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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SALVAGE THE ROYAL HOTEL, GISBORNE

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INTRODUCTION

The Royal Hotel, Gladstone Road, Gisborne had been a landmark in the town since 1874. Its impending demolition in 1994 came to the attention of the District Committee of the Historic Places Trust who advocated for its protection. Although not registered under the Historic Places Act (1993), it had a long and significant association with Gisborne. It was also considered the site could have pre-1900 archaeological remains associated with it.

As the demolition of the building was initiated, it became known a range of European artefacts were located. The Historic Places Trust informed the developers of the requirements of the Historic Places Act and Department of Conservation staff were requested to salvage as much information as possible from the ongoing demolition.

HISTORY

The first Royal Hotel was built in 1874 (Robinson, 1990 : 57). Around 1895 it burned down and Fred Martin who was the licensee at the time is remembered locally for managing to keep the cold ale flowing by serving it from a tent alongside the remains of the burned hotel (J. Martin 1994, pers comm).

When the Royal was rebuilt in 1895, it was "a two-storeyed wood and iron building with a balcony and contains twenty-eight rooms, exclusive of the kitchen, and a four-roomed cottage behind the hotel. There are seventeen bedrooms, four sitting rooms below and two sitting rooms above, also a billiard room, and adjoining room capable of seating twenty-four guests. There is a ten-stalled stable with two loose boxes behind the hotel" (The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand 1902 : 991). (Fig. 1).

In 1902, Joe Martin took over the licence from his brother, Fred. He was licensee for 52 years, believed to be a record unequalled anywhere in New Zealand.

In 1953, Joe Martin retired but his sons continued the family association

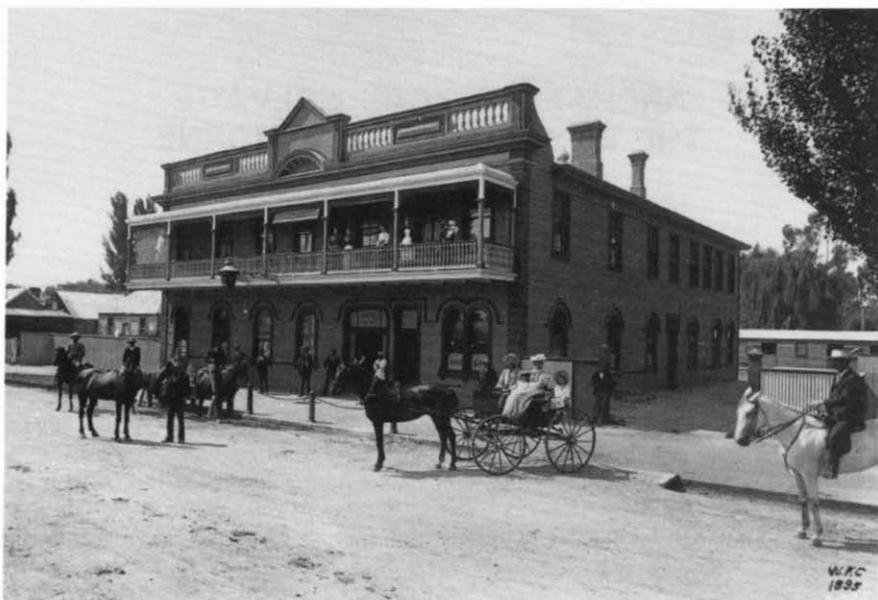


Figure 1. Royal Hotel 1895 (Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre).



Figure 2. Demolition of the hotel.

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with the hotel until 1965.

The Royal Hotel has contributed considerably to the social history of the Gisborne area and is remembered locally for its association with the Martin family and also local brewer and hotelier, D J Barry, the owner.

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On 20 April 1994, Victoria Grouden and I visited the site at the request of the Historic Places Trust. At this stage the demolition of the hotel was well underway (Fig. 2). The work area was very disturbed and archaeological material only apparent in an area approximately 20 m square, the area of the laundry and maids' quarters.

We spent approximately 30 minutes during the demolition work gathering surface material from this area before the rest of the building and area was finally tidied and levelled.

A number of bottles were also collected by the contractor. The final destination of this material is unknown.

Recently, information has been received from a local bottle hunter that the site also contained evidence of Maori occupation. This was not evident during our visit and has not been verified.

ARTEFACT ANALYSIS

The analysis of the material collected on site was undertaken by Dr Neville Ritchie, Department of Conservation, July 1994 (Appendix 1).

This collection consisted of a number of pieces of glass, china and oddments. Also located was one piece of chicken bone, one piece of beef bone and an oyster shell.

Some items are of specific interest. One cork was located with the Royal marked on it (Fig. 3a) and an ornate bottle plug was located (Fig.3b). A range of DJ Barry bottles were also part of the collection (Fig. 4).

It is difficult to accurately date the site from such a small collection. Many of the items chronologically straddle the period of both the early (1874) and later (1895) Royal Hotel. However, the fire blackened and melted glass items suggest that these items at least were in the hotel when it burned down around 1895 (Ritchie 1994, pers comm).

Another 28 bottles were collected by the contractor (app 2).

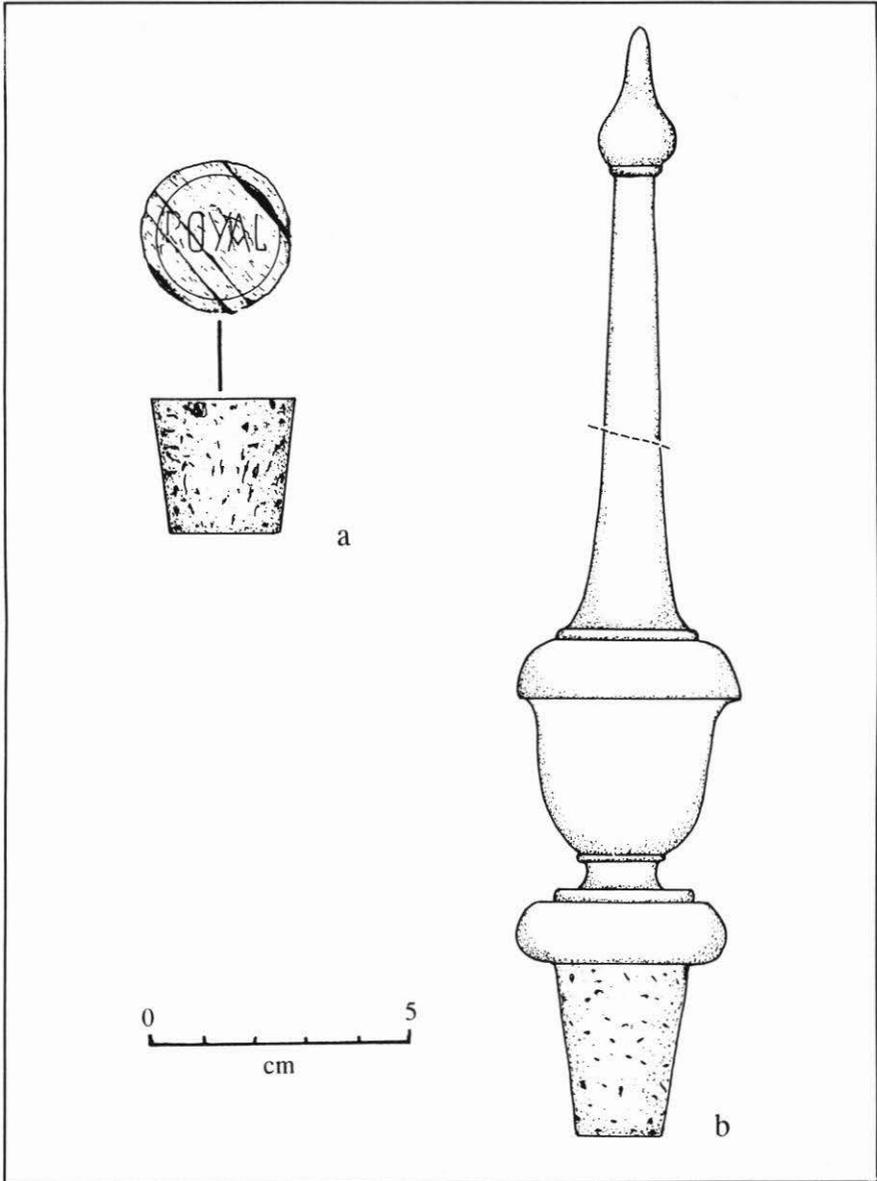


Figure 3. (a) Royal Cork. (b) Ornate bottle plug.

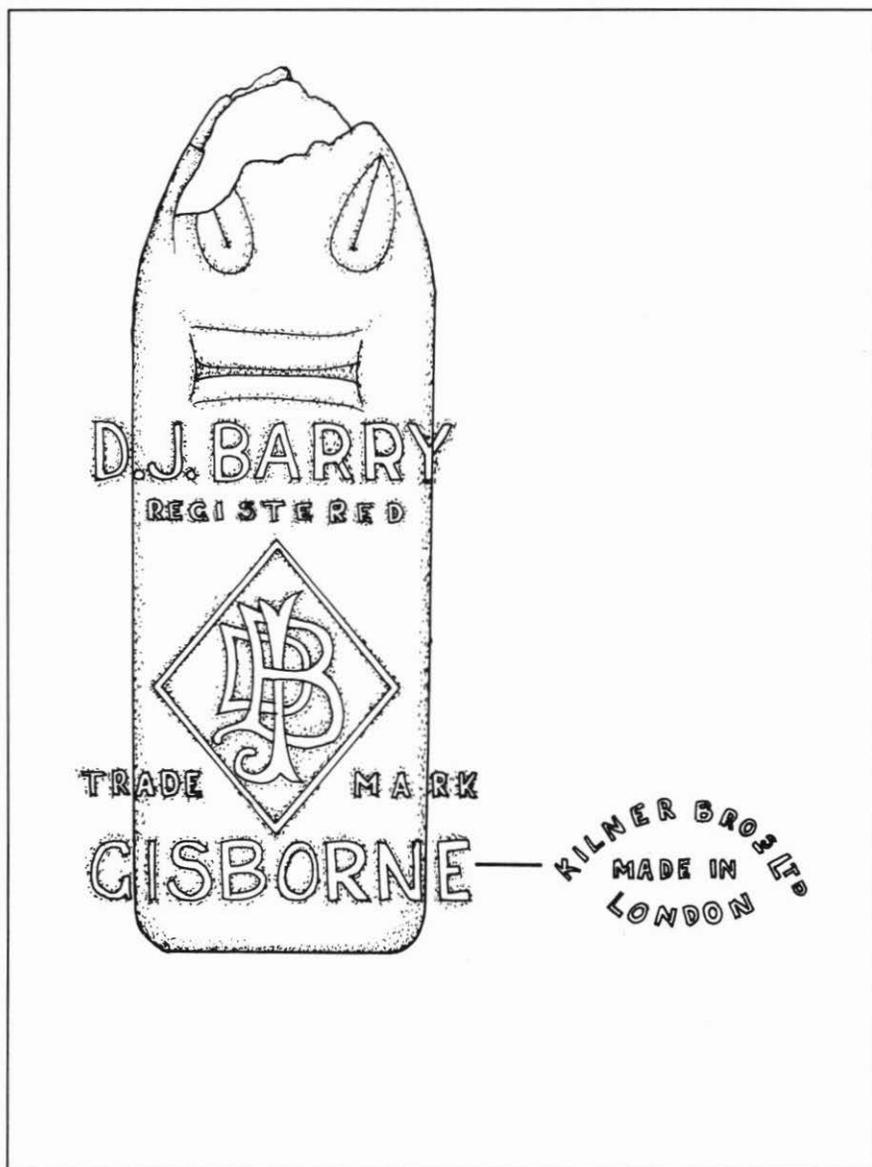


Figure 4. D.J. Barry marble bottle.

CONCLUSION

The demolition of the historic Royal Hotel has raised a number of issues for protection of pre-1900 sites in Gisborne. Some of these are being addressed through the statutory planning process and closer liaison between Gisborne District Council, NZ Historic Places Trust and the Department of Conservation.

The building itself had a long and interesting history associated with Gisborne and is a loss to the heritage of the city. The site also proved to be archaeological. Much information about the early settlement of Gisborne was possibly lost through not completing a scientific excavation of the site. The rescue collection did, however, bring to light some interesting material.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1 : ARTEFACTS ANALYSED BY DR N RITCHIE

Royal Hotel Artefact Analysis - Glass Artefacts

Artefact Type/Item	Min. No.	Comments
Crown cap beer bottle	1	c1930-40 intact "D J Barry Ltd, Gisborne" embossed round bottom. DJB trademark. The "NZ" on the base suggests the bottle was made in NZ. Bottle manufacture started in 1922 in New Zealand.
Ring seal beer	1	qt size, green glass, neck and lip with cork and bail in-situ 1880-1920.

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Blob top beer	1	pt size, green glass neck and lip only. c.1900.
Schnapps bottle	1	Base and side and lip frags. Same as "Udolpho Wolfe's" large size 1880-1920.
Marble bottle and marble	1	"D J Barry" Reg'd trademark, lower $\frac{1}{2}$ of bottle c. 1890-1920*(Fig 4).
Marble bottle	1	2 frags, part lip, aqua, lighter than above, diff. bottle.
Marble bottle	1	6 frags, some part melted; diff shade from above 2 bottles.
Aqua bottle base part -		Possibly of above bottle embossed "Patent..4..Makers.. and LD, ...EY (bottlemakers mark). Maker not determined.
Aerated water	1	Aqua glass, side frag. Trademark illegible, date 1893
Blue glass poison bottle	1	"Cork top", for tablets, intact Ht 75mm, 24mm x 24mm.
Blue glass caster oil bottle	1	Lip section only.
Rect. chemist bottle	1	Aqua, base, 60mm x 35mm.
Ayer's bottle base	1	Part base. Emb. Aye(rs) Sarsparilla, Lowell, MS. (Massachusetts) on side of bottle.
Penny ink	1	Aqua, octagonal, neck broken.
Brown glass frag.	1	Thinner and lighter than beer could be medicine or household product bottle.
Dark green frag.	1	Shoulder, undiagnostic.

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Drinking glasses	2	Clear glass, bases, 45mm and 50mm.
Flat glass	1	1 frag, 2mm thick.
MN of vessels	18	

ROYAL HOTEL ARTEFACT ANALYSIS - CERAMICS

Artefact Type/Item	Min. No.	Comments
Dinner plate, Dm c30cm	2	Rim frags, scalloped edges blue transferprint, "Asiatic Pheasant", earthenware common ware 1870-1930.
Dinner plate, Dm 30cm	5	Scalloped edge, brown transferprint floral design. Possibly some plain frags off same plate earthenware. 1880-1920.
Plate, DM 19cm	2	Base and rim, purple flora and pictorial scenes.
Plate/Platter DM 33cm	2	Dark brown floral transferprint rim frags, 1 plain. 1880-1920.
Plate	1	Base frag only. Porcelain with illegible stamped trademark, possibly #2 or 4.
Cup, DM 9cm	4	Rim frags, flow blue (cobalt) and gilt hairline, fire blackened, porcelain.
Cup, Dm c.9cm	1	Side frags, white, porcelain.
Saucers x 2D. 15.5cm	9	White with gilt hairlines near edge, porcelain, 1 fire blackened.
Saucer, Dm 17cm	2	Pink edgebank and 3 gilt hairlines porcelain.

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Eggcup	1	White overglaze, base, porcelain.
Jug?	7	Base and side frags, red transferprint on white, verticle ribbing.
Jug?	4	White overglas with blue hairline part handle, base and sides, earthenware.
Bowl?	4	White with green floral transferprint, side frags, earthenware possibly a chamber pot.
Bowl base and foot ring	1	White with part of green maker's mark on base "...YS, HANLEY, ENGLAND. SEMI P O R C E L A I N " (s t i l l earthenware). Sides very thin 2mm, base more robust.
Bowl, DM. 17cm	3	On inside and exterior, same pattern as above, side frags, earthenware.
Condiment pot lid	1	Part lid. Pearly green luminescent edge band and gilt floral design. Porcelain.
Gravy boat?	1	Green transferprint. Edge band around top. Part handle and side. Angled corners, earthenware. 1880-1920.
Ceramic tile	2	White glazed. Embossed on base "Campbell Tile Co, Made in England" trademark illegible, earthenware.
Rim frag. DM 15.5 cm	1	White with scalloped rim, earthenware.
Side fragments	4	Plain white, probably parts of

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one or more of the above vessels.

ROYAL HOTEL ARTEFACT ANALYSIS - ODDMENTS

Artefact Type/Item	Min. No.	Comments
Bottle corks	2	One has "Royal" printed on top.
Ornate bottle plug?	1	Broken in two; lower end fits into cork with hold through it.
Button, DM 5mm	1	4 hole pearl shell off woman's garment/collar?

APPENDIX 2

Artefacts Collected by Contractor

ARTEFACT TYPE/ITEM	MIN. NO.	COMMENTS
Aromatic schnappes	1	Udolpho Wolffe's schiedam 1880-1920.
Black beer wire top	3	
Small green applied top	2	
Brown crown seal	1	NSW Bottle Company Ltd.
Black beer	1	With cork.
Brown crown seal	2	D J Barry.
Marble bottles	2	...KILNER BRO and LTD.
Clear medicine	1	-
Enos fruit salts	1	-
Toothpaste jar	1	No top.
Marble bottles	3	Kir ... Makers London.

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Marble bottles.	2	D Barry. Aberdeen Rd, Gisborne.
Marble bottles	3	D J Barry. Registered trade mark Gisborne.
Medicine bottle	1	Fellow and Co. Chemists. St John NE. Base (B3).
Part clear bottle	1	Label. ... ERAGE ... ntains ... servative.
Crown seal beer bottle	3	Registered DJB Trademark Base - AGM NZ.
	TOTAL	28