

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME Theatre Royal
ADDRESS 118-124 Stafford Street, Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(Dr A McEwan, 9 July 2018)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. No. 46 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 5393 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 8 DP 9843 & Lot 3 DP 18106

VALUATION NUMBER 2500051200

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION [1869-70/1877/1882-83] 1911 / 1962-63 / 1992-93

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** HE White, architect (1911); Barry Bracefield, architect (1992-92)

STYLE Post-Modern with Edwardian auditorium

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Multi-level building with rectangular footprint and varied roof forms. Symmetrical façade, with recessed wing on northern boundary, has suspended veranda with central pedimented canopy and projecting pediment over large arched window. Columns framing entry, cornice, open-bed pediment and frieze motifs pay homage to earlier 1911 classical façade. Building extends the width and length of the property; 1911 auditorium is largely original.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, concrete, cement plaster, corrugated metal.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Ongoing programme of partial demolition and redevelopment (see dates above).

SETTING

The Theatre Royal is located on the west side of Stafford Street, to the south of its intersection with George Street. Other heritage buildings in the vicinity include the Excelsior Hotel, the former Gladstone Board of Works building (heritage item # 43), the Oxford Buildings (heritage item # 47) and the former National Bank (heritage item # 45). The extent of scheduling encompasses the two land parcels on which the building is principally located.

HISTORY

The first Theatre Royal opened on this site in 1877. The original structure had been built as a stone store by Richard Turnbull in 1869/70; it was known as Turnbull's Hall by 1876. The hall was remodelled by local architect Maurice Duval for JL Hall in 1877 and for Moss Jonas in 1882-83. Shops on the street front flanked a hallway that led to the theatre beyond until at least the early 1960s, when the foyer was rebuilt. The auditorium dates to 1911 and the façade and foyer were reconstructed to local architect Barrie Bracefield's design in 1992-93. The building was acquired by Timaru City Council in 1961 and remains in council ownership and management today.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Theatre Royal has historical and social significance for its association with the civic and social life of the community since 1877. The building is associated with a wide range of social and theatrical events and its long history of redevelopment demonstrates the continued value of the theatre to its owners and audiences.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Theatre Royal has cultural significance as a site of community identity and historic continuity.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Theatre Royal has architectural value as a composite building that combines an Edwardian auditorium with a Post-Modern façade and entrance foyer. Architects involved in the building's repeated remodelling over the years include Maurice de Harven Duval, HE White, and Barrie Bracefield. White (1876-1952) was a builder turned architect who specialised in theatre design. The Theatre Royal in Timaru was one of his early theatre designs, his best-known New Zealand work being St James' Theatres in Wellington (1912).

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The Theatre Royal has technological and craftsmanship value for its brick construction and decorative auditorium plaster detailing.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Theatre Royal has contextual significance as a historic landmark on Stafford Street. There are a number of other heritage buildings in the vicinity and together these items contribute to the historic character of the town's principal thoroughfare.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As there has been development on this site since 1869/70, the property has potential archaeological values relating to its colonial use and development.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Theatre Royal has overall significance to Timaru 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 since the mid-1870s and cultural significance as a site of community identity and historic continuity. The Theatre Royal has architectural value as a composite building with an Edwardian auditorium behind a Post-Modern facade and technological and craftsmanship value for its brick construction and interior detailing. The Theatre Royal has contextual significance as a historic landmark within the town centre of Timaru.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

B

REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 15 September 1869, p. 2; 26 June 1872, p. 2; 22 April 1876, p. 3; 28 April 1876, p. 3; 12 August 1876, p. 2; 14 July 1877, p. 3; 16 November 1882, p. 3; 17 May 1883, p. 8; 14 March 2017 (available online).
- *Daily Telegraph* 26 April 1883, p. 3.
- *Nelson Evening Mail* 24 April 1911, p. 3.
- *NZ Herald* 24 April 1911, p. 5.
- *South Canterbury Times* 22 November 1881, p. 2; 10 October 1884, p. 2.
- *Wairarapa Age* 25 March 1911, p. 5.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/5393>



Extent of scheduling, 118-124 Stafford Street, Timaru.

