GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME	former H & J Smiths' 'Progressive Stores' department store
ADDRESS	58 Main Street, Gore
PHOTOGRAPH	

(October 2021)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. (at time of assessment)	H18	**HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY**	n / a
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Section 8 & Part Section 9 Block VI Town of Gore		
GDC FILE NUMBER	3215144 / 3284121 / 3221555		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	1912 + 1925 + 1930		
ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/ BUILDER	CH Roberts, architect; T Latham, contractor [1912]		
STYLE	Edwardian classicism		

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Two-storey building with L-shaped footprint and hipped roof forms. Principal elevations face north and east. The ground floor has two verandas, carried on metal posts with curved brackets, running along the Main Street frontage and part of Irk Street; first floor windows are double-hung sashes with sunhoods. Main Street elevation is symmetrical with two 'Chicago' style tripartite windows on the first floor and clerestory windows above the veranda. Irk Street elevation has six blind windows on the ground floor between veranda sections and a single 'Chicago' window over a side entry. Entrances marked by pediments set within lean-to veranda; bracketed cornice features building name in relief beneath solid parapet with decorative swags. Delivery bay at west end of Irk Street elevation.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, cement plaster & metal roof.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Extended along Main Street (1925). Extended along Irk Street (1930). Modern glazed entry at corner (1999?).

SETTING

The building is located on the west side of Main Street overlooking its intersection with Irk Street. There are a number of other scheduled heritage items in the vicinity at the southern

end of the central business district. The scheduled setting encompasses the three land parcels on which the building is located.

History

H & J Smith was founded in Invercargill by Helen Smith (1873-1918) and her brother John in 1900. The Smiths had been born in South Otago and gained work experience in Dunedin before moving to Invercargill to set up in business. The company prospered and built its own manufacturing facilities for clothing, draperies and bedding. John moved to Gore in 1905 to start a branch there; another shop followed in Riverton. In 1912 a new store was built in Gore (it opened in early 1913) and the firm became a limited liability company. Helen Smith died of influenza in November 1918 and the company was continued by her brother. The Gore store was enlarged in 1925 and 1930; another two generations of the Smith family serving as managing director. In 1954 Queen Elizabeth II attended a lunch hosted by the Gore Women's Club on the first floor of the department store. H & J Smiths continues to operate in Invercargill, Gore and Queenstown; but stores in Dunedin, Te Anau and Balclutha were closed between August 2020 and January 2021 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Gore store was downsized in August 2020 and the local branch is now located in the neighbouring building at 66 Main Street. Currently the Irk Street section of the historic department store is available for lease, with the Main Street, corner section tenanted and in commercial use.

Historic And Social Significance

The former H & J Smiths' department store has high historic and social significance for its association with the major Southland department store chain H & J Smith, its founding partners Helen and John Smith and, more generally, the commercial development of Gore's town centre in the early 20th century.

Cultural And Spiritual Significance

The former H & J Smiths' department store has cultural value for the esteem in which it is held as a historic town centre commercial building.

Architectural And Aesthetic Significance

The former H & J Smiths' department store has high architectural significance for its Edwardian classical design, which was continued in later additions, by Invercargill architect Charles Henry Roberts. Roberts (1869-1942) was born and educated in North Otago and initially trained as a builder. He served his articles with JA Burnside in Dunedin and then commenced practice on his own account in 1895. Roberts also designed Baker's Buildings on Main Street (1904) as well as a number of churches around Otago.

Technological And Craftsmanship Significance

The former H & J Smiths' department store has high technological and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its Edwardian and interwar construction and classical detailing. T Latham was a local builder and contractor.

Contextual Significance

The former H & J Smiths' department store has high contextual significance for its landmark qualities and the contribution it makes to the historic character of Gore's central business district.

Archaeological and Scientific Significance

Although the building post-dates 1900, its site may have potential archaeological values relating to the colonial development of Gore's town centre. Deposit Plan 931, which is dated February 1908, records that there was a wooden building on the corner site at that time.

Summary of Heritage Significance

The former H & J Smiths' 'Progressive Stores' department store has high overall heritage significance to Gore and to the district of Gore as a whole. The building has high historic and social significance for its association with H & J Smiths' and its founders, as well as the development of the town centre. The former H & J Smiths' department store has cultural value for the esteem in which it is held as a historic town centre building and high architectural significance as an Edwardian classical style building designed by Invercargill architect Charles Roberts. The former H & J Smiths' department store has high technological and craftsmanship significance for the evidence it can provide of Edwardian and interwar building methods and materials and the quality of its ornamental plasterwork. The former H & J Smiths' department store building has high contextual significance for its landmark qualities and contribution to the historic character of Gore's central business district.

References

- *Mataura Ensign* 24 January 1910, p. 4; 12 April 1912, p. 1; 16 April 1915, p. 1.
- *Southland Times* 21 January 1910, p. 1; 12 February 1910, p. 5; 31 March 1913 p. 5.
- *Otago Daily Times* 18 December 1929, p. 5; 8 December 1930, p. 12; 2 September 1942, p. 4.
- *Progress* 1 December 1913, p. 845.
- *Wise's New Zealand Post Office Directory*; various dates.
- *Stuff* 28 August 12020; available online.
- https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s26/smith-helen-hay
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H_%26_J_Smith
- https://www.hjsmith.co.nz/about-h-and-j-smith/about-us
- https://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc04Cycl-t1-body1-d6-d2-d31.html
- https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2498

Report Completed 10 May 2022

Author Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services

Extent of scheduling, encompassing all three land parcels, former H & J Smiths' building, 58 Main Street, Gore.

The building in 1913. *Progress* 1 December 1913, p. 845.

The building in 1929. *Otago Daily Times* 18 December 1929, p. 5.