



Douglas Dairy Factory

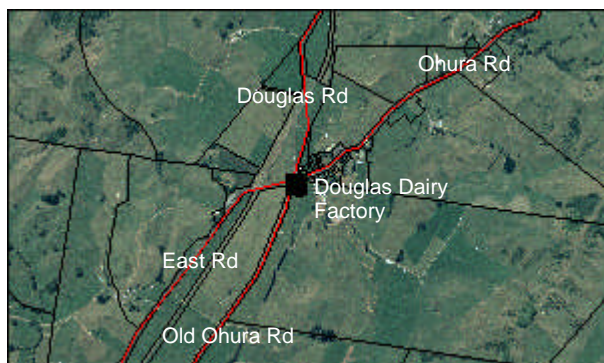
Cnr. Douglas & Ohura Rd's

1899

Use: None
Materials: Concrete, iron roof
NZHPT Registered: Not registered
Legal Description: Lot 1 D.P. 2352 Blk I Omoana SD

Historic Value: 3 out of 5
Architectural Value: 1 out of 4
Technical Value: 1 out of 2
Symbolic Value: - out of 3
Rarity Value: - out of 2
Townscape Value: 1 out of 2
Group Value: - out of 2

Overall Heritage Value: 6 out of 20



T. Bayly started selling sections of land around the Douglas area in 1889, which is when the Douglas community began to be settled. After 10 years, in 1899, there were sufficient settlers to open a creamery. This was opened by the Crown Dairy Company, and was situated on a flat area towards the village, near the sale yards. By 1902, the Stratford Co-operative Dairy Company had taken over the creamery. Farmers would bring their milk here by a dray or wagon, and the cans were hoisted up to the stage with a chain to be emptied and given back.

The dairy production steadily increased with new farmers moving to the area. This factor, coupled with a fire in 1918 that burnt the creamery down, led to a new Douglas factory having



to be built. Local suppliers petitioned for a cheese factory to be built instead of a replacement creamery, with success. While the new factory was being erected, the milk was carted to a temporary creamery set up in the Douglas stables.

The actual building of the new factory underwent many difficulties. Building in the swampland made securing adequate foundations hard, and eventually hard fill from the bank opposite the Douglas Boarding House and bags of concrete were used. Once the building had been partially completed, the equipment was taken inside – with a wall having to be knocked out and rebuilt when one of the boilers was larger than had been estimated. The new factory also included a whey tank, which was placed on four-foot Matai logs. The new Douglas Dairy Factory was finally opened in 1919.

The drays and wagons used by the farmers to transport their milk were gradually phased out, being replaced by tankers. The first tankers appeared during the 1930s, but the wagons were not totally phased out until the late 1950s.

The Dairy Factory continued to grow, with the company purchasing the (by then) disused Boarding House in 1941 and converting it into three flats for their married staff to live in. Other staff lived in huts at the rear of the Boarding House, or between the factory and the river. Having the staff living in a close proximity to the factory became vital during WWII, when the factory was working day and night to try and provide as much cheese as possible to help provide valuable resources.

In 1955, the Stratford Company decided to convert the Douglas factory into a Casein Factory. This had the effect of a reduction in staff members, which had a run-on effect on the total population of the Douglas community.

Three years later, the suppliers held a meeting in the hall, which resulted in the approval for the change to the farmers being on the tanker collection. This had the attraction of the higher payments that the Stratford Company were able to offer, and the fact that a large proportion of the farmer's day no longer had to be used up by delivering milk and washing the cans. Consequently, in June 1958, the Dairy Factory was closed, with the buildings being sold to the Douglas Transport Company.

Bibliography

Douglas: A Taranaki Rural Community
Church, Ian; *The Stratford Inheritance*, The Heritage Press (1990) p58