 1909, p. 41.
- *Otago Daily Times* 16 April 1908, p. 1; 28 April 1908, p. 4.
- <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2553>
- <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc04Cycl-t1-body1-d7-d127.html>

REPORT COMPLETED

10 May 2022

AUTHOR

Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services



Extent of scheduling, Willowbank Railway Station windmill & water tank, 4 Waikaka Road, Willowbank.

