

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former Bruce's 'Royal Flouring Mills' / Timaru Milling Company Mill

ADDRESS 4 Mill Street, Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(www)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. NO 39 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 239 / 1
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 2 DP 346228

VALUATION NUMBER 2500022702

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1881-82

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** James Bruce, owner/designer; Thomas Machin,
contractor

STYLE Industrial Romanesque

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Multi-level building (predominantly six storeys in height), with irregular rectangular footprint and hipped and mansard roof forms. Arched door and window openings, latter have concrete sills. Bays framed by full-height brick pilasters. Remnants of canopy over east elevation loading bay. Blind archways on north elevation, some openings on same have been filled in since demolition of three-storey northern grain store.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, concrete, timber, corrugated iron roofing and cladding.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Addition of two floors to three-storey section at south-west corner (post-1890). Milling plant replaced (1924-25). Grain silos on site to north erected (1956). Removal of external elevator on east elevation (date unknown). Northern, three-storey grain store demolished (2001).

SETTING

The former flour and oatmeal mill stands on the north side of Mill Street, immediately west of the Timaru railway line. The port of Timaru lies to the north/north-east of the mill. The extent of setting is limited to the southern portion of the land parcel on which the former mill stands, 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 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 by Bruce in its place and was in production by September 1882. It was the first in New Zealand fitted with roller milling plant. Only the smoke stack and part of the boiler house of the 1878 mill were retained in the new building. By early 1883, after the death of his business partner Julius Mendelson 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. Meanwhile Bruce developed another mill on the south side of Grey Street (no longer extant), which did not achieve the great success of his Royal Mills. 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 and, from 1941, the well-known Diamond pasta range. The Timaru Milling Company closed in 2005; later owners used the buildings on the mill site until early 2012. The building is currently vacant.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company mill has high historical significance for its association with James Bruce, the history of flour milling in South Canterbury, and the modernisation of the New Zealand milling industry. The former mill has added historical significance for its association with the Diamond pasta range, which is still in existence.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company mill has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former operators over many decades.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company mill has architectural significance as an industrial structure designed to be fit for purpose with two principal elevations evoking the Romanesque Revival style that was popular for later 19th century American industrial buildings. James Bruce, who visited the United States in c.1881 to study modern American mills, designed both the 1878 mill and its replacement. Bruce also designed the Waimate Presbyterian church and manse (1874-77) and in the later years of his life he moved to Wellington and resumed his work as a builder.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company mill has high technological significance as a large-scale late 19th century flour and oatmeal mill. The mill was fitted with machinery imported by James Bruce from the United States. The six-storey section was for the milling of flour and the adjoining five-storey wing produced oatmeal. The contractor Thomas Machin also built the Timaru and Gladstone Board of Works building (1874, heritage item # 43) and the former Union Bank of Australia (1876-77), both in Stafford Street. He was later to practise as an architect, which was permissible before registration and the protected status of the term 'architect' was introduced in the early 20th century.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Timaru Milling Company mill has contextual significance as one of a number of large industrial structures that line the western boundary of the railway line as it passes

through Timaru. Mill Street was originally named Grey Street; by 1926 it had assumed its current name, presumably in honour of the mills erected along it.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the former mill pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological significance relating to the industrial development of the property and the operation of the mill.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Bruce's 'Royal Flouring Mills' / Timaru Milling Company mill has high overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The building has high historical significance for its almost 130-year association with flour and oatmeal milling and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of those who owned and operated the mill. The former Timaru Milling Company mill has architectural significance as a Romanesque Revival style industrial structure designed by James Bruce and high technological significance for its brick construction and as the site of the country's first roller mill plant. The former Timaru Milling Company mill has contextual significance as a local historic feature and its site has potential archaeological significance in view of the building's age and the earlier development that occurred on this site.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

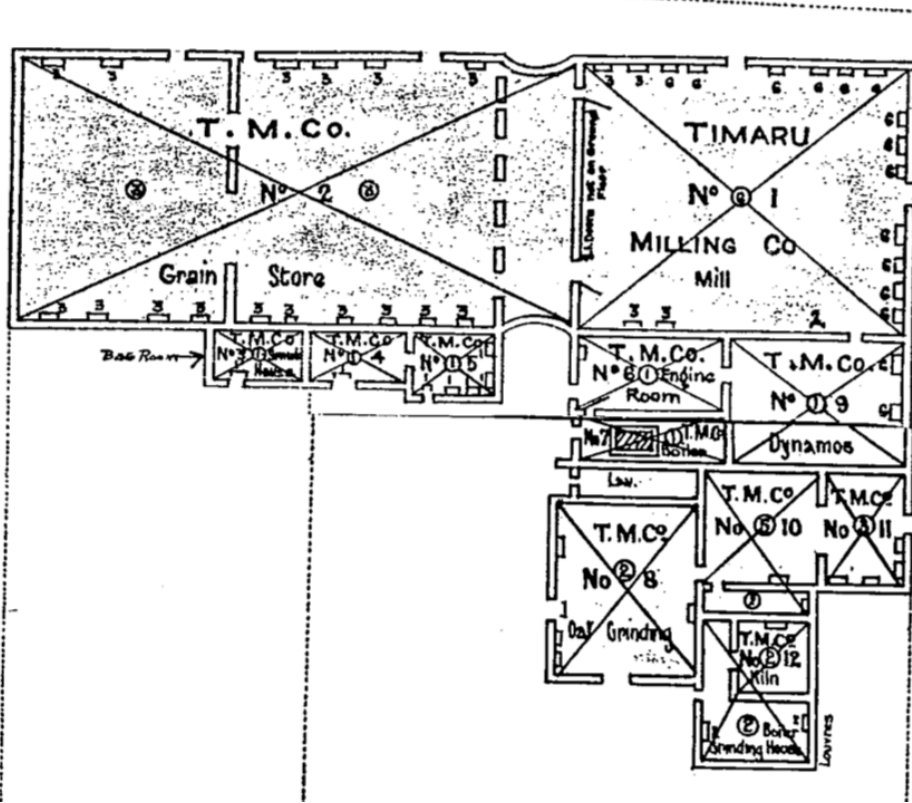
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- <http://diamondmeals.securehost.net.nz/Diamond-History/>



Extent of setting, limited to southern portion of land parcel at 4 Mill Street, Timaru.



Building before additional two floors added to west elevation.
<http://diamondmeals.securehost.net.nz/Diamond-History/>



Building floor plan in 1925. 1925 block plan, South Canterbury Museum.



The Past Today – Historic Places in New Zealand (ed. J Wilson) p. 116.