



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero – Review Report for a Historic Place **Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade), TIMARU** **(List No. 2075, Category 2)**



Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade), Robyn Burgess, 9 May 2023, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

Robyn Burgess
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Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

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Disclaimer

Please note that entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero identifies only the heritage values of the property concerned, and should not be construed as advice on the state of the property, or as a comment of its soundness or safety, including in regard to earthquake risk, safety in the event of fire, or insanitary conditions.

Archaeological sites are protected by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, regardless of whether they are entered on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero or not. Archaeological sites include 'places associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there may be evidence relating to the history of New Zealand'. This List entry report should not be read as a statement on whether or not the archaeological provisions of the Act apply to the property (s) concerned. Please contact your local Heritage New Zealand office for archaeological advice.

PURPOSE OF REVIEW

The purpose of this review is to assess the heritage values of the Timaru City Council Offices and Former Public Library following changes made to the building in the early 2000s. The report concludes that the building merits remaining on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero ('the List') as a Category 2 historic place, with the new name 'Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade)' and with a varied extent.

SUMMARY

Sited on the corner of 2 King George Place and Latter Street in central Timaru, the Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) building, built in stages between 1908 and 1933, is a recognisable remnant of a well-crafted, architecturally significant work by architects Walter Panton and Son, and is notable as part of the history of local government in Timaru and as a Carnegie Library. It has aesthetic, architectural, historical and social significance or value. Its key physical elements are its north and west façades, war memorial lamp of remembrance, and clocktower with associated bells and mechanisms.

Situated south of the prominent Te Waiateruati pā near Temuka, the Timaru pakainga was a well-known tauranga waka (landing place) and mahinga kai. In the 1830s, whalers had been attracted to Timaru and some stayed to settle on the land. The colonial town developed in the 1850s and maps from this time show the area where the Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) building now stands as being open hilly land, less than 300 metres from what was then the foreshore.

In 1904 the Timaru Borough Council purchased a site on George Street from Dr Gabites for £1150 to allow for municipal buildings and library to be erected for the Council. An architectural competition was held and the selected design by Walter Panton and Son was constructed in two phases. The first half completed was the public library, as a result of Mayor James Craigie securing funding from Andrew Carnegie for such a purpose. The library was constructed in 1908 and opened in 1909. The second half of the original design – the municipal buildings – was built soon after in 1911-1912.

The Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) is a two storeyed classically designed frontage, in a palazzo style, with pilasters and Corinthian capitals, keystones and

medallions. The foundations are grey Timaru 'bluestone', while the main part of the west and north façades are built of Ōamaru stone. The main entrance, fronting King George Place, is accessed by seven bluestone steps and a vestibule leading to a pair of doors. Above the main entrance is a balcony and the plain pediment contains the Council's coat of arms. Inscribed in the stonework of the frieze, are the words 'Municipal', 'Offices', 'Public' and 'Library'. A tall concrete clocktower rises centrally from the roof line. As well having glazed clock faces, the tower also contains bells behind louvres, and is surmounted by a 7.6 metre flagpole and topped with a lamp. The building fabric behind the north and west façades is modern, the south façade containing rows of fenestration and a light grey coloured cladding. Below is a renovated basement. The roof is corrugated steel.

Several major additions were made to the building in the two decades following initial completion. The library was extended to the south-west in 1914 and the council buildings were extended to the east in 1927. An impressive addition in 1933 was the clocktower, designed by Victor H Panton, which reuses a clock mechanism previously in the Post Office clocktower and given to the city by former Mayor, James Craigie, in 1913. In early 1946 a permanent Lamp of Remembrance was installed at the top of the clocktower's flagpole, at the instigation of the then mayor, A E S Hanan, as a memorial to the men who served in World War Two. In 1962 the parapet, including pediments and finials, was removed during a general facelift of the façade. From 1979 the library part of the building was converted to offices. A major redevelopment programme in circa 2003-2005 involved the demolition and rebuilding of most of the building whilst retaining the north and west facades and the clocktower. In its new modern interior, the building continues to function as the Timaru District Council offices. Despite the major rebuild behind the north and west façades, the street-facing exterior looks largely the same as it did for much of the twentieth century, and it is an appreciated architectural feature of the town.

1. IDENTIFICATION¹

1.1. Name of Place

Name:

Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade)

¹ This section is supplemented by visual aids in Appendix 1 of the report.

Other Names:

Timaru Council Buildings; Municipal Chambers; Municipal Buildings; Timaru City Council Offices & Former Public Library; Timaru D.C. Offices & Former Public Library; Carnegie Library (Former)

1.2. Location Information

Address

2 King George Place and Latter Street
TIMARU

Local Authority

Timaru District Council

1.3. Legal Description

Lots 1-3 DP 1490 (CT CB185/272), Canterbury Land District

1.4. Extent of List Entry

Extent includes part of the land described as Lots 1-3 DP 1490 (CT CB185/272), Canterbury Land District and the north and west façades and clocktower of the building structure known as Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) thereon. The extent includes the clocktower, including its mechanisms and bells as well as the lamp of remembrance atop the clocktower. (Refer to map in [Appendix 1](#) of the List entry report for further information).

1.5. Eligibility

There is sufficient information included in this report to identify this place. This place is physically eligible for consideration as a historic place. It consists of part of a building fixed to land which lies within the territorial limits of New Zealand.

1.6. Existing Heritage Recognition

Local Authority and Regional Authority Plan Scheduling

Scheduled in the Timaru District Plan (Operative 8 March 2005), Schedule of Heritage Buildings, Structures and Sites, Heritage Item 48, Timaru City Council Office and Former Public Library. It is also in the Proposed Timaru District Plan (2022), 'former Timaru Public Library and Borough Council Municipal Offices / Timaru District Council Offices Façade'.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1. Historical information

Early Timaru

Timaru was an integral component of the extensive Ngāi Tahu network of kāinga (settlement) and mahinga kai (food-gathering places) located throughout South Canterbury. Situated south of the prominent Te Waiateruati pā, Hoani Kahu from Arowhenua described Timaru as 'he pā nō mua, he kāinga nohoaka tūturu, he tūahu tapu, he urupā tūpapa, and he tauranga waka'.² There was open space and plentiful kai to be found in the area. Building and clothing resources and foods were gathered at Timaru, including manu (birds), tuna (eel), ika (fish), makō (shark), hāpuku (groper), pipi, pāua, kina, and kaeo.³

Whalers had been attracted to Timaru in the 1830s, and some stayed to settle on the land, providing early colonial presence.⁴ The controversial Canterbury Purchase (Kemp's Deed) land sale took place in the late 1840s but the area remained important to iwi who were able to negotiate a 20 acre reserve to be set aside (Native Reserve 884 at Caroline Bay).⁵ Early maps from the 1850s show the area where the Timaru Council building now stands as being open hilly land, less than 300 metres from what was then the foreshore.⁶

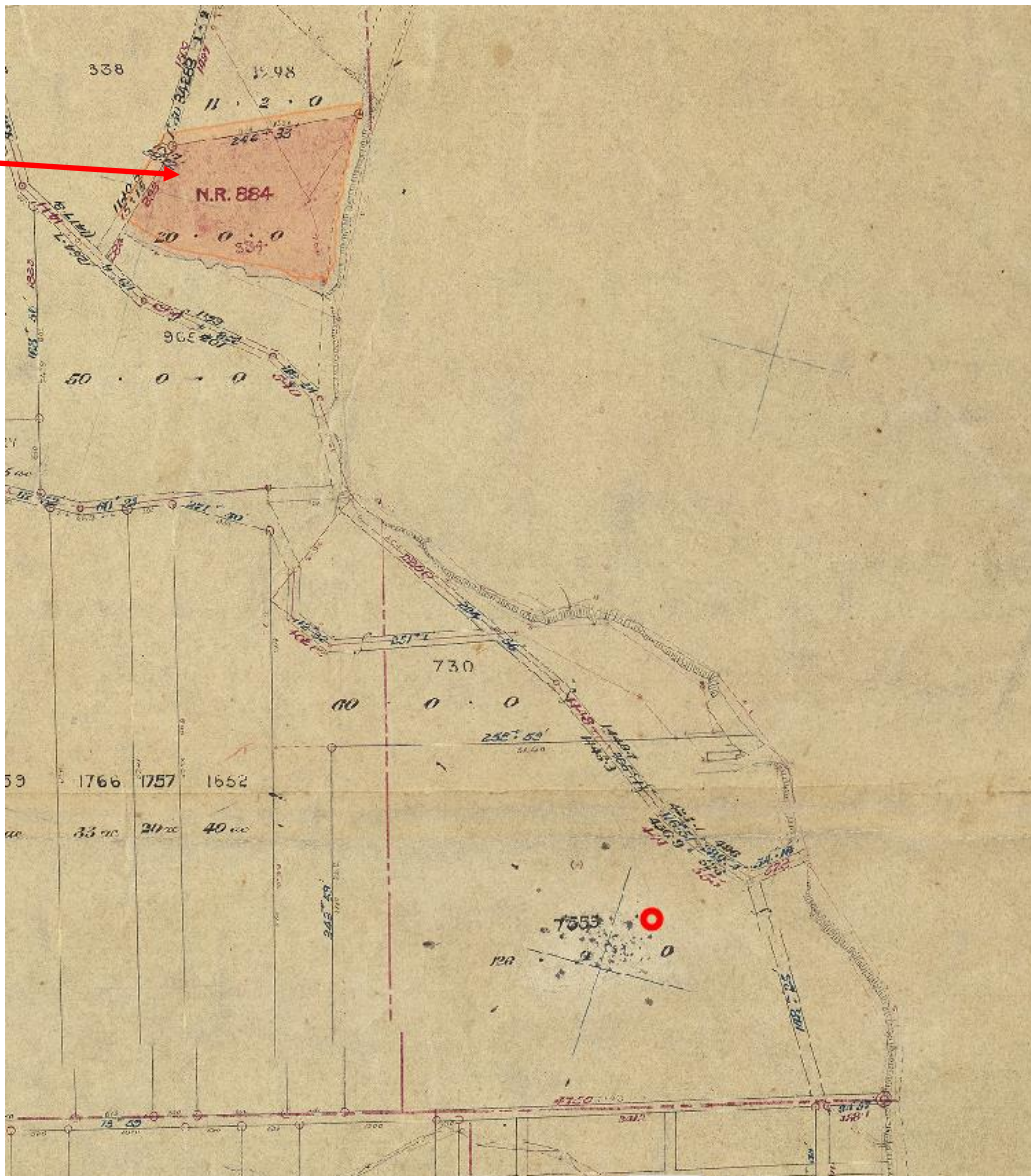
² J.H. Beattie in *Kā Huru Manu*: <https://kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas/> (entry for Timaru, accessed Dec. 2023)

³ Huia Pacey, pers. comm. 11 Jan. 2024; URL: <https://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas> (accessed 4 April 2023)

⁴ John Wilson, 'South Canterbury region - Early European history', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2017, URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/south-canterbury-region/page-5>, accessed 25 June 2019.

⁵ Huia Pacey, pers. comm. 11 Jan. 2024; URL: <https://apps.canterburymaps.govt.nz/BlackMaps/index.html> (accessed 1 August 2019).

⁶ Black Maps', nineteenth century South Island Survey Maps, Environment Canterbury, URL: <https://mapviewer.canterburymaps.govt.nz/> (accessed 27 Sep. 2023).

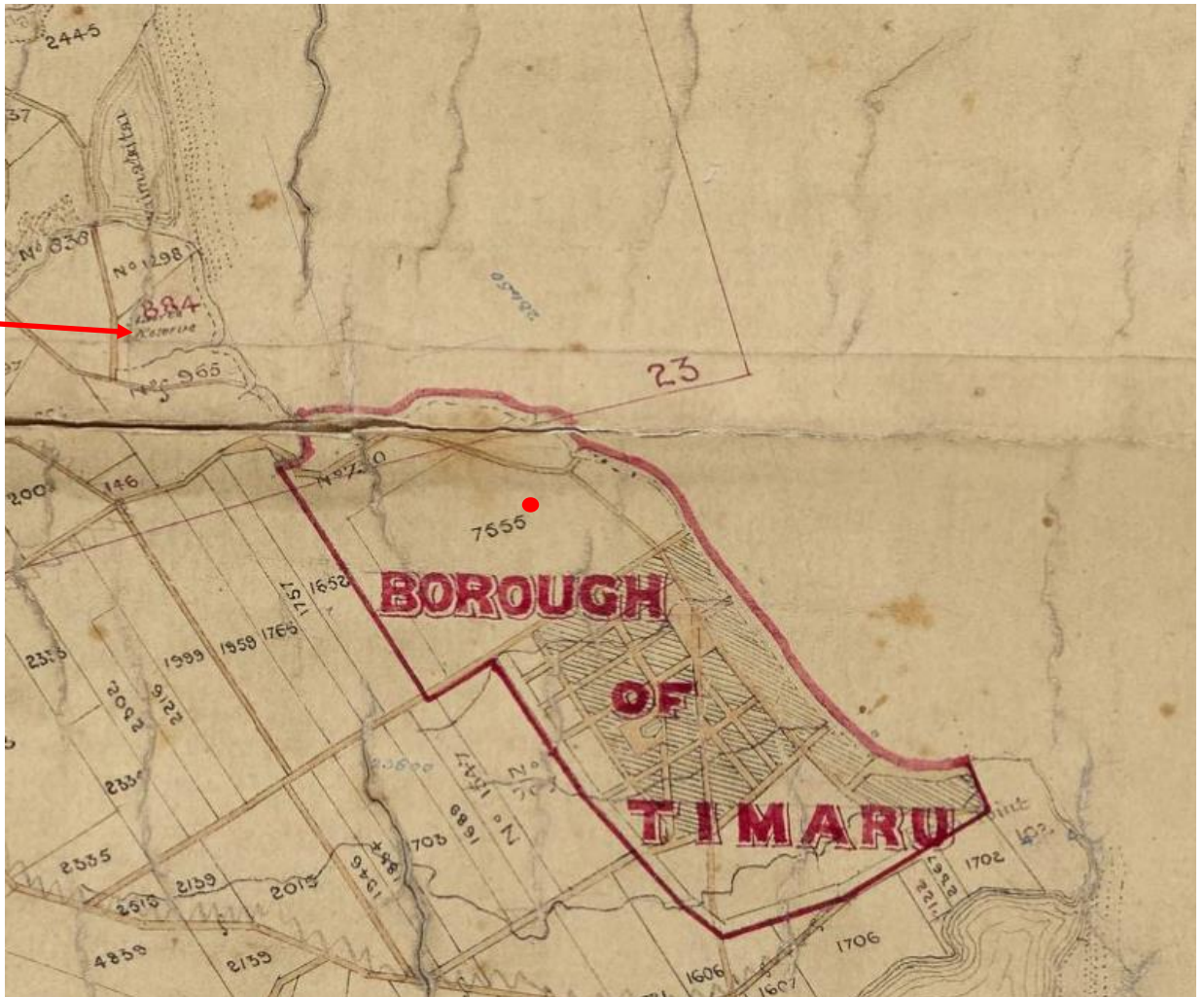


Detail of Timaru, not dated (circa 1850s), from Canterbury Maps (Black Maps). Red circle marks the location that the Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library building was later built on. Arrow marks the Native Reserve 884, approximately 1.5 kilometres to the north-west. URL: <https://mapviewer.canterburymaps.govt.nz/> (accessed 3 Aug. 2023)

In 1850, William and George Rhodes took up 'The Levels run', a vast tract of land in South Canterbury, and subsequently began to use the shoreline at Timaru to ship goods in and out.⁷ The Rhodes brothers were responsible for the initial land purchase and survey of a town in 1853. The government surveyed its own settlement immediately to the south of the Rhodes land in 1856 but it was 'Rhodes Town', immediately behind the beach by the established immigrant landing sites, where the commercial centre of Timaru developed and

⁷ L. G. D., Acland, *The Early Canterbury Runs*, Whitcoulls, Christchurch, 1975, p. 183; Wilson 2017. URL <https://teara.govt.nz/en/south-canterbury-region/page-6> (accessed 2023).

flourished after 1859.⁸ Colonial settlers began to arrive in significant numbers from 1859, and over the next decades Timaru's population and prosperity grew on the back of farming and the port.



Detail from Black Map (BM 59), Timaru District, circa 1860, Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch Regional Office, Archway Record Ref. R22668006. [The red dot imposed at centre is approximately the location of what became 2 King George Place in the centre of Timaru Town. The street layout in this plan shows the intended government town slightly to the south-east. The red arrow marks Native Reserve 884 to the north-west at Caroline Bay]

⁸ https://www.timaru.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/674032/Historic-Heritage-Historic-Character-Area-Assessment-Report-Timaru-Central-City.pdf

There was especially high population growth between 1896 until 1911.⁹ An important provincial hub, Timaru connected its residents and the South Canterbury region to the rest of New Zealand and beyond physically through road and rail and intangibly via mail, newspapers and other reading material.¹⁰ A building fitting the town's civic infrastructure was required. In 1904 the Timaru Borough Council purchased a site on George Street from Dr Gabites for £1150 to allow for new corporation buildings to be erected for the Council.¹¹ Competitive designs for the municipal buildings and library had been called for and that of architect Walter Panton was accepted.¹²

Library

The first part of the building completed was the public library, as a result of Mayor James Craigie securing a gift of £3000 by 'steel king', Andrew Carnegie, for such a purpose.¹³ Carnegie was a Scots-American philanthropist who donated funds for libraries all over the world, including in New Zealand. The library replaced the Mechanics' Institute and Library, which had been located in North Street, and which been established as a subscription library in Timaru in the early 1860s.¹⁴ The Carnegie-funded new library was constructed in 1908 and opened in 1909.¹⁵ On the day of the opening, the *Timaru Herald's* editorial commented: '*The possession of a free public library seems to be one of the marks which indicate that a town has reached a certain maturity, as the communal provision and use of such an institution is to some extent a luxury. ... All over the civilised world, legislative provision has been made for the equipment of public libraries at the public expense, while here and there this has been done by the generosity of individuals, who thus acknowledged their personal indebtedness to the world of literature. The acquisition of a public library by Timaru, which will shortly be achieved, is a notable mark of the progress of the town ...*'.¹⁶

⁹ Susann Liebich, *Connected Readers: Reading Practices and Communities Across the British Empire, c. 1890-1930*, PhD Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2012, pp. 33-34.

¹⁰ Liebich, 2012, p. 34.

¹¹ Certificate of Title CB185/272; *Timaru Herald*, 29 Sep. 1904, p. 3, 11 Oct. 1904, p. 3.

¹² *Timaru Herald*, 24 Apr. 1907, p. 7 and 18 Feb. 1909, p. 7; *Progress*, 1 Sep. 1913, p. 34.

¹³ *Timaru Herald*, 18 Feb. 1909, p. 7.

¹⁴ *Press*, 11 Jan. 1962, p. 11.

¹⁵ *Timaru Herald*, 15 Feb. 1908, p. 2, 18 Feb. 1909, p. 7 and 4 Jun. 1909, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Timaru Herald*, 4 Jun. 1909, p. 4.



Public Library, William Ferrier, circa 1909, South Canterbury Museum, Catalogue Number 1999/144.1. [Note this image shows the first stage of the building, the library, prior to the construction of the municipal offices and library extension].

When it opened in 1909, it was one of only three libraries in New Zealand offering free access and borrowing rights to all residents.¹⁷ As well as being a key institution for accessing reading material, it was a place where connections were established and extended. Within two years of the library's opening, 15% of Timaru's population had become members. By 1934 that figure had increased to almost 30%, a notably high proportion given that the average library membership across New Zealand, Australia and Britain at this time was 10%.¹⁸

In early 1913 the Timaru Borough Council appointed Evelyn Culverwell as chief librarian, the first woman to hold this position in New Zealand.¹⁹ The appointment of a female was considered a bold move by the Council but Culverwell's professional training and ethos soon proved invaluable. The first action she took as chief librarian was to review and re-order the entire book stock and begin cataloguing using the Dewey System, which she stated would 'bring the Timaru Library into line with the four leading libraries of the Dominion'.²⁰ She also set aside a section in the lending library for children and juvenile readers, mirroring a trend

¹⁷ Liebich, 2012, p. 45.

¹⁸ Liebich, 2012, p. 72.

¹⁹ *Timaru Herald*, 6 Feb. 1913, p. 7 and *Otago Daily Times*, 7 Feb. 1913, p. 6; Liebich, 2012, p. 45 and p. 73.

²⁰ Liebich, 2012, p. 74.

in public libraries in the English-speaking world.²¹ In 1913-14 the library was extended to the south-west, with the addition of two spacious rooms for reading and circulating.²²



Delegates from Conference of Librarians, Wellington, showing Miss E. Culverwell (Timaru) third from left, marked by red arrow. *Press*, 15 Jun. 1934, p. 20.

Municipal Chambers

The remainder of Panton's initial design, the Municipal Chambers, was completed in 1912 in the same style as the library.²³ These new buildings were intended to reflect the dignity of the 'august body' of the Timaru Borough Council, the local government law makers. They contained rooms for the Town Clerk, Mayor, Council Chambers, general office with a counter and strong room, waiting room, a room to be used to hold booths when elections were held, an engineer's room (which was also a strong room), toilets and a cellar which housed more toilets, heating plant and storage rooms.²⁴ The stone balcony above the main entrance, built to accommodate about 20 people, was intended 'to make public utterances whenever occasion arises'.²⁵

²¹ Liebich, 2012, p. 89.

²² *Timaru Herald*, 31 Jan. 1914, p. 11.

²³ *Timaru Herald*, 14 Mar. 1912, p. 3.

²⁴ *Timaru Herald*, 14 Mar. 1912, p. 3.

²⁵ *Timaru Herald*, 14 Mar. 1912, p. 3.



Timaru Public Library and Municipal Offices, Joc Morgan, '1/4/11', 'c 1912', South Canterbury Museum, Catalogue Number 4626.

Additions and Clocktower

In 1927 the building was extended further to the east in the same style, accommodating the municipal electricity department showrooms and offices.²⁶ The architects for the 'extensive additions to the Municipal Buildings for the Timaru Borough Council' were again Walter Panton and Son.²⁷ Early in 1933, the council held a competition for the design of a new town clocktower as a further major addition.²⁸ The successful entrant was Victor H Panton, son of Walter who had died two years earlier, and the clocktower was built by W J Harding Ltd.²⁹ Standing tall above the roof line, it houses a clock mechanism with chimes given to the city by former Mayor, James Craigie, in 1913, which was original in the Post Office clocktower (later demolished).³⁰

²⁶ *Press*, 23 Dec. 1933, p. 11.

²⁷ *Timaru Herald*, 2 Oct. 1926, p. 1. Canterbury Maps, historical imagery 1935-39, URL: <https://canterburymaps.govt.nz/> (accessed December 2023)

²⁸ *Timaru Herald*, 2 Mar. 1933, p. 1.

²⁹ *Press*, 23 May 1933, p. 5 and 23 Dec. 1933, p. 11. Victor Panton worked with his father, Walter, in architectural partnership and had involvement in the council buildings. Walter died in 1931 and Victor died in December 1946 (*Press*, 11 Dec. 1946, p. 5).

³⁰ *Press*, 23 May 1933, p. 5 and 23 Dec. 1933, p. 11; *Timaru Herald*, 3 Jun. 1933, p. 5 (supplement).



Timaru Public Library and Municipal buildings, F R Lamb, circa 1938, South Canterbury Museum, Catalogue No. 4621.

Lamp of Remembrance

In August 1945, at the instigation of the mayor, A E S Hanan, a temporary lamp burned on top of the flagpole on the clocktower in memory of men who had fallen, so recently, in the Second World War.³¹ It was an experiment to trial how a lamp might perform, and the following year it was replaced by a perpetual burning light, paid for by public subscription.³² Known as the Lamp of Remembrance, the permanent memorial was installed in 1946 at the top of the clocktower's flagpole, shining for miles to the outer suburbs.

In 1962 the building's parapet, including pediments and finials, was removed during a general facelift of the façade.³³ From 1979 a new library opened in the town and the library part of the municipal building was converted to offices.³⁴ A major redevelopment programme in circa 2003-2005 involved the demolition and rebuilding of most of the building whilst retaining the north and west facades and the clocktower.³⁵ In its new

³¹ *Ashburton Guardian*, 28 Aug. 1945, p. 2.

³² *Ashburton Guardian*, 28 Aug. 1945, p. 2; *Timaru Herald*, 21 Sep. 1945, p. 1. And 6 Oct. 1945, p. 4.

³³ Barrie Bracefield and Dinah Holman, Timaru District Council Inventory Form: Timaru District Council Building, March-May 1995, pp. 355 ff.

³⁴ Barrie Bracefield and Dinah Holman, Timaru District Council Inventory Form: Timaru District Council Building, March-May 1995, pp. 355 ff.

³⁵ Trengrove & Blunt Architects Ltd, Timaru District Council Offices Building Redevelopment Project, Ground & First Floor

interior, the building continues to function as the Timaru District Council offices. The mechanisms for the chimes were repaired in 2023, so that the clock once again rings out on the hour.³⁶



Propped façades during the redevelopment works, 13 May 2005, (photographer not known, digital image supplied to Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga)

2.2. Physical Information

Current Description

Located in an elevated location in King George Place in Timaru's central business district, the Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) is a prominent building seen from many vantage points. When viewed from the street, the building retains much the same appearance as it did through most of the twentieth century.

Designed by Walter Panton and Son, it is a two storeyed classically designed building, in a Renaissance palazzo style, with pilasters and Corinthian capitals, keystones and medallions.³⁷ The foundations are grey Timaru 'bluestone', while the main part of west and north façades are Ōamaru stone.³⁸ It has rusticated detailing on the ground floor, decorative rounded headed windows and entrances, colonnades, decorative brackets supporting a parapet and central clocktower.

Demolition, approved 13 Oct. 2003.

³⁶ *Timaru Herald*, 1 Oct. 2023.

³⁷ *Timaru Herald*, 18 Feb. 1909, p. 7.

³⁸ *Timaru Herald*, 18 Feb. 1909, p. 7.

The main entrance, on the north elevation, is accessed by seven bluestone steps and a vestibule leading to a pair of doors. Above the main entrance is a balcony and the plain pediment contains the Council's coat of arms. Inscribed in the stonework of the frieze, are the words 'Municipal', 'Offices', 'Public' and 'Library'. The concrete clocktower rises centrally from the roof line, around 27 metres in height above the footpath.³⁹ As well having glazed clock faces, the tower also contains bells behind louvres, and is surmounted by a 7.6 metre flagpole and topped with a perpetually lit lamp.

Major works to the building in the first decade of the twenty first century resulted in the street-fronting facades, the basement space and the clocktower being retained, while the rest was demolished and rebuilt. The building fabric behind the north and west façades is modern, the south façade containing rows of fenestration and a light grey coloured cladding. The roof is corrugated steel. Below is a basement which has been relined as part of the early twenty first century redevelopment.



Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) showing main façade and clocktower, Milly Woods, 4 Apr. 2018 (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga)

³⁹ *Press*, 23 Dec. 1933, p. 11.



Modern south elevation from the 2000s redevelopment, showing heritage clocktower above, R. Burgess, 9 May 2023, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

Construction Professionals

Walter Panton and Victor Panton (as Walter Panton and Son, architects for the Library and Municipal Chambers 1908-12 and additions in 1913-1914 and 1926-1927)⁴⁰

Victor Panton (architect for Clocktower)⁴¹

Messrs Hunt and Werry (contractors for the Library)⁴²

S McBride (stonemason)⁴³

B R Tooth & Son (builders for Municipal Chambers)⁴⁴

W J Harding (builder of 1920s-1930s additions, including Clocktower)⁴⁵

John Calder (contractor for 1962 façade alterations)

McDonald & Wilson (architects for 1979 library conversion)

Trengrove & Blunt (architects for circa 2003-5 replacement offices behind the north and west façades)

⁴⁰ *Timaru Herald*, 18 Feb. 1909, p. 7 and 12 Oct. 1926, p. 7; *Press*, 11 Dec. 1946, p. 5.

⁴¹ *Press*, 23 May 1933, p. 5 and 23 Dec. 1933, p. 11.

⁴² *Timaru Herald*, 18 Feb. 1909, p. 7 and 4 Jun. 1909, p. 2.

⁴³ *Timaru Herald*, 4 Jun. 1909, p. 2.

⁴⁴ *Timaru Herald*, 18 Aug. 1911, p. 5 and 5 Aug. 1912, p. 7.

⁴⁵ *Press*, 12 Oct. 1926, p. 14, 23 May 1933, p. 5 and 23 Dec. 1933, p. 11.

Construction Materials

Ōamaru stone, bluestone foundations, Scotch granite columns, reinforced concrete, glass, timber, metal

Key Physical Dates

1909 – Library constructed

1912 – Municipal Chambers completed

1914 – South-west extension to Library

1927 – East extension to Municipal Buildings

1933-1934 – Clocktower constructed

1946 – Lamp of Remembrance added to top of flagpole

1960s – Façade alterations

Early 2000s – north and west façades and clocktower retained, while remainder of building demolished and rebuilt

Uses

Government – Council/local government building

Government – Flagpole

Civic Facilities – Library (Former)

Commemoration – Memorial – World War One

Commemoration – Memorial – World War Two

Comparative information: historic places as façades

A small number of historic places were already only historic façades when first entered on the List, such as Waitaki Boys' High School Façades (Category 1 historic place, List No. 358) and Kirkcaldie and Stains Department Store Façade, Wellington (Category 2 historic place, List No. 1402). Even when the Timaru City Council Offices and Former Public Library was first assessed for Listing in 1983, it was the exterior that the Buildings Classification Committee were primarily interested in.⁴⁶

Most Listed places that are façades were originally entered on the List as a whole building but later development has resulted in façade-only retention. Where those places remain on the List following formal review, they tend to be in prominent locations within towns and

⁴⁶ Buildings Classification Committee Field Note Book, South Canterbury Trip 8-11/4/1983.

cities and, from the outside at least, are recognisably the buildings that were identified for their heritage values.

Examples of places on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero (the List) which were previously a whole building and reviewed as a 'Façade' include:

Commercial Building Façade, 181 High Street and Tuam Street, Christchurch (Category 2 historic place, List No. 1909), which is a three-storeyed stone-faced building providing a noteworthy streetscape presence as a post-Canterbury Earthquakes (2010-11) survivor from what was previously a prominent 1910 Edwardian building on the site. The façade is a tangible reminder of the building's long and respected history as a city furniture and furnishings store, first as A J White's and later as McKenzie and Willis.

Junction Hotel (Former) Façade, 112 High Street, Rangiora (Category 2 historic place, List No. 3783, which provides a noteworthy streetscape presence as a post-Canterbury Earthquakes (2010 and 2011) survivor from what was previously a prominent Victorian building on the site. When viewed from the street, the Hotel Façade retains much the same classical appearance as it did for nearly 90 years before the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes. It is two storeys in height, with rusticated detailing on the ground floor, decorative rounded headed windows and entrances, colonnades, decorative brackets supporting a simple balcony with metal railing and dentils supporting a plain parapet. The façade is a tangible reminder of the building's long and prominent history as a hotel.

Oxley's Hotel Façade, Picton (Category 2 historic place, List No. 5108) which retains architectural significance as a very good example of the public architecture of a quality hotel from the 1890s. Much of the aesthetic value of the original Oxley's Hotel façade remains in place and is enhanced by the refurbishment and reinstatement of the colonial verandah, which contributes a significant three-dimensional aspect to this façade. As one of the most important remaining fragments of built heritage in the town, Oxley's Hotel Façade's prominence and location in an area highly visible from the foreshore and harbour approach provides an excellent opportunity for utilising interpretation to tell the story of the history of Picton.

2.3. Chattels

There are no chattels included in this List entry.

2.4. Sources

Sources Available and Accessed

Papers Past digitised newspapers have provided considerable information about the building's history and use, including its various stages of development. Ann McEwan's heritage assessment report for 'former Timaru Public Library and Borough Council Municipal Offices/Timaru District Council Offices façade (Doc # 1304418) was accessed. Susann Liebich's PhD thesis on reading practices and their communities has provided helpful information about the Timaru public library and of its chief librarian, Evelyn Culverwell.

Further Reading

Liebich, Susann, *Connected Readers: Reading Practices and Communities Across the British Empire, c. 1890-1930*, PhD Thesis, 2012, Victoria University of Wellington

3. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT⁴⁷

3.1. Section 66 (1) Assessment

This place has been assessed for, and found to possess aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical and social significance or value. It is considered that this place qualifies as part of New Zealand's historic and cultural heritage.

Aesthetic Significance or Value

Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) has aesthetic significance. In their scale, materials and design, the north and west façades are considered visually appealing. The sound of the bells chiming in the clocktower is also a celebrated component of the place, as evidenced by efforts made to repair when the mechanisms ceased functioning for a time. The Lamp of Remembrance and associated plaque can elicit an emotional response as a solemn reminder of locals from the district who lost their lives in the Second World War.

Architectural Significance or Value

⁴⁷ For the relevant sections of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, see Appendix 4: Significance Assessment Information.

The building has architectural significance. Designed by Walter Panton and Son as the result of an architectural design competition, the façade is noted for its Italianate style in Ōamaru stone, bluestone and Scotch granite, and the clocktower stands as a prominent feature on the skyline. Despite the changes behind, the façade continues to form a noteworthy part of the townscape and provides a visual continuity of proportion, scale, use of materials, relationship of solid to void, colour and texture. The façade has craftsmanship value, particularly in its decorative detailing around window and door openings.

Cultural Significance or Value

Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) has cultural significance. The historic façade is the recognisable face of a building that functions as an interface between the council and the community. A focal point for territorial local authority administration of the Timaru district, it represents the way our districts serve the community and can be seen as a place of civic pride as well as public scrutiny and diverging views. Elected representatives meet in the Council chambers and, along with staff as public servants, debate and make decisions that impact the community.

The public library that was in this building for many years provided reading material to a wide range of readers, thus supporting various reading communities including those seeking self-improvement and further education. The Lamp of Remembrance memorial atop the flagpole on the clocktower reflects community attitudes to the commemoration of those from the district who lost their lives during the significant international conflict of World War Two.

Historical Significance or Value

Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) has historical significance. The first part of the building, constructed in 1908-1909, was its large free public library. One of the earliest of the 18 Carnegie libraries built in New Zealand with funding provided by the Scottish-born American steel magnate and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, the Timaru library was often singled out for praise for serving its residents more adequately than any other place in the country. Already a substantial building, it was soon added to with an extension of the reading and circulation rooms in the mid-1910s, demonstrating its popularity and relevance. The shift of the library contents to a new purpose-built library in the city in 1979 highlights its ongoing significance and value to the community, while the taking-over of the former library portion by the council at that time showed the ever-increasing space requirements of its administration.

The municipal offices built adjoining the library, constructed in 1911-12 and extended again in the mid-1920s and early 1930s, demonstrate the development and influence of the local authority.

Social Significance or Value

Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) has social significance. It is the front-facing presence of the council, and its clocktower acts as a centre point of the civic building which continues to bring people together. The clock face time pieces and, especially at night, the ever-lit beacon of the Lamp of Remembrance provide a point of reference for the community. It is expected that there would be a collective sense of loss should the community no longer be able to use and interact with the building.

3.2. Section 66 (3) Assessment

This place was assessed against the Section 66(3) criteria and found to qualify under the following criteria: a, b, e and h. The assessment concludes that this place should be listed as a Category 2 historic place.

(a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history

Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) reflects representative aspects of New Zealand history. From the late nineteenth century, local authorities proliferated in New Zealand. At the start of the second decade of the twentieth century - around the time that the Timaru municipal building was constructed - the country had almost 4,000 local bodies. The smaller ones have since been amalgamated but Timaru council has maintained its local body prominence and continues to operate as the civic offices on this exact site.

Throughout New Zealand, territorial local authorities are the established decision-makers for a wide range of regulatory and social functions in their communities. Like other centres, Timaru Borough Council (from 1948 Timaru City Council) has provided roading, drainage, water supply, piped water, parks, libraries and other public facilities. It represents the civic administration of the district, with the mayor, councillors and staff serving the interests of their community.

(b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history

Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) is especially notable for being an early Carnegie library, associated with the Scots-American philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, who gave money for the construction of public libraries throughout the world in the early twentieth century. New Zealand benefited from his donations and 18 Carnegie libraries were opened in New Zealand between 1908 and 1916. The Timaru Public Library was one of the early Carnegie libraries in New Zealand. The library is also closely associated with Everlyn Culverwell, New Zealand's first female chief librarian, who was at the helm of the library for 23 years from 1913 and was held in very high regard in the community and national library circles.

(e) The community association with, or public esteem for the place

As a recognised part of Timaru's built heritage, Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade)'s prominence and location is a much-appreciated tangible reminder of the city's long and ongoing civic history. Despite the major alterations of the early twenty first century, its north and west exteriors are recognisably the same building as that which was built incrementally and with much pride throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century. The very fact that the façade was retained – and not pulled down – when redevelopment was required shows the value recognised. The clocktower as a visual and audible timekeeper continues to be of importance to the community and any works carried out to it are reported in the Timaru newspapers.

(h) The symbolic or commemorative value of the place

The Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) building has both symbolic and commemorative value. In each phase of its construction in the twentieth century, the building reflected the council's view of progressiveness of the borough. When the clocktower was added, the importance of its audible and visible reliability was stressed, itself a reflection of how the council wished to portray its role. The retention of the north and west façades and clocktower as part of the major redevelopment of the council buildings in the early twenty first century shows that these historic elements symbolise the longevity and gravity of the place.

The Lamp of Remembrance on top of the clocktower commemorates men who fought, suffered and died during the Second World War, 1939-1945. Perpetual lights have occasionally been utilised in New Zealand as memorials to those who died in events such as in the South African War, World War One and World War Two and can be found in places such as schools, churches, war memorials and at Returned Services Associations. The mayor of Timaru, A E S Hanan, was widely applauded for his effort in installing the Lamp of Remembrance on the Timaru municipal buildings and it is notable for continuing to shine as a beacon seen from near and far.

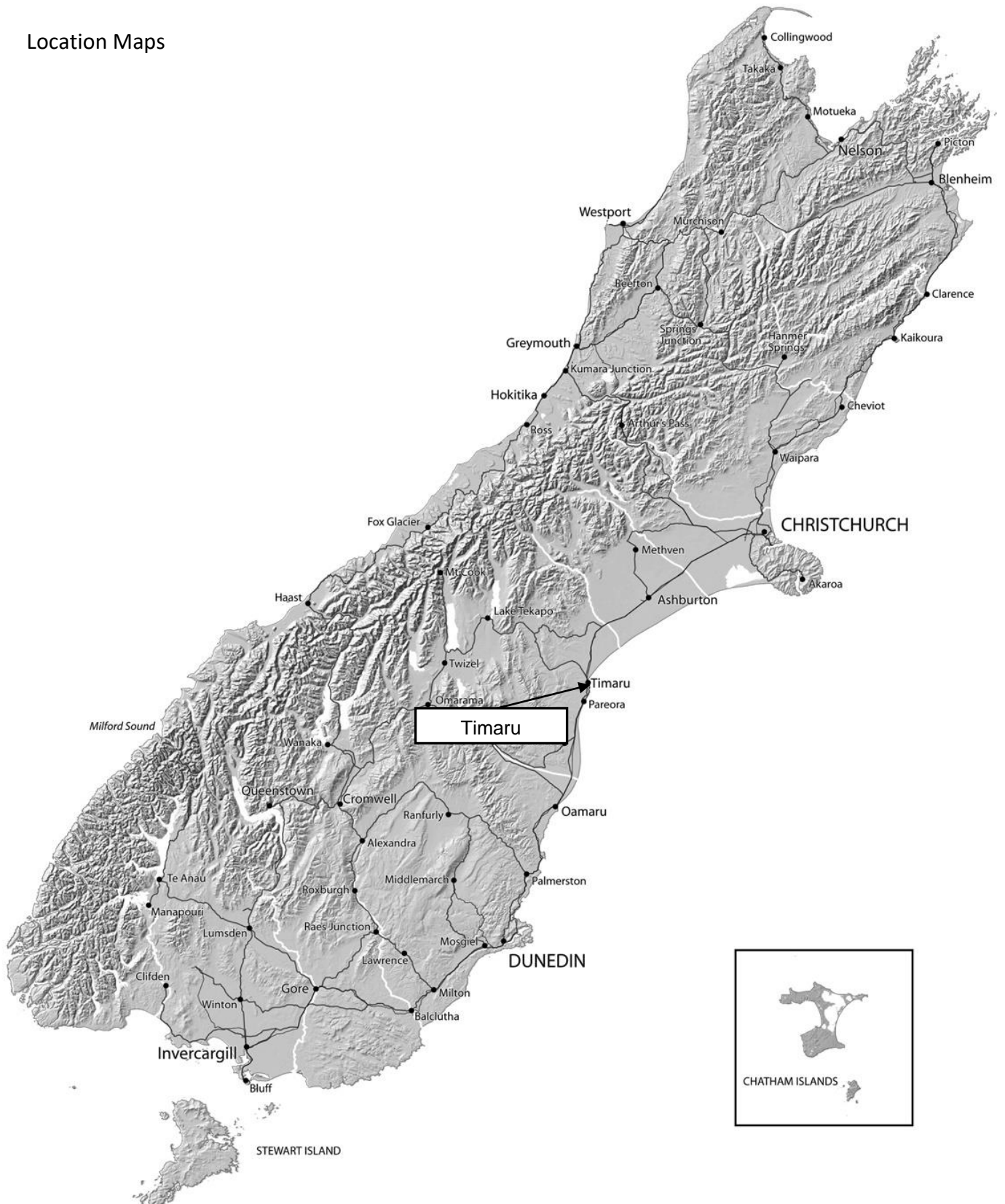
Summary of Significance or Values

The Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) has historical and cultural significance. As an important remnant of a well-crafted, architecturally significant work by Timaru architects Walter Panton and Son, it is part of the history of local government in Timaru and as a Carnegie Library. Despite major redevelopment in the early twenty first century, the building retains key physical elements, namely its north and west façades, war memorial lamp of remembrance, and clocktower. As such, the building has aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical and social significance or value.

4. APPENDICES

4.1. Appendix 1: Visual Identification Aids

Location Maps





Aerial view showing Timaru and surrounding suburbs. The red marker is the location of Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) at 2 King George Place and Latter Street in central Timaru. (Canterbury Maps)

Map of Extent



Extent is indicated by red polygon and includes part of the land described as Lots 1-3 DP 1490 (CT CB185/272), Canterbury Land District and the north and west façades and clocktower of the building structure known as Timaru Council Offices and Former Public Library (Façade) thereon. The extent includes the clocktower, including its mechanisms and bells as well as the lamp of remembrance atop the clocktower.



**RECORD OF TITLE
UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT 2017
FREEHOLD
Search Copy**



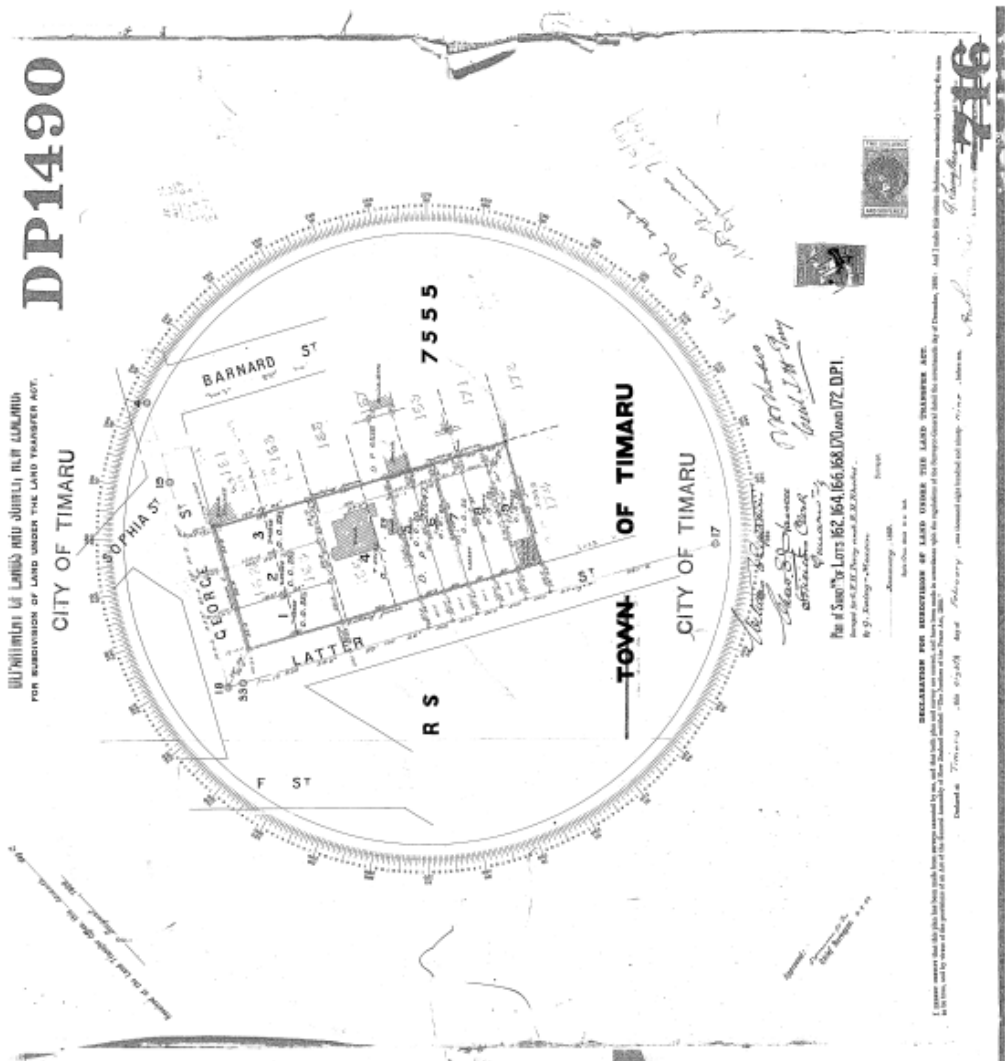

R. W. Muir
Registrar-General
of Land

Identifier CB185/272
Land Registration District Canterbury
Date Issued 19 October 1899

Prior References
CB33/242

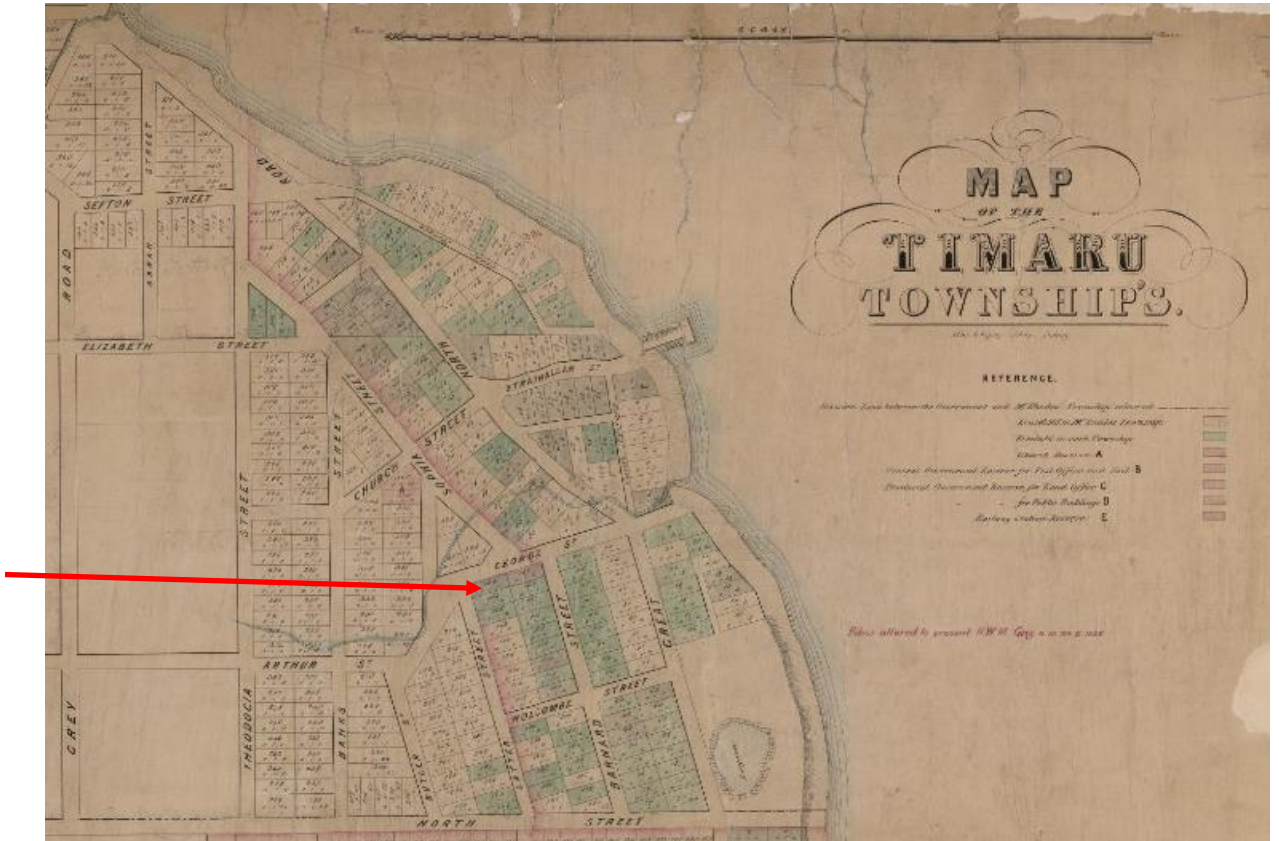
Estate Fee Simple
Area 1935 square metres more or less
Legal Description Lot 1-3 Deposited Plan 1490
Registered Owners
Timaru Borough Council

Interests



4.2. Appendix 2: Visual Aids to Historical Information

Historical Plans

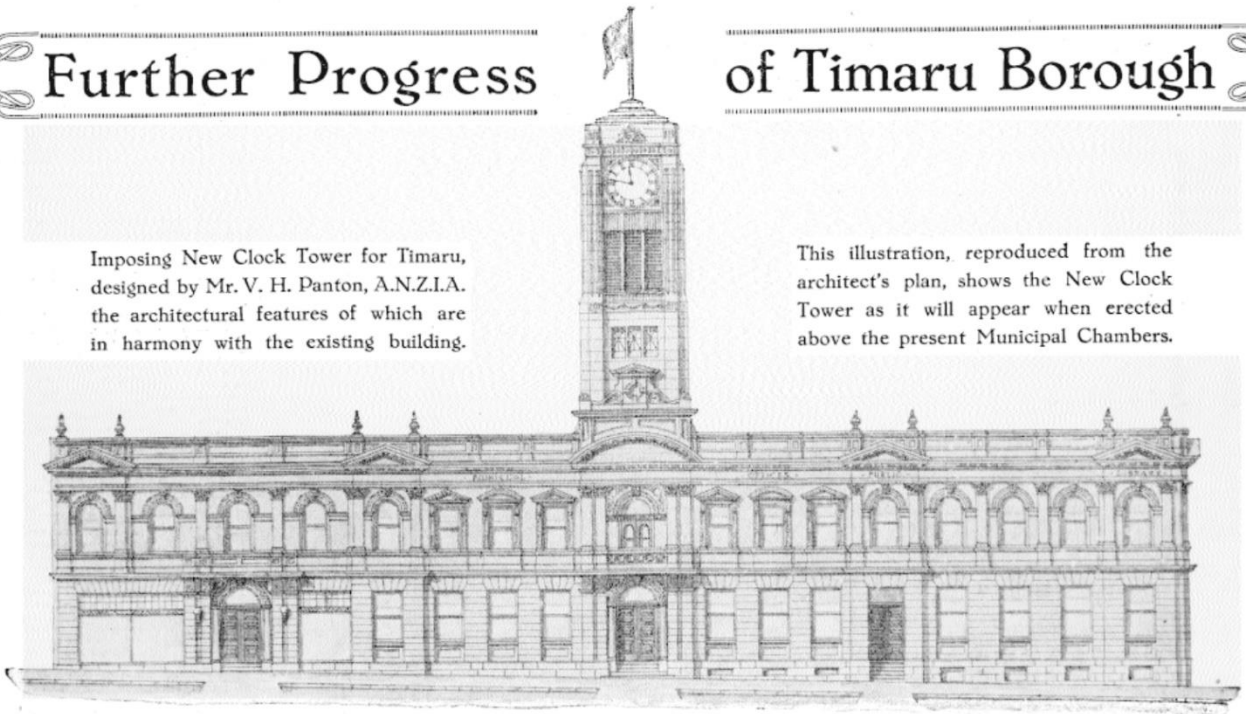


Detail from Map of the Timaru Township's (sic), Lithograph by Allan & Wigley, Sydney, not dated (circa 1860), Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Christchurch Regional Office, Archway Record Code R22668232. Red arrow marks corner where the library and municipal buildings were later constructed.

Further Progress of Timaru Borough

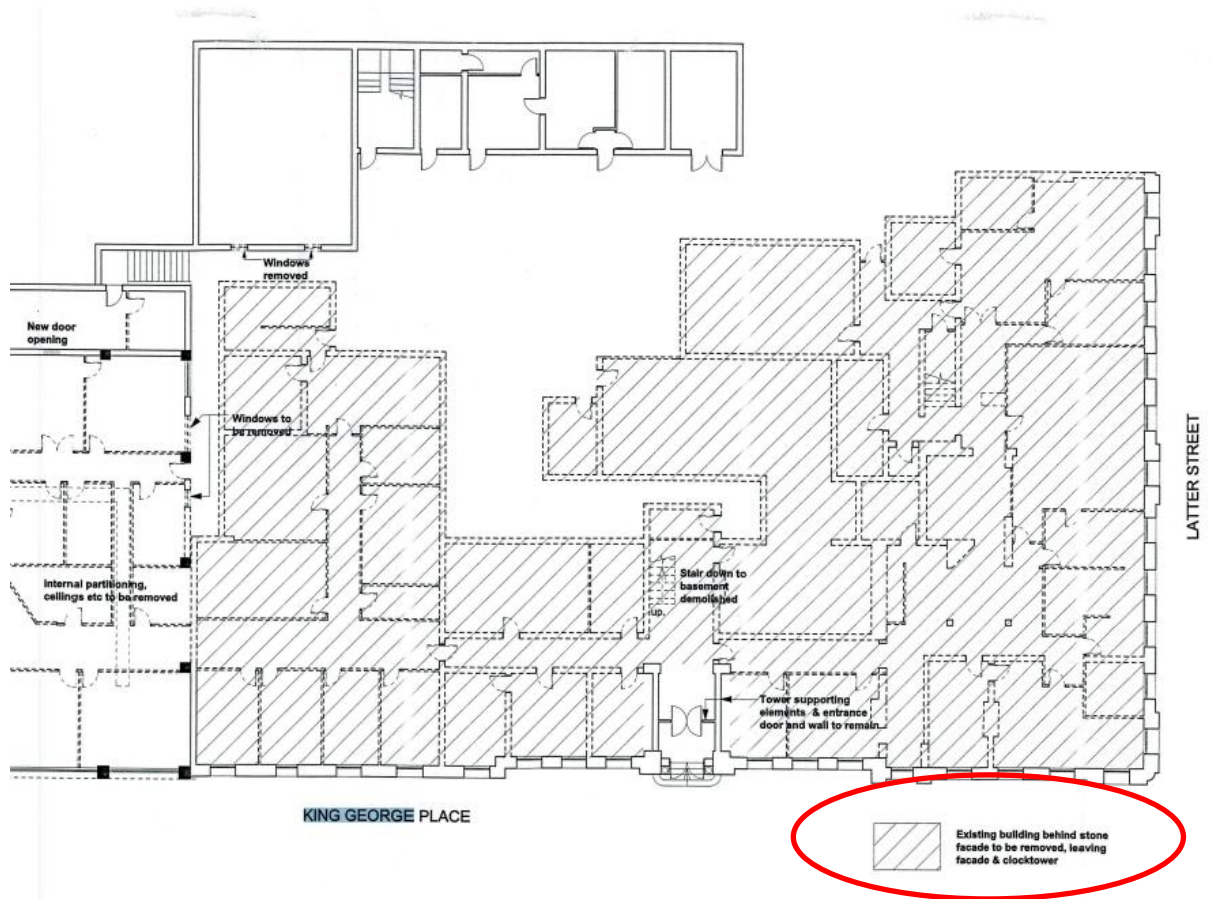
Imposing New Clock Tower for Timaru, designed by Mr. V. H. Panton, A.N.Z.I.A. the architectural features of which are in harmony with the existing building.

This illustration, reproduced from the architect's plan, shows the New Clock Tower as it will appear when erected above the present Municipal Chambers.



FRONT ELEVATION OF MUNICIPAL CHAMBERS AND PROPOSED TOWN CLOCK TOWER.

Plan showing proposed new clock tower design, *Timaru Herald*, 3 Jun. 1933, p. 5 (supplement).



Detail of plan by Trengrove & Blunt Architects Ltd, Timaru District Council Offices Building Redevelopment Project, Ground & First Floor Demolition, approved 13 Oct. 2003 – hatching identifies ‘existing building behind stone façade to be removed, leaving façade and clocktower’

Historical Photographs



'Municipal Bldgs & Library, Timaru. N.Z. 4622', Souvenir photographic print, circa 1950, South Canterbury Museum, Catalogue Number 2013/065.04.



Aerial photographs showing Timaru City Council Offices and Former Public Library rooflines in the 1980s compared to current flatter profile in the photograph dated circa 2020.

4.3. Appendix 3: Visual Aids to Physical Information

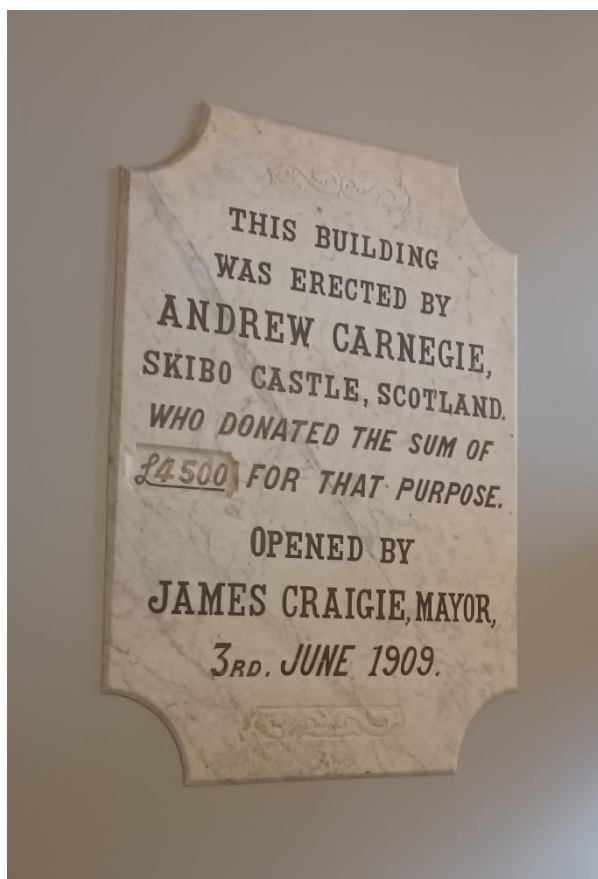
Current Photographs of Place



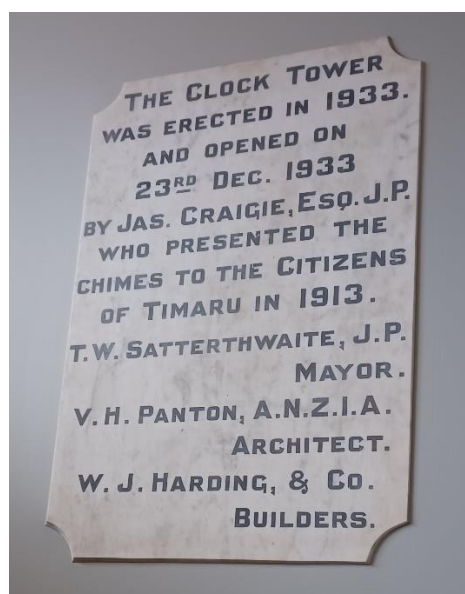
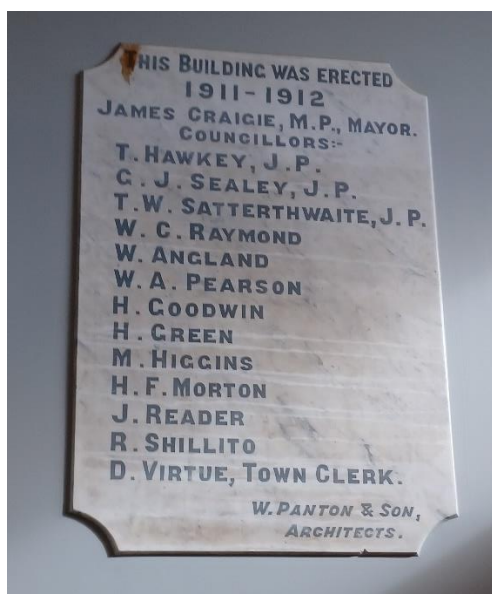
View from south-west showing original west elevation façade and modern south facades from the 2000s redevelopment, R. Burgess, 9 May 2023, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga



Lamp of Remembrance on flagpole (left) and associated plaque (right), R. Burgess, 9 May 2023, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga



Plaque acknowledging Andrew Carnegie’s public library donation, R. Burgess, 9 May 2023, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga [£4500 is the combined total of £3000 for the original and £1500 for the extension]⁴⁸



Building plaques recognising some major building phases, on wall in entrance, R. Burgess, 9 May 2023, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

⁴⁸ *Timaru Herald*, 29 Apr. 1913, p. 11.



Detail of bells in clocktower, R. Burgess, 9 May 2023, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga



Detail of mechanism in clocktower, R. Burgess, 9 May 2023, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

4.4. Appendix 4: Significance Assessment Information

Part 4 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Chattels or object or class of chattels or objects (Section 65(6))

Under Section 65(6) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, an entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero relating to a historic place may include any chattel or object or class of chattels or objects –

- a) Situated in or on that place; and
- b) Considered by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga to contribute to the significance of that place; and
- c) Proposed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for inclusion on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero.

Significance or value (Section 66(1))

Under Section 66(1) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may enter any historic place or historic area on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero if the place possesses aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.

Category of historic place (Section 66(3))

Under Section 66(3) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may assign Category 1 status or Category 2 status to any historic place, having regard to any of the following criteria:

- a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history
- b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history
- c) The potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history
- d) The importance of the place to tangata whenua
- e) The community association with, or public esteem for, the place
- f) The potential of the place for public education
- g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place
- h) The symbolic or commemorative value of the place

- i) The importance of identifying historic places known to date from an early period of New Zealand settlement
- j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places
- k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for the purpose of assigning Category 1 or Category 2 status to a historic place, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3).

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for entering historic places or historic areas of interest to Māori, wāhi tūpuna, wāhi tapu, or wāhi tapu areas on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3) or (5) or in regulations made under subsection (4).

NOTE: Category 1 historic places are 'places of special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage significance or value.' Category 2 historic places are 'places of historical or cultural heritage significance or value.'