

# Massive new retailing area planned

Civic reporter

A massive new retailing development in the heart of New Plymouth is almost certain to go ahead.

New Plymouth City Council has just completed a \$12 million purchase of two properties in the city's central business area.

This transaction means the council now owns all the land bounded by Molesworth St and Gill St between the State Insurance building and Currie St.

It now intends on-selling the block - about 4ha in size - to a suitable developer. The council has already received indications a retail operator is interested in establishing a suitable major retail facility there.

News that the council had closed the land purchase deal was released by Town Clerk Mr Kinsley Sampson at a council policy and resources committee meeting this afternoon.

At its last full monthly meeting the council approved a draft form of agreement as the basis for negotiation of the purchase of properties owned by the New Plymouth Operative Society and John Avery Ltd. It also authorised a special subcommittee,

comprising Mr Sampson, Mayor Mr David Lean, and councillors Messrs Ron Barclay, John Armstrong and Kingsley Fletcher, to negotiate final purchase of the land.

This afternoon Mr Sampson confirmed the agreement had been satisfactorily negotiated, and the properties purchased with settlement last week.

The purchase price was \$1,139,675, but fees, stamp duty and disbursements lifted the total settlement cost to \$1,212,184. This figure was \$36,900 less than had been anticipated in April, he said.

Mr Sampson said the council had the objective of encouraging a comprehensive major retail development in the Molesworth-St-Gill St-Currie St area of the city.

This would secure the financial and retail viability of the central business district.

## Developer

A second limb of the council's land decision authorised the subcommittee to negotiate on-sale of the land to a suitable developer.

"The indications are that a suitable retail operator is interested in establishing a suitable major retail facility on the site," Mr Sampson reported to the meeting.

"The subcommittee is expecting an approach from this development company within the near future."

"Provided that the proposal meets the objectives of the council and satisfactory terms of transfer can be negotiated, the subcommittee would hope to be in a position to recommend the on-sale of this and other council holdings within the area in a relatively short time."

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## Sales over cost

Proceeds from the sale of land in other parts of central New Plymouth will pay largely for the city council's purchase of the John Avery Ltd and New Plymouth Operative Society property.

Mr Lean said the council will receive a \$1,212,184 advance from its electricity reserve fund to pay for the land purchase deal.

Town clerk Mr Kinsley Sampson reported to a city council policy and resources committee meeting this afternoon on the method of payment.

It was intended to finance the purchase substantially from the council's existing development fund and proceeds from the sale of the New Plymouth Bowling Club land and No. 1 Powderham St.

It is reckoned the sale of the bowling club land - between Leach St and Courtenay St - will net \$775,000. That land has been sold to allow an L. D. Nathan Ltd supermarket development.

No. 1 Powderham St is being sold to allow development of the former Egmont mill into a restaurant and bar complex. The safe, subject to the necessary settlement of the go ahead, will net \$102,500.

The council's development fund balance is \$286,675. Mr Sampson reported that the opportunity to purchase the Avery and operative society sites necessitated settlement of the bowling club land and No. 1 Powderham St and, therefore, bridging finance was necessary.

He said the council's land purchase deal was the culmination of 12 months' hard work and negotiation by the subcommittee.

The purchase broadened the depth of the central business area as well as acting as a catalyst for major retailing development in the area.

## Initiative

"It will also prevent problems where developers and local authorities have not used their initiative to ensure the future of the city's commercial heart," he said.

"Where that has happened the developers have taken the line of least resistance and moved to the suburbs with their retailing projects."

Mr Lean confirmed that several organisations had in the past expressed interest in the land. It was considered the prime retailing development site in New Plymouth, but the developers' biggest problem was that they were unable to acquire all the required property.

Now that the council owned all the land, it could sell it to a developer, Mr Lean said.

"It was envisaged there would be one major tenant, with the possibility of additional retail shopping space."

"I'm confident we will now see a major retailing development that will encompass all that area from the State Insurance building west past Currie St."

He said the council would not be part of any development. It had acquired the land and would now sell it to an organisation that wished to put a development in place.

## Stabbed to death

LONDON. — Monday (NZPA). — New Zealander, Michael Smith (23) was stabbed to death in the London suburb of Clapham in the early hours on Saturday morning, police said today.

He was on his way to his flat after walking a girlfriend home when he was attacked. His body was found on the edge of the common by a man walking his dog. A post-mortem examination found that Mr Smith was stabbed with a knife which pierced his heart. He had several stab wounds.

Mr Smith came to London about 18 months ago and was working as an accountant in the city's financial district.

A police spokesman said today they had no firm leads in the case.

## Party would be joke, says Jones

WELLINGTON. — Today (NZPA). — New Zealand Party Leader Mr. Bob Jones says the party continuing without himself and President Malcolm McDonald would be a bit of a joke.

"Are they saying they're going ahead without Malcolm and me?" Mr Jones asked.

He was commenting on reports that some officials are prepared to continue the party and that deputy leader Mrs Jamie Pearce is ready to take over the leadership. "Nobody can stop them; it would be a bit of a joke. They're welcome to do that if that's the way they want to go," Mr Jones said from Turangarewa where he was about to begin a fishing holiday.

However, he also said the recess for the party announced yesterday by Mr McDonald was only temporary.

"We will disappear in the polls, all that sort of thing. So be it."

"But, by God, there's a reasonable expectation there'll be disenchantment, a plague-on-both-your-houses attitude in a year or so and, when the bugle's blown, there'll be heaps more that will come back in fighting fit and enthusiastic, having had a good hibernation," Mr Jones said.

Impact

Mr Jones said the Timaru by-election had caused a serious reconsideration of the electoral impact of the New Zealand Party.

That election showed a solid but unimproved position for National, a sizeable vote loss for Labour and corresponding gain for the New Zealand Party, he said.

"Currently, we believe a change of government to be undesirable. While that attitude could change we believe our continued presence, particularly as our support is growing rapidly as reflected by both Timaru and the polls, will have an undesirable electoral impact on this nation."

"As a result I have urged the party abandon the political arena," Mr Jones said.

Mr Jones said the June 28 council meeting of the party had decided by consensus to go into recess. But he could not recall if it was put to a vote.

"It was a very genial meeting. It was reached by general consensus - is it agreed that we etc etc. Nobody sort of disagreed," he said.

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New Plymouth Mayor Mr David Lean, on the State Insurance building overlooking the central city area earmarked for major retailing development. The area extends from the State Insurance building to Currie St, the western boundary of which is identified by the large white building in the centre of the picture. The area is also bounded by Gill St (left) and the old railway goods shed (right).



## Today

### Castro winning pool power struggle

Henry the senior crocodile at Stockholm Zoo, Sweden has lost two toes in a power struggle with a rival called Castro, the gift of Cuba's President Fidel Castro. Jonas Wahlstrom, head of the zoo aquarium, told Reuters today he planned to rename the crocodile pool Little Cuba because of the guerrilla war between Henry (H) and his challenger (7). Henry, who hails from Egypt, had his toes amputated after being savaged by Castro, who has been trying to dominate the crocodile community since arriving from Moscow Zoo in 1961. Castro's aggressiveness horrified visitors last month when he caught a baby monkey in his jaws and snapped it in half. The Cuban pretender, originally given to a Soviet cosmonaut by President Fidel Castro before being handed on to the Swedish Zoo, demonstrated his superior virility by fathering 13 offspring to Henry's 4 last year.

### Wiggling no threat

Wiggling one's backside while disco-dancing is not "unhealthy" and does not threaten socialist morality, according to the latest edition of Shanghai's Liberation Daily newspaper. Some Chinese people like to use the pejorative term "unhealthy" when they see someone "wiggling their buttocks" while disco-dancing, or when they see young women done up to look attractive, the newspaper said. Such judgments are purely subjective and incorrect, according to the newspaper. It said it was "a pity" that certain people "look at these things subjectively," and label "unhealthy" everything that they are unused to or that does not correspond to their strict standards.

### Lunch for 15,000

Radio station KSTR in Grand Junction, Colorado, is preparing to serve 15,000 people lunch on Saturday to pay its bet with Mesa County over the number of fatal accidents during the independence anniversary holiday weekend. The station promised to treat everyone in the western Colorado county to a barbecue if it registered no fatal accidents during the weekend, said Charlie Michaels, operations manager of the AM-FM station. There are an estimated 80,000 people in Mesa County, and Michaels said the station expects at least 15,000 will show up for Saturday's picnic of hamburgers and hot dogs at Lincoln Park. The station's cost at \$150,000 (\$NZ40,680) and said the station was getting a large proportion of that through trade arrangements with businesses.

### Thieves undaunted

When thieves cut a hole in the rear of driver David McDonald's van - grabbing a carton of cigarettes - he thought he would thwart another attempt by parking with the back door against a lamp-post. But not so. With the first van in for repairs, this time the thieves cut a hole in the floor of a replacement outside Mr McDonald's (NZPA).

## Inflation record hint

The Government is softening up the public to expect news on the inflation front. Prime Minister Mr Lange, on a radio pro-

## Alternative sites explored

according to vice-president Mr Max Leubart.

It would rent the rooms from the council while it looked for alternative premises. Two or three premises were being considered, but he did not want to say where.

He said the Currie St rooms had suited the society pretty well, but it was economically better to sell them and look for something similar or even better. He would not say how much the rooms were sold for.

He was not sure how much the project would cost, but said the new premises would be 200sqm.

Mr Roberts said the company was mainly involved in selling to commercial firms and organisations.

It has been operating in Currie St since the 1920s, but that site is now no longer suitable.

He said the building was very old and unsuitable for alteration. The Currie St cul-de-sac also limited parking space in the area.

At the new site, there would be 13 parking spaces and a loading bay. He said the new building would also have a much-enlarged showroom.

the consumer-price index figures from the Statistics Department which are imminent. To be any where near 17% in the year, the quarterly figures would

The Currie St office generated a lot of pedestrian traffic which a developer would want to retain, he said.