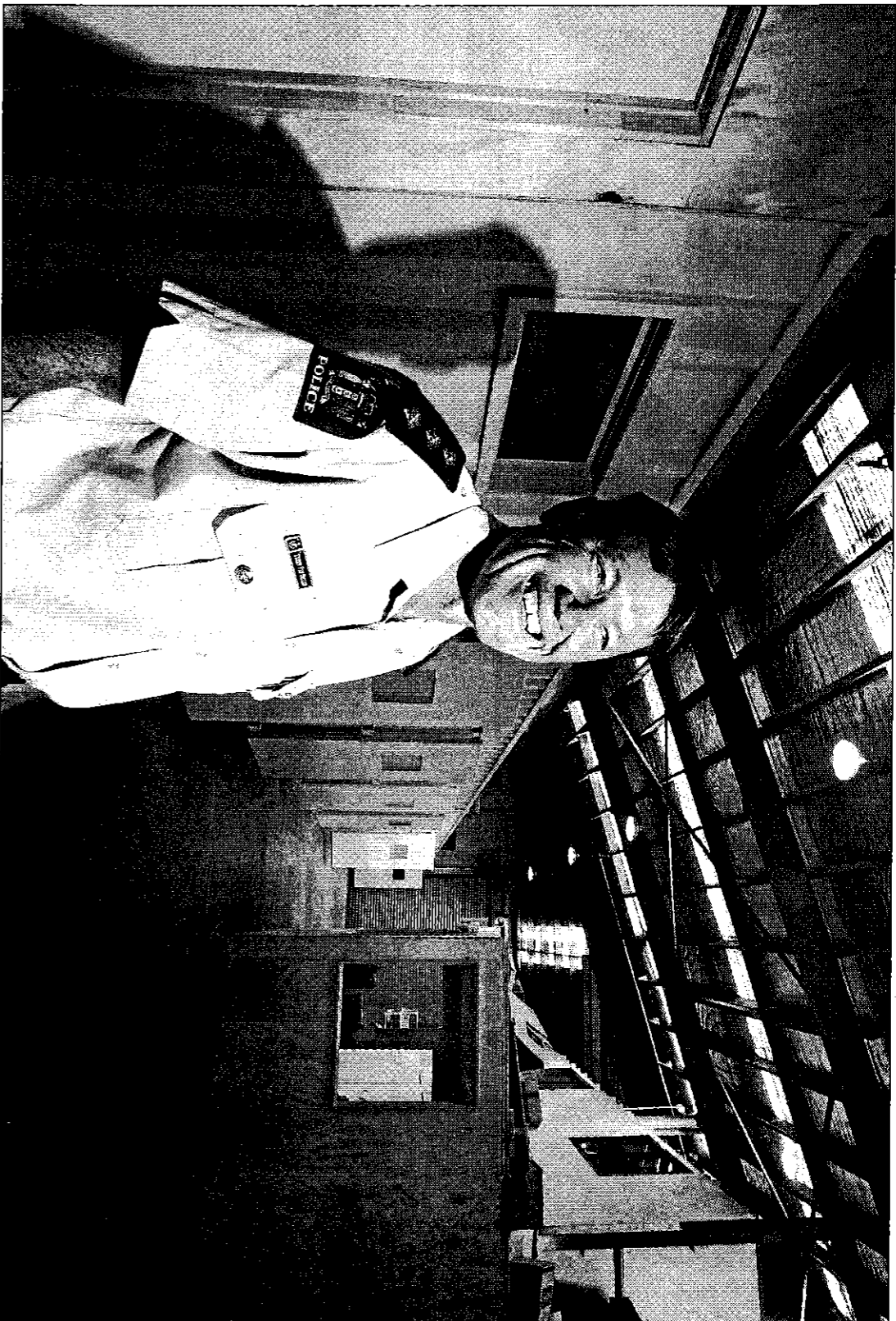


When the beat meets the beach



Temporary home: Acting area commander, Inspector Terry van Dillen, inside the unique new cell-block at New Plymouth's interim police station.

Photo: CAMERON BURNELL/FAIRFAX NZ

Police enjoy working at temporary site

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Stunning sea views have met with the approval of New Plymouth police since they moved into new premises six weeks ago.

Police moved into the temporary location, at the corner of St Aubyn and Dawson streets in January, while the old station was demolished and a new one built.

"They're loving the location - being by the sea," acting area commander Inspector Terry van Dillen said.

"Some staff have mentioned, why can't we build the new station here.

"The neighbours have never felt

safer in their lives, they've got 24-hour protection."

A lack of space at the old station resulted in police being housed in three different places, the main station on Powderham St, the nearby Atkinson Building and a third location on Bayley Rd, but Mr van Dillen said having staff all in one building was having a positive effect.

"The staff are loving it. It is great, there is a huge interaction between all of the working groups and sections," he said.

"Young sectional uniformed team members are now sitting with CIB officers discussing cases and criminal matters, which never happened before when we were in the old building."

Mr van Dillen said there had been some teething issues with the new location but nothing major.

"We have had to put up with some things that aren't perfect."

He said a problem with rattling windows in the area commander's office had been fixed with strategically placed tissue paper and net curtains had been added to the men's changing rooms to protect their modesty from the neighbours in the Devonport flats.

A ventilation system for the station's unique cell-block, built from shipping containers, was being worked on.

Mr van Dillen said some members of the public had been going to the wrong door and almost ending up in operational

areas, but it was not a problem.

"We love interaction with the public," he said.

The CBD security cameras have not been moved to the temporary station. Instead, they have been put into Taranaki House, Robe St, but staff monitoring them were in direct radio contact with frontline police.

"That has worked very well, ideally we would have liked to have had them here but it's working exactly how it was working at the old station," Mr van Dillen said.

The old police station on Powderham St has been demolished and the new \$13 million building is expected to be fully operational by mid-2013.