

WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

2021 District Plan Item No. HH109
HERITAGE ITEM NAME West Eyreton School building
ADDRESS 1651 North Eyre Road, West Eyreton
PHOTOGRAPH



(www)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. n / a **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** n / a
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 1 DP 6771

VALUATION NUMBER 2170003200

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1935

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** JA Bigg, Canterbury Education Board architect; Mr
Hall, builder

STYLE Veranda block, open-air classroom type

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey building with irregular rectangular footprint and hipped roof. Straight veranda along north elevation is terminated by a lower-level bay at west end. Extensions to sides and rear; multi-pane casement windows and folding doors off veranda. Three panels of clerestory windows above veranda, which is carried on latticed posts.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Timber framing and weatherboard cladding, corrugated metal roof.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Extended and enlarged (1960s/early 1970s & 1990s?).

SETTING

The building is centrally located within the school grounds, which are bounded by North Eyre Road to the north and School Road to the west. The centre of the West Eyreton settlement is to the east, at the intersection of North Eyre, Earlys and Downs Roads. The extent of scheduling is limited to the immediate setting of the school building, notwithstanding the potential archaeological values of the property.

HISTORY

The West Eyreton School opened in 1872 on a plot bounded by North Eyre Road in the north and School Road in the west. A school teacher's house was built at the same time to the south of the school building. The West Eyreton School Committee petitioned the Education Board in 1930 in regard to the need for a new school to replace the borer-ridden building in which classes were then being held. After some delay, most likely caused by the Depression, a reunion of some 200 former pupils was held to coincide with the opening of a new school building, facing North Eyre Road, on 28 September 1935. Local MP RW Hawke officially opened the new school in the presence of six foundation pupils and the current headmaster AR Chambers. The original school building was then removed from the site. Today the school is a full primary school catering for over 200 students.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The West Eyreton School building has historical and social significance for its association with the rural community of West Eyreton and the past and present teachers and pupils of the school. Given the major rebuilding programme being undertaken at North Canterbury schools since the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010-11, the 1935 West Eyreton School building is a notable survivor of an earlier vintage of primary school buildings.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The West Eyreton School building has cultural value as a demonstration of historic education practices as well as the way of life of a rural community since 1935.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The West Eyreton School building has architectural significance as the work of Canterbury Education Board architect John Alexander Bigg. Bigg (born 1903) was the head of the Building Department of the Canterbury Education Board from 1931 until 1968, having commenced his working life in the department in 1920. He developed the 'famed veranda block' (Williams), which was a variant on the open-air classroom developed in the 1920s and was subsequently adopted by a number of other education boards around the country. The building has been extended to the sides and rear but the principal, north-facing elevation is largely authentic and still features the original latticed veranda posts and clerestory windows for ventilation.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The West Eyreton School building has craftsmanship value for the evidence it provides of interwar construction methods and materials. The contractor was a Christchurch builder.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The West Eyreton School building has contextual significance as a defining historic feature within the school campus. Its central location and visibility from North Eyre Road enhance the building's contribution to the historic character of the school.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the school building post-dates 1900 its site may have archaeological value in view of the development of the school campus for education purposes since 1872.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The West Eyreton School building has overall significance to West Eyreton and Waimakariri district as a whole. The building has historical and social significance for its association with the past and present teachers and pupils of the school and cultural value as a demonstration

of the way of life of a rural community since 1935. The West Eyreton School building has architectural significance for its design by Canterbury Education Board architect JA Bigg and craftsmanship value for the evidence it provides of interwar timber construction and detailing. The West Eyreton School building has contextual significance as a defining historic feature within the school campus and although the building post-dates 1900 its site may have archaeological value in light of the educational use and development of the property since 1872.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

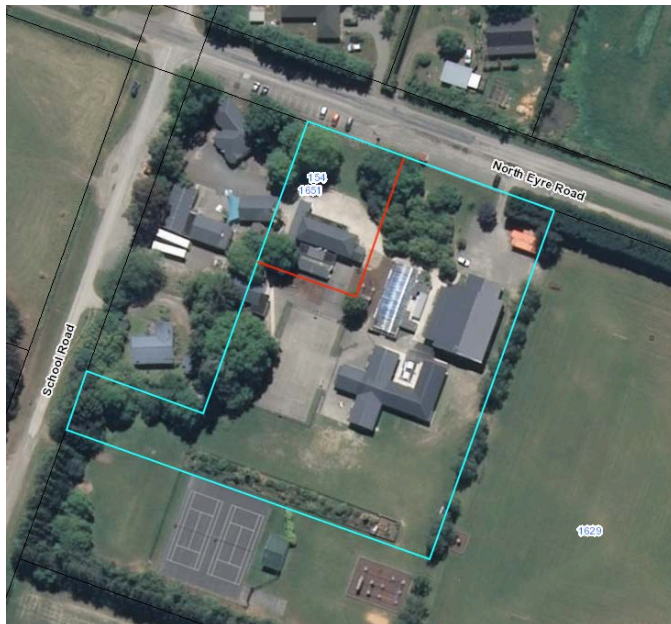
- *Press* 2 March 1872, p. 1; 27 May 1925, p. 16; 10 September 1930, p. 14; 12 April 1935, p. 22; 30 May 1935, p. 23; 5 July 1935, p. 4; 8 August 1935, p. 4; 30 September 1935, pp. 15 & 18; 25 March 2017 (available online).
- *Feilding Star* 4 July 1924, p. 4.
- *North Canterbury Gazette* 24 September 1935, p. 5; 27 September 1935, p. 3.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903; available online.
- Archives New Zealand.
- MN Williams 'Building's Yesterday's Schools – An analysis of educational architectural design as practised by the Building Department of the Canterbury Education Board from 1916-1989' PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 2014.

REPORT COMPLETED

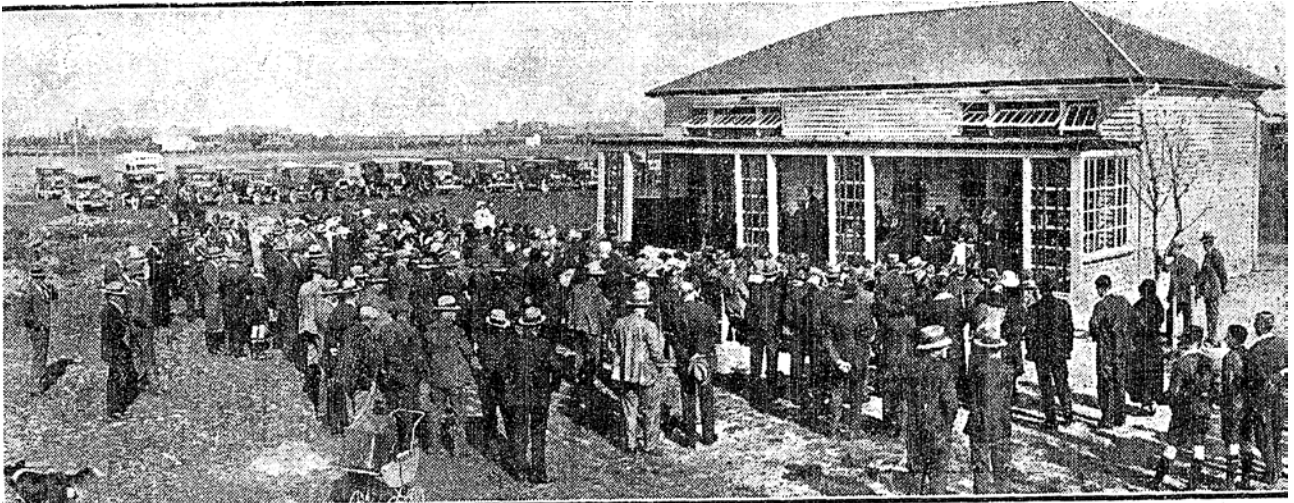
24 July 2019

AUTHOR

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Extent of scheduling, limited to immediate setting, 1651 North Eyre Road, West Eyreton.



The opening of the new school building. *Press* 30 September 1935, p. 18.