

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME Bluestone & Iron Bridge
ADDRESS Saltwater Creek, Coonoor /Fairview Roads,
Watlington, Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(www)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. HHI74 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** n / a
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Legal road

VALUATION NUMBER xx

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1872

**ARCHITECT / DESIGNER /
BUILDER** GM Babington, engineer; PD McRae, contractor

STYLE Industrial

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Arched bridge with faceted parapets built from coursed bluestone.

MATERIALS / STRUCTURE

Bluestone (basalt) & concrete. Ironwork sub-structure.

ADDITIONS / ALTERATIONS

Repaired and widened on south side (Kurt Kempf, stonemason; 1993).

SETTING

The bridge spans Saltwater Creek (aka Otipua Creek) at the meeting of Fairview and Coonoor Roads, south of Coonoor Road's intersection with Landsborough Road. The extent of setting is limited to the immediate environs of the bridge.

HISTORY

There was a bridge over Saltwater Creek at the southern entry to Timaru by late 1864. This timber structure was repaired in 1871 and replaced by the current bluestone structure in 1872. The Timaru and Gladstone Board of Works was given the task of erecting the new bridge, despite local opinion that the Levels Road Board was better qualified for the undertaking, by the Canterbury Provincial Council. The Board of Works had been established by Act of Parliament in 1867. £1200 was set aside for the replacement structure and tenders were called for an iron bridge with stone abutments in April 1872. Initially the parapets were to be built of timber. The bridge was completed by December 1872 and the earlier structure duly disassembled for reuse by the Levels Road Board. Repairs to the bridge's approaches were already necessary by October 1873; the Levels Road Board being responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the bridge once it was completed. The bridge was widened and repaired in 1993 and is still in use today.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Saltwater Creek bridge has historical significance for its association with the Timaru and Gladstone Board of Works and, more generally, the Canterbury Provincial Council which funded its construction. The bridge represents the development of the district's transport infrastructure and the local quarry industry.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Saltwater Creek bridge has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of Timaru's colonial settlers and the steps taken to facilitate mobility around the district. The bridge is esteemed by members of the South Canterbury Historical Society and the Timaru Civic Trust for its historic qualities.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Saltwater Creek bridge has aesthetic value as an arched bridge that was designed to be fit for purpose. George Mathew Babington (c.1831-74) was the Board of Works' civil engineer in 1872. He had earlier been the engineer to the Levels Road Board. Babington resigned from the Board of Works in May 1873 and died in the following year whilst in the service of the Waimate Road Board.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The Saltwater Creek bridge has technological and craftsmanship significance as a later 19th century iron and masonry bridge, constructed, in part from locally quarried bluestone, by PD McRae, who was also a Timaru publican.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Saltwater Creek bridge has contextual significance as a local feature that is one of a large number of stone bridges and culverts throughout the Timaru district. The bridge can be linked to the Timaru and Gladstone Board of Works building in Stafford Street, Timaru (heritage item # 43) and another Main South Road bridge on Normanby Road bridge, which was erected by the Levels Road Board (heritage item # 101) in the later 1870s.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the bridge pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological significance relating to the structure's construction and the development of the Main South Road on the outskirts of Timaru.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Saltwater Creek bridge has overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The bridge has historical significance for its association with the Timaru and Gladstone Board of Works and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of colonial settlers in the district who needed robust bridges at their service. The Saltwater Creek bridge has aesthetic value as a utilitarian arched bridge and technical and craftsmanship significance for its iron and masonry construction using locally quarried bluestone. The Saltwater Creek bridge has contextual significance as one of a large number of stone bridges and culverts in the district and its site has potential archaeological significance in view of its pre-1900 date of construction.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 31 December 1864, p. 5; 9 September 1865, p. 5; 3 October 1866, p. 3; 17 July 1869, p. 2; 31 July 1869, p. 5; 11 March 1871, p. 3; 15 January 1872, p. 3; 9 February 1872, p. 3; 12 February 1872, p. 2; 14 February 1872, p. 5; 8 March 1872, p. 2; 22 April 1872, p. 4; 26 April 1872, p. 2; 12 July 1872, p. 2; 4 October 1872, p. 3; 8 November 1872, p. 3; 25 November 1872, p. 3; 16 December 1872, p. 1; 23 December 1872, p. 3; 13 January 1873, p. 3; 9 May 1873, p. 3; 1 August 1873, p. 1; 10 October 1873, p. 3; 30 September 1874, p. 1; 16 October 1874, p. 1; 27 January 2017 (available online).
- *South Canterbury Times* 11 July 1883, p. 2; 20 April 1892, p. 1.
- *North Otago Times* 11 February 1868, p. 3.
- J Waugh 'Historic Stone Arch Bridges' *Historic Places* No. 47, May 1994, pp. 20-21.
- <http://www.timarucivitrust.co.nz/activities/previous/7>



Extent of setting, bridge over Saltwater Creek, Coonoor/Fairview Roads, Watlington, Timaru.