

Car park plan for Plunket rooms site

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New Plymouth's much-loved Plunket rooms will soon be demolished to make way for car parks.

Foodstuffs confirmed yesterday that it had bought the building and planned to expand its central city New World supermarket.

General manager of brands at Wellington Foodstuffs, George Sutherland, said the move was a win-win for all the parties involved.

He acknowledged Plunket House, in Courtenay St, was a building with a lot of history, but said the community would benefit

from the redevelopment. Last year, the property had a QV capital value of \$615,000.

The supermarket redevelopment will result in an extra 25 to 30 car parks.

Mr Sutherland said as part of the purchase agreement, Plunket was entitled to remove any items of significance from the building.

"I'm sure, like many occasions when people move out of old buildings, there will be a bit of nostalgia there but they [Plunket] are going on to better things," Mr Sutherland said.

"They might be a bit emotive about that, people who have worked there for a little while, but they'll get over that when they move into their new facilities."



But for historic building champion Lance Girling-Butcher, the news was not all good.

"This is a very destructive way

of providing cars with places to park. It does worry me that we take these easy options," he said.

Mr Girling-Butcher said an old

On the way out: The Plunket Rooms in Courtenay St are to be demolished to create extra car parks for City Centre New World, which is being upgraded early next year.

Photo: JONATHAN CAMERON/FAIRFAX NZ

fire station on the corner had also been demolished so car parking could be made.

His grandfather, Thomas Bates,

was believed to have designed the Plunket Rooms, which were built in 1949.

"It's very sad, it's another building that's fallen in that area but I guess there are commercial benefits."

The building is not on the New Zealand Historic Places Trust register.

Mr Sutherland said he was unsure when demolition of the Plunket rooms would begin, but the new car parks would be part of an overhaul of the New World supermarket.

"It's very well run but well overdue for a refurbishment and we want to provide customers with a first class experience. We wanted to give something a bit cutting

edge to New Plymouth. I honestly think it's going to be a win-win. I understand it's pretty amicable.

"There'll be a nice new Plunket facility almost twice the size and a much better and improved locally owned and operated supermarket."

City New World owner Robert Dowman said he was looking forward to the major upgrade his store would get early next year.

"It will add one-third in size to the supermarket. It will make it a very good, up-to-date, modern supermarket like no other in New Plymouth."

Mr Sutherland said the refitted supermarket would have a "fresh food experience that will blow people away".