

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former Timaru Milling Company office

ADDRESS 1 Stafford Street, Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(Dr J Wilson, 12 September 2018)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. New **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** n / a
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 1 DP 346228

VALUATION NUMBER 2500022701

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1941-42

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Turnbull & Rule, architects

STYLE Art Deco Moderne

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey building with square footprint and hipped roof. Principal elevations face north and west. Entry is housed within a rounded bay at the north-west corner. Bay features a pleated parapet, name of company in painted lettering above cornice over central door with flanking windows. Six-pane steel-frame windows on north and west elevations have a single opening casement and relief panels above and below. Vestigial classical detailing above entry and at parapet level. Elevation overlooking Mill Street has planar wall and unadorned window openings. Chamfered corner with downpipe at Mill and Stafford Streets intersection. Flagpoles mounted on Stafford Street elevation and small garden court on north elevation.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Concrete [?], corrugated metal roofing.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

New door at entry (date unknown). Building erected on garden site to north of office (later 1970s).

SETTING

The former mill office stands on the east side of Stafford Street, opposite its intersection with Browne, King and High Streets. The building is bordered by Mill Street to the south. The former Timaru Milling Company flour mill is to the east along Mill Street and the town centre and port of Timaru lie to the north. The extent of setting is largely limited to the footprint of the office building, notwithstanding the potential archaeological values of the site as a whole.

HISTORY

James Bruce (c.1831-1903) was a Scottish millwright who arrived in New Zealand in the early 1860s and worked as a builder and contractor in North Otago before eventually settling in Timaru and setting up a sawmill in Grey (Mill) Street. Bruce then built a brick flourmill, known as the Waitangi Mills, on the same site in 1878; this mill burnt down on 21 May 1881. A new flour and oatmeal mill was erected in its place and was in production by September 1882. It was the first in New Zealand fitted with roller milling plant. By early 1883, after the death of his business partner in December 1882, Bruce had closed the mill and was seeking buyers for it. A meeting in May of that year proposed the formation of a limited liability company to own and operate Bruce's Royal Flouring Mills. The company was duly formed and in April 1886 its shareholders resolved to change the name to the Timaru Milling Company Ltd. At the turn of the 20th century the Timaru Milling Company's mill was said to be the largest in New Zealand, with a capacity 25 sacks of flour per hour. The company produced pictorial collectors' cards from the late 1930s until the early 1950s and also produced oatmeal. In 1941 it was granted the sole New Zealand licence to produce macaroni; thus was founded the well-known Diamond pasta range. In 1941-42 a macaroni factory was erected to the west of the flour mill. Previously the land had been held by the Timaru Borough Council and occupied by the army. A new office was built at the same time as the pasta factory at the corner of Mill and Stafford Streets. The Timaru Milling Company closed in 2005; later owners used the buildings on the mill site until early 2012. The former company office is currently vacant.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company office has historical significance for its association with the Timaru Milling Company, the history of flour milling and food production in South Canterbury, and the modernisation of the New Zealand milling industry. The former office has added historical significance for its association with the Diamond pasta range, which is still in existence and was launched in the early 1940s to overcome the import restrictions and war-time conditions that were hampering New Zealanders' access to macaroni. The adjacent flour mill produced the raw material needed for pasta production, using wheat that was produced following years of research at Lincoln College (*Press* 6 November 1941, p. 3). The new factory was widely reported at the time of its construction and was a destination for visiting dignitaries.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company office has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former owners and employees.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company office has architectural significance as an Art Deco Moderne style building designed by leading Timaru architects Turnbull and Rule. 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 (1901-2) in Temuka, Chalmers Church (1903-4, heritage item # 38) in Timaru, and a large number of Timaru houses. Turnbull went into partnership with Percy Watts Rule in c.1920, after which time Rule was the firm's principal designer. The practice designed the Timaru Boys' High School Memorial Library (1923-24, heritage item # 16), Temuka Public Library (1926-27, heritage item # 118), St James' Anglican Church at Franz Josef (1928-31) and Rule was awarded a Gold Medal from the NZ Institute of Architects for his design of the Surgical Wing at Timaru Hospital (1936-40) in 1939. Originally the milling company office overlooked a garden that ran along the Stafford Street frontage, hence the architectural treatment given to the north elevation, which is now largely obscured by the factory extension built on the garden site.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company office has technological and craftsmanship value as an example of war-time construction methods and materials.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company office has contextual significance as one of a number of heritage buildings associated with the milling industry that are located in or near to the town centre. The former Timaru Milling Company mill stands on the adjacent property at the east end of Mill Street (1881-82, heritage item # 39). Mill Street was originally named Grey Street; by 1926 it had assumed its current name, presumably in honour of the mills erected along it. The former Timaru Drill Hall stands on the opposite side of Mill Street.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the office building post-dates 1900, its site has potential archaeological value relating to the earlier development of the property. Before 1941 the property at the corner of Mill and Stafford Streets was a council reserve. The 1875 town plan shows the footprint of a 'Barrack' on the site and while this building had been removed by 1925, the block plan of Timaru prepared in that year shows the South Canterbury Battalion Band Room on the same lot, to the east of the office building site.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

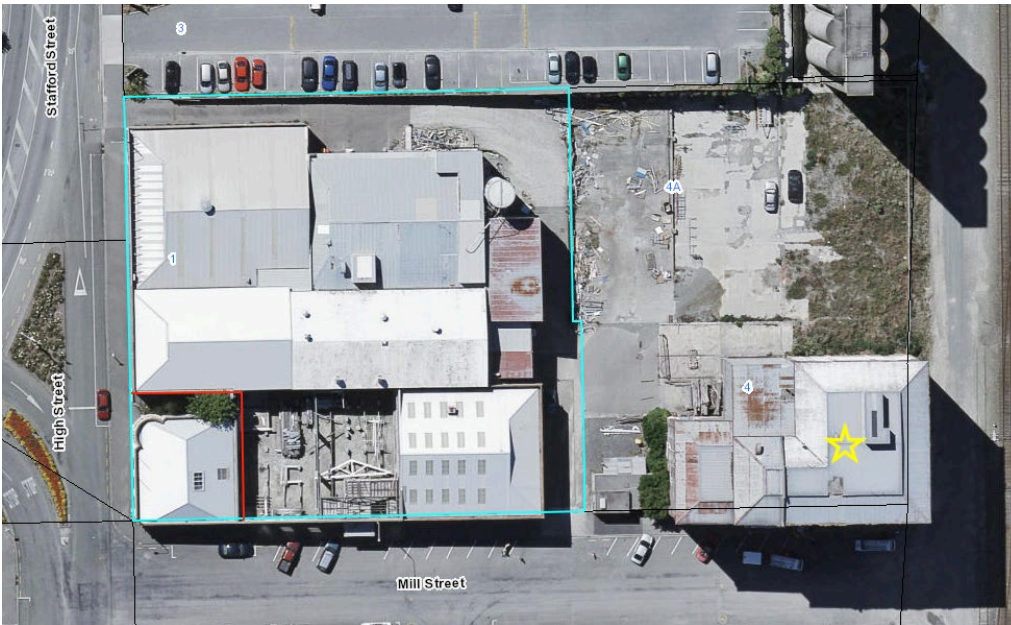
The former Timaru Milling Company office has overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The building has historical significance for its association with the Timaru Milling Company and its pioneering production of pasta for the New Zealand market and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of the company's owners and employees. The former Timaru Milling Company mill has architectural significance as an Art Deco Moderne style building designed by leading Timaru architects Turnbull & Rule and technological and craftsmanship value for its interwar construction and detailing. The former Timaru Milling Company office has contextual significance as a local historic feature and for its relationship with the former Timaru Milling Company flour mill. The building's site may have archaeological value in view of the pre-1900 development that occurred here.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

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- *Waikato Independent* 20 August 1941, p. 4.
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- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand - Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903 (available online).
- N Crawford 'In a Land of Wheat: Timaru's Flourmills' *The Past Today - Historic Places in New Zealand* (ed. J Wilson) Auckland, 1987.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/239>
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/agricultural-processing-industries/page-5>
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/agricultural-processing-industries/page-6>
- <https://turnbullephemera.tumblr.com/post/154490001448/the-timaru-milling-company-issued-picture-card>
- <http://diamondmeals.securehost.net.nz/Diamond-History/>



Extent of setting, limited to office footprint and garden court at south-west corner of site, 1 Stafford Street, Timaru. The former Timaru Milling Company mill (heritage item # 39) is marked by yellow star.



Building detail. Dr J Wilson, 12 September 2018.