

Easy-does-it with work on historic club

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The job's pretty delicate and it rests on the shoulders of Lyall Moore.

Adding to the pressure is the fact that iwi, the NZ Historic Places Trust and archaeologists will be watching his team's every turn like hawks. Mr Moore is managing the move and restoration of the historic Hamilton Club building in Grantham St. Hamilton developer Project Grantham has resource consent to redevelop the site and carry out alterations to transform the building into a commercial office. Yesterday Mr Moore oversaw the demolition of "the ugly end of the building" – it was one of numerous additions to the original two-storey edifice since it opened in 1904. Each of these will get the chop before the club is lifted and temporarily shifted south to make way for new foundations. The work includes seismic strengthening, new pile foundations and positioning the building so it can open on to a piazza connected to the river reserve.

When the project is completed next March the building will sit three metres lower and 10 metres closer to the Waikato River. And it will look just as it did in 1904 – that's if everything goes to plan. "We've got to be careful," Mr Moore said.

"Every time we take a scrape off the dirt they [archaeologists] inspect it. We've had local iwi look into it and it looks like the terraces were closer to the river – they may have Maori stuff in there, but it's not where we are working."