

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

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** former Belford Flour Mills

**ADDRESS** 2-4 North Street, Timaru

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(www)

**FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** No. 40      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 3160 / 2  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Pt Section 1 & Pt Section 2 Town of Timaru, Pt Lot 2  
DP 9845, Lots 2, 3 & 4 DP 12936

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2500023400A & 2500023400B

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1877-78

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Maurice de H Duval, architect; George Filmer,  
contractor

**STYLE** Industrial vernacular

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Multi-level building with irregular rectangular footprint and hipped and gabled roof forms. Built up against a bank, so west elevation is one and two-storeys in height, east elevation has two, three and four-storey sections. Canopy over ground floor on east side shelters former railway siding. Most door and window openings have shallow-arched heads. Roof ventilators, north elevation built to road boundary, vestigial lettering 'Belford Flour Mills' on east elevation.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Brick, concrete, timber, corrugated iron roofing.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Conversion to roller mill (1885). Alterations/additions to northern section (date unknown). Nightclub conversion (post-1974).

**SETTING**

The former flour mill stands on the south side of North 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 the land parcels on which the building is located, partly in view of the potential archaeological values of the site.

## **HISTORY**

Local solicitor Arthur Ormsby (died 1889) opened the Belford Steam Flour Mill on North Street in the winter of 1878. Offices at the mill site were erected later in the same year. Ormsby's wife Margaret (nee Hunt) hailed from Belford in Northumberland, England, which may explain the name given to the mills. A railway siding running along the eastern boundary of the building allowed for the loading and unloading of goods directly in to the mill. The mill was fitted with three French millstones when it first opened; it was later converted to a roller mill. The grain store was built level with North Street, while the three lower floors of the mill were built within an excavation of the beachfront cliff so that they might be close to the railway line. The mill was fitted with roller milling plant by Richard Allen in 1885 and then sold by Allen to Messrs Turner, Brown and Jackson in 1890. Two years later John Jackson (c.1837-1909) was the sole owner; Jackson was also a borough councillor and served four years as Mayor of Timaru. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Timaru was considered the centre of New Zealand's milling industry, production at the Belford Mills amounted to nine sacks of flour per hour. Milling operations ceased in 1947 and the building was purchased by New Zealand Breweries and used as a grain store. After it was sold to Chrome Platers Ltd in 1974 part of the former mill was converted for use as a nightclub.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Belford Flour Mills have historical significance for their association with former owners Arthur Ormsby and John Jackson and, more generally, the history of flour milling in South Canterbury. The former mill was said to be the oldest in the district at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (*Timaru Herald* 6 February 1902).

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Belford Flour Mills have cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former operators over almost 70 years.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Belford Flour Mills have architectural significance as an industrial structure designed by local architect Maurice de Harven Duval. Duval was a French or Belgian architect who practised in Timaru between c.1877 and 1895. He undertook a considerable amount of work for the Catholic church in Canterbury, including St Mary's Church at Pleasant Point (1889), was the architect to the South Canterbury Education Board, and also designed commercial and residential buildings, including 'Elloughton Grange' for William Grant (1893, heritage item # 5).

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Belford Flour Mills have technological and craftsmanship significance for their brick construction and detailing. The bricks for the mill were locally-produced by James Shears and John Anderson of the Canterbury Foundry in Christchurch was the engineer for the mill. The contractor George Filmer also built the National Bank in Stafford Street (1881-82, heritage item # 45). Filmer was a local builder from the early 1870s and was also involved in local body politics. One of his former employees, William Hall-Jones, later entered national politics and served briefly as Prime Minister (1906).

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Belford Flour Mills have 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. The former mill building lies to the north of the former Timaru Milling Company mill (heritage item # 39) and to the south of the former Evans Atlas mill (heritage item # 42). Both the north and east elevations are visible from the public domain, the latter easily viewed from the eastern end of Heaton Street.

## **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 early operation of the mill.

## **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Belford Flour Mills have overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The building has historical significance as the oldest surviving mill building in Timaru and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of those who owned and operated the mill for almost 70 years. The former Belford Flour Mills have architectural significance as an industrial design by Maurice Duval and technological significance for their brick construction and detailing. The former Belford Flour Mills have contextual significance as a local historic feature and their site has potential archaeological significance in view of the building's age and location.

## **HERITAGE CATEGORY**

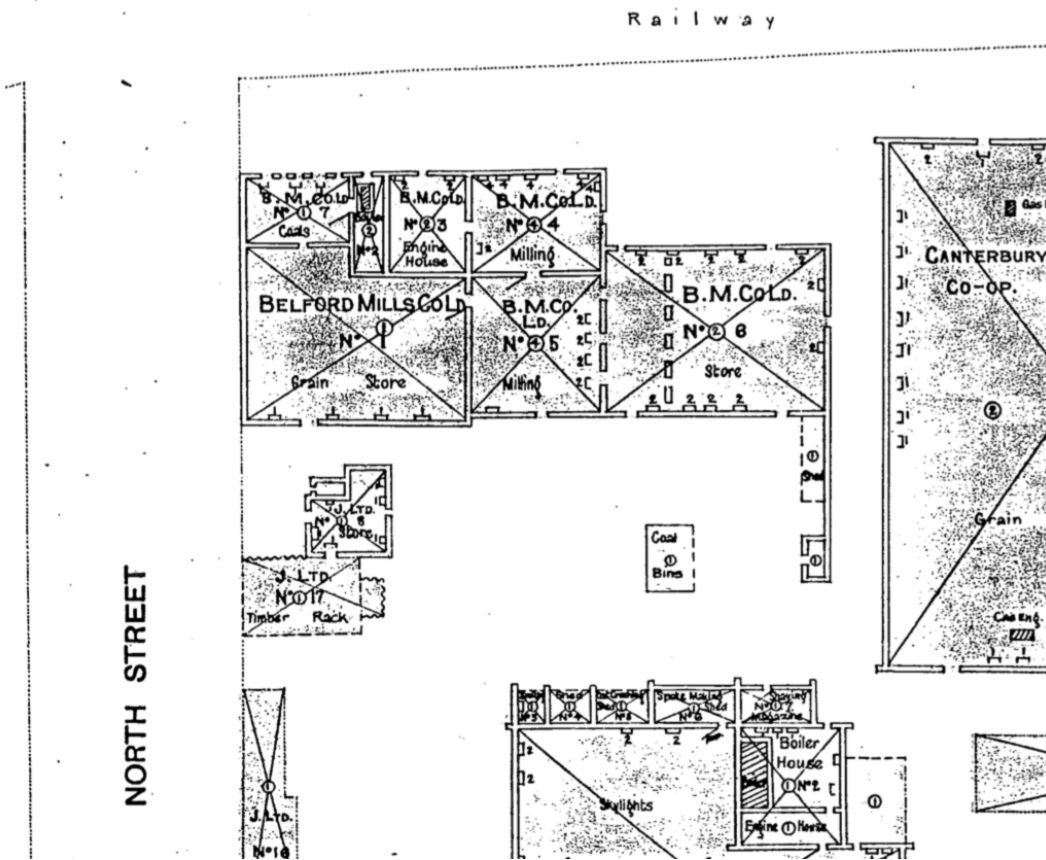
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## **REFERENCES**

- *Timaru Herald* 24 April 1877, p. 4; 24 July 1878, p. 2; 29 July 1878, p. 3; 25 October 1878, p. 4; 4 March 1880, p. 4; 11 April 1885, p. 3; 7 May 1885, p. 1; 25 March 1890, p. 1; 6 February 1902, pp. 1 & 2 (supplement).
- *Star* 2 February 1884, p. 4.
- *Wanganui Herald* 17 July 1909, p. 7.
- *South Canterbury Times* 2 October 1884, p. 3.
- *Press* 4 October 1873, p. 2; 17 June 1889, p. 6.
- *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/3160>
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- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/agricultural-processing-industries/page-6>



Extent of setting, comprising multiple land parcels at 2-4 North Street, Timaru.



Detail from 1925 block plan (South Canterbury Museum) showing Belford Mills Co. premises.



Belford Flour Mills with CFCA and Timaru Milling Company buildings beyond, 1909. 1/1-008813-G, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Detail from same view below.

