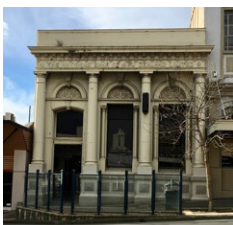


TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former National Bank of New Zealand Building

ADDRESS 129 Stafford Street, Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(A McEwan, 9 July 2018)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. No. 45 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 2074 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Pt Lot 21 DP 1

VALUATION NUMBER 2500048500

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1881-82

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** FJ Wilson, architect; George Filmer, builder

STYLE Neoclassical

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Multi-level building with rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Façade reads as one floor having a three-bay classical arcade with engaged columns, entablature bearing building name and solid parapet. Tympanum with key stones over side entry and window openings; latter are framed by colonettes. Stone base (dolerite) set with rectangular plaques in contrasting stone.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, Oamaru stone, dolerite, corrugated iron.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Pediment removed from parapet (date unknown). Internal remodelling (post-1980).

SETTING

The former bank occupies the full extent of its site and stands on the east side of Stafford Street, south of its intersection with George Street. Across the road stand the Theatre Royal (heritage item # 46) and the former Criterion Hotel; to the south is the former Union Bank of Australia and the former Timaru and Gladstone Board of Works building (heritage item # 43). To the north is the former Government Life Building (heritage item # 47). The extent of scheduling is the land parcel on which the building is located, in view of the potential archaeological values of the site.

HISTORY

The National Bank of New Zealand was established in 1872 and it had offices in Timaru by June of the following year. The bank moved from temporary premises further north on Stafford Street in to its new, purpose-built premises south of George Street in May 1882. A sitting room and two bedrooms on the first floor were provided for banking officers required to sleep on site. The bank moved out in December 1980 and thereafter the building was converted for use as a restaurant. After a fire damaged the interior of the building it was renovated and used as a 'fun parlour' and night club. The former bank was put on the market in late 2015 and is currently unoccupied.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former National Bank of New Zealand building has historical significance for its association with the early banking history of Timaru and almost a century of use by the National Bank of New Zealand. In the later 19th and early 20th centuries there were three banks on the east side of Stafford Street between George Street and the former Timaru and Gladstone Board of Works building (National, Union and the Bank of New South Wales).

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former National Bank of New Zealand building has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former staff and customers. Banking staff were typically provided with on-site accommodation in the 19th century; historically the former National Bank therefore combined commercial and residential functions.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former National Bank of New Zealand building has architectural significance as the work 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 is reported to have arrived in Timaru in c.1855 and not only worked as a contractor and architect but also as a publican, holding licenses for hotels in Timaru and Washdyke in the mid-1860s. Wilson also designed the Criterion/Excelsior Hotel in Stafford Street (1872-73), Timaru Main School (1873-74) and the former Bank Street Methodist Church (1874-75, item # 51). He and his wife Emily had ten children and although Frank Wilson died in Gisborne in 1911 he was remembered at the time as one of the 'prominent citizen(s) of Timaru in the early days' (*Timaru Herald* 28 April 1911, p. 7). Wilson left Timaru in the 1880s and, after a period spent in Australia, he later lived and worked in Wellington, Palmerston North and Gisborne. Frank Wilson's son Frank was also an architect and his grandson Francis Gordon Wilson (1900-59) became Government Architect of New Zealand (served 1952-59).

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former National Bank of New Zealand building has technological and craftsmanship significance for its brick and stone construction. The building represents 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. George Filmer was a local contractor from the early 1870s and was also involved in local body politics. One of his former employees, William Hall-Jones, later entered national politics and served briefly as Prime Minister (1906).

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former National Bank of New Zealand building has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the historic character of Stafford Street and in relation to a number of nearby heritage buildings. The building's presence in close proximity to the Excelsior Hotel, Theatre Royal (heritage item # 46), former Union Bank of Australia and the former Timaru

and Gladstone Board of Works building (heritage item # 43) attests to the historic importance of the southerly section of Stafford Street for the financial and commercial development of the city.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

The site of the former National Bank of New Zealand building has potential archaeological significance relating to the early development of Timaru and its central business district. The 1875 town plan (South Canterbury Museum) appears to show that the site was vacant before the bank was erected in 1881-82.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

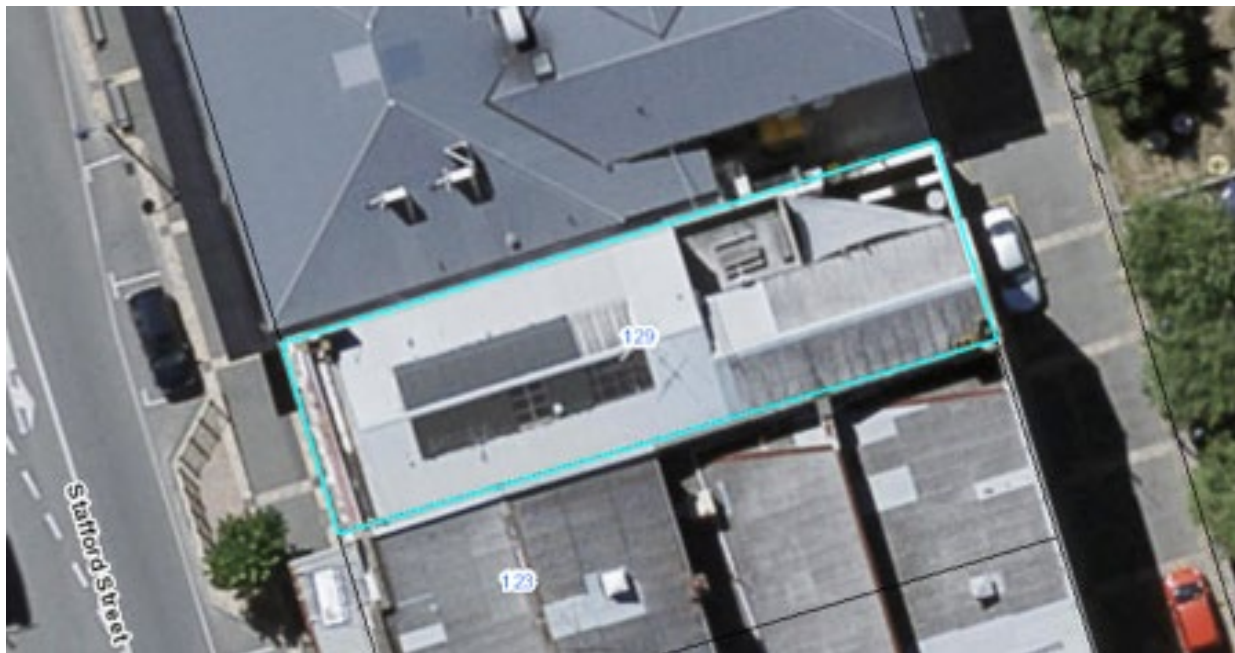
The former National Bank of New Zealand building has overall heritage significance to Timaru and the district of Timaru. The former bank has historical significance for its association with the development of Timaru's banking sector and the evolution of Stafford Street. The former National Bank of New Zealand building has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former staff and customers and architectural significance as the work of colonial architect FJ Wilson. The former National Bank of New Zealand building has technological significance as a masonry building with classical detailing and contextual significance for its contribution to the historic streetscape of Stafford Street. The former National Bank of New Zealand building has potential archaeological significance relating to its construction and early use.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

B

REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 30 June 1873, p. 2; 28 January 1881, p. 2; 22 May 1882, p. 3; 13 June 1893, p. 3; 14 June 1906, p. 5.
- *South Canterbury Times* 23 September 1881, p. 3; 30 December 1881, p. 2; 2 May 1882, p. 3; 1 December 1882, p. 3; 23 July 1886, p. 3.
- *Poverty Bay Herald* 21 April 1911, p. 4.
- *New Zealand Times* 12 April 1911, p. 8.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903; available online.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2074>



Extent of setting, 129 Stafford Street, Timaru.