

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME O’Meeghan’s Buildings
ADDRESS 284-286 Stafford Street, Timaru
PHOTOGRAPH



(A McEwan, 9 July 2018)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM No. NO. 35 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 2067 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lots 12-17 DP 7393

VALUATION NUMBER 2500064400

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1911-12

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Thomas Lusk, architect of Lusk & Moriarty

STYLE Commercial classicism

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Two storey-building with rectangular footprint and hipped roof. Symmetrical façade has a centre-and-ends composition with a two-four-two rhythm of bays separated by slightly projecting bays with arch-headed windows and the cornice broken by a decorative pediment with cartouche panel. Cartouches bear inscribed lettering ‘AD 1912’ and ‘Shoral [sic] Hall’. Multi-pane double-hung sash windows with aprons at first floor. Suspended veranda, with marquee over former theatre entrance; modern shop fronts. Name of building in paint below cornice.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, Oamaru stone facings, concrete, corrugated iron.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Theatre and auction mart at rear demolished; shop fronts modernised (2007).

SETTING

The building stands on the south-west side of Stafford Street, south of its intersection with Canon Street. A service lane off Canon Street provides access to the rear of the building. The extent of scheduling is limited to the footprint of the original building.

HISTORY

Irish-born Michael O’Meeghan (1861-1921) erected a large commercial building on Stafford Street in 1911-12. O’Meeghan was a hotelkeeper in Timaru and also owned other commercial property in the town. The ground floor of O’Meeghan’s Buildings was occupied by shops, whilst the first floor housed the Choral Hall. O’Callaghan and Le Cren’s auction mart was at the rear. In December 1915 a cinema, the Grand Theatre, opened at the back of the site (JS Turnbull, architect). The 1925 block plan for this part of the town centre (TDC) shows that the Grand Picture Theatre and A. Washer’s auction rooms stood in separate single-storey buildings behind O’Meeghan’s Buildings. There was an open yard between the two parts of the commercial property and a passage way between shops linked the theatre to the street. At the same time there were six shops on the ground floor and a billiard saloon (est. June 1915) on the first floor. The theatre was renamed the Regent in 1931; it closed in 1967. The former Regent Theatre and Washer’s auction mart building were demolished in 2007. The surviving Stafford Street block of O’Meeghan’s Buildings was refurbished at the same time and remains in commercial use.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

O’Meeghan’s Buildings have historical and social significance for their association with Michael O’Meeghan, the early occupants 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

O’Meeghan’s Buildings have cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of their former tenants and their customers.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

O’Meeghan’s Buildings have architectural significance as the work of Timaru architect Thomas Lusk. In June 1911 Lusk (c.1882-1946) entered in to a partnership with building surveyor Bart Moriarty, who had previously supervised the construction of the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart (heritage item # 19, 1909-11). Lusk and Moriarty also designed the Dominion Hotel (heritage item # 36) and Meehan’s Building in 1912 (heritage item # 20); the partnership continued until early 1914. Lusk later moved to Dunedin and then to Hamilton; he was the father of noted Canterbury artist Doris Lusk (1916-90).

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

O’Meeghan’s Buildings have technological and craftsmanship significance for their brick and stone masonry construction and the quality of the building’s classical detailing. Lusk and Moriarty were also the contractors for this building, employing day labour to undertake its construction. The cantilever veranda was the first of its kind in Timaru when the building opened in March 1912.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

O’Meeghan’s Buildings have 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.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the building post-dates 1900 its site may have potential archaeological significance relating to earlier activity undertaken on the property. An 1875 map of Timaru (South Canterbury Museum) shows a building on the future site of O’Meeghan’s Buildings.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

O’Meeghan’s Buildings have overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The building has historical and social significance for its association with Michael O’Meeghan and the early 20th century development of the town centre and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its tenants and their customers. O’Meeghan’s Buildings have architectural significance as the work of Timaru architect Thomas Lusk and technological and craftsmanship significance for their brick construction and classical detailing. O’Meeghan’s Buildings have contextual significance for the contribution they make to the Timaru town centre streetscape and their site may have potential archaeological significance in view of the building’s location and earlier development on the property.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

B

REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 29 August 1911, p. 3; 14 October 1911, p. 6; 28 February 1912, p. 5; 12 March 1912, p. 6; 16 March 1912, p. 3; 2 April 1912, p. 3; 30 December 1913, p. 6; 15 April 1914, p. 7; 4 May 1914, p. 1; 29 June 1915, p. 2; 30 June 1915, p. 6; 8 December 1915, p. 3; 15 February 1916, p. 2; 12 March 2007 (available online).
- *Waimate Daily Advertiser* 12 January 1910, p. 3.
- *South Canterbury Times* 9 April 1901, p. 2.
- *Progress* 1 July 1913, p. 41.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2067>
- <http://cinematresures.org/theaters/25673>



Extent of setting, limited to footprint of original building, 284-286 Stafford Street, Timaru.