

Construction of a boutique New Plymouth hotel designed to complement the recently approved Len Lye Centre is nearing completion. Reporter **John Anthony** was given a tour to see what the landmark hotel will offer.

**B**uilding a boutique hotel opposite New Plymouth's Govett-Brewster Art Gallery was as much a civic duty as it was an investment opportunity, project manager Aaron Boddington says.

In about 10 weeks, the four-storey King and Queen Hotel Suites will be ready for its first guests, Boddington said.

The 17-suite boutique hotel is integrated to work with Ozone Coffee Roasters' courtyard and surrounding arts and hospitality establishments.

With the bulk of structural work finished, the building is now ready to be fitted-out with modern European decor.

Once completed the hotel, which has been four years in the making, will cut a striking figure on New Plymouth's central business district with its zinc, plaster, cedar and aluobond exterior.

"This is something New Plymouth hasn't really seen before," Boddington said.

The project is being undertaken by the Boddington and Macfarlane families who have owned the site, on the corner of King and

and was excited to be involved with the hotel.

"It's good to be home," Fleming said. "When you look at New Plymouth it's absolutely booming."

Boddington said the hotel's ground floor was expected to be completed by mid-March at which point Craig Macfarlane's business Macfarlane Assist would move into part of the space.

Hotel staff would also begin their training on the ground floor while the top floors were completed.

The only reason the hotel would not open within eight to 10 weeks would be if quality was at risk of being compromised, he said.

Macfarlane said Fleming was experienced in high-end management.

"There's demand for people like Dan all over the world," Macfarlane said.

The hotel catered for a range of high end hotel customers from newlyweds to travelling business people to large families needing a temporary home, Boddington said.

"There's really something for everyone with this hotel."

Initially it was hoped the hotel



**Coffee courtyard:** The King and Queen Hotel Suites entrance is designed to allow foot traffic to flow into the Ozone Coffee Roasters courtyard pictured.

# You are, of course, most welcome, your majesty

Queen streets, since 1994.

Architects Chapman Oulsnam Speers have been working on the project since its inception.

Boddington said the hotel was not just a financial investment but also a civic investment.

The multimillion dollar project has created jobs and added another building to New Plymouth's burgeoning "arts and cultural precinct", Boddington said.

Up to 60 Fletcher Building contractors are on site to get the hotel finished by the end of April and once completed, the hotel will employ about six staff, he said.

"You can't underestimate the community value of projects like this," Boddington said.

The *Taranaki Daily News*' tour of the development began at the stairs leading into the Ozone courtyard, where two life-size bronze lion statues will soon set the modern European theme to the hotel.

French-style wooden blinds, grand original art work, tiled walls and cobbled floors all feature in the hotel.

"We think what we're offering is a complete point of difference."

Most of the furniture had been shipped over from Europe, he said.

"If you're a hotel in the centre of an arts district you've got to have these things."

With Cafe Govett Brewster, Ozone Coffee Roasters, Snug Lounge, Frederics and a range of other hospitality establishments within close walking distance it was decided that a food service would not be provided at the hotel, he said.

"These are the hotel's sister companies anyway, through the family links."

The hotel, combined with the soon-to-be built Len Lye Centre, the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and the refurbished White Hart would create a precinct in New Plymouth of cultural significance, he said.

"This is certainly going to form our cultural hub."

King and Queen Hotel Suites recently hired Pacific International Hotel Management School graduate Daniel Fleming as its general manager.

Fleming, 24, said he had been in Wellington working in various managerial positions for the Inter-Continental Wellington Hotel for the past three years.

Fleming said he wouldn't have come back for just any position

would have opened in February, but meeting new earthquake building codes and making small adjustments along the way pushed the opening date out.

A month longer was spent laying the foundations and getting the structure right, Boddington said. "But a month at this end is nothing."

"Of course we want it open but quality comes first."

Every room has a kitchenette or full kitchen and a separate bathroom and toilet.

Of the 17 rooms only four didn't have balconies and most of those with balconies had sea views.

The suites were a mix of two bedroom units and one bedroom units.

The smallest suite was 44 square metres and the largest, called the King Henry suite, is 65sqm.

The room overlooking the Ozone courtyard, dubbed the Anniversary Suite, was Boddington's favourite, he said.

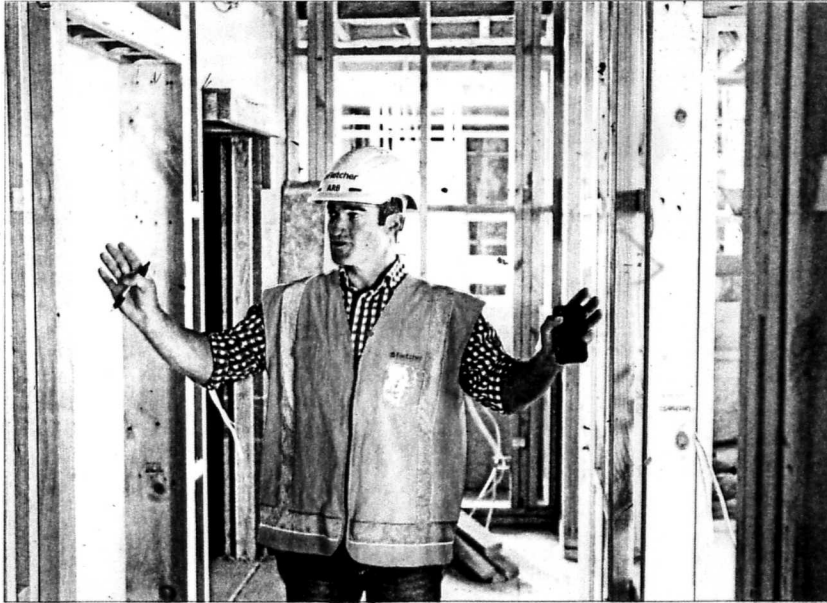
"My focus was that I wanted to see people having wedding photos here."

Corporate offices would be located on the top floor and the underground carpark had 20 spaces, two of which were private.

Boddington said there was an opportunity to add a fifth storey to the hotel but he didn't feel it was right for the location.

"I didn't want it to overbear what was here."

Plus it meant that if Ozone wanted to build up in the future it could do that and still have sea views.

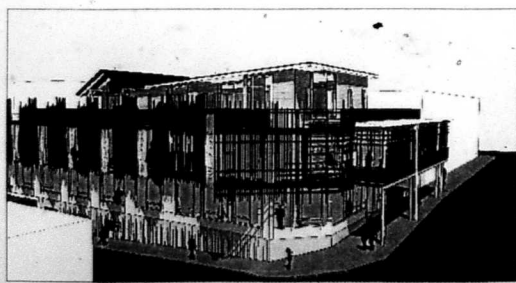


**"My focus was that I wanted to see people having wedding photos here."**

Project manager

**Royal abode:** King and Queen Hotel Suites project manager Aaron Boddington inside the near-complete 17-suite boutique hotel. Photo: ANDY JACKSON

Final vision: An artist's impression of the King and Queen Hotel Suites in New Plymouth.



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