

WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former Sefton Public Library

ADDRESS 14 Pembertons Road, Sefton

PHOTOGRAPH



(3 April 2023)

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

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 7 Pt RS 2355 Sefton Township

VALUATION NUMBER 2144019400

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1923

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Guthrie Brothers, architects; Wadey & Efford,
contractors

STYLE Inter-war vernacular

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Small, single-storey, two-room building with rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Entrance porch at north end, stepped gable ends, casement and fanlight type fenestration. Memorial stone reads 'This library was built and endowed by a bequest of James Young, 1923'. Name of library in relief lettering on the main gable end of north elevation.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Reinforced concrete, timber, corrugated iron, bubbled glass.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Tile roof replaced with corrugated iron (date unknown); windows replaced with aluminium framed casements with fanlights (1970s?).

SETTING

The library stands on a triangular lot bounded by Pembertons Road to the west and High Street to the east. The Anglers' Arms is to the south along Pembertons Road but the immediate setting is largely residential in character. The extent of scheduling is the land parcel on which the library is located.

HISTORY

The 1903 Canterbury edition of the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* reported that Sefton possessed a library at the time of publication. When local farmer James Young (c.1852?-1921) of Mount Grey Downs died in October 1921 he left a number of generous bequests, including £500 with which to build a library at Sefton. Young also left an endowment of £1000 for the library's operation and maintenance. A site was offered to a newly created library committee by G Wilson in May 1923 and tenders were called in the following month. In July 1923 local residents helped to haul sand and shingle from the Ashley River to be used in the library's concrete construction. The building was officially opened on 7 December 1923 by the Hon George Forbes. Professor James Shelley of Canterbury University College was present at the opening and gifted 20 books from his own library to the new building. The library closed in 1996 but its site was the focus of a 2000 millennium project involving planting the site with native trees and shrubs. More recently the sale of the building, which is currently unused, has been mooted.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Sefton Public Library has historical and social significance for its association with the Sefton community and the philanthropy of James Young. Young's Mount Grey Downs farm had been in the family for around 40 years at the time of his death. He also gave £1000 to the Institute for the Blind in Auckland and £2000 to the North Canterbury Hospitable and Charitable Aid Board to maintain free beds for the poor in Christchurch Hospital.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Sefton Public Library has cultural significance as a site of community identity. It is valued by members of the public as a demonstration of the way of life of a rural community in the 20th century.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Sefton Public Library has architectural significance as the work of notable Christchurch architectural partnership the Guthrie Brothers. JS 'Jack' Guthrie (1883-1946) worked in partnership with his brother Maurice and in the 1910s and 1920s the firm was one of Christchurch's most successful. Jack Guthrie is a significant figure in New Zealand's architectural history owing to the design of the landmark California bungalow 'Los Angeles' (1909) and for introducing the American Colonial Georgian Revival style to New Zealand with Long Cottage (1917), both in Christchurch. In addition to a number of Canterbury homestead designs, including 'Rakahuri' at Glentui (H111, 1918), the Guthrie Brothers were also responsible for the 1918 extension of Ivey Hall at Lincoln College, the Northern Agricultural and Pastoral Association building in Rangiora (H076, 1924-25), and the main block at Christchurch Boys' High School (1926). The partnership was dissolved in 1926.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Sefton Public Library has technological and craftsmanship significance for its reinforced concrete construction and detailing by Rangiora building contractors Wadey and Efford. The firm, which was run by William Efford junior (1877-1960) from 1910, was also responsible for erecting the Victoria Park band rotunda (H048, 1906) and the Catholic convent (1907), both in Rangiora, the Woodend Methodist Church (H085, 1910-11), and St Barnabas's Anglican Church at Woodend (H086, 1932-33).

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Sefton Public Library has contextual significance as local historic feature prominently located on what was previously a public reserve. The original gateposts are still extant.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the library post-dates 1900, any archaeological value its site may have would likely arise from its earlier, if any, development and use.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Sefton Public Library has overall significance to Sefton and Waimakariri district as a whole. The former library has historical and social significance for its association with the Sefton community and the legacy of James Young. The former Sefton Public Library has cultural significance as a valued demonstration of the way of life of a rural community through the 20th century and architectural significance as the work of notable Christchurch architectural practise the Guthrie Brothers. The former Sefton Public Library has technological and craftsmanship significance for its concrete construction and detailing by Rangiora contracting firm Wadey and Efford and contextual significance as a local historic feature. The potential archaeological value of the site may be limited in view of the post-1900 construction date of the library.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Press* 10 November 1921, p. 1; 14 December 1921, p. 13; 25 May 1923, p. 3; 5 June 1923, p. 3; 19 June 1923, p. 13; 10 July 1923, p. 3; 24 July 1923, p. 3; 5 September 1923, p. 3; 17 November 1923, p. 3; 8 December 1923, p. 3; 11 December 1923, p. 2; 24 August 1925, p. 3; 19 December 1930, p. 3; 27 August 1931, p. 3; 7 May 1934, p. 3; 25 September 1934, p. 18.
- *NZ Herald* 31 October 1921, p. 4.
- *Feilding Star* 24 February 1922, p. 2.
- *North Canterbury Gazette* 21 September 1934, p. 3.
- M Jenner *Small Libraries of New Zealand* Tauranga, 2005.
- Waimakariri District Council 'Sefton Ashley Regions – Historic Trail', 1999.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903; available online.

REPORT COMPLETED

11 June 2019

AUTHOR

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REPORT UPDATED

7 April 2023 / 22 May 2025

AUTHOR

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Extent of scheduling, former Sefton Public Library, 14 Pemberton's Road, Sefton.



The library on opening day. Supplied.



Foundation stone by entrance porch, 3 April 2023.