

WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

2021 District Plan Item No. **HH017**

HERITAGE ITEM NAME Johnston's Buildings

ADDRESS 113 High Street, Rangiora

PHOTOGRAPH



(Dr A McEwan, 9 July 2019)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. H072 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 3784 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 2 DP 28806

VALUATION NUMBER 2166103500

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1896-97

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** RW England, architect; Messrs Boyd & Keir, builders

STYLE Commercial classicism

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Two-storey corner building with L-shaped footprint and hipped roof forms. Bullnose return veranda carried on cast iron posts with decorative brackets. Pediments over first floor windows, bracketed cornice and solid parapet bearing name and date of building on raised corner section. Parapet on High Street elevation has three pediments marking each bay of the façade. Also on the site is a single-storey row of shops with a square footprint and multiple hipped roof forms. Veranda is slightly convex and is carried on the same style posts as the two-storey corner building. Three recessed shop entries and solid parapet with decorative mouldings.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, cement plaster, cast iron and corrugate metal.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Parapet removed (1960s). Parapet reinstated and building earthquake strengthened (2000).

SETTING

The building stands on the south side of High Street in the Rangiora town centre. Victoria Street borders the property to the east and the former Junction Hotel façade (H073) is on the opposite side of High Street. The extent of scheduling is the land parcel on which the building is located and includes the single-storey shops on the western portion.

HISTORY

John Johnston (1840-1915) was a Scottish-born blacksmith who emigrated to New Zealand with his parents and five siblings in early 1859. He worked at Anderson's Foundry in Christchurch until late 1863 when he established a business in Rangiora. Johnston married Christina McIntyre in 1864 and was the second mayor of Rangiora (1880-83). In August 1896 Johnston's 1863 smith's shop was moved from the corner of his High Street site along Victoria Street to make way for a new building to be occupied by GF Smith's drapery and, after Smith vacated the premises in 1901, Johnston's ironmongery and hardware store. The new building was nearing completion by January 1897 but progress appears to have stalled because it was reported in April that some of the glass for the large ground floor windows was found to have been broken in shipment. John Johnston's son William took over the business after his father's death in 1915. Johnston junior formed the North Canterbury Motor Company with two others after World War I and the garage took over the blacksmith's premises at the rear of Johnston's Buildings. The Public Trust established an office in Johnston's Buildings in 1921 and the North Canterbury Electric Power Board had their showroom on the ground floor in the mid-1930s. Around the same time the first home of the revived Rangiora division of the St John Ambulance Brigade was an office on the first floor of Johnston's Buildings. Thanks to the long-standing association between the Johnstons and the corner of High and Victoria Streets it became known as Johnston's corner. The building was refurbished and strengthened in 2000 and remains in family ownership.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Johnston's Buildings have high historical and social significance for their association with John Johnston and, more generally, the commercial development of Rangiora. The construction of Johnston's Buildings signalled the end of the long depression of the 1880s and 1890s and the building was the first in Rangiora's town centre to be lit by electricity.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Johnston's Buildings have cultural value as a demonstration of the working life of its early occupants and for the esteem in which the structure is held as a Rangiora Landmark building.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Johnston's Buildings have high architectural significance as the work of Robert England junior (1863-1908) who established his practice in Christchurch in 1886 and was joined in partnership by his brother Edward (1875-1949) in 1906. The England Brothers were responsible for some of Christchurch's most notable late 19th and early 20th century residential buildings, including the former McLean's mansion (1899-1902) and the 1900 section of Riccarton House. A number of the firm's Christchurch buildings were demolished following the Canterbury earthquakes. Johnston's Buildings were sensitively restored in 2000 and are an accomplished example of late Victorian commercial classicism.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Johnston's Buildings have technological and craftsmanship significance for its masonry construction and ornamental detailing. Local contractor and politician Thomas Keir (1837-1910) was born in Scotland and emigrated to New Zealand in 1864. After two years working as a carpenter in Christchurch he settled in Rangiora, where he was a builder and contractor in partnership with Hugh Boyd for some 40 years. Boyd (1843-1924) was also a Scottish-born carpenter and joiner who emigrated to New Zealand in 1864. He settled in Rangiora where family members were already resident and commenced business in 1865. Boyd had met Keir on the voyage out to New Zealand. He was an inaugural Rangiora Borough councillor, served a term as Mayor of Rangiora, and was prominently involved in local education matters for over 40 years.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Johnston's Buildings have high contextual significance as a defining historic feature within the Rangiora town centre and for their relationship with the former Junction Hotel facade (H073) on the opposite side of High Street. The building is a rare survivor of the historic streetscape that has largely been transformed by the redevelopment that has occurred since 2011. According to Hawkins, Johnston's Buildings influenced the design of a number of other town centre buildings in Rangiora in the early 20th century.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the building pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological value relating to the early development and use of the property.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Johnston's Buildings have high overall heritage significance to Rangiora and Waimakariri district as a whole. The building has high historical and social significance for its association with John Johnston and the commercial development of Rangiora and cultural value as a heritage feature held in esteem by members of the community. Johnston's Buildings have high architectural significance as carefully restored commercial classical design by Christchurch architect RW England and technological and craftsmanship significance for their masonry construction and ornamental detailing by local builders Boyd and Keir. Johnston's Buildings have high contextual significance for the contribution they make to the Rangiora town centre streetscape and the site has potential archaeological values in view of the buildings' age.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

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- *Sun* 28 June 1915, p. 11; 30 June 1915 p. 10; 3 May 1918, p. 3.
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- *North Canterbury Gazette* 4 June 1935, p. 3.
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REPORT COMPLETED

4 April 2019

AUTHOR

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Extent of setting, Johnston's Buildings, 113 High Street, Rangiora.



As built. www.