



Opunake Power Station, Beach Camp Road

1923

Use	Power Station	Historic Value	3 out of 5
Materials	Concrete	Architectural Value	- out of 4
NZHPT Registered	Not registered	Technical Value	2 out of 2
Valuation No	11970-433-01	Symbolic Value	1 out of 3
Legal Description	Lot 1 DP 7129	Rarity	- out of 2
		Townscape Value	1 out of 2
		Group Value	- out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	7 out of 20
Reference	Be1		

Description

The Opunake Power Station is a concrete building at the southern end of Opunake Beach. It is fed by water from the Opunake Lake at the top of the cliff. The lake is an artificially created body of water filled by a tailrace from the Waiaua River.

History

In 1899 the Town Board held discussions with engineers regarding the potential for an electricity supply for Opunake. Mr J R Stewart prepared plans for a small scheme on the Waiaua River. In 1903 a consulting engineer, Mr Edmund Allo, made a further report on the possibilities of this scheme. Tenders were received in 1904 to install an appropriate plant but the matter postponed.

The issue of electricity supply was raised again in 1907 by Messrs Holmes and Allan who offered to install a plant for the town. Consulting engineers, Templin and Toogood, drew up a scheme for the Town Board in 1917. A loan of £7,000 was raised and building started. It was then decided that a larger area than just Opunake could be supplied with electricity, and the Power Board was formed in 1921. This time a loan of £70,000 was raised by a poll of ratepayers of the Power Board area, (from the Oeo Road in the south to the Mototi Stream in the north). In December 1923 the area from the Mototi Stream to Puniho Road was added to the district and a loan of £22,000 was raised to cover it.

In 1925, due to water supply and storage problems, additional power sources were sought from the neighbouring New Plymouth Borough. In 1927, the New Plymouth Borough Council allowed this proposal to become operative, and therefore providing Opunake district with more efficient power supply.

Two plaques on the building record the opening of the station and the later upgrading of the generating capacity.

Plaque 1 reads:

"Opunake Power Board. This plate was erected on Sept 11th 1923, to commemorate the inauguration of the supply of electricity to the Opunake District. C. A. Trotter (Chairman), J. P. Burton, W. L. F. Chambers, H. Young, M. O'Brien, C. H. Hurst, F. Carter, A. O'Brien (Secretary). Templin and Toogood (Selwyn Toogood's father), Consulting engineers. J. E. Mays in charge of headworks. H. Webb in charge of Electric lines."

Plaque 2 reads:

"Opunake Hydro Scheme upgrade. The 365-kilowatt flight hydro turbine generator installed to upgrade the generating capacity of the Opunake Hydro Scheme was officially commissioned by the Mayor of South Taranaki District, Mary Bourke, 23rd April 1996. Egmont Electricity Limited."

The Opunake Power Board amalgamated with the South Taranaki Power Board on 1 April 1963 and became the Egmont Electric Power Board. In 1997, the South Taranaki District Council sold Egmont Electricity to Powerco.

Architect

Mr Toogood, Templin and Toogood

Builder

Not known.

Sources

Date

January 2000

Information added in November 2002.