

# Of passing interest

TDN 4/3/2013

Historical features in our landscape seen by Puke Ariki heritage collections manager **Kelvin Day**.

T K Skinner house,  
Powderham St, New  
Plymouth

Opposite the BP service station in Powderham Street is a single-storey building which was formerly the home of Thomas Kingwell Skinner.

Skinner was born in New Plymouth in 1849 and became a surveyor under the traineeship of Octavius Carrington. After joining the Taranaki Provincial Government in 1870 he was heavily involved in surveying land prior to settlement. With the abolition of the Provincial Government system in 1876, New Plymouth was constituted a borough and Skinner was appointed consulting engineer, with responsibility for the first water supply. In 1881, Skinner went into partnership with Thomas Gore

Sole, the firm that surveyed the railway line between New Plymouth and Hawera. This partnership was dissolved nine years later. Skinner acted as the consulting engineer to the New Plymouth Borough until 1902 when a fulltime engineer was appointed.

Both his younger brothers, John and William Henry, were also surveyors. William rose through the ranks to become, at various times, Commissioner of Crown Lands at Marlborough, Hawke's Bay and Canterbury. T K Skinner never married and he died on August 28,

1925. In the 1950s, the New Plymouth Women's Club purchased the former Skinner home, converting it into clubrooms which were officially opened in 1952. The building has served the club well, but it has outgrown its usefulness and the club now has other premises.

