

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME Stafford Chambers
ADDRESS 199-209 Stafford Street / 18-22 Beswick Street,
Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(A McEwan, 9 July 2018)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. NO. 24 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 2070 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 1 DP 3539

VALUATION NUMBER 2500071200

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1908

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Thomas Coulthard Mullions, architect; HN Hollow,
builder

STYLE Commercial classicism

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Three storey-building with irregular triangular footprint and hipped roof forms. Principal elevations overlooking Stafford and Beswick Streets have arched window openings on the second floor beneath a prominent cornice and shaped parapet. Paired rectangular windows on the first floor are separated from those above by a string course with an arch and keystone motif. Modern shopfronts and a suspended veranda. Corner of the building is chamfered at ground floor level and curved above. Parapet at corner bears the building name in relief lettering.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Ferro-concrete, brick, cement plaster, corrugated metal.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Erection of veranda and unspecified ground floor window alterations (TC Mullions, architect; 1909); installation of suspended veranda (date unknown).

SETTING

The building stands on the north-east side of Stafford Street, on the south side of its intersection with Beswick Street. There are a number of heritage buildings in the vicinity,

including Rhodes's Buildings on Stafford Street (heritage item # 31), and the former Atlas Chambers (heritage item # 26), Grosvenor (heritage item # 23) and former Royal (heritage item # 25) hotels, all on Beswick Street. The extent of scheduling is land parcel on which the building stands.

HISTORY

Stafford Chambers was built in 1908 for Robert Hay who had sold it by January of the following year. At the time that the plans for the building were announced its form was compared with the Flatiron building in New York. Hay (1850-1918) was the son of Ebenezer Hay, a pioneer settler on Banks' Peninsula. He was the brother of William Hay, who built several buildings further north on Stafford Street, including Hay's Buildings (heritage item # 29). Robert Hay held the Otumarama Estate at Gleniti in the late 1890s before his retirement to Christchurch. Tea rooms occupied the second floor when the building opened, and it also accommodated professional rooms and provided a venue for various organisations, including the Farmers' Union, Automobile Association, and the Red Cross. One of the later occupants of the building was the local branch of the Temperance and General (T & G) Mutual Life Assurance Company. The building remains in retail and commercial use today.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Stafford Chambers has historical significance for its association with Robert Hay, the early tenants of the building and, more generally, the early 20th century development of the Timaru town centre. The building represents the Edwardian-era building boom in Timaru, whereby earlier shops and business premises were replaced and new, 'modern' premises were built.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Stafford Chambers has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former tenants and their clients or customers.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Stafford Chambers has architectural significance as an early career work by local architect Thomas Coulthard Mullions (1878-1957). Mullions practiced architecture in Timaru between 1904 and 1915; occupying rooms in the Hay's Buildings, which he had designed, from the time they were completed. Mullions designed and built his own home at 8 Park Lane and oversaw the construction of 'The Croft' (former Orbell house) at 12 Park Lane (1908, heritage item # 8). He later practised in Auckland where he patented a cavity concrete block in 1919.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Stafford Chambers has high technological and craftsmanship significance for its ferro-concrete and brick construction and ornamental detailing. Henry Hollow (c.1849-1935) was a local builder who was a sub-contractor for the Rink Stables on Stafford Street that were built to Mullions' design in 1907. The building prefigures the ferro-concrete construction of several Auckland tower blocks designed by Mullions in partnership with CF McDonald and Sholto Smith in the 1920s (see Tyler, as below).

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Stafford Chambers has high contextual significance as a notable historic feature within the Timaru town centre. The building is one of a small number of CBD structures with a triangular footprint. 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.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the building post-dates 1900 its site may have potential archaeological significance relating to its earlier development and use. The 1875 plan of Timaru (South Canterbury Museum) shows earlier structures on this site and it was reported in 1907 that one of the earlier buildings on the property dated to 1869 and was built of stone.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

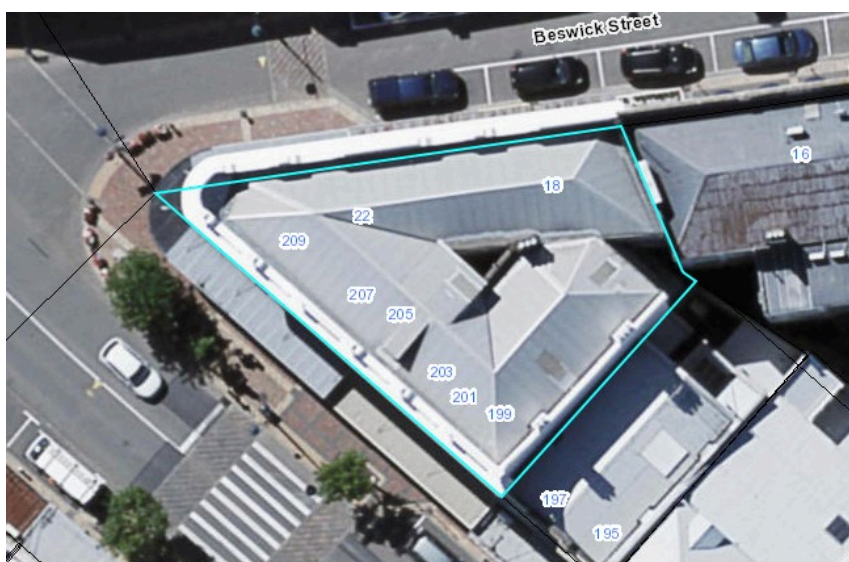
Stafford Chambers has high overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The building has historical significance for its association with the early 20th century development of the town centre and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its early tenants and their clients or customers. Stafford Chambers has architectural significance as the work of Timaru architect Thomas Coulthard Mullions and high technological and craftsmanship significance for its ferro-concrete and brick construction and ornamental detailing. Stafford Chambers has high contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the Timaru town centre streetscape and its site may have potential archaeological significance in view of the building's pre-1900 development and use.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 3 May 1907, p. 3; 6 November 1907, p. 7; 21 November 1907, p. 2; 16 November 1908, p. 1; 21 January 1909, p. 5; 30 January 1909, p. 4; 1 July 1909, p. 7; 30 December 1909, p. 4; 19 April 1910, p. 2; 9 May 1913, p. 4; 23 January 1914, p. 2; 22 September 1916, p. 3; 3 December 1918, p. 5; 10 November 1920, p. 8.
- *Akaroa Mail and Banks' Peninsula Advertiser* 3 December 1918, p. 2.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2070>
- L Tyler 'McDonald, Mullions and Smith Architects: An Open Architecture for Auckland in the 1920s' *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 30, Open* ed. by A Brown and A Leach (Gold Coast, Qld: SAHANZ, 2013), vol. 2, pp. 749-760.



Extent of setting, 199-209 Stafford Street & 18-22 Beswick Street, Timaru.