

Surrounded by CBD and sea views to live for

By CAROLINE MARTIN

WHERE else could you live slap-bang in the middle of a CBD with the sea at the end of your street and views to die for? ... Auckland eat your heart out!

The transformation of a former rest home complex into stylish inner-city apartments is set to add a new lifestyle dimension to New Plymouth.

Construction and conversion work on the landmark 1960s building at 22 Liardet St, built for the Government Life Insurance Company, once home to Inland Revenue and more latterly the Tasman View Rest Home, is expected to start at the beginning of October.

A further two levels with four double-storey penthouses, are to be added to the existing 3700 square metre, six-floor structure, bringing the total floor space to 5000 square metres.

In all there will be 25 spacious, mostly three-bedroom apartments, including a further three single-storey penthouses on the sixth floor (level four), a smart lobby area and gym on the ground floor and owner car parking at basement level.

The project will take about a year to complete and nine of the prospective units have already been sold.

The concept represents apartment style living at its very best. Walk out your door and you are right in the heart of the CBD — the cafes, the bars, the banks, the shops — they're all around you; while the waterfront and the coastal walkway beckon at the bottom of the road.

Then there are those views. From the existing rooftop they are simply spectacular, a sweeping panorama embracing city, sea and mountain.

Operating under the name of Liardet Apartments Ltd, Greg and Ginny McCarthy — the concept's developers — purchased the building from Tasman Vista Ltd last year. The former Auckland-based couple are living on site and intend to buy a unit themselves.

Ginny discovered 22 Liardet St while she was working as a clinical consultant on the development of the Castlereas Rest Home in Highlands Park, and facilitating the move of Tasman View's residents there.

"We both fell in love with New Plymouth and also the building; it has a great presence to it. We knew as soon as we saw it that it would make a fantastic



SEASIDE: Greg and Ginny McCarthy are living their Liardet Apartments dream. Photo: MARK TAYLOR

apartment complex. It's a fabulous location, we can walk almost anywhere in New Plymouth under cover. We hardly use the car at all."

While recycling buildings into lifestyle apartments is a new concept for New Plymouth, Greg is an old hand at it.

A builder by trade with extensive knowledge in the property management and development fields both in Britain and New Zealand, he did his first apartment conversion in 1986 in Auckland, working as a consultant.

In the late '80s he started his own business as a property consultant in development and construction and he has done a huge number of them in Auckland and around the country.

Greg was also group development manager for a national hotel chain, has worked on a variety of residential retirement village projects and was responsible for transforming the old Auckland Railway Station into student accommodation.

"I have a passion for the industry and we decided we'd do it for ourselves and this is our first big cab off the rank."

"It's our first one and we want to live



INTERIOR: The apartments are designed for flexible living.

here," added Ginny. "And we actually want to be able to walk by and say: we did that and it's a great building and it has done really well for New Plymouth."

Other key players in the project are Glenn Brebner of Boon Goldsmith Bhaskar Team Architecture and Frank Kerslake of TSE Taranaki. The building contractor has still to be finalised.

TSB Realty property consultant Greg Hull is selling the apartments.

Prices range from \$290,000 for the sole one-bedroom unit which is on the ground floor (although that has already been sold), to \$1.1 million for a three bedroom penthouse.

The seaward-facing penthouse on the fourth level has a POA (price on application) on it.

Both three-bedroom apartments on this level will have 111 square metres of decking.

In between them will be a large two-bedroom unit of 111 square metres, priced at \$900,000.

"But from the outset we've maintained a price level on the lower floors that is affordable for the average person, so 50% of our stock is being priced to meet mid-

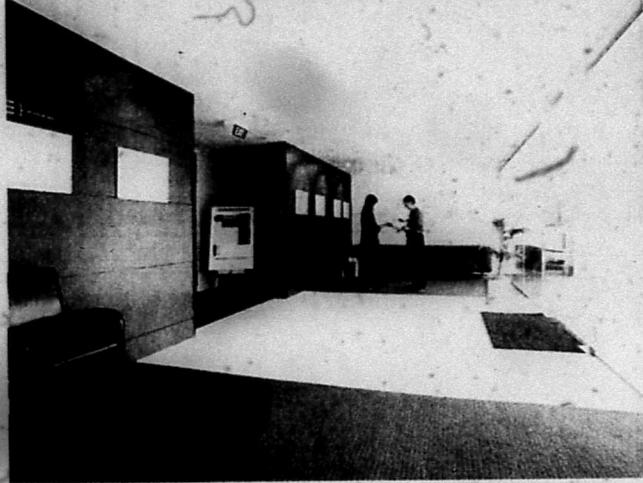
dle and lower market," Greg said.

There will be five two-bedroom units — the other four being 75 square metres — the rest will be three bedrooms and, at 145 square metres, larger than your average Kiwi home.

All units will have bi-fold doors opening up to the outside off the living areas. Those on levels four and five will have decks and the remainder, Juliet-style balconies. All two and three-bedroom apartments will have main bathrooms and ensuites, the latter will also have study areas. Levels three and above will be air-conditioned.

Some of the larger apartments, including the penthouses have been designed for flexible living, with multi-purpose areas that can extend into the living spaces or be closed off and used as bedrooms, by means of sliding wall panels. The two-storey penthouses will also have double height voids seven metres to the ceiling, creating a feeling of space and light.

Apartments will feature New Zealand wool carpeting, porcelain-tiled bathrooms with big rectangular showers, top quality kitchen fittings, island benches and stainless steel appliances. Penthouse



FOYER: There are colour displays in the foyer for the open home tomorrow.

kitchens will have polished timber floors.

"Because we're not building from scratch we've been able to put a lot of emphasis on special areas like kitchens and bathrooms," said Ginny.

"We have been very particular about our finishes. They're identified in our specifications and we also have colour board displays in the foyer so people can come and see what we propose to put in there in the way of tiles, carpets, finishes, colour schemes. There are two colour options."

The building will be upgraded to comply with new seismic codes; internal shear walls will serve to stabilise the building and give it some rigidity in earthquake situations. All the services, other than fire, will be updated — new plumbing, new electrics, new lift.

"We'll effectively be gutting everything internally and starting again. The only thing that we not taking out are the fire systems. The reason for that is because they are over code," Greg said. "The structure will be upgraded to new."

The existing spiral stairwell will stay. "It's beautiful and we want to preserve

its look as best we can."

Much of the existing tinted glass will stay, at 5mm thick it has good natural sound absorption. The additional levels and balconies, along with further architectural detailing will change the whole profile of the building. That and a new paint job will give it an exciting and funky new look, the developers said.

There is an emphasis on security. Residents will have their own underground parking space and garage door infra-red openers. There will be a lift from the basement. The main entrance doors will be accessed by proximity card and there'll be an intercom system for guests.

"You have a feeling of living above the city," said Ginny. "There's nothing more perfect than sitting on the deck in the evening watching the sunset and the lights of the city come alive."

"We believe we have the perfect lifestyle within this building, particularly for those who want time for themselves and time to enjoy the city on their doorstep."

Prospective buyers are invited to an open day to talk to the developers and view the plans, tomorrow from 1-3 pm.