

THEME 12: RETAIL & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

12.1 RETAILING IN THE CENTRAL CITY



Figure 132: George Street

circa 1910

Stores were established to service the whaling and early farming settlements around Dunedin, so it can be said that retailing preceded the establishment of the city. Octavius Harwood was the store keeper for the Weller Brothers station on the Otago Peninsula while fellow whaler Johnny Jones set up a store at Cherry Farm to provision the 1848 settlers.

Dunedin's first retail shops were established in the Princes Street, Manse Street, Rattray Street triangle and included J. R. Johnstone and Company and stores belonging to James Mayo, Smith and Allan, and John McGibbon. [McDonald, K. C.: *A Century of Civic Enterprise*].

Hocken's annotated View of Dunedin, 1851 (Fig. 11, Page 32) shows the locations of Wilson's druggist; Sam Gibbs' bakery; Alex Rennie's grocery; Henry Mayo's grocery and drapery; Wedderburn's and John Proudfoot's shoe makers; stores of William Cutten, James Macandrew, Johnson and Borton, and Johnny Jones; James Brown's drapery and post office; John Adam's tailor. [Hocken, T. M.: *Contributions to the*

Early History of New Zealand (Otago), Key to "View of Dunedin from Church Hill" by G. B. Shaw, November 1851]. Amongst these early traders were the future leaders of the settlement, including Edward McGlashan, James Macandrew and William Cutten, who set up a store and auction business before founding the *Otago Witness* Newspaper in 1851 and the *Otago Daily Times* in 1861. The lack of precise addresses is perhaps unsurprising when the whole of Dunedin's commercial area could be walked in fifteen minutes. Early barber and hairdresser, Alexander Archibald, was "Second Shop North of the Brick building" in 1851, this information being explicit enough to direct customers to his shop. [ADVERTISEMENTS COLUMN 2: *Otago Witness*, Issue 2, 22 February 1851, Page 1]

The Arcade: An early Dunedin shopping precinct which survived until the 1970s was the Arcade that ran between High and Maclaggan Streets. This was one of the many enterprises started by Henry Farley, a Melbourne retailer who also developed the Vauxhall Gardens, a pleasure garden on Otago Peninsula. The original open timber arcade was divided into fifty shops each measuring 13 foot 6 inches deep.



Figure 133: The Royal Arcade, Dunedin.

circa 1900

In 1875 this structure was replaced by brick buildings, covered with a roof, and renamed the *Royal Arcade* (Fig.133). The interior was gas lit and an elevated gallery was constructed for musical performances. During the 1930s the Royal Arcade was reduced to a single storey and

extensively remodelled in a modern Spanish American style by Dunedin architect, H. McDowell-Smith. It then reopened as *Broadway* and was finally demolished to extend Manse Street across High Street to link with Rattray and Maclaggan Streets. This street, unanticipated in Kettle's plan, is now called Broadway.

Furniture retailers and department stores: Dunedin became a major furniture manufacturing centre following the lead set by Guthrie and Larnach's Dunedin Iron and Woodware Company during the 1870s. The introduction of steam powered sash and joinery factories preceded the industrialisation of furniture craft processes and Dunedin had some of the largest furniture factories in New Zealand. Many were long-lived businesses that distributed their products throughout the country. Remarkably, the furniture shop established by William Butterfield in 1858 continues today as furniture manufacturer, Otago Furniture Company. Other large furniture businesses established both factories and retail shops in Dunedin, notably Scoular and Chisholm (1863), whose three storey showroom was located on the corner of Maclaggan and Rattray Streets. William Nees and Sons was a competing business, also established in 1863. Its large furniture factory stands at the corner of Anzac Avenue and Frederick Street where it now houses furniture retailer, McKenzie and Willis, and shopfitters, Miller Studios.

Major retail business in Dunedin included A & T Inglis (1869), Arthur Barnett Limited [B118], (1903) and Brown Ewing (1902), which was descended from an earlier business established in 1866 by Thomas Brown, Ralph Ewing and John Glendenning. Bendix Hallenstein's Drapery and General Importing Company (DIC) was established in 1884. Its large shop on Princes Street extended through to the Octagon and was adapted for the present Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Its competitor, D.S.A. Limited (1890), remained in business until the mid-1960s. Penroses Department Store in George Street [B111] was regarded as the most modern in the country when it opened in 1905. The two-storey shop (Fig.134) featured elegant full height display windows and a sweeping staircase to the upper floor as well as a Lamson vacuum tube system which, to the wonderment of generations of Dunedin children, transported money and documents to a central



Figure 134: Penrose's new store, corner of George and St Andrew Streets
Otago Witness, 26.5.1909.

cashiers' department. The building with its ornate windows still stands, although it now houses Starbucks Coffee and State Insurance. It is registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust as a Category II Historic Place (Reg. No. 4744). Parts of the dismantled Lamson tube system are held in storage by the Otago Settlers Museum.

Few significant new retail buildings were added to the major commercial streets of Dunedin. Instead, a process of renovation substituted for new development. The Farmers Trading Company store was redesigned by Warren and Mahoney and featured fashionable full height display windows. A small arcade called Harvest Court was tried in George Street in 1970. Dunedin architects Miller, White and Dunn (late with Rodney Dalziel) contributed the Woolworths store, recently demolished for the Wall Street development. With its light weight metal clad façade and modernist signage, the Woolworths building did not sit comfortably in the surrounding historic townscape. The same architectural firm was responsible for the Woolworths Supermarket in Andersons Bay Road, Dunedin's first taste of modern American style shopping.

Archaeological investigations have been undertaken into several of these retailing sites. The site of A & T Inglis (later Brown Ewing & Company and then the Farmers Trading Company) was excavated in 2003 (Petchey 2004) and evidence of retailing, commercial and

residential activities was found there. Recent excavations at the Wall Street mall site (Petchey, in prep.) and also on George Street, found evidence of several retail shops, including part of a mosaic entrance, similar surviving examples of which can be found in lower Stuart Street and Princes Street.

It is certain that a great deal more archaeological evidence survives in the George Street retail area, along the North Dunedin flat to the north of the Octagon. This area, once low-lying and damp, was rapidly developed during and after the gold rushes of the early 1860s, and archaeological investigations to date have found a wealth of mid-to late-nineteenth century material.

12.2 SOUTH DUNEDIN



Figure 135: Caversham Post Office on the Main South Road, 1863.

The difficulty of travelling in the early settlement led to self containment in the villages and rural centres around Dunedin. These places developed shops as part of an economic and social infrastructure that meant that local residents could purchase goods, be entertained and use essential services without going into the city centre. A set of standard businesses would become established around a general store. These would include butchers, grocers, fruit and vegetable sellers, shoe shops and boot repairers, hardware stores and clothing shops.

Retailing expanded into Dunedin's suburbia, often being established alongside the city's rail and tram routes. The city's second major retail area developed along South Dunedin's King Edward Street and the crossing of Cargill Street (now Hillside Road), extending almost two kilometres towards the beach suburb of St Kilda. Long established South Dunedin retailers include the department store Wolfenden and Russell. A number of retail store interiors in South Dunedin (such as that in the \$2 and More Shop at 127 King Edward Street) [B358] have remained remarkably intact over the past century, providing examples of shop design lost in other centres. Another axis extended along Hillside Road towards Caversham (Fig.135). Caversham itself was a village which was absorbed into suburban Dunedin. It contained a wide range of retailers and small manufacturers. Its two general stores, Rutherford's and McCracken's stood within fifty metres of each other in the main street.

12.3 SUBURBAN CENTRES

Of a similar scale to South Dunedin is Mosgiel, with a population of approximately 10,000 and a significant group of retail buildings from the 1880s to the present. Other Dunedin localities with smaller retail precincts include Port Chalmers, Green Island and Caversham.

12.4 RURAL SERVICE CENTRES

Further research is required in this area.