

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former McRae's Stone Store / former NZ Loan and Mercantile Agency Co./Dalgety & Co. stores [known as the former Landing Service Building]

ADDRESS 2 George Street, Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(A McEwan, 9 July 2018)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM No. No. 44 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 326 / 1
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 10 DP 1

VALUATION NUMBER 2500048801C

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1870 & 1875-76

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Peter McRae, owner/builder?; FJ Wilson, architect
(1876 addition)

STYLE Industrial vernacular

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Two-storey building with irregular trapezoidal footprint and hipped roof forms. Door and window openings, some of them arched, have stone or brick surrounds. First floor windows on symmetrical east elevation are multi-pane double hung sashes. Ground floor openings on same elevation have been covered over. Remnant cathead over central opening on east elevation, beneath solid parapet. Lantern on ridgeline of western (rear) wing. 1950 Canterbury centennial plaque mounted on east wall marks the site of the first house in Timaru (built by George Rhodes).

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Dressed and random rubble Timaru bluestone (basalt), brick, timber, corrugated metal.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Hip-roofed extension to middle bay, south elevation (c.1995). Southern staircase addition (c.2014).

SETTING

The building stands on the original shoreline of Timaru harbour, at the eastern terminus of George Street, close by Timaru Railway Station and railway line. A public plaza on the north-east side of the building accommodates historic interpretation signage and a statue of Captain Henry Cain, who operated one of the George Street landing services. There are a

number of heritage buildings in the vicinity, including Meehan's Building (heritage item # 20), the former National Bank (heritage item # 45), and the former Evans Atlas flour mills (heritage item # 42). The extent of scheduling is the land parcel on which the building is located.

HISTORY

The first stage of what is known today as the Landing Service building was erected in 1870 by Peter McRae as a grain store. McRae, a local contractor, entrepreneur and hotelier, appears to have immediately leased the building to Julius Mendelson of Temuka who was still in possession of the building when it was offered for sale or lease in November 1872 and again in November 1873. The store was built so that drays delivering grain could offload at level with the first floor from the bank behind the building. Grain could then be delivered to boats brought up to the landing service in front of the building. The NZ Loan and Mercantile Agency Company had taken over McRae's grain store by the winter of 1875; the company enlarged the building in 1875-76 by adding the two rear hip-roofed structures, thus tripling the size of the original building. The 1925 block plan of central Timaru (South Canterbury Museum) shows the three-part stone building at the centre of a large complex of stores held by Dalgety & Co. (to the north and west) and the NZ Loan and Mercantile Agency (to the south). The two companies merged in 1961. The stores, principally for wool and grain, were served by sidings from the railway line, the 1876 addition having been built to accommodate a line of rails through the centre of the building. The buildings were used as warehousing until they were sold to Timaru City Council in 1984. Under threat of demolition for a number of years, the building was saved and conserved in the 1990s by the Timaru Civic Trust with support from the local community. The building remains the subject of a Heritage Order (11 February 1985) and is now in hospitality, retail and tourism uses.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former McRae's stone store has high historical and social significance for its association with the early settlement and commercial development of Timaru. It is commonly known as the Landing Service building but that is a misnomer, in view of the fact that the landing service was just that, a service, which was offered until 1881 in relation to the movement of goods to and from the Timaru waterfront before the harbour and railway were well established. The building derives its historic significance from its association with Peter McRae, the NZ Loan and Mercantile Agency, and Dalgety & Co. as a store built to house goods for export from the district. Its high social significance arises from its conservation in the 1990s and the efforts made by the community to protect a landmark heritage building from demolition.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former McRae's stone store has cultural significance for the esteem in which it is held by the local heritage community and as a demonstration of the way of life of the buildings' owners, their staff and customers over many decades.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former McRae's stone store has architectural significance for its industrial vernacular design and classically-inspired east-facing façade. The first stage of the building may have been designed and built by Peter McRae, who was the contractor for the Saltwater Creek bridge in 1872. At least part of the later sections of the building was built to the design of early Timaru architect FJ Wilson. South African-born Francis John (Frank) Wilson (c.1836-1911) was said to have 'practically rebuilt Timaru after the big fire' of 1868 (*Poverty Bay Herald* 21 April 1911, p. 5). Wilson was also responsible for the Criterion (Excelsior) Hotel (1872-73), the first stage of the Bank Street Methodist Church (1874-75, heritage item # 51), and the former Maclean & Stewart's Auction Mart and Horse Bazaar (1878-79, heritage item # 28).

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former McRae's stone store has high technological and craftsmanship significance for its bluestone masonry construction and classical detailing. The building represents both a response to the March 1869 council bylaw stipulating masonry construction in the central business district, which was passed after the December 1868 fire that destroyed around 30 buildings in the town centre, and the use of a building material that is closely identified with Timaru's colonial building tradition.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former McRae's stone store has high contextual significance as a landmark historic building that serves as an important reminder of the historic importance of the locality in relation to the landing service and the development of the railway through Timaru. 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

As the building and its associated historic activities pre-date 1900, the property has potential archaeological significance relating to its colonial use and development. The property's location in close proximity to the railway and harbour is also noteworthy as regards potential archaeological values. The 1875 map of Timaru (south Canterbury Museum) shows the footprint of the original, eastern bay of the building immediately in front of a bank running parallel to the beach. Excavation would have been necessary to create the building site for the later additions.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former McRae's stone store, which has come to be known as the former Landing Service building, 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 the commercial development of Timaru and cultural significance as a highly valued heritage site. The former McRae's stone store has architectural significance as an industrial vernacular structure and high technological and craftsmanship significance for its stone masonry construction and classical detailing. The former McRae's stone store has high contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the Timaru town centre and harbour precinct. The building's site has potential archaeological significance in view of the colonial use and development of the property.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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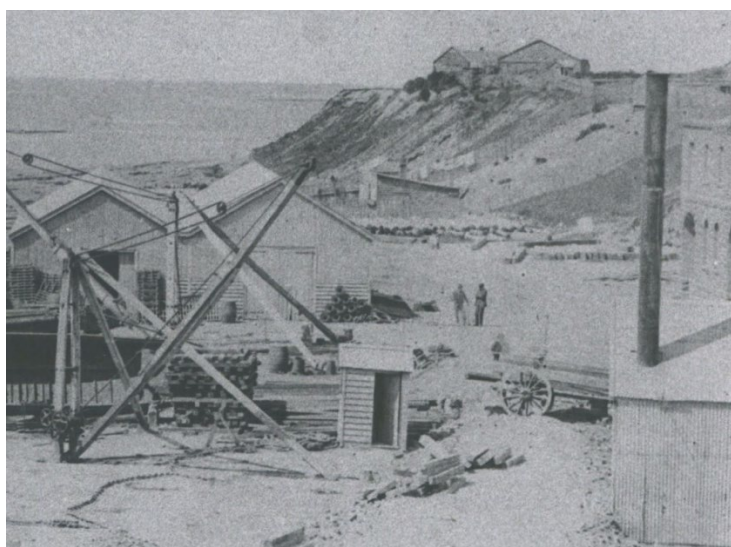
REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 20 April 1866, p. 6; 22 April 1868, p. 2; 23 May 1868, p. 1; 6 February 1869, p. 1; 26 November 1870, p. 5; 21 June 1871, p. 2; 1 November 1871, p. 3; 17 April 1872, p. 4; 25 November 1872, p. 1; 9 July 1873, p. 2; 11 July 1873, p. 2; 15 August 1873, p. 3; 5 September 1873, p. 2; 17 October 1873, p. 3; 28 November 1873, p. 3; 12 October 1874, p. 1; 30 August 1875, p. 2; 22 February 1876, p. 2; 17 June 1876, p. 3; 27 July 1876, p. 2; 31 July 1876, p. 3; 4 August 1876, p. 1; 2 April 1877, p. 3; 16 March 1878, p. 1; 9 November 2017 (available online).
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/326>
- <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/timaru-landing-service-building>
- <https://www.aorakitourism.co.nz/activities/heritage/landing-services-building-5-things-you-should-know>

- M Mosley *Illustrated Guide to Christchurch and Neighbourhood* Christchurch, 1885, pp. 161-62 (available online).
- G McLean *100 Historic Places in New Zealand* Auckland, 2002.
- D McGill & G Sheehan *Landmarks – Notable Historic Buildings of New Zealand* Auckland, 1997.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* (available online).



Extent of setting, 2 George Street, Timaru.



c.1870 photograph showing at far right the grain store built by PD McRae close to the sheds and pulley structure of the landing service. Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin.

New Advertisements.

**1,700 BUSHEL RYE GRASS
SEED.**

R . T U R N B U L L

Will Sell by Public Auction, on
SATURDAY NEXT,
6th instant,
At

McRAE'S STONE STORE,

(adjoining the Landing Service,)

**SEVENTEEN HUNDRED BUSHEL
RYE GRASS SEED,**

Grown in the District, in lots to suit pur-
chasers.

Sale at **ONE** sharp.

Terms at Sale.

Timaru Herald 3 September 1873, p. 2. PapersPast.



Detail from October 1956 aerial showing stone stores surrounded by later warehousing erected by the NZ Loan and Mercantile Agency and Dalgety & Co. WA-42345-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.