

**WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL  
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM**

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**2021 District Plan Item No.** HH013  
**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** Rangiora Borough Council Substation  
**ADDRESS** 131B Percival Street, Rangiora  
**PHOTOGRAPH**



(Dr A McEwan, 22 December 2018)

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

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Lot 5 DP 12852

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2166107301

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1932

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** HH Matthews, RBC electrical engineer; Messrs Wadey & Efford, contractors

**STYLE** Neoclassical

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Single-storey building with rectangular footprint and concealed, gabled roof. Principal, east-facing elevation is symmetrical with blind arches flanking a double-door entry beneath an extended parapet featuring recessed panels with the name of the council in relief. Arch over entry supported on consoles; date of the building in relief set within the arch. Cornice bears the words 'Sub Station' in relief. Skylights in north-facing roof slope.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Reinforced concrete, corrugated metal.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Façade windows boarded over (date unknown).

**SETTING**

The building stands on the west side of Percival Street, south of its intersection with High Street and immediately adjacent to Victoria Park to the south. The town centre is to the north of the site and the setting is a mix of commercial and civic structures and amenities. The extent of scheduling is the land parcel on which the building is located.

## **HISTORY**

The Rangiora Borough Council ran its own electricity department from 1919 and, not wishing to forgo this profitable enterprise, erected a number of substations in the town independently of the North Canterbury Electric Power Board. The borough substation in Percival Street superseded an earlier one built by the council in Good Street. It distributed power generated at Lake Coleridge. The substation 'for its size is considered to be one of the most up-to-date in New Zealand', according to a news report of December 1934. It remains in use today.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Rangiora Borough Council substation has historical and social significance for its association with the provision of electricity supply to Rangiora since 1932 and, more generally, the development of modern infrastructure in the township during the inter-war period.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Rangiora Borough Council substation has cultural value as a symbol of the impact that electricity supply to Rangiora homes and businesses had upon the lives of the town's residents and visitors.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The Rangiora Borough Council substation has architectural significance as a Neoclassical style building that is comparable in form and detailing to the heritage substations erected by the Municipal Electricity Department in Christchurch between the world wars. Restrained classical styling was combined with modern electrical technology to create the appearance of an impregnable 'Temple to Electricity' (CCC heritage booklet). Harold Matthews was appointed electrical engineer to the borough in May 1928 and he held the position through the 1930s. Matthews (1884-1969) was born and trained in Invercargill and became an associate member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (UK) in 1926 and the Institute of Electrical Engineers (UK) in 1928.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The Rangiora Borough Council Substation has technological and craftsmanship value for its concrete construction and classical detailing by local builders Wadey and Efford. The firm, which was run by William Efford junior (1877-1960) from 1910, was also responsible for erecting the coronation gates (H048, 1902) and band rotunda (H048, 1906) in Victoria Park, the Woodend Methodist Church (H085, 1910-11), the Sefton Library (1923) and St Barnabas's Anglican Church at Woodend (H086, 1932-33).

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Rangiora Borough Council Substation has contextual significance as a local historic feature and for its relationship with a number of contemporary Rangiora Borough Council substations, including those in Good Street, Blakett Street and High Street to the west of the Plough Hotel. It is also associated with Victoria Park and Rangiora's governmental precinct.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

Although the building post-dates 1900, its site may have potential archaeological value given its location on the periphery of the town centre.

## **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The Rangiora Borough Council Substation has overall heritage significance to Rangiora and the district of Waimakariri as a whole. The building has historical and social significance for its

association with the provision of electricity to Rangiora homes and businesses since 1932 and cultural value as a symbol of the impact electricity supply had upon the lives of the town's residents and visitors. The Rangiora Borough Council Substation has architectural significance as a Neoclassical temple style design by electrical engineer HH Matthews and technological and craftsmanship value for its reinforced concrete construction and classical detailing by local contractors Wadey and Efford. The Rangiora Borough Council Substation has contextual significance as a local historic feature on the edge of the town centre; its site may have potential archaeological value in view of the building's location.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

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## REFERENCES

- *Press* 17 May 1928, p. 7; 22 February 1930, p. 5; 20 November 1931, p. 3; 26 November 1931, p. 1; 18 December 1931, p. 15; 21 December 1931, p. 4; 23 December 1931, p. 4; 22 January 1932, p. 15; 30 November 1932, p. 13; 11 December 1934, p. 18; 3 June 1935, p. 4; 8 January 1938, p. 3.
- *Sun* 18 June 1919, p. 10.
- *North Canterbury Gazette* 29 September 1933, p. 5; 16 June 1938, p. 5.
- DN Hawkins *Rangiora: the passing years and people in a Canterbury country town* Rangiora, 1993.
- *The Architectural Heritage of Christchurch 10. Pavilions, temples & four square walls – Christchurch pump houses and substations* Christchurch City Council; available online.
- Archives New Zealand.

REPORT COMPLETED

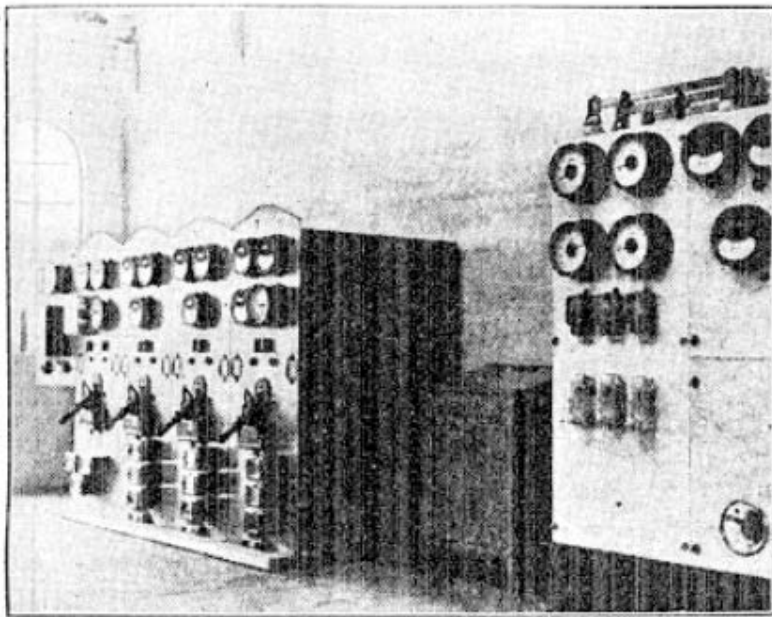
31 July 2019

AUTHOR

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Extent of setting, 131B Percival Street, Rangiora.



*ELECTRICAL SUB-STATION AT RANGIORA.—A section of the switchboard at the Rangiora Borough Council's new sub-station, which is now nearing completion.*

Press 30 November 1932, p. 13.