

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

---

**2021 District Plan Item No.** HH033  
**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** Wolffs Road footbridge  
**ADDRESS** 1077 & 1091 Wolffs Road / Eyre River, Horrellville  
**PHOTOGRAPH**



(HNZPT)

**DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** H008      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 7143 / 2  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Pt Lot 3 DP 8172 RS 37131 & Pt RS 15417

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2170010900 & 2170010800

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** later 1940s

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Public Works Department, design; RG Wolff, builder

**STYLE** Suspension footbridge

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Wire rope foot bridge, with timber decking, is suspended from four steel towers mounted on concrete footings.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Wire rope, steel, concrete & timber.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Unknown, if any.

**SETTING**

The bridge spans the Eyre River to the west of Horrellville. There are multiple crossings of the Eyre River between Oxford in the west and Kaiapoi to the east. The adjacent roadway traverses the river bed downstream (south side) of the bridge. The scheduled setting includes the bridge approaches, as well as the bridge itself.

## **HISTORY**

A traffic bridge across the Eyre River at the site of Wolff's Ford was under discussion by 1924 but the issue remained unresolved for many years. Instead local residents and travellers crossed the river at a number of fords, including one in Wolffs Road. In September 1938 it was reported that the Eyre County Council had decided to take no action about a renewed request for a traffic bridge at Wolffs Road, on the basis that there was no agreement on where it should be located. Local farmer Rudolf Wolff (c.1880-1963) evidently decided to take matters in to his own hands and, after delays caused by World War II, he built a suspension footbridge slightly upstream of the road ford. The bridge was apparently not completed until 1948. It remained in private ownership until 1978, when it was handed over by the Wolff family to the county council. The bridge is now owned by Waimakariri District Council and can still be accessed by foot. The long-discussed traffic bridge over the Eyre was eventually built in Poyntzs Road.

## **HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Wolffs Road footbridge has historic significance for its association with the mid-century development and use of local transport infrastructure, particularly when the Eyre River was high or in flood. The bridge is also notable for its association with local farmer RG Wolff, after whose family the local road and ford are named. Wolff was elected to the West Eyreton Riding of the Eyre County Council in 1923.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Wolffs Road footbridge has cultural value as a place of community identity and historic continuity. It demonstrates the way of life of local people whose movement was affected by the condition of the Eyre River in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The Wolffs Road footbridge has aesthetic value as a standard Public Works Department design.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The Wolffs Road footbridge has technological significance as a suspension bridge erected by a local landowner for public use. The suspension bridge type avoided the need for driving piles in to the river bed and was an economical approach to building across a wide span, in this case created by the braided nature of north Canterbury rivers.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Wolffs Road footbridge has contextual significance as a local historic feature and in relation to Wolffs Ford, which is immediately adjacent to the bridge.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

As the footbridge post-dates 1900, any potential archaeological significance its site may have would likely relate to an earlier period of the river's use and development.

## **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The Wolffs Road footbridge has overall heritage significance to the Horrellville area and to Waimakariri district as a whole. The bridge has historic significance for its association with the development of the district's infrastructure and cultural value as a place of historic continuity. The Wolffs Road footbridge has aesthetic value for its standard PWD mid-20<sup>th</sup> century design and technological significance for its steel, iron and concrete construction by RG Wolff. The Wolffs Road footbridge has contextual significance as a local historic feature.

**HERITAGE CATEGORY**

B

**REFERENCES**

- *Press* 14 May 1923, p. 13; 14 July 1924, p. 5; 15 September 1925, p. 3; 7 August 1926, p. 7; 15 April 1936, p. 5; 5 October 1938, p. 9.
- *Star* 25 July 1919, p. 6; 11 October 1920, p. 8.
- *North Canterbury Gazette* 8 September 1938, p. 7.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7143>
- <http://www.bridgemeister.com/list.php?country=New+Zealand&type=country&pp=100&sf=101>
- [https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5JVNJ\\_bridge-over-the-river-eyre-canterbury?guid=22f391c8-a9ca-4dc2-9032-bfc8cc5f156c](https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5JVNJ_bridge-over-the-river-eyre-canterbury?guid=22f391c8-a9ca-4dc2-9032-bfc8cc5f156c)

**REPORT COMPLETED**

7 February 2019

**AUTHOR**

Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services



Extent of scheduling, encompassing the bridge and the land parcels on which its approaches are located, Wolffs Road/Eyre River, Horrellville.