

Heritage Item 19

Concrete Water Race



Location

Address:	Hart Road, Pudding Hill
Co-ordinates:	Northing 5736367 , Easting 2390953
Legal Description:	Road Reserve
Owner:	Local Purpose Reserve (soil contamination and river control)

Purpose

Current Use:	Water race
Original/Past Uses:	Water race

Heritage Significance and Category

Heritage Significance:	Physical; Historic
Heritage NZ:	Not registered
Ashburton DC:	Category A

Site Assessment

Assessed by:	Arlene Baird, Davie Lovell-Smith Ltd.
Date Assessed:	29 November 2014

Detail

Description:

This is a section of water race which feeds from the Pudding Hill Stream and runs down through the Canterbury Plains. The first 1.5km (very approximately) of the water race is constructed of a concrete base and sides which is approximately one meter wide and half a meter deep.

To the north western end of the water race, where the water is diverted from the Pudding Hill Stream, there is a small concrete dam with a sluice and sluice gate for regulating the flow. From there the race narrows and flows to the south east through the purpose made channel. Approximately half way along the concrete section, there is an overflow area which funnels off to the south west, again with a sluice gate (pictured). It appears that this overflow channel is not regularly used as it is overgrown with grass and weeds. The water race continues to the end of this straight 1.5km section where the concrete ceases and the water race continues on a much wider river base.

History:

Today the whole district is intersected with water-races, fed from the Pudding Hill stream and the river Ashburton. However during the early years of settlement in the Ashburton District, the lack of water was a great drawback to settlers in the plains, so the County Council started to construct over 3000 miles of water-races, to ensure that every paddock between the sea and the hills was supplied with water.

In 1869, Mr. Fooks, the Council's borough engineer, constructed a water-race about six miles in length on Mr. Reid's farm at Westerfield, and obtained his supply from the Ashburton River. Both prior to and after the execution of this work most of the engineers in the province declared it to be impracticable. The then Provincial Government, however, took the matter up and inaugurated a system of water-races in the district. In the early seventies Mr. Duncan Cameron, of the Springfield Estate, gave an irresistible impetus to the water-race system, by providing a supply for his own extensive property. The Ashburton County Council followed the good example, and in a few years had brought streams of water over the whole surface of the Ashburton plains.

Operations started on this water race in 1880/81, when 2000 barrels of cement were used to construct a dam at Pudding Hill and establish a concrete water race.

Two years later a second supply was taken out of the north branch of the Ashburton river, and a third supply was secured from the river near Winchmore.

This concrete water race still forms an integral part of the water flow from Pudding Hill Stream down through the Canterbury Plains.

Notable features:

Concrete construction; dam; sluice; sluice gates; overflow channel.

Condition:

The concrete construction appears to be in good usable condition with no evident damage.

Setting:

The water race takes water from the Pudding Hill Stream and runs in a south-easterly direction adjacent to the river. The setting is of high importance due to the practicalities considered during construction of where it would be appropriate to divert the water from Pudding Hill Stream.



