

The Register

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Register of Historic Places

Rangitikei-Ruapehu
Pilot Project

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Bank of New South Wales Gold Office

Loop Road, ST BATHANS

Register Number: 331

Number:

Registration Type: Historic Place - Category I

Type:

Region: Otago Region

Date: 2/4/04

Registered:

City/District Council: Central Otago District Council

Council:

Other Names: Gold Office

Names:

Status: Registration includes the building, its fixtures and fittings and land on part CT

Explanation: OT32/217 as shown on Plan A in the Registration Report.

Brief History: Gold was first discovered near St Bathans in 1862 at Welshman's Gully. The new field attracted 200 miners within a week. Within three years major sluicing was undertaken in the area. The town of St Bathans was flourishing by July 1864, and by October of that year had forty business houses, ten hotels and a thousand residents. By the 1870s the town had become a service centre for the region. By the turn of the century the population had decreased as gold returns declined. The goldfield was a rich one, up until the 1940s some three quarters of a million pounds worth of gold had been taken out of the St Bathans basin alone. By 1956 only 47 people resided at St Bathans.

An Agency of the Bank of New South Wales was opened in St Bathans in September 1864, becoming a Branch in March 1883. The land on which the bank was sited (Section 10) was purchased from the Crown in August 1874. The adjoining Section 9, previously owned by the Bank of New Zealand was purchased by the Bank of New South Wales in February 1893.

A banking chamber with small gold office partitioned off, and an attached dwelling of six rooms was built on the Bank's section and occupied in November 1874.

On the 30 December 1905 the Branch reverted to an agency of the Naseby Branch, and the dwelling portion was leased at the same time as a residence. The residence part was sold to J. Lothian for removal during 1925, with the proviso that the agency part be left in a fit state for use. The Agency at St Bathans closed on 10 April 1946 and the Gold Office was transported to Oturehua.

The Oturehua Agency operated from May 1946 to September 1973. During this time the building was refurbished and the roof line altered to give it its present appearance. Prior to this alteration it had a sawn off appearance from the removal of the dwelling. The interiors were relined after a small fire in the premises in 1958. During this refurbishment the original wire gauze screens from the windows were removed and the white frosting applied in their place.

In October 1974 the building was handed over to the Oturehua Historical Society. When the society ceased operations in 1982 permission was requested from the Otago Goldfield's Park to return the building to St Bathans. The building was restored by the Department of Lands and Survey at its Alexandra workshop and then shifted to St Bathans. The building was sited across the road from its original section. It was officially opened by Otago Conservator for the Department of Conservation, Robin Thomas, in March 1989, as a site providing for the interpretation of the early banking

system on the goldfields.

Current Use: Civic facilities and recreation - Historic Property

Former Uses: Civic facilities and recreation - Museum
Finance - Bank
Mineral Extraction and Processing - Assay Office

Construction Original Construction - Original construction of banking chamber with small gold office partitioned off, and attached dwelling.: 1870s
Dates: office partitioned off, and attached dwelling.: 1870s
Modification - Dwelling portion removed.: 1925
Relocation - Building moved to Oturehua, where it was used for the Oturehua agency of the Bank of New South Wales.: 1946
Modification - Exterior restored and the building was relocated to St Bathans, in a position on the opposite side of the road to its original site.: 1980s

Physical Description: A banking chamber with small gold office partitioned off, and an attached dwelling of six rooms was built on the Bank's section and occupied in November 1874. The dwelling portion was removed in 1925. The gold office was relocated in 1946.

Construction Details: The Gold Office is the remaining portion of the building originally built as a bank and managers residence in 1874. An 1894 photograph indicates that the premises were of weatherboard construction with a hipped iron roof, and double hung single pane sash windows. The residence had a veranda with cast iron fretwork. The main decorative detailings on the Gold Office are the eave brackets, the classically styled arched fanlight with false keystone above the central doorway, and the horizontal cap moulding supported by corbels above the sash windows on the commercial frontage of the otherwise domestically styled building.

Historical Narrative: Microsoft VBScript runtime error '800a005e'

Invalid use of Null: 'Replace'

/Register/ListingDetail.asp, line 475