GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME	former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse
ADDRESS	32 Gorton Street, Gore
PHOTOGRAPH	

(April 2022)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. (at time of assessment)	H10	**HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY**	n/a
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Lot 2 DP 301039		
GDC FILE NUMBER	6512764		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	1904		
ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/ BUILDER	Robert Hay, engineer		
STYLE	Utilitarian		

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey building with rectangular footprint and hipped roof that jetties out beyond walls on north, east and south sides; flat-roofed section on west side is built to the road boundary. Entrance doors on west and north elevations; latter is panelled and has fanlight. Two double-hung sash windows on south elevation.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, concrete, timber, corrugated steel.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Internal alterations (1911). Reroofed; new build on site with steel perimeter fencing (date unknown).

SETTING

The former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse stands on the east side of Gorton Street, close to its intersection with Oldham Street. Hyde Park is to the south and the town centre is to the north of the property. The scheduled setting is the land parcel on which the building is located.

History

Gore was the first town in Southland to have electric lighting introduced in 1894; this initiative was undertaken by a private company and then later taken over by the borough council (1902). The Electric Light Works in Gorton Street were initially run by gas-powered engines on site but from late 1904 power sourced from the Mataura Meat Works was carried by line to a new powerhouse where it was transformed and then distributed. The powerhouse also accommodated a well from which water was pumped to the town reservoir for circulation around the town; a second pump was installed in the building in October 1911. Alexander Ramsay was the first engineer in charge of the works; he was succeeded, in 1904, by James Scott, a marine and electrical engineer, who was the manager until late 1906 when he was appointed engineer to the Christchurch City Council. Scott was born in Milton but trained in Glasgow and London before returning to New Zealand where he practised in Invercargill before taking up the Gore role. The Southland Electric Power Board was established in 1919 and Gore Borough Council joined the scheme in 1926; more recently the powerhouse has been redeveloped as part of a storage facility.

Historic And Social Significance

The former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse has historic significance for its association with the development of electricity provision in Gore and, somewhat unusually, the provision of electricity by the Southland Frozen Meat Company from its Mataura works to Gore from 1905 until c.1933.

Cultural And Spiritual Significance

The former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse has cultural value as a place esteemed for its role in bringing electrical lighting to the town.

Architectural And Aesthetic Significance

The former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse has aesthetic value as a utilitarian structure designed to be fit for purpose.

Technological And Craftsmanship Significance

The former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse has technological significance for its former industrial use. Civil engineer Robert Hay was credited with the design of Gore's new power scheme when it came on stream in 1905; Hay was in private practice in Dunedin between 1876 and 1920 and undertook work all over New Zealand.

Contextual Significance

The former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse has contextual value as a streetscape feature in the industrial sector of central Gore.

Archaeological and Scientific Significance

Although the building post-dates 1900, its site has potential archaeological significance relating to its earlier use and development.

Summary of Heritage Significance

The former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse has overall heritage significance to Gore and to the district of Gore as a whole. The building has historic significance for its association with the early provision of electricity in Gore and cultural value as a place esteemed for its role in bringing electrical lighting to the town. The former Gore Electric Light Works powerhouse has aesthetic value as a utilitarian structure designed to be fit for purpose and technological significance for its former industrial use. The former Gore Electric Light Works

powerhouse has contextual value as a streetscape feature within Gore's industrial precinct; its site has potential archaeological value.

REFERENCES

- *Mataura Ensign* 4 June 1898, p. 2; 14 February 1901, p. 2; 14 January 1902, p. 3; 10 April 1902, p. 2; 12 April 1902, p. 3; 31 March 1904, p. 2; 13 September 1904, p. 5; 5 December 1905, p. 2; 16 October 1907, p. 3; 24 September 1910, p. 1; 16 October 1911, p. 4; 11 July 1916, p. 2.
- *Otago Daily Times* 26 June 1937, p. 21.
- *Evening Star* 21 November 1928, p. 4.
- *Progress* 1 November 1906, p. 13.
- *Southland Times* 24 June 1909, p. 5.
- *Poverty Bay Herald* 1 June 1905, p. 2.
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Extent of scheduling, former Gore Electric Light Works building, 32 Gorton Street, Gore.