

WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

2021 District Plan Item No. HH104
HERITAGE ITEM NAME former Commercial Hotel / Rustic Country Hotel
ADDRESS 159 Main Street, Oxford
PHOTOGRAPH



(Dr A McEwan, 10 July 2019)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. n / a **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** n / a
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Pt RS 1750

VALUATION NUMBER 2153232800

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1878

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** JSM Jacobsen, architect; JJ Robinson, builder

STYLE Commercial classicism

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Two-storey building with L-shaped footprint and hipped roof forms. Single-storey lean-to and extension to rear (south) of main block. Rusticated weatherboards on north and west-facing façades. Bracketed eaves, solid parapet, double-hung sash windows. Recessed entrance porch on north elevation with balcony above; decorative brackets on ground floor veranda posts.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Timber framing and weatherboard cladding, corrugated metal roofing.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Erection of single-storey wing at rear along Commercial Road (c.1980?). Removal of parapet signboard and corner entry; installation of aluminium-framed oriel window on ground floor (date unknown, c.1980?).

SETTING

The building stands on the south side of Main Street on the western edge of the township of Oxford. The property is bounded to the west by Commercial Road and stands at the crossroads with Depot and Mill Roads. The hotel is built to the property boundary on the north and west sides; the wider setting is largely residential in character. The extent of scheduling is the land parcel on which the hotel stands, partly in view of the site's potential archaeological values.

HISTORY

William Paget opened his new Commercial Hotel on 1 July 1878; he had held a country hotel license in the township since the early 1870s. There were four hotels in all when Paget (1850-1921) opened the West Oxford hotel; the others being the Harewood Arms in East Oxford, the Oxford Hotel and the Terminus Hotel in West Oxford. By the turn of the 20th century three hotels were in operation in the town and the Commercial Hotel was being run by John JB Hiffernan. In c.1903 the hotel boasted 'sixteen bedrooms, four sitting rooms, a billiard and bagatelle room, and a dining room, the latter being capable of seating forty guests. The stable behind the hotel has four loose boxes, and there is a coach shed. An excellent paddock and kitchen garden are attached to the hotel, which is one of the most commodious in the Oxford district. A large hall, suitable for public meetings, and fitted up so as to give ample convenience for theatrical and other amusements, adjoins the hotel' (*Cyclopaedia of NZ*, p. 497). The hotel changed hands regularly through the 20th century and is still run as a hotel today.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Commercial Hotel has historical and social significance for its continuous use as a hotel since 1878 and, more generally, for its association with the colonial development of Oxford.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Commercial Hotel has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its past and present proprietors and their patrons.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Commercial Hotel has architectural significance as a commercial classical design by Christchurch colonial architect JSM Jacobsen. Jacobsen (known as Isaac, 1823-1906) was born in Germany and settled in Nelson soon after he arrived in New Zealand in 1843. He was a building contractor in the settlement until 1870, at which time he relocated to Lyttelton in the wake of a disastrous fire that destroyed much of the town centre. In Lyttelton and Christchurch Jacobsen practised as an architect. He later returned to Nelson, where he died in 1906.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Commercial Hotel has technological and craftsmanship value for its Victorian timber construction and detailing. John Robinson was a Rangiora builder who also built the first stage of the Anglican Church of St John the Baptist (H052, 1875-76) and its Sunday School (1879) in Rangiora.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Commercial Hotel has contextual significance as a local landmark at the western periphery of Oxford and for the evidence it provides of the historic settlement and development of West Oxford.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

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

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Commercial Hotel / Rustic Country Hotel has overall heritage significance to Oxford and Waimakariri district as a whole. The hotel has historical and social significance for

its association with the provision of hospitality in West Oxford since 1878 and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former proprietors and their patrons. The former Commercial Hotel has architectural significance as a commercial classical design by Christchurch architect Isaac Jacobsen and technological and craftsmanship value for its Victorian timber construction and detailing by Rangiora builder JJ Robinson. The former Commercial Hotel has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the historic character of Oxford's Main Street and its site has potential archaeological values given the age of the building.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Press* 9 May 1873, p. 3; 25 March 1878, p. 1; 17 June 1878, p. 3; 6 July 1878, p. 4; 1 October 1878, p. 2; 31 October 1878, p. 6; 10 June 1889, p. 6; 2 June 1914, p. 10; 30 July 1919, p. 1; 3 September 1919, p. 2; 2 May 1925, p. 18.
- *Lyttelton Times* 14 September 1859, p. 5; 11 March 1878, p. 3; 17 June 1878, p. 3; 26 September 1878, p. 3; 26 April 1889, pp. 4.
- *Star* 7 June 1879, p. 3.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903 (available online).
- Macdonald Dictionary of Biography, Canterbury Museum (available online).
- DN Hawkins *Beyond the Waimakariri* Christchurch, 2001 (available online).
- <https://www.rusticcountry.nz>

REPORT COMPLETED

23 July 2019

AUTHOR

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Extent of setting, 159 Main Street, Oxford.



Hotel with public hall beyond, c.1915.



The hotel in c.1920.