

LEISURE

Of passing interest

Historic features in our landscape observed by the Director of Puke Ariki **Kelvin Day.**

Waimate Hotel, Manaia

Like most regions Taranaki has had its fair share of hotels over the years. Many are now but a memory, others have been converted to other uses while still more continue to carry on the business they have for decades.

The south Taranaki town of Manaia once boasted three hotels within spitting distance of one another. The first Waimate Hotel opened for business in the newly established town in October 1881, the Manaia Hotel having been opened some five months before. For the next 22 years it served the people of the town and surrounding community well.

However, by 1903 the building was past its best and was demolished to make way for a new grand building. This was designed by Stratford architect Mr J.W. Warren and the construction was entrusted to Messrs John Ryan and Sons. At the time it opened the building was described as being "most commodious". The downstairs bar



"opened on to three compartments" and in the centre of the bar "there is a handsome octagon whisky stand, studded with mirrors."

That the hotel was grand is evidenced by the 36 rooms, 15 of which were downstairs. It also boasted a billiard room, dining room and three sitting rooms along with

the usual office, kitchen, toilets and storerooms. Upstairs were a further two sitting rooms and a "special shower bath for footballers".

Once the foundations had been laid the construction of the hotel was completed, according to the newspaper's correspondent in an amazingly swift four weeks. The

joinery was supplied by Syme's Hawera Factory, the painting and wallpapering was completed by Messrs R. Higham and Co, while the plumbing contract was awarded to James Wallace, of Otakeho.

This grand old building has, over the past 111 years, served the community well.