GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME	former Mataura Dairy Factory
ADDRESS	Mataura Marae, 15-17 Dorset Street, Mataura
PHOTOGRAPH	

(April 2022)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. (at time of assessment)	n / a	**HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY**	n / a
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Lot 1 DP 10951		
GDC FILE NUMBER	3273062		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	1922		
ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/ BUILDER	Unknown		
STYLE	Industrial		

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

One-and-a-half-storey building with irregular rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Principal, south-east elevation has multiple cross-gabled bays and central loading bay with suspended canopy. Two, gabled and glazed ventilators on principal ridgeline; tripartite casement windows and contrast brick detailing. Single-storey section with ramp and walkway with pipe railing at north corner. Decorative parapet on north-west elevation bears name of marae.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, concrete, cement plaster, timber, corrugated metal.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Timber L-shaped wing at south end of site (17 Dorset St), including chimney and upper level of water tower, demolished (c.2000?). Marae kitchen facilities installed north-east end of building (date unknown).

SETTING

The former Mataura Dairy Factory stands on the south-east side of Dorset Street; the site is bounded by Blampied Street to the north. The railway line is to the west and the Mataura River to the east of the site, which is on the south-west fringe of the town. The land parcel is gazetted as Māori reserve and zoned as a Māori Purpose Zone under the Gore District Plan. The scheduled setting encompasses the immediate surrounds of the building, rather than the land parcel as a whole.

HISTORY

Efforts to establish a dairy factory in Mataura had commenced by November 1884 but had to be revived in January 1887. Once formed the Mataura Dairy Factory Company purchased a site near the mouth of the Waimumu Stream in May 1887 and called tenders for a factory building two months later. Founding company directors included hotelier Hugh Cameron and merchants John Gray, James Pollock and Thomas MacGibbon. It appears that the first factory was located at what is now 17 Dorset Street; after the new factory was built beside it in 1922 the old factory was converted into a bacon curing shed. When the factory opened for the new season on 22 June 1923 it was described as the 'most up-to-date in the South Island as well as being the largest single roof factory in the island' (*Otago Daily Times* 23 June 1923, p. 8). The new factory was designed to process 15,000 gallons of milk and output in June 1923 was 11,000 crates of cheese per annum. Donald McDonald was the manager at the time the new factory was built. In 1935 it was reported that the Mataura Dairy Factory Company was one of the largest cheese factories in the country.

The factory closed in 1980; it has since been converted into Te Hono o te Ika a Maui ki Ngai Tahu marae (also known as Mataura Marae). It also hosted Kia Ngāwari Kōhanga Reo before it moved to its own site. Mataura Marae was opened to support the large, active, mātāwaka Māori community that had established in Mataura – largely due to employment opportunities at the Mataura freezing works. The marae development programme is ongoing, with the former dairy factory accommodating the whare kai and a modern wharenui having been built in the southern corner of the site. Further development of kaupapa Māori activities is expected on the wider site.

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Mataura Dairy Factory has historic and social significance as an interwar dairy factory that demonstrates the large-scale nature of dairying in the district in the early 20th century and the company's rising fortunes between 1887 and 1922. Mataura Museum holds a number of photographs of the factory and its staff making cheese.

The current use of the building as part of a marae complex is significant to local Māori, who repurposed the site as a focal point for Mataura's Māori mātāwaka community. It provides a space for a wide variety of family and community events and has hosted educational opportunities including, formerly, a kōhanga reo.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Mataura Dairy Factory has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former workers and suppliers. Before on-farm tanker milk collection began in the early 1950s, dairy factories often served as a social hub for local farmers.

The building also holds cultural value for its association with Te Hono o te Ika a Maui ki Ngai Tahu marae. As a mātāwaka marae, it serves an important cultural function for the mātāwaka community, providing a place to engage in cultural practices, and creating a sense of belonging for the many Māori in the community who cannot regularly return to their own marae, which are often in Te Ika a Māui/North Island.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Mataura Dairy Factory has architectural significance as an industrial structure that was designed to be fit for purpose while also expressing aesthetic value in its composition and detailing. The designer of the factory is currently unknown.

Technological And Craftsmanship Significance

The former Mataura Dairy Factory has technological significance for its brick masonry construction and the evidence it may provide about early 20th century dairy factory technology. The builder of the factory is currently unknown.

Contextual Significance

The former Mataura Dairy Factory has contextual significance as a local landmark that, in addition to the freezing works and paper mill on opposite sides of the Mataura River, is one of the key industrial sites within the township. The building also has contextual significance as part of Mataura Marae.

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

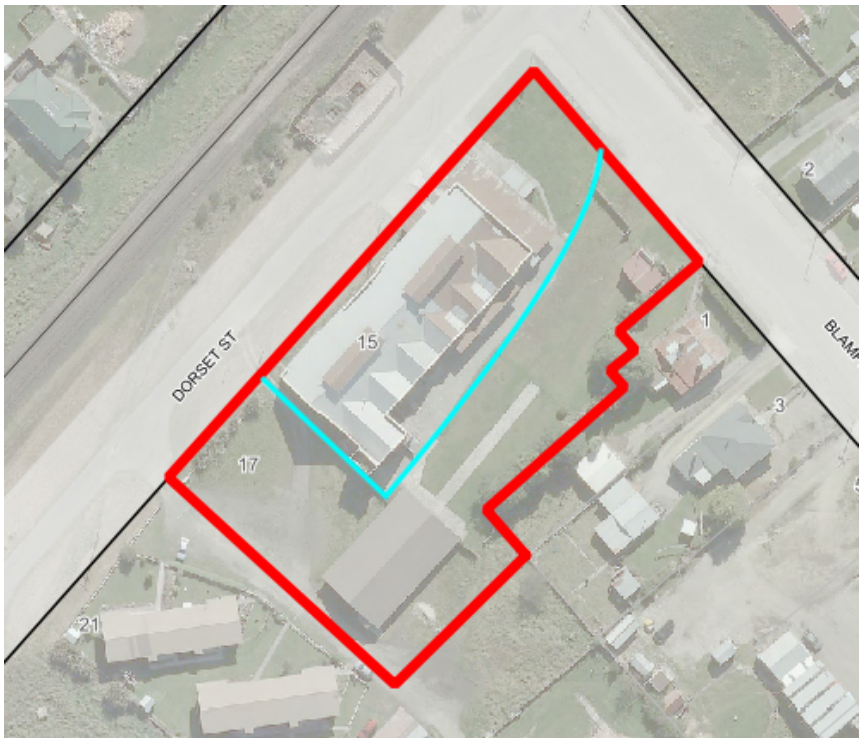
The former Mataura Dairy Factory has overall heritage significance to Mataura and to the district of Gore as a whole. The building has historic and social significance for its association with the local dairy industry and, more recently, Te Hono o te Ika a Maui ki Ngai Tahu marae. The former Mataura Dairy Factory has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former workers and their suppliers and as a site of cultural identity as Te Hono o te Ika a Maui ki Ngai Tahu marae. The former Mataura Dairy Factory has architectural significance for its utilitarian design that also demonstrates a concern with aesthetic values and technological significance for its brick masonry construction and former industrial use. The former Mataura Dairy Factory has contextual significance as a local landmark, both industrially and culturally, and its site has potential archaeological value in view of its development history.

References

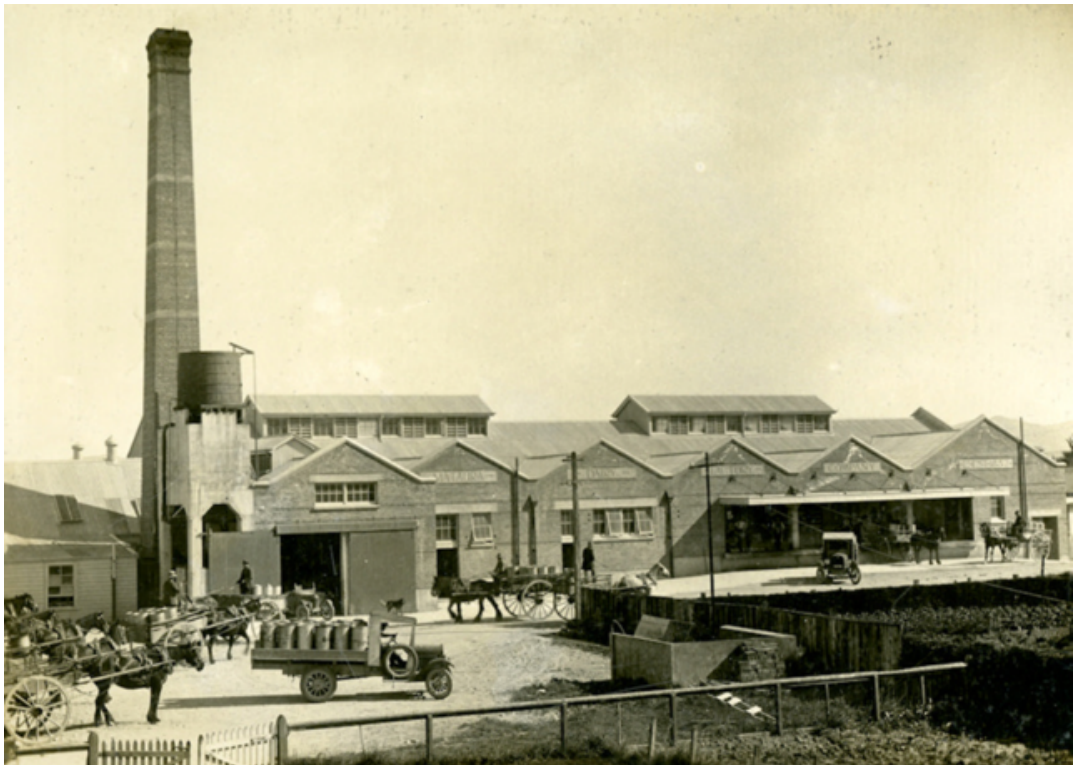
- *Mataura Ensign* 7 November 1884, p. 3; 18 January 1887, p. 3; 21 January 1887, p. 4; 20 September 1887, p. 5.
- *Otago Daily Times* 22 January 1922, p. 10; 23 June 1923, p. 8; 1 November 1927, p. 4; 15 September 1939, p. 8.
- *Southland Times* 2 July 1887, p. 1; 18 May 1916, p. 1.
- *Poverty Bay Herald* 24 June 1935, p. 3.
- *Otago Witness* 6 May 1887, p. 7; 27 February 1923, p. 38.
- *Evening Star* 12 April 1932, p. 12.
- *Timaru Herald* 12 July 1923, p. 7.
- *The Ensign* 2 December 2020 (available online).
- https://waateanews.com/2019/03/28/kick-start-to-complete-mataura-marae/
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mataura

Report Completed 18 May 2022

Author Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services



Extent of scheduling, limited to the immediate environs of the subject building, former Mataura Dairy Factory, Mataura Marae, 15-17 Dorset Street, Mataura.


The dairy factory in 1925. Mataura Museum.