GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME	former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex
ADDRESS	4 Gorton Street, Gore
PHOTOGRAPH	(April 2022)
DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. (at time of assessment)	H6 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 7470 / 1
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Sections 1-2 & 18-22 Block XI Town of Gore
GDC FILE NUMBER	3211935
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	1890, 1892-93, 1895, c.1900, 1912, 1918-20, 1920s?
ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/ BUILDER	Panton & Packe, architects [1890]; John Day, builder [1895 & 1912]; WH Dunning, architect, Blair Mason, engineer, Messrs Fletcher Bros, contractors [1918-20]
STYLE	Industrial vernacular, 'Daylight' factory, Interwar Modern

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Building complex of varied heights and footprints that is built to the road boundaries on Mersey, Gorton and [in part] Ashton Streets.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, concrete, corrugated metal.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Staged building programme as indicated above.

SETTING

The mill complex occupies a large, L-shaped site that is bordered by Mersey, Gorton and Ashton Streets. The town centre is to the north-west, beyond the main trunk railway line on which raw materials to and finished products from the mill were once shipped. The scheduled setting encompasses the seven land parcels on which the buildings and structures of the mill complex are located.

HISTORY

In 1878 Messrs Richardson, Green & Co. opened the Gore Flour Mill. The mill, which was bought by Messrs Fleming, Henderson & Co. in 1883, had its first oatmeal kiln installed in 1888 and was expanded and upgraded with new plant imported from England in 1892-93; it was being run by Messrs Fleming & Gilkison by the late 1890s. Thomas Fleming (1848-1930) was born in Scotland and immigrated to New Zealand with his family in 1862. He trained as a miller in North Otago and then purchased an Invercargill flour mill with his brother-in-law Peter Gilkison in c.1876. By the turn of the 20th century the Gore mill was a major exporter of oatmeal, trading under the 'Thistle' brand; the company's 'Snowflake' brand flour was largely consumed locally. In c.1910 Thomas Fleming bought out his partners and the company became Fleming & Co. Ltd. Advertisements for the 'Creamoata' brand of finely milled breakfast oats first appeared in New Zealand newspapers in 1906 and the figure of Sergeant Dan accompanies advertisements for 'Creamoata' from June 1915, possibly in response to the war. Fire destroyed the original timber section of the mill in late March 1912; another fire in March 1918 also necessitated the rebuilding of some parts of the complex. After production of 'Creamoata' was shifted to Australia in c.2000, the building was acquired by Sergeant Dan's Stockfoods Ltd in 2005. The Sergeant Dan brand oat product was discontinued by Nestle in 2008.

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex has high historic and social significance for its association with a nationally recognised food brand, its place in the development of Gore district and Southland as a grain and food-producing region, and as one of Gore's most notable employers for many decades. In the early 20th century the mill was believed to be the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere (HNZPT list entry). Fleming & Co.'s co-dependence upon the Southland rail network and its early support for local aviation are also notable aspects of the mills' historic value.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex has cultural significance as a place of community identity and historic continuity. NZ Post featured Sergeant Dan in a series of nostalgic food focused postage stamps in 1999, thus demonstrating the brand's national reach and esteem.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex has architectural significance as a multi-part mill complex, which was developed over a number of years. The five-storey mill building erected on Gorton Street in 1918-20 is especially notable as an early example of the 'daylight' factory, a type of modern factory building developed in the USA and typified by the large-scale use of glazing. The architect, William Dunning (1872-1933), was born and educated in Tasmania and then spent twelve years in South Africa before immigrating to New Zealand in 1908; he was also associate architect for the 1925 National Bank building in Gore, in association with Atkins & Mitchell of Wellington, and designed McCutchen's Building in Main Street (c.1927). The design of the company's offices in Mersey Street is also of note; the architect is currently unknown.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex has technological and craftsmanship significance as a late 19th and early 20th century industrial complex, designed for high quality food production and incorporating the latest in contemporary milling technology. John Day was a local contractor.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex has high contextual significance as a Southland landmark and for the defining contribution it makes to the historic character of Gore's industrial zone and, more generally, the town centre. The mill site includes buildings on the corner of Gorton and Ashton Streets that were occupied by Murray Roberts & Co. and Dalgety & Co in the mid-1920s.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the mill complex pre-dates 1900, its site has potential archaeological significance relating to its use and development as an industrial complex.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex has high overall heritage significance to Gore and to the district of Gore as a whole. The mill complex has high historic and social significance for its association with a nationally recognised food brand, a major local employer and the development of Southland, and cultural significance as a place of community identity and historic continuity. The former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex has architectural significance as a complex of utilitarian structures designed to be fit for purpose and technological and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its construction and detailing. The former Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex has high contextual significance as an iconic Southland landmark and as a defining feature within Gore's centrally located industrial zone.

REFERENCES

- *Mataura Ensign* 2 March 1883, p. 3; 23 September 1890, p. 9; 29 March 1895, p. 3; 14 June 1895, p. 4; 19 May 1896, p. 3; 21 February 1899, p. 2; 30 August 1900, p. 6; 11 May 1912, p. 1; 28 May 1912, p. 7; 24 January 1920, p. 4.
- *Otago Witness* 13 March 1918, p. 34 (supplement).
- *Southland Times* 13 April 1878 p. 2; 11 May 1878, p. 3; 26 November 1890, p. 1; 24 April 1891, p. 3; 18 June 1906, p. 3; 1 April 1912, p. 5.
- *Otago Daily Times* 13 April 1881, p. 3; 16 April 1935, p. 14; 9 October 2008 (available online).
- *Progress* 1 November 1918, p. 364.
- *NZ Herald* 5 June 1915, p. 13.
- *Evening Post* 28 March 1912, p. 8.
- *Taranaki Daily News* 1 October 1918, p. 2.
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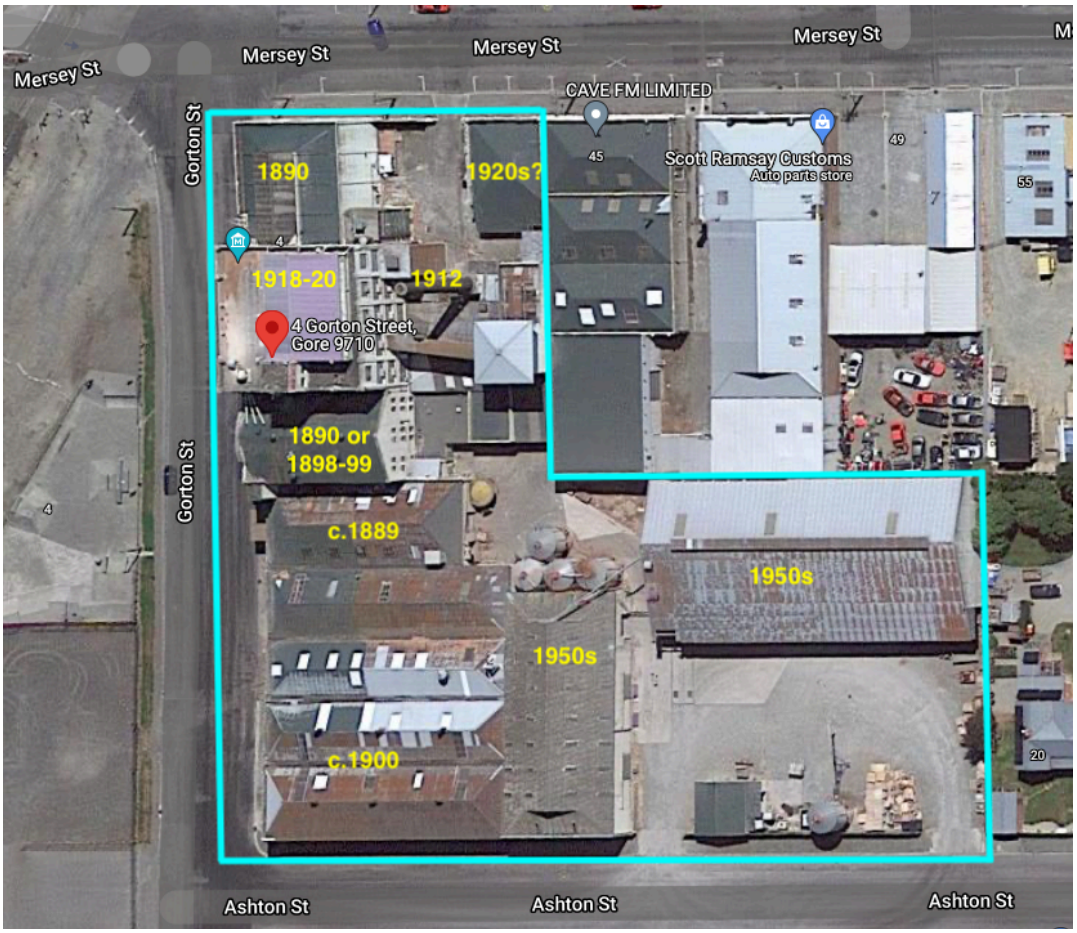
Extent of scheduling, encompassing all parcels outlined in red, Fleming & Co.'s 'Creamoata Mills' complex, 4 Gorton Street , Gore.



Approximate dates of construction for component parts of the mill complex.