

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

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** Grosvenor Hotel  
**ADDRESS** 26 Cains Terrace & 8 Beswick Street, Timaru

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(A McEwan, 9 July 2018)

**DISTRICT PLAN ITEM No.** HHI39      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 2054 / 2  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Lots 1-7 DP 7269

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2500071500

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1915

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** JS Turnbull, architect; Shillito Bros, contractors

**STYLE** Edwardian Baroque

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Three storey-building with square footprint and hipped roof forms; outbuilding at the rear (south) and cellar below. Two street frontages meet at rounded corner. Piano nobile effect created by treatment of first and second floors; ground floor has arched door and window openings. Oriel windows on north (Beswick Street) elevation; recessed two-storey balconies on east (Cains Terrace) elevation. Segmental pediments above cornice with dentil moulding; projecting parapets bear hotel name in relief. Rounded balusters on first floor and wrought iron railing on second floor balconies. Corner has textured brickwork 'stripes' and decorative relief work at street level bearing hotel initials. Circular windows at corner and on Beswick Street elevation. Wreath motifs in the apron between the oriel windows on north elevation.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Brick, cement plaster, Marseilles tiles and corrugated iron roofing.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

New fenestration and infill of second floor balcony on east elevation (date unknown, poss. part of 1973 refurbishment). Post-1983 exterior painting obscuring brick and stone constructional polychromy. Light well built over (date unknown). Refurbished (2010).

**SETTING**

The building stands on the south corner at the intersection of Cains Terrace and Beswick Street, midway between Strathallan Street in the north and George and Stafford Streets in

the south. The former Royal Hotel (heritage item # 25) stands on the north side of Beswick Street. The hotel stands on an elevated site with views of the port from its upper floors. The extent of scheduling is the multiple land parcels on which the hotel is located, partly in view of the potential archaeological values of the site.

## **HISTORY**

The first hotel to stand on this site was erected by John Meikle (1843-1926) in 1875-76. The architect was Frank Wilson and the two-storey building was constructed from brick. The hotel opened in June 1876, although it had already begun to host functions before that date. It was extended along Beswick Street in 1877 and was the largest hotel in Timaru for many years. Sir George Grey was a guest in May 1884 and Premier Richard Seddon stayed at the Grosvenor in 1899. The original hotel was demolished and a new one built in its place by JP (John Patrick) Murphy in 1915. Murphy had married Annie Coffey in Taranaki in 1897 and was a member of the Catholic church, as it seems were a number of his fellow Timaru publicans. William Fitzgerald, a builder's labourer, was killed when he fell from the older hotel when it was being demolished. The new building included a new Rialto auction room at the west end of the Beswick Street frontage. Initially only the rooms overlooking the street were completed on the third storey and there was an open light well in the centre of the building. The hotel continued to operate as the demolition and construction project proceeded; it officially re-opened for business on 20 November 1915. The hotel then continued to host dignitaries and provide a venue for town club meetings and social events. A civic luncheon for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip was held at the Grosvenor Hotel on 25 January 1954, during the Royal tour of 1953-54. The building was taken over by Dominion Breweries Ltd in 1970 and refurbished in 1973. New owners undertook further refurbishment work in 2010. The Grosvenor remains in use as a hotel today.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Grosvenor Hotel has high historical and social significance for its 142-year history of hospitality on this site and for its association with its early publicans, especially JP Murphy, their patrons and, more generally, the commercial development of Timaru's town centre. Having been established in 1876 the hotel's redevelopment in 1915 demonstrates the early 20<sup>th</sup> century building boom that occurred in Timaru, whereby earlier shops and business premises were replaced or extensively refurbished. The Grosvenor Hotel was the largest and last of the three major hotels built in Timaru in the early 1910s; the Hydro Grand Hotel (former heritage item # 37, demolished 2017) and the Dominion Hotel (heritage item # 36) preceding it.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Grosvenor Hotel has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former publicans, their families and their patrons, whether as hotel guests or visitors to the bar.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The Grosvenor Hotel has high architectural significance as an Edwardian Baroque design by notable Timaru architect JS Turnbull. Timaru-born James Turnbull (1864-1947) trained in Melbourne and then established a practice in Timaru in c.1895. The son of Richard Turnbull, a prominent Timaru businessman and politician, Turnbull also designed Job Brown's Beehive Stores (heritage item #117, 1901-2) in Temuka, Chalmers Church (heritage item #38, 1903-4) and a large number of Timaru houses. Turnbull went into partnership with his former assistant Percy Watts Rule in c.1920, after which time Rule was the principal designer in the firm. (Rule was already in Turnbull's office at the time the Grosvenor Hotel was being built). The firm designed the Temuka Library (heritage item #118, 1926-27), St Mary's Hall in Timaru (1928-29), St James' Anglican Church at Franz Josef (1928-31) and the 1930 additions to the Bank Street Methodist Church (heritage item #51).

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The Grosvenor Hotel has technological and craftsmanship significance for its brick construction and the quality of the building's 1915 classical façade. The Shillito Bros. had premises in Le Cren's Terrace and offered second hand bricks for sale from the hotel site in May 1915. The ornamental plasterwork on the building was undertaken by Arthur Hornsey of Timaru.

### **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Grosvenor Hotel has high contextual significance as a notable historic feature within the Timaru town centre. The concentration of scheduled heritage items and historic character buildings lining Stafford Street, and in the vicinity of the port and railway station, gives Timaru's principal CBD thoroughfare its distinctive identity and sense of place. The building stands across the road from the former Royal Hotel (heritage item # 25) and south of the former Customshouse (heritage item 22); it can be seen from the port. It was reported that JP Murphy gave the council land along the Cains Terrace boundary of his property in 1915 to allow the footpath to be widened.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

Although the building post-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological significance. John Crammond's Cobb stable (est. c.1869) was located on the property prior to the first Grosvenor Hotel being erected in 1875-76 (Township of Timaru map, South Canterbury Museum). The hip roofed outbuilding to the south of the hotel (Lot 7 and part of Lot 4) may pre-date the hotel.

### **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The Grosvenor Hotel has high overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The building has high historical and social significance for its association with hospitality in the town since 1876 and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its early proprietors and their patrons. The Grosvenor Hotel has high architectural significance as an Edwardian Baroque style design by local architect JS Turnbull and technological and craftsmanship significance for its brick construction and classical detailing. The Grosvenor Hotel has high contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the Timaru town centre streetscape and skyline and potential archaeological significance in view of the development that has occurred on the site since c.1869.

### **HERITAGE CATEGORY**

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### **REFERENCES**

- *Timaru Herald* 22 June 1876, p. 3; 7 November 1894, p. 4; 1 March 1899, p. 3; 18 February 1910, p. 6; 21 May 1910, p. 4; 11 October 1913, p. 12; 18 September 1914, p. 9; 6 March 1915, p. 2; 27 March 1915, p. 10; 8 May 1915, p. 12; 22 June 1915, p. 10; 9 October 1915, p. 9; 14 October 1915, p. 6; 27 November 1915, p. 5; 7 May 1917, p. 2; 31 May 1917, p. 7; 1 March 1920, p. 10; 1 April 1920, p. 11; 11 December 1920, p. 11; 31 January 2009 (available online).
- *South Canterbury Times* 14 May 1884, p. 3.
- *NZ Tablet* 4 February 1915, p. 13; 9 May 1918, p. 25.
- *Waimate Daily Advertiser* 22 April 1915, p. 3.
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- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2054>
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- <http://thegrosvenor.co.nz>
- S Brosnahan *Thinking about Heaven – a history of Sacred Heart parish, Timaru* Timaru, 2011.



Extent of setting, 26 Cains Terrace & 8 Beswick Street, Timaru.



Earlier Grosvenor Hotel, *Tourists' Guide to Canterbury* 1902.



Grosvenor Hotel, c.1916. ½-006876-G, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.