

**TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM**

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** former Geraldine Town Hall, Library & Municipal Theatre / Geraldine Cinema

**ADDRESS** 78 Talbot Street, Geraldine

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(Dr J Wilson, September 2018)

**FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** No. 108      **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** n / a  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Sec 152 Town of Geraldine

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2475152500

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1924-25

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Lancelot Miles, architect; AM Fyfe, builder

**STYLE** Arts and Crafts

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

One-and-a-half-storey building with rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Symmetrical façade, with wide cross-gabled entry bay. Recessed entrance doors approached by steps and framed by short engaged columns and small square windows with X-shaped mullions and string course above. Shallow-arched multi-paned casement windows with eyebrow moulds. Chimneystacks atop principal gable ends; piers along side walls. External stairs to fire doors from hall and gallery set into south wall.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Reinforced concrete, cement stucco, corrugated iron.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Cupola removed (pre-1970?).

**SETTING**

The former Geraldine Town Hall is located on the west side of Talbot Street, south of its intersection with Cox Street. The Geraldine Library and Service Centre is immediately to the south and St Mary's Anglican Church, hall and former vicarage are on the opposite side of the street. The rear (west) of the property is bordered by the Geraldine Domain and holiday park. The extent of scheduling is the land parcel on which the building is located.

## **HISTORY**

The Geraldine Borough Council (est. 1905) erected a town hall, library and municipal theatre in Talbot Street in 1925. The Geraldine Literary Institute had previously erected a building in 1874-75. The old library was demolished in August 1924, by which time the architect had revised his earlier plans for a new town hall and library to meet the council's budgetary constraints. The official opening took place on 25 August 1925. Miss Stringer was appointed librarian to the new facility, with the lending library and reading room occupying rooms on either side of the theatre's entrance vestibule. The hall provided a venue for live entertainment and social functions as well as for motion pictures. A modern council service centre and library building now stands to the south of the 1925 building. The privately-operated Geraldine Cinema opened in 1970 and continues to function as an independent cinema today.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Geraldine Town Hall has historical and social significance for its association with the civic and social life of the community since 1925. The building demonstrates both the rising popularity of the movies during the inter-war period and the efforts taken in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to retain a local cinema as new forms of home entertainment challenged the viability of small-town movie theatres.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Geraldine Town Hall has cultural significance as a site of community identity and historic continuity.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Geraldine Town Hall has architectural significance as the work of Timaru architect Lancelot L Miles. Miles (1886-1962) commenced practice in his hometown in May 1911, after two years study in Britain. He was elected a member of the NZ Institute of Architects in September 1913 and registered as an architect in July 1914. Miles also designed houses in the English Arts and Crafts style. By 1925 he was practising in Wellington, where he was adjudged bankrupt in March 1929.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Geraldine Town Hall has technological and craftsmanship value for its inter-war reinforced concrete construction and architectural detailing. AM Fyfe was a local builder and contractor.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Geraldine Town Hall has contextual significance as a historic feature on Talbot Street. There are a number of other scheduled buildings on Talbot Street, including St Mary's Anglican Church (heritage item # 105), the former vicarage of St Mary's (heritage item # 104) and the former Geraldine Post Office (heritage item # 103); together these items contribute to the historic character of the town's principal thoroughfare. The siting of the Geraldine Library and Service Centre (c.2004) beside the cinema also enhances the latter's visibility within the streetscape.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

As the former Town Hall post-dates 1900, any archaeological values the site may have would likely arise from the prior use and development of the property.

## SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Geraldine Town Hall, Library and Municipal Theatre has overall significance to Geraldine and Timaru district as a whole. The building has historical and social significance for its association with the civic and social life of the community for over 90 years and cultural significance as a site of community identity and historic continuity. The former Geraldine Town Hall, Library and Municipal Theatre has architectural significance as an Arts and Crafts style public building designed by Timaru architect Lancelot Miles and technological and craftsmanship value for its reinforced concrete construction and detailing. The former Geraldine Town Hall, Library and Municipal Theatre has contextual significance as a historic feature within the town centre of Geraldine.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

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## REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 1 May 1911, p. 5; 17 August 1911, p. 4; 25 August 2010 (available online).
- *Temuka Leader* 24 July 1924, p. 3; 26 July 1924, p. 3; 14 August 1924, p. 3; 28 August 1924, p. 2; 18 October 1924, p. 2; 13 June 1925, p. 4; 20 June 1925, p. 3; 25 June 1925, p. 3; 27 August 1925, p. 5; 6 October 1925, p. 2; 13 October 1925, p. 2; 15 October 1925, p. 3; 12 November 1925, p. 2; 9 December 1926, p. 1.
- *Progress* 1 August 1911, p. 35; 1 September 1913, p. 674.
- *Press* 25 October 1925, p. 3.
- *NZ Herald* 13 November 1923, p. 31.
- *Evening Post* 28 August 1926, p. 6; 23 March 1929, p. 5.
- <http://geraldinecinema.co.nz>
- [http://sites.rootsweb.com/~nzlscant/town\\_hall.htm](http://sites.rootsweb.com/~nzlscant/town_hall.htm)



Extent of scheduling, 78 Talbot Street, Geraldine.



Town Hall and Library at the time it opened.