



LEGAL HEAT: The glass roof in the New Plymouth courthouse.

Photo: ADRIAN MALLOCH

## Temperatures rise over new roof

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By LYN HUMPHREYS

THE HOTHOUSE effect at the refurbished New Plymouth Courthouse will cause people to faint on summer days, predicts a New Plymouth lawyer.

The concern yesterday resulted in the Department of Courts decision to change the design fault before any further courts are revamped.

Lawyer Les Hickling said the courthouse waiting room was a very inadequate facility.

"It has a glass roof and no ventilation. With the summer months coming it will reach the point where people are fainting."

Up to 80 people used the area during a busy court day, he said. The situation was made worse with many of them smoking.

Recently a young toddler became distressed while waiting all day with his mother for a court case to finish, Mr Hickling said.

New Plymouth's acting senior deputy registrar Roger Bedford agreed there was a heat-buildup problem. It affected people in the waiting area but not the three courts or staff offices.

There had been no local input on the design of the building, Mr Bedford said.

It had been designed by an architect in consultation with the national buildings manager Jenny Raven and judges.

Yesterday, Department of Courts communications manager Geordie Cassin, Wellington, said: "We are deeply concerned that any members of the public have been discomforted."

Although the glass roof vents worked well on windy days, when there was no wind the heat buildup caused a conservatory-type environment, Mr Cassin said.

"We recognise the concerns and do want to take prompt action. We will be working with local staff and the architect for a resolution."

A similar design was soon to be used for the Wanganui courthouse, so the concerns would be taken into consideration before that refurbishment took place.

Apart from the glass problem, the department was very pleased with the new environment at New Plymouth created by the recent refurbishment, Mr Cassin said.

Mr Bedford said the courthouse was a public building and as such had a smoking ban.

"But it is a very difficult rule to enforce. We don't have any member of staff volunteering to enforce it.

"There's no way staff are going to risk a knife in their guts. Some of them are liable to stab it out in your face."

However, smoke boxes had been installed in the hope people would not stub out their cigarettes on the carpet, Mr Bedford said.