

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

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** Limestone Bridge  
**ADDRESS** Sterndale Stream, Sterndale Valley Road, Totara Valley

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(HNZPT)

**FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM No.** No. 79      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 2010 / 2  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Legal road

**VALUATION NUMBER** xx

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1874

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Levels Road Board (William Williamson, engineer)

**STYLE** Vernacular

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

c. 3.8-metre span arched bridge built from coursed limestone.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Limestone.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Unknown, if any.

**SETTING**

The bridge spans Sterndale Stream on Sterndale Valley Road, south of its intersection with Hays Road. The extent of setting is limited to the immediate environs of the bridge and is consistent with the Heritage NZPT list entry.

## **HISTORY**

Limestone quarrying for local use commenced in Totara Valley in the 1870s. Several bridges and a number of buildings were subsequently erected in the locale. The Levels Road Board, established in 1864, was responsible for building and maintaining bridges throughout the district. Tenders were called for two stone bridges over the Sterndale Stream in November 1874. By mid-January 1875 the bridge appears to have been completed. The bridge is still in use today.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge has historical significance for its association with the Levels Road Board and the development of the Totara Valley. The bridge represents the development of the district's transport infrastructure and the local quarry industry.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of early pastoralists who relied on bridges built by the local road board to access their farms and truck stock to market.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge has aesthetic value as a vernacular bridge that was designed to be fit for purpose. William Williamson was the engineer of the Levels Road Board in 1874.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge has technological and craftsmanship significance as a later 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry bridge, constructed from locally quarried limestone by the Levels Road Board. Timaru contractors Messrs McGill and Brehaut were the successful tenderers for the Sterndale Valley Road bridge.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge has contextual significance as a local feature that is one of a large number of stone bridges and culverts throughout the Timaru district. Another scheduled bridge (heritage item # 78) is located on Hays Road, west of its intersection with Cleland Road, and St Paul's Presbyterian Church (heritage item # 77) is located on Cleland Road at the eastern terminus of Hays Road.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

As the Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological significance relating to the structure's construction and the development of pastoralism in Totara Valley.

## **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge has overall heritage significance to Totara Valley and Timaru district as a whole. The bridge has historical significance for its association with the Levels Road Board and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its early users. The Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge has aesthetic value as a utilitarian vernacular arched bridge and technical and craftsmanship significance for its masonry construction using locally quarried limestone. The Sterndale Valley Road limestone bridge has contextual significance as one of a large number of stone bridges and culverts in the district and in relation to other limestone structures in the locale. The Sterndale Valley Road

limestone bridge has potential archaeological significance in view of its pre-1900 date of construction.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

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## REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 26 November 1864, p. 4; 28 January 1865, p. 5; 22 August 1866, p. 2; 5 January 1874, p. 3; 25 March 1874, p. 3; 29 July 1874, p. 4; 9 September 1874, p. 3; 11 November 1874, p. 4; 20 November 1874, p. 1; 25 November 1874, p. 3; 13 January 1875, p. 4.
- J Waugh 'Historic Stone Arch Bridges' *Historic Places* No. 47, May 1994, pp. 20-21.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903; available online.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2010>



Extent of setting, Sterndale Stream Creek, Sterndale Valley Road bridge.



Sterndale Valley Road, Totara Valley, south of Hays Road, with bridge site marked by pin.