GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME	former JE Watson & Co. building
ADDRESS	45 Mersey Street, Gore
PHOTOGRAPH	

(April 2022)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. (at time of assessment)	n / a	**HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY**	n / a
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Section 3 Block XI Town of Gore		
GDC FILE NUMBER	3217873		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	1911-12 + c.1930		
ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/ BUILDER	Unknown designer; Mr Dall, contractor (1911-12)		
STYLE	Commercial classicism		

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey building with rectangular footprint and hipped roof forms; flat-roofed extension at rear. Principal, north-facing elevation is largely symmetrical with entry at west end. Large, four-paned windows with obscure glass fanlights, dentilled cornice and stepped parapet with centrally located flagpole. Fluted column motif incised on lower part of piers framing window bays on facade. Vehicle access to rear yard runs along the east boundary of the site.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Reinforced concrete, cement plaster, corrugated metal.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Façade remodelled (c.1930). Rear extension (1970s).

SETTING

The former JE Watson & Co. building stands on the south side of Mersey Street, in that portion of the street bordered by Tamworth Lane in the east and Gorton Street in the west. The building is built to the road boundary and the scheduled setting is the land parcel on which the building is located.

HISTORY

JE Watson & Co. were wool, grain and seed merchants with branches throughout the district. The company had started in Gore and by the turn of the 20th century had its head office in Invercargill. It became a limited liability company trading as JE Watson & Co. in 1903; partners in the firm at that time were JE Watson, James Graham and John Gilkison. The firm had had premises in Mersey Street since 1898, if not earlier, and built a new office on a new site there in 1911-12. Watson & Co. sold the building to Dalgety & Co. in 1930 but remained in occupation for some years; by the early 1950s the building also housed the local agencies of two insurance companies. The building has since changed hands and is now the home of a local radio station.

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former JE Watson & Co. building has historic significance for its association with JE & Watson & Co. and its contribution to the development of agriculture in the district, as well as, more generally, the development of Gore's industrial zone.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former JE Watson & Co. building has cultural value as the former site of the Gore Toy Library and the current premises of local radio station Cave FM.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former JE Watson & Co. building has architectural significance as a light industrial building with an interwar commercial classical style façade that is in keeping with those of the neighbouring buildings. The designer[s] of the building and its interwar facade are currently unknown.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former JE Watson & Co. building has technological and craftsmanship significance for its reinforced concrete construction and detailing. When it was erected in 1911-12 the building was said to be the first 'ferro-concrete' building in Gore. The contractor was a Mr Dall, who had previously built Gore's Bank of New Zealand.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former JE Watson & Co. building has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the historic character of Gore's town centre. The former Stevenson's Princess Theatre and Flemings' Creamoata factory are also scheduled heritage items in Mersey Street West; the Watson building is also complementary in style to that of the neighbouring former Dalgety/*Ensign* office building.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the building post-dates 1900, its site may have potential archaeological value relating to its earlier use and development. The section was owned by James Turnbull before it was acquired by JE Watson & Co. in 1911.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The JE Watson & Co. building has overall heritage significance to Gore and to the district of Gore as a whole. The building has historical significance for its association with JE Watson & Co. and the agricultural development of the district and cultural value as a place of community use and identity. The JE Watson & Co. building has architectural significance as an early 20th century light industrial building with an interwar commercial classical style facade and technological and craftsmanship significance for its reinforced concrete

construction and classical detailing. The JE Watson & Co. building has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the historic, light industrial character of Mersey Street; its site may have potential archaeological value.

REFERENCES

- *Mataura Ensign* 22 January 1898, p. 2; 14 January 1908, p. 4; 5 September 1911, p. 7; 13 September 1911, p. 5; 28 May 1912, p. 7.
- *Southland Times* 13 May 1889, p. 3.
- http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc04Cycl-t1-body1-d5-d51-d42.html

REPORT COMPLETED 18 May 2022

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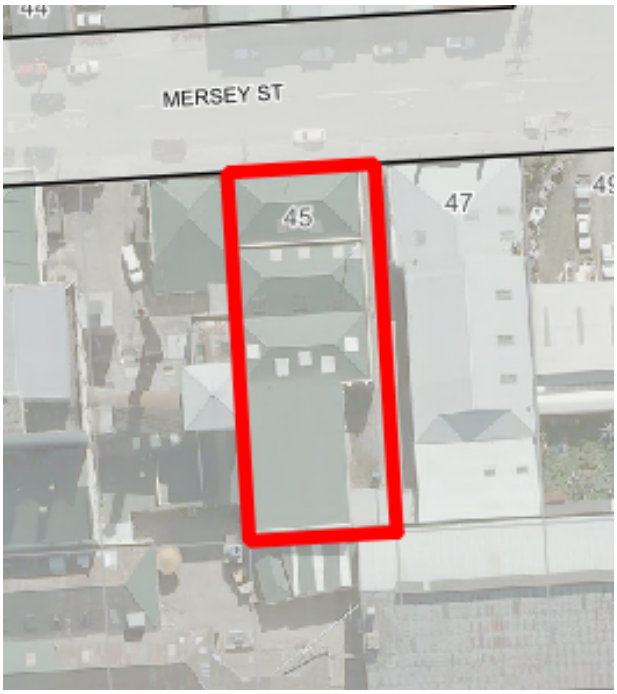

Extent of scheduling, former JE Watson & Co. building, 45 Mersey Street, Gore.