

**TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM**

---

**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** former Pleasant Point Post Office

**ADDRESS** 15 Afghan Street, Pleasant Point

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(Dr A McEwan, 12 July 2018)

**DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** New                      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** n / a  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Part Lot 8 DP 365

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2482120600A

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1912

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** John Campbell, Government Architect, Public Works  
Department

**STYLE** English Domestic Revival

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Two-storey building with rectangular footprint and hipped roof. Principal elevation faces north and is symmetrical about a cross-gabled 'pediment' with recessed entry accessed via a ramp and flight of steps. Flagpole atop cross gable. Double-hung sash windows, most with multi-pane uppers. Exposed rafters, string courses above and below windows. Lean-to at rear (south elevation).

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Timber framing and rusticated weatherboard cladding, corrugated iron.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Chimneys removed; fire escape added to west elevation, main entry altered (date unknown).

**SETTING**

The former post office stands on the south side of Afghan Street, immediately adjacent to its intersection with Khyber Street. There are several outbuildings at the rear of the property. To the east are the former Washdyke Junction railway signal box (heritage item # 130), the Pleasant Point Railway Station (heritage item # 129) and St Mary's Catholic Church. The commercial centre of Pleasant Point is on the other (northern) side of the former rail corridor. The extent of scheduling includes the land parcel on which the building is located. It is noted

that the building appears to extend beyond the northern boundary of the property in to the road reserve.

## **HISTORY**

Pleasant Point's first post office opened in 1868; initially it was housed in private business premises. The office was transferred to the settlement's new railway station in 1875. In 1882, after a long debate, the station was moved further west, closer to the road junction around which Pleasant Point's commercial centre was becoming established. A telegraph office was opened in the station in the same year. On 23 December 1912 a purpose-built post office close to the station was opened. The first postmaster to work in the new office was E Dollimore. A telephone exchange opened in the building on 14 June 1913, some months after an agency of the NZ Insurance Office had commenced business. An automatic exchange, in its own building next to the post office, was opened on 10 December 1965. (This building is no longer in situ). A new exchange on another site became operational in April 1982 and the post office was closed in June 1989. It was bought in the following year by the founders of Denheath Custard Squares, which occupied the building until 2001. A café operated from the building until recently; the former post office is currently on the market.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Pleasant Point Post Office has historical significance for its association with the provision of government post and telegraph services in the town for 77 years. The post office was the only central government service provided for any length of time in the town, apart from policing. The building also represents the social pattern whereby the postmaster was provided with accommodation in the post office and demonstrates how many former government buildings gained new uses after their closure in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The former post office's association with well-known South Canterbury dessert company Denheath Custard Squares also enhances its historical significance.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Pleasant Point Post Office has cultural value as a site of community identity and as a demonstration of the way of life of its former postmasters, their families, staff and customers.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Pleasant Point Post Office has architectural significance as one of the hundreds of building designed in the office of the Government Architect, John Campbell, who had overall responsibility for the 'corporate' style of government buildings from 1899 until his retirement in 1922. The Pleasant Point Post Office is comparable to the Akaroa Post Office (1914-15) in its use of the English Domestic Revival style in lieu of the more ornate Edwardian Baroque that Campbell favoured for major metropolitan post offices.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Pleasant Point Post Office has technological and craftsmanship value for the quality of its timber construction and detailing. The contractor of the building is currently unknown.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Pleasant Point Post Office has contextual significance as a notable historic feature within the Pleasant Point town centre. There are a number of other heritage buildings on Afghan Street; together these items contribute to the historic character of the town's principal thoroughfare.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the former post office post-dates 1900, any potential archaeological values its site may have would likely arise from any prior use and development. There appears to have been a small chemist shop on the corner of the site before construction of the post office.

## SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Pleasant Point Post Office has overall significance to Pleasant Point and Timaru district as a whole. The building has historical significance for its association with government services in the town for over 75 years and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former staff and customers. The former Pleasant Point Post Office has architectural significance as an English Domestic Revival design produced by the Government Architect and technological and craftsmanship value for the quality of its timber construction and detailing. The former Pleasant Point Post Office has contextual significance as a local historic feature and although the building post-dates 1900 its site may have potential archaeological significance in relation to the colonial development of the property and town centre.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

**B**

## REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 12 February 1873, p. 2; 1 October 1912, p. 5; 24 December 1912, p. 9; 18 February 1913, p. 6.
- *West Coast Times* 13 February 1912, p. 2.
- *South Canterbury Times* 21 October 1882, p. 2.
- *NZ Herald* 13 February 1912, p. 7.
- Archives New Zealand.
- Peter Richardson 'Building the dominion: government architecture in New Zealand, 1840-1922' PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1997. Available online.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903 (available online).
- Peter Richardson 'An Architecture of Empire: The government buildings of John Campbell in New Zealand' MA thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1988. Available online.
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2c3/campbell-john>
- <http://www.pointhistory.org.nz/chapters/community-services>
- <http://www.pointhistory.org.nz/chapters/the-commercial-sector-today>
- <https://www.denheath.co.nz/pages/our-story>



Extent of scheduling, 15 Afghan Street, Pleasant Point.

