

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING: FORMER DUNEDIN NORTH INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



Google Streetview, accessed 18 October 2022

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX057
Address	19 Riego Street, Dunedin
Located within a Heritage Precinct:	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description:	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record:	Education
Condition of Property:	Not known to be at risk because of condition

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Does not meet criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1:

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Facade to Reigo Street, Albany Street, and Anzac Ave
	External/ancillary elements	
	Internal elements and/or rooms	Not considered as part of this desktop assessment. Owner may nominate interior elements for protection
	Excluded elements	

Statement of Significance

Heritage New Zealand's introductory statement of significance for the Crown Land Disposal Heritage Impact Assessment is reproduced below:

'In 1934, Dunedin North Intermediate School was opened. It was designed by the Otago Education Board Architect A B Welch as the first purpose-built intermediate school in New Zealand. It has architectural and aesthetic significance. It was a radical departure for Dunedin's education institutions and proved a turning point for the city's school architecture. As the first school to carry the name 'intermediate', it represented a major reconceptualization of New Zealand education and is socially and historically significant.'

It is not comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin because it is the first of its kind in New Zealand. Because of this history, the former Dunedin North Intermediate School has special heritage value.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Interwar (1918-1939)
Style	Education Department plan
Era/Date of Construction	1934
Architect/Designer/Builder	A B Welch, Otago Education Board
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Intermediate school
Primary Construction Materials	Timber weatherboard, tile roof, timber door and window joinery
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Central two storey form, entry porch, quadrangle layout, timber joinery and detailing.

Brief History (reproduced from Heritage New Zealand's Heritage Impact Assessment)

Originally the site had been exchanged the lease to accommodate a replacement school for the Albany Street School, a primary school, which was situated opposite. The Albany Street School, a stone building, was no longer fit for purpose and the Otago Education Board (OEB) had long advocated for a replacement. By 1930 the site and funds for a new brick school on the site of N Block had been secured. However, in 1931, as a result of the Napier Earthquake, the Department of Education cancelled the funding just as the foundations were being prepared.

The radical 1933 Education Amendment Act established intermediate schools (as opposed to junior high schools) throughout New Zealand. The Minister of Education declared that the provisions for the establishment of intermediate schools was a step in the right direction, as it was at these schools that a child's aptitude could be best discovered. It was the intention to establish these schools throughout the Dominion as opportunities permitted.

The government clearly signalled that the new nationwide intermediate schools were the central platform of their educational policy. Separating themselves from the American educational system in language and direction, these intermediate schools were no longer essentially stepping stones between primary and secondary education. From this point on Intermediate schools would emphasise technical education to help discern children's aptitudes.

In early 1933 the Education Department's offer to construct the first purpose-built Intermediate School for the Otago Education Board on the Albany Street site was accepted. The architect of the new intermediate was A.B. Welch, the Board's newly appointed architect, and this was his first school design.

Welch's design radically departed from earlier educational institutions in the city, grand buildings which were designed to impress and to convey school values.⁷ Primary schools were less ornate than institutions for older students but were generally built, or rebuilt, in stone or brick.⁸ In 1906 the newly established Maori Hill School was constructed of brick with impressive quoining. Among secondary schools, Edmund Anscombe's castellated brick design for the new Otago Girls High (1910), King Edward Technical College (1914) and the University of Otago's Medical School (1926) were substantial, stately and enduring. Even the Caversham School's modernist new buildings (1927) were imposing. Until DNI, almost without exception, Dunedin's twentieth century educational institutions were imposing rectangular brick monoliths.

Unlike these earlier institutions, Welch's design for DNI emphasised function over form. There were still elements which paid homage to earlier styles, seen in entrances decorated with porticos including columns supporting a pediment. The small paned windows also spoke to classical architectural styling. However, as the first of the intermediate schools it showed 'evidence of a functional interpretation of their distinctive needs'. The design embodied a 'promising conception of the purposes of an intermediate school' by containing classrooms for vocational training. The majority of the school is single-storey and one classroom and corridor wide. Its quadrangle footprint was a radical departure from earlier Dunedin educational institutions.

As such, outwardly the design was a disappointment to some locals.¹¹ The Board's Chair himself noted that 'he was disappointed that the building could not be worthy of Dunedin's educational buildings as a whole, but there was an old saying that half a loaf was better than no bread.'

There was praise for the building as well, though. A reporter of the time pronounced that '[no]where in the plans and specifications is there any sign of lavish or unnecessary expenditure and those responsible deserve credit for their simple yet dignified and carefully planned design'. The design included 'all the latest ideas in modern school room construction. Ventilation, lighting and heating followed the most modern development.' In the design of the classroom spaces every opportunity was taken to catch the maximum light and sunshine: 'Special care has been taken to have all the lighting windows to the classrooms facing approximately north-east, an obvious advantage in the preservation and strengthening

of children's health ... this [quadrangular] area, in addition to facilitating the reception of the maximum amount of sunshine into the classrooms, affords ideal shelter from winds and rough weather'.

The design then heralded a significant departure in future architectural styling of Dunedin city schools. The simplified design was adopted for new and rebuilt primary schools, which were weatherboard with single-storeyed classroom blocks and windows on both sides of the classroom for ventilation and light. These schools included Pine Hill (1936), Forbury (1939), Wakari (1939) and Opoho School (newly established in 1938). Macandrew Intermediate School, built in 1940, was also weatherboard with a two-storey entrance, and wings the width of a classroom extending into a quadrangular design. The simple design followed DNI's lead yet was even less ornamental. The facade contained no additional classical elements. New secondary schools in Dunedin also echoed DNI's innovative design. Mosgiel District High School, opened in 1940, was a weatherboard quadrangular design. King Edward Technical College gained a purpose-built art school in 1937. Kings High School, established in 1936, also followed DNI's design of a weatherboard two-storey entrance, single-storey classroom wings and a quadrangular design. The addition of a school hall later enclosed the quadrangle. Kings was also something of a milestone in school architecture as it contained classical architectural detailing not unlike that of DNI. Unfortunately, the school was demolished and rebuilt in 1991 so nothing remains of A.B. Welch's original design. DNI stands alone as a testament to the architectural transformation of city schools.

After the construction of DNI the old Albany Street School was demolished. Its World War I memorial plaque was relocated to the new intermediate school's front elevation.

DNI was described as a 'melting pot' with pupils coming from the old Albany Street School, George Street, Opoho and even Maori Hill Schools. 16 The school offered manual training in woodwork and metalwork (for boys), domestic science and sewing (for girls) as well as art and music. The domestic science room included a dining room and bedroom so girls could practice the art of table dressing and bedmaking. Dame Alison Holst is a noted pupil of the school.

Although the school closed in 1956 it was not until 1972 that the land was officially gazetted for use as a teachers' college. The arrangement continued until the mid-1970s when a new campus was built on the Union Street site.

In 1984 most of the Dunedin School of Art moved from the old King Edward Technical College site into the former DNI school buildings, which the Teachers' College had recently vacated. The Otago Polytechnic Students Association moved into rooms on the first floor. For around 20 years the former DNI was home to the prestigious School of Art.

In recent years the Art School has partly moved into new accommodation and shares the former DNI with Veterinary Nursing studies.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion.

An edited version of Heritage New Zealand's 'Summary of Values' is reproduced in part, below:

The former Dunedin North Intermediate has historic significance as the first school in New Zealand to be named an intermediate school. As the first intermediate school it represented a transformative change in New Zealand's education system. It was the first purpose-built intermediate school designed to recognise the different aptitudes of children and provide vocational training for the non-academic. The 1933 Education Act 'drastically redirected' education. DNI was the Education Department's first school to give effect to this legislation. DNI is the starting point for intermediate education as we know it today.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

DESIGN

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion.

Heritage New Zealand's summary of significance in their Heritage Impact Assessment is reproduced in edited form below:

The building has design significance as the first purpose-built intermediate school. It was the first quadrangular design for a school in the South Island. The design aimed to ensure the 'reception of the maximum amount of sunshine into the classrooms...an obvious advantage in the preservation and strengthening of children's health.'

The design was a 'radical departure for Dunedin City's earlier imposing brick and stone educational institutions – reflecting the abandonment of the build in brick policy following the 1931 Napier earthquake. Although DNI's design was radically simplified, there are still elements which paid homage to these earlier buildings by including elements of classical styling – porticos, pediments, columns, dentils under the cornice, and small paned windows. After the construction of DNI there was a flurry of new school builds in the city, all of which followed the DNI design, and none of which included classical detailing.'

The design emphasized function over form. The school's purpose and philosophy were reflected in the design – it provided spaces for manual classes and vocational training and also emphasized the importance of physical health in its layout and orientation.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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Zealand. It has architectural and aesthetic significance. It was a radical departure for Dunedin's education institutions and proved a turning point for the city's school architecture. As the first school to carry the name 'intermediate', it represented a major reconceptualization of New Zealand education and is socially and historically significant.'

REFERENCES

Heritage Impact Assessment – Dunedin North Intermediate School (Former), Heritage New Zealand, 2015 (saved to Pataka)

Review of HNZPT Crown Land Disposal Heritage Impact Assessment/Date Assessment Completed	11 April 2023	Author	HNZPT edited by HB
Date Peer Reviewed	6 August 2024	Reviewer	MM
Date Assessment Updated	6 August 2024		



Elevation on Riego Street (Google Streetview)



Corner of Albany Street and Anzac Avenue