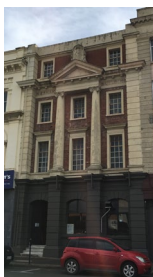


**TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM**

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** Meehan's Building  
**ADDRESS** 3-7 George Street, Timaru

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(A McEwan, 9 July 2018)

**FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** No. 20      **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 2062 / 2  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Part Lots 7 & 8 DP 763

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2500079200AA & 2500079200BB

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1912-13

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Thomas Lusk, architect of Lusk & Moriarty

**STYLE** Neo-Georgian

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Four storey-building with slightly irregular rectangular footprint, hipped and gabled roof forms. Symmetrical façade has rusticated base and pilasters; first and second floors feature a temple motif with engaged composite Ionic columns. Third floor has a cartouche bearing the date 'AD 1913'. Name of building set within the entablature on each side of the temple front. Solid parapet, exposed brick walls on façade and at rear of building. Semi-circular door and window openings on the ground floor, with steps to former. Semi-circular openings indicate half-basement below ground floor windows. Multi-pane casement windows light first, second and third floors. Single Palladian-style window on north elevation is set with cathedral glass.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Brick, concrete, corrugated iron.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Unknown, if any.

**SETTING**

The building stands on the north side of George Street in the middle of a short block bordered by Cains Terrace to the west and Station Street to the east. Immediately to its west is the former Werry's Hotel (heritage item # 21). The former Landing Service building

(heritage item # 44) is to the south-east and the former Government Life building (heritage item 47) is to the south-west. The extent of scheduling is the footprint of the building.

## **HISTORY**

Meehan's Building was erected in 1912-13 by J Meehan and Son, grain, seed and general merchants. They occupied the ground floor of the building; construction of which had commenced in October 1912. At that time it was reported that the building would contain offices and sample rooms and an elevator would be a feature of the building. James Meehan (1861-1932) was born in Australia but settled in New Zealand with his parents as a child. Having worked for the *Mount Ida Chronicle*, Meehan moved to Timaru and opened a general store. He settled at Makikihi in 1883 and operated stores there and at Morven and St Andrews. In 1913 Meehan returned to Timaru and opened a 'grain, seed and produce merchant's business' in George Street. Upon his death he was survived by his wife Christina (nee Martin) and seven children. One of his sons, Victor, joined the family business and was jointly charged with the company for selling wheat at prices exceeding that set by the government in 1921. In 1925 the Meehans owned the building immediately to the east and in the 1930s they acquired the hotel directly to the west. The company was still in existence in 1940. The building remains in commercial use.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Meehan's Building has historical and social significance for its association with James Meehan and, more generally, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development of the Timaru town centre. The building represents the Edwardian-era building boom in Timaru, whereby the early shops and business premises were replaced.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Meehan's Building has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former owners, occupiers and their customers.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

Meehan's Building has architectural significance as the work of Timaru architect Thomas Lusk. In June 1911 Lusk (c.1882-1946) entered in to a partnership with building surveyor Bart Moriarty, who had previously supervised the construction of the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart (heritage item # 19, 1909-11). Lusk and Moriarty also designed the Dominion Hotel (heritage item # 36) and O'Meehan's Buildings in 1912 (heritage item # 35); the partnership continued until early 1914. Lusk later moved to Dunedin and then to Hamilton; he was the father of noted Canterbury artist Doris Lusk (1916-90).

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

Meehan's Building has technological and craftsmanship significance for its brick masonry construction and the quality of its classical facade detailing. It seems likely the Lusk and Moriarty were also the contractors for this building, given that Bart Moriarty was a building surveyor and that the firm was advertising for bricklayers in October 1911.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Meehan's Building has contextual significance as a notable historic feature within the Timaru town centre. The concentration of scheduled heritage items and historic character buildings lining Stafford Street and in the vicinity of the port and railway station gives Timaru's principal CBD thoroughfare its distinctive identity and sense of place.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

Although the building post-dates 1900 its site may have potential archaeological significance relating to earlier activity undertaken on the site. An 1875 map of Timaru (South Canterbury Museum) shows buildings flanking this section of George Street, which appears to have been vacant when James Meehan bought the property in 1910.

### **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

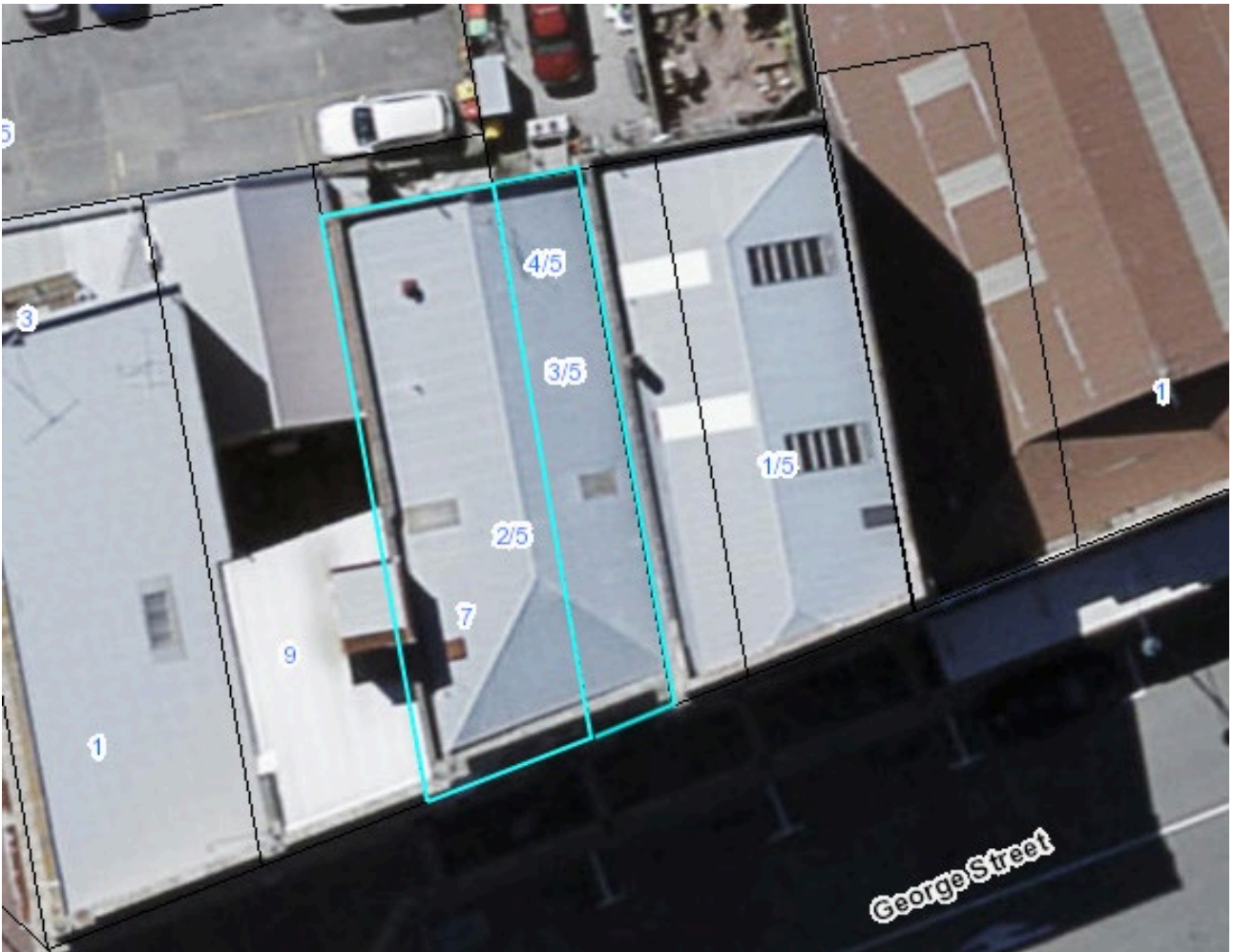
Meehan's Building has overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The building has historical and social significance for its association with James Meehan and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former owners, occupiers and their customers. Meehan's Building has architectural significance as the work of Timaru architect Thomas Lusk and technological and craftsmanship significance for its brick construction and classical detailing. Meehan's Building has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the Timaru town centre streetscape and its site may have potential archaeological significance in view of its location and possible earlier commercial use of the property.

### **HERITAGE CATEGORY**

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### **REFERENCES**

- *Timaru Herald* 3 December 1885, p. 2; 14 May 1892, p. 3; 30 May 1910, p. 4; 27 February 1912, p. 2; 4 October 1912, p. 5; 26 October 1912, p. 8; 4 February 1913, p. 6; 12 April 1913, p. 8; 24 April 1913, p. 1; 7 July 1913, p. 12; 8 December 1913, p. 1; 20 February 1914, p. 8; 28 May 1914, p. 1; 19 January 1915, p. 2; 21 July 1920, p. 6; 30 October 1920, p. 1.
- *Oamaru Mail* 9 October 1911, p. 5.
- *Otago Daily Times* 3 November 1932, p. 9.
- *Press* 16 December 1926, p. 8; 20 December 1940, p. 16.
- *Ashburton Guardian* 11 October 1912, p. 8.
- *Auckland Star* 4 May 1921, p. 2.
- *New Zealand Tablet* 29 June 1911, p. 19.
- *Progress* 1 September 1912, p. 53; 1 July 1913, p. 41; 1 May 1914, p. 42.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2062>
- <http://www.timarucivictrust.co.nz/activities/meehans-building>
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903; available online.



Extent of setting, 3-7 George Street, Timaru.