

Historic Heritage Inventory



Waitawheta Water Supply

Location: Waitawheta River at Dickey's Flat

Heritage Status

Historic Places Trust Registration Number:

Historic Places Trust Category:

HDC Heritage Category: C - Heritage Item. Local or Neighbourhood Significance

Other:

Physical Description: Some concrete remains of Paeroa supply dam and filter house. Pipes remain along the route through the gorge, and the tunnel cut for the pipe is now used as a walkway.

Other known names:

Notable features:

Style:

Materials:

Date of Construction: 1957

History: Undoubtedly the biggest undertaking ever attempted by the Borough was the Waitawheta Water Scheme and it was a most protracted affair. First mention in the records was in 1923 when Hauraki Plains County initiated discussions on a joint scheme but it was received without much enthusiasm despite the fact that the 1923/24 summer was a very dry one.

However, difficulties and poor pressure from the Ohinemuri County Supply soon made Council aware again of the desirability of a better supply and a preliminary investigation of the Waitawheta area was carried out but nothing further done. In 1929 the local supply was again troublesome and a report was obtained which suggested a reservoir in town. The depression following this time ruled out any possibility of progress and it was not until 1937 that Council felt in a position to consider the matter again. In February 1938 Mr. R. P. Worley, Consulting Engineer, submitted a very comprehensive report on water supply for the Borough and came down very strongly for a supply from Waitawheta as the only source in the whole district capable of providing an adequate supply for as far ahead as could be foreseen. The estimated cost for a satisfactory scheme which would supply 1 million gallons a day was £25,000.

Again the matter lapsed and was not revived until 1940 when an approach was made to Government to hold the land in the watershed as a water reserve and perhaps establish a district water scheme as a rehabilitation project. It was found that as the stream was in a mining district special legislation was required to safeguard the stream from being used as a sludge channel. It took

District Plan Schedule

Number: HAU261

Heritage Category: C

Heritage Type:

- Wahi Tapu
- Cultural Landscape
- Building
- Group of Buildings
- Structure
- Historic Place
- Archaeological Site
- Other

Date Period:

1881-1910

Significance:

- Archaeological
- Architectural
- Cultural
- Historic
- Scientific
- Technological

Thematic Context

- Maori
- Early Settlement
- Industry
- Extraction
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Transport
- Communication
- Commerce
- Residential
- Social/Cultural
- Civic
- Health
- Educational
- Church/yard
- Other

Historic Heritage Inventory



District Plan Schedule

Number: **HAU261**

Heritage Category: **C**

Waitawheta Water Supply

3 years of preparation and negotiation before the Paeroa Water Supply Empowering Act 1947 was passed and this Act was a tribute to the endeavours of Mr. E. Edwards, Mayor, Mr. C. N. O'Neill the Borough Solicitor and Mr. M. C. Baker, Town Clerk.

More conferences were held between the Borough Council and Hauraki Plains and Ohinemuri Councils but were to some degree inconclusive. The estimate for the scheme had now risen to £47,000. Ohinemuri eventually advised that they were no longer interested in a joint scheme. The Hauraki Plains decision hinged on the amount of Government subsidy available. Eventually a deputation was taken on behalf of the two Councils to the Ministers of Works, Lands & Internal Affairs on 18th October 1949. It was favourably received but later some difference rose between the two Councils as to features of the facility and cost sharing and at one stage Hauraki Plains wrote that it did not intend to go ahead with a joint scheme. Some two months later this decision was reversed and in December 1950 a formal application for subsidy was lodged. Great was the disappointment when the Minister of Works wrote that any subsidy granted would only apply to the County share of costs and not to the Borough. The Minister also advised that Piako County should also be brought into discussions on supply from the Waitawheta. Another round of investigations and conferences followed. So much delay occurred that in 1952 the Borough Council decided to "go it alone". In 1953 steps were taken to raise a loan of £42,000 for renewing the pipes throughout the Borough in preparation for the new scheme. This was commenced in 1954 and took just over 2 years to complete. A loan of £80,000 was applied for in 1955 but permission to proceed took 14 months to obtain. In the meantime the amount was increased to £86,500. A loan poll was taken and carried by 160 votes for and 80 votes against the proposal. Tenders were called late in 1957 and one from the Carrington Building Co. Ltd., accepted. Messrs. Provincial Plumbers Ltd. of Waihi were the chief sub-contractors. The work was a major undertaking, much under exceedingly difficult conditions and the perseverance of the workman on the job was indeed a credit to them. The pipe line measures 33,700 feet (about 6 1/2 miles) from the Borough boundary via the Waitawheta Gorge to the intake above Dickey's Flat. The pipe line crossed two large swing bridges and passed through a 500 feet long tunnel before going under the bed of the stream to reach the treatment plant. Rising costs and additional features added to the scheme after the original tender was accepted resulted in the completed job costing just over £95,000. The first draw off from the supply was taken shortly prior to Christmas 1959 although the final work had not been completed at that stage. For the first time for nearly 40 years Paeroa Borough had an adequate supply of water. More remained to be done to make the supply perfect in all respects but all honour is due to the Councillors through the years who spent many hours working for the day when the Waitawheta scheme would be realised.

In 1999 the water intake was relocated to just above the junction of the Waitawheta and Ohinemuri Rivers. The water pipes have largely been removed and the walkway has been extended over the pipeline route to Dickey's Flat.

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District Plan Schedule

Number: **HAU261**

Heritage Category: **C**

Architect:

Designer:

Builder:

Engineer:

History of changes:

Condition: Unknown

Integrity:

Current Uses: of pipeline route - walkway

Former Uses: Water supply

Registered owner: HDC, DoC

Legal Description:

Reference Source: The Ohinemuri Regional History Journal, Vol. 2, No 2, September 1965

Associated Pictures: