GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME	former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange
ADDRESS	120 Main Street, Gore
PHOTOGRAPH	

(October 2021)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. (at time of assessment)	n / a	**HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY**	n / a
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Section 1 SO 6012 & Section 1 SO 5973		
GDC FILE NUMBER	3262064, 3226915		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	1952-58		
ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/ BUILDER	Miller, White & Dunn in association with Gordon Wilson, Government Architect		
STYLE	Modernist		

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Three-storey building with irregular T-shaped footprint and flat roof. Principal elevation faces east and is terminated at the north end by a stair tower with glazing at north end. Flagpole and access balcony on blind wall of stair tower; ground floor of east elevation features pilotis. Ramp and steps to recessed entry; steel-framed casement windows. Single-storey loading bay at north end.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Reinforced concrete, cement plaster.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Unknown, if any.

SETTING

The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange stands on the west side of Main Street, north of its intersection with Civic Avenue. The building occupies almost the full extent of the two lots on which it stands. The scheduled setting encompasses the two land parcels on which the building is located.

HISTORY

Gore's first post office was officially established with the appointment of postmaster Joseph Burrows on 1 July 1867. In December 1875 the post office was relocated to the railway station; it would appear that a purpose-built office was erected close by in c.1878. Added to over the years, the building was deemed inadequate by the end of the 19th century and consequently a new building (1901-2) was erected between the railway station and earlier post office. This post office, which also housed a number of other government departments, was itself replaced by a new post office and automatic telephone exchange on the other side of Main Street in 1958. The building was officially opened by the Hon Michael Moohan, MP and Postmaster General, on 25 September 1958. Today the Gore Post Office and Automatic Telephone Exchange still performs a telecommunications purpose but is also occupied by a private, corporate tenants.

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange has historic and social significance for its association with the development of the district's communication infrastructure and as a reflection of the size and scale of Gore by the middle of the 20th century.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of past post office staff and their customers.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange has architectural significance as a Modernist building that retains a high level of external authenticity. Miller, White and Dunn were architects to the University of Otago and also designed the Post and Telegraph workshops at Andersons Bay, Dunedin; plans for both projects are held by the Hocken Library at the University of Otago. Miller & White had been established in Dunedin in 1927 and by the early 1950s the firm was being run by James White and Ian Dunn. Gordon Wilson was the Government Architect between 1952 and 1957; he had previously overseen the development of the state housing programme. During Wilson's tenure Modernism became the house style of central government. The University of Otago's Dental School (1954-61) designed by the Government Architect's office has a similar pilotis and panel ground floor treatment to the Gore Post Office.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange has technological and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its post-war construction and detailing.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange has contextual significance as a town centre landmark and for its historic relationship with the former Post Office on the opposite side of Main Street.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the structure post-dates 1900, its site may have potential archaeological value relating to its prior use and development. SO 5973 (July 1951) and SO 6012 (February 1952) show a number of buildings were located on the site before the post office was erected.

Summary of Heritage Significance

The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange has overall heritage significance to Gore and to the district of Gore as a whole. The building has historic and social significance for its association with the development of the region's communication infrastructure and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former staff and users. The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange has architectural significance as a Modernist building designed by Miller, White & Dunn of Dunedin in association with the Government Architect's office and technological and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its post-war construction and detailing. The former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange has contextual significance as a town centre landmark and in relation to the building that it replaced on the opposite side of Main Street. The building's site has potential archaeological value relating to its pre-1900 use and development.

References

- Archives New Zealand.
- https://www.otago.ac.nz/library/pdf/hoc_fr_bulletins/Bull_60_Architects.pdf
- https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5w36/wilson-francis-gordon

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Extent of scheduling, former Gore Post Office & Automatic Telephone Exchange, 120 Main Street, Gore.

The Gore Post Office in 1966. Archives NZ.