

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:
FORMER GREEN ISLAND CIVIC CENTRE AT
222 MAIN SOUTH ROAD/1 HOWDEN STREET



Photo: Origin Consultants

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX114
Address:	222 Main South Road/1 Howden Street
Other Building Name:	The Lighthouse
Located within a Heritage Precinct:	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description:	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record:	Community Hall/Church
Condition of Property:	Not known to be at risk because of condition

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Does not meet criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope
✓	External/ancillary elements	Clock tower on the corner of Howden & Main South Road (allowing for the digital clock to be replaced).
	Internal elements and/or rooms	Not considered as part of this desktop assessment. Owner may nominate interior elements for protection.
	Excluded elements	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Green Island Civic Centre, on the corner of Main South Road and Howden Street, has heritage significance. The former Civic Centre, constructed 1958-1960, is associated with the former Green Island Borough Council that governed the district from 1875 until 1989 when numerous local districts were amalgamated under the present Dunedin City Council. The building is associated with the growth and development of Green Island, and socially it has provided a meeting and community place since its construction. The design of the building, by notable Dunedin architectural practice Allingham and Williamson, is a fine example of a Modern/International Style building that retains a good level of authenticity and integrity.

The building is comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin of a similar type and/or history. When compared with other scheduled buildings, the Green Island Civic Centre meets the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Moderne (1955-1975)
Style	International Style
Era/Date of Construction	1958-1960
Architect/Designer/Builder	Allingham and Williamson
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Green Island Civic Centre/Council Offices
Primary Construction Materials	Glass, concrete, Benhar clay bricks, timber, structural steel, porcelain enamel panels.
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Modern detailing including curtain wall glazing (with panels of bright green vitrolite), tile mural and use of colour, curved façade with porcelain panels, clock tower.

Previous site development

Before the current civic centre was built, this was the site of the former Green Island Council Chambers building, a smaller timber gabled structure that sat at the corner of Howden Street and Main South Road. The rear of the site was used as a works yard and contained multiple ancillary buildings.



The earlier Green Island Council Chambers, c. 1920 (DCC Archives, Green Island Borough Series, 22/1).



Site of the Green Island Civic Centre in 1947, with the former Council Chambers visible to the left of the image (Retrolens, SN399 (Cropped)).

Design and construction

The Civic Centre was designed in 1958 by architects Allingham and Williamson to replace the former town hall, council chambers, and a rundown cinema. The structural consultants for the building were E. R. Garden & Associates, the services consultant was C. J. Maindonald, and the contractor was William McLellan Ltd. Mayor James Boomer attended the official opening of the Green Island Civic Centre on 25 June 1960. A dance and cinema showing were held in the building on the same day.¹

¹ Healey, K. n.d. *The Green and the Gold: The Story of Greater Green Island*. Dunedin: Green Island Jaycees (Inc.)

The building contained a five-hundred-seat auditorium that could be used as a cinema or for stage shows. The cinema was acclaimed as ‘the most modern of its kind in the province’. It also contained a dance hall, supper room, and Council Chambers office space to accommodate the various uses.²

The building incorporates several elements of the Modernist/International Style. The mass of the building is elevated from the ground using extensive curtain glazing and thin columns (pilotis) on the ground floor. The glazing forms a horizontal grid, accented by bright green vitrolite panels. The design has a colour palette reminiscent of Le Corbusier’s colour keyboards, with the neutral, earthy tones of the local Benhar clay brick and concrete accented with brighter colours; the tile mural on the eastern elevation is red, blue, and green (the panels on the front façade appear to have originally been coloured as well). The building sits on concrete pile foundations and is supported by a reinforced concrete frame. The curved frontage of the building, dominated by a grid of porcelain enamelled panels, is supported by structural steel columns encased in concrete.³ The design features an electric clock, displayed on a concrete column on the corner of Howden Street and Main South Road. The “swept-back contemporary-type concrete tower,” was imported from England on Allingham’s recommendation. The prominent Richmond family donated the original clock. It has since been replaced.⁴

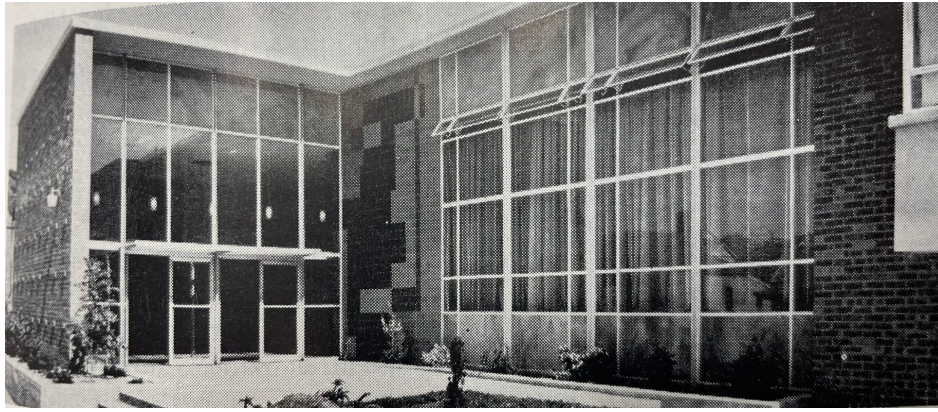


Green Island Civic Centre Opening Day, 25 June 1960 (DCC Archives, Green Island Borough Series, 22/19.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dccarchives/>).

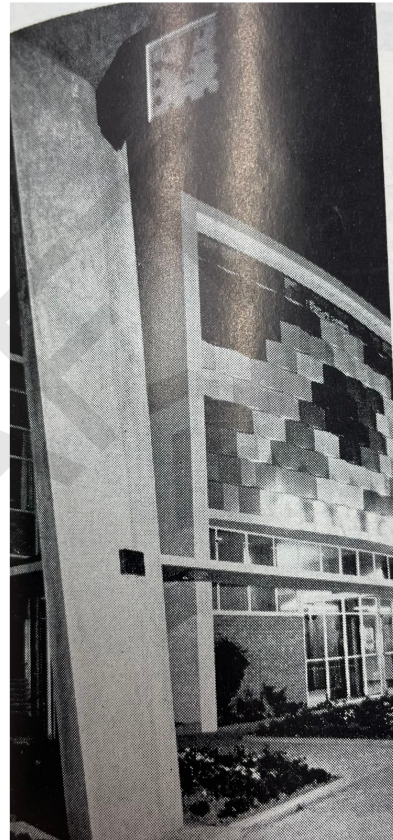
² Healey, K. n.d. *The Green and the Gold: The Story of Greater Green Island*. Dunedin: Green Island Jaycees (Inc.), Page 119.

³ NZIA, ‘Green Island Civic Centre,’ *Journal of the NZ Institute of Architects*, 29, 4 (1962), Pages 106-112; Les Couleurs, 2020. <https://www.lescouteurs.ch/en/the-colours/colour-keyboards/>

⁴ NZIA; Gatley, J. 2008. *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand’s New Architecture 1904-1984*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.



Green Island Civic Centre, c. 1962 (NZIA.).



The facade of the Civic Centre, c. 1962. (right) The original clock and facade at night, c. 1962 (NZIA, 'Green Island Civic Centre,' Journal of the NZ Institute of Architects, 29, 4 (1962), Pages 106-112.)



The main foyer c. 1962, featuring a terrazzo floor and granite-like columns ((NZIA, 'Green Island Civic Centre,' Journal of the NZ Institute of Architects, 29, 4 (1962), Pages 106-112.)



Civic Centre before repainting (The Allingham File compiled by Nigel Brown)

Commentators praised the Civic Centre for its “airy spaciousness, its central position, its modern design and its colour”.⁵ Interior features included the main pillars in the foyer, which were spray-painted with mixed white and black water and oil paint to give a granite-like appearance; a terrazzo floor using local aggregates; and the exterior brick wall of the shop, which runs through to the foyer, connecting exterior and interior.⁶

⁵ Healey, K. n.d. *The Green and the Gold: The Story of Greater Green Island*. Dunedin: Green Island Jaycees (Inc.), Page 119.

⁶ NZIA.

Later history and development

The Green Island Borough Council occupied the offices in the building until at least 1982.⁷ The building has been renovated multiple times, the first time in 1972 when the Green Island Badminton Club donated funds towards the project.⁸ The offices were extensively altered c. 1982, and the theatre floor levels were altered for Kids TV Ltd in 1992. In 1992, the site was subdivided, separating the theatre and offices at the front from the social hall at the rear.⁹ The auditorium was converted into a church for the Grace Baptist Assembly of Dunedin c. 2002.¹⁰ The current owner of the front section of the site (the theatre, foyer, and shop), is the Landmark Baptist Lighthouse (Lighthouse Baptist Church). The rear, used as a community hall, is owned by the Dunedin City Council.¹¹ The rear portion of the building continues to be used for community events.¹²

At some stage, the tiles on the façade were repainted, the 'Civic Centre' sign removed, and a pyramid-shaped glass canopy erected over the entrance on the eastern elevation.

The former Civic Centre features in 'A guide to Otago Architecture'.¹³



The Green Island Civic Centre in 2024. The clock tower is visible to the left of the image

Notable people/Themes

Green Island Borough Council

Green Island Borough Council was active from 1875-1989. The first Mayor of Green Island was J. J. Eagerty (1875-1877). The mayor when the new Civic Centre was built was James Boomer (1944-1961). The last mayor of Green Island was V. J. Crimp, who served from around 1968-1989. The Council served

⁷ DCC, A28563 (2211908).

⁸ Healey, K. n.d. *The Green and the Gold: The Story of Greater Green Island*. Dunedin: Green Island Jaycees (Inc.).

⁹ Premise, DP 22969

¹⁰ DCC, ABA21209 (641812); DCC, A28563 (2211908); DCC, AAB19924058 4974 (4300045).

¹¹ OT15A/536;

¹² Greater Green Island Community Network, 2022. <https://greatergreenisland.nz/directory>

¹³ .¹³ Andrew Barrie, Jade Shum, and Victoria Gancheva, "Coastal Otago, Oamaru and Central Dunedin: A Guide to Otago Architecture", Map No. 9, Architecture New Zealand, March/April 2022

Green Island as it developed from a small town into a fully-fledged suburb with a population of seven thousand.¹⁴

Allingham and Williamson

John Allingham (c.1911-1991) was born in Auckland and educated at the School of Architecture at Auckland University College. He came to Dunedin in 1938 where he was senior partner in the firm of Allingham and Williamson. Allingham started that practice that would become Allingham, Harrison & Partners in 1946.¹⁵ In 1955 he took in Rod Williamson and the firm became Allingham and Williamson. Williamson left the practice in about 1960. Allingham took John W Harrison into the partnership in 1961.¹⁶

Hocken Collections records that the practice was responsible for many projects throughout Otago, including the Green Island Civic Centre, 2A Power Station at Waipori, the Head Office Building for the Dunedin City Council Electricity Department, University of Otago Biochemistry, Science Library and Physics buildings, Physical Education Building, Otago Polytechnic Complex, the Dunedin City Council Administration Building, and Cromwell New Town Centre.

John Allingham held the offices of secretary and chair of the Otago branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects and also served as vice president and councillor of the national body. He retired from practice in 1972 after 26 years of practice in Dunedin. In 1956 he was awarded an MBE for his services to architecture. He died in 1991.¹⁷

Modernist Architecture

Te Ara writes:

*'During the 1930s the first expressions of the new modernist or international style were becoming visible in New Zealand. The European-derived language denounced historicism or revivalism and promoted instead a modern, 'machine-age' aesthetic where buildings were shorn of decoration and sported clean lines and simple elements and forms – exemplified by the German Bauhaus school. Modernism accepted the Louis Sullivan adage 'form follows function' – that the functions of a building should be architecturally expressed.'*¹⁸

Architectural historian and lecturer Bill McKay writes that after the Second World War 'Modernism took off during the post-war economic boom. In the 1950s and '60s, there was a proliferation of new

¹⁴ Healey, K. n.d. *The Green and the Gold: The Story of Greater Green Island*. Dunedin: Green Island Jaycees (Inc.); Healey, K. 1990. *The Green and the Gold: The Story of Greater Green Island, Volume II*. Dunedin: Green Island Borough Council.

¹⁵ Hardwicke Knight and Niel Wales, *Buildings of Dunedin: An Illustrated Architectural Guide to New Zealand's Victorian City*, John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1988, pp.70-71.

¹⁶

<https://hakena.otago.ac.nz/SCRIPTS/MWIMAIN.DLL/257626171/2/2/255506?RECORD&DATABASE=DESCRIPTION&UNION=Y>

¹⁷ *Otago Daily Times*, 20 June 1991.

¹⁸ Ben Schrader, 'Public, commercial and church architecture - Modernism, 1930 to 1970', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/public-commercial-and-church-architecture/page-4> (accessed 5 August 2024)

government, institutional and commercial buildings built in the concrete and glass International style.¹⁹ Modernist architectural language was dominant – with many government and civic buildings using this language, including the 1958 Green Island Civic Centre.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The former Civic Centre has historic and social significance as the former office of the Green Island Borough Council being the civic and community focus of the Green Island community. Along with its civic functions, the centre provided an entertainment and meeting place for the community. Part of the building remains as community hall.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building demonstrates cultural heritage values within this criterion. The former Civic Centre is associated with the former Green Island Borough Council that governed the district from 1875 until 1989 when numerous local districts were amalgamated under the present Dunedin City Council. The extant building is physical evidence of the former organisation that contributed significantly to the settlement and development of the Green Island community.

While part of the building is now used as a church, this is not a long-established place of worship.

DESIGN

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Green Island Civic Centre has design significance as a Modernist/International Style civic building designed by notable Dunedin architect John Allingham that retains much of its original form and detailing. The building retains a good degree of authenticity and integrity.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

REFERENCES

Publications

Gatley, J. 2008. *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture 1904-1984*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

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NZIA, 'Green Island Civic Centre,' *Journal of the NZ Institute of Architects*, 29, 4 (1962), Pages 106-112.

¹⁹ <https://www.nzia.co.nz/explore/articles-and-essays/the-story-up-to-now/>

Archival Sources

DCC Archives.

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Retrolens (<https://retrolens.co.nz/>).

Websites

Greater Green Island Community Network, 2022. <https://greatergreenisland.nz/directory>

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