

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 96
*FORMER ADDINGTON RAILWAY WORKSHOPS WATER
TOWER AND SETTING – 66H CLARENCE STREET,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 22/12/2014

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Historical and social values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular person, group, organisation, institution, event, phase or activity; the continuity and/or change of a phase or activity; social, historical, traditional, economic, political or other patterns.

The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower has high historical and social significance as the only surviving structure from what was once the largest railway workshops complex in New Zealand. The city's first railway workshops were established at the Christchurch Railway Station site in 1863 but by the late 1870s these were too small and their location at the station was intrusive. Addington was the site chosen for new workshops and a rail line was built to link the two sites. The workshops opened in 1880 and at the turn of the 20th century about 550 men were employed there. The former Water Tower (1882-83) was built to provide a high-pressure water supply for the workshops and four faces of the steel water tank bore health and safety slogans until these were overpainted in the mid-1990s.

The Addington Railway Workshops closed in 1990, after which time the site was redeveloped as the Tower Junction retail centre and also became the site of the new Christchurch Railway Station (Warren & Mahoney, 1993). The tower also has historical significance as a reminder of the central place once occupied by rail transport in New Zealand. In 1990 an IPENZ plaque was installed on the tower to acknowledge its engineering heritage significance. Although the tower was specifically designed to withstand earthquakes, it suffered some damage in the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes and is currently awaiting repair.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural and spiritual values that demonstrate or are associated with the distinctive characteristics of a way of life, philosophy, tradition, religion, or other belief, including: the symbolic or commemorative value of the place; significance to Tangata Whenua; and/or associations with an identifiable group and esteemed by this group for its cultural values.

The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower has cultural significance as a tangible reminder of the significant role that the railway workshops once played in Christchurch, not only as a provider of skills and employment, but as a social and economic focus for the communities that once surrounded them.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular style, period or designer, design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.

The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower has architectural and aesthetic significance as a finely crafted piece of reinforced concrete construction. Although primarily an engineered utilitarian structure, the tower conveys a sense of classical monumentality by virtue of its symmetry and the treatment of the reinforced concrete base. The tower was designed by Peter Ellis, the Chief Draughtsman of New Zealand Railways, who later worked for the Wellington Harbour Board.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Technological and craftsmanship values that demonstrate or are associated with: the nature and use of materials, finishes and/or technological or constructional methods which were innovative, or of notable quality for the period.

The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower has high technological significance as one of the earliest reinforced concrete structures in the world (Thornton, p. 66). Designed to resist earthquakes, the tower was considered an innovative and daring structure at the time of its construction, the more so for its shallow raft-type foundations. An article about the tower published in *New Zealand Building Progress* in 1906 noted that the Public Works Department was sceptical about the nature of Peter Ellis's design, making him alone responsible for its success. Addington Prison inmates built the tower, which predates the first reinforced concrete water tower in Britain by 18 years.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), a landscape, setting, group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of

consistency in terms of type, scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detail; recognised landmarks and landscape which are recognised and contribute to the unique identity of the environment.

The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower has contextual significance, despite the demolition of the railway workshops that once surrounded the centrally located tower. The tower is a local landmark and retains its sense of context with the relocation of the central railway station from the central city to Addington in 1993 to a new purpose built station building and the railway line that serves it. The tower also has contextual significance in relation to other 19th century rail heritage items in the city, such as the Lyttelton Rail Tunnel (1867), and to other early concrete structures, such as Addington Jail (1870-75). The Water Tower also has contextual significance in relation to the Walker Settlement Workers' Dwellings in Mandeville Street, Riccarton (1909), which were built in the vicinity of the workshops with the housing needs of their employees in mind.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Archaeological or scientific values that demonstrate or are associated with: the potential to provide information through physical or scientific evidence an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values of past events, activities, structures or people.

The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower has archaeological significance because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower has high heritage significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula, and nationally. The tower has high historical significance for its construction to serve the country's largest railway workshops and for its association with the history of the railways in Canterbury. The structure has cultural significance as it marks the site of one of the city's most significant 19th and early 20th century employers. The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower has architectural significance for the quality of its design and high technological significance for its reinforced concrete construction. The tower has contextual significance in relation to the city's rail heritage. The former Addington Railway Workshops' Water Tower and its setting have archaeological significance in view of the age of the structure and the size and scale of industrial activity on the site since c1880.

REFERENCES:

Historic Place # 5390 – Heritage New Zealand List
<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/5390>

IPENZ Engineering Heritage
<http://www.ipenz.org.nz/heritage/itemdetail.cfm?itemid=122>

Geoffrey Thornton *Cast in Concrete – Concrete construction in New Zealand 1850-1939* (Auckland, 1996)

Geoffrey Thornton *New Zealand's Industrial Heritage* (Wellington, 1982)

Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District (Christchurch, 1903)
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc03Cycl-t1-body1-d3-d18-d20.html>

Press 14 August 1909, p. 12

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