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# High-fliers irk neighbours

## Building plans hearing today

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A flamboyant architect and a cut-price king have riled up their neighbours with controversial plans to do-up their New Plymouth homes.

Murali Bhaskar, of architect firm Boon Goldsmith Bhaskar Brebner, wants to add two storeys to his four-storey Victoria Building residence on King St, increasing its height 5.65 metres to 16.65m.

With the central business district height limit set at 14 metres, the plan has been opposed by neighbouring property owner Geoffrey Whyte.

On the other side of town in Fitzroy, the co-owner of New Plymouth's Pak'N Save supermarket, Peter Melody, has applied to significantly extend his three-bedroom seaside property on Richmond St.

The plan has been opposed by two neighbours, largely because of the views it will block.

New Plymouth District Council planner Rachael Megee has recommended both projects go ahead but the objections mean each proposal will be judged by independent hearings commissioner Bill Wasley today.

His decisions are not likely to be made public until next month.

Mr Bhaskar's extension to the 87-year-old Victoria Building is potentially the most controversial, as it is strikingly different.

The architect is proposing to build a two-storey, three-bedroom timber-and-glass apartment on top of the concrete building. When completed, two edges of the apartment will overhang the original building.

It is this design feature that independent landscape architect Martha Dravitzki states has an "undesirable, shadowing and dominating effect". Her report states it is widely accepted new additions be built a step back, so the original



**Too big:** New Plymouth supermarket owner Peter Melody's plans to significantly remodel his Fitzroy home have been opposed by some of his neighbours as overbearing. Photo: ROBERT CHARLES/FAIRFAX NZ

building can be "appreciated and viewed" in its own right.

However, she also states the additional height has only minor effects and the project should proceed.

Buildings in breach of the height limits have been turned down in the past. In 2010 Mr Wasley turned down a 9m extension to the 12.9m Waterfront Hotel and in 2011 the 23m Kawaroa Apartment proposal was nixed by independent commissioner Christine Fletcher.

Both buildings were reasonably close to Mr Bhaskar's building, though the extensions proposed

### Do-ups:

Peter Melody, left, wants to extend his home while Murali Bhaskar wants to go upwards.



were significantly greater than the respective 14m and 10m height limits at each site.

In Fitzroy Mr Melody has run foul of district planning rules over a proposal to increase the size of

his three-bedroom home to cover 60 per cent of his 420sqm section. It would also cast a greater shadow than is allowed on its northern and southern boundaries.

The proposal has received objections from two neighbours who believe it will block their views and is overbearing.

The public hearings for the proposals begin at 9am today in the council's Civic Centre.



**Too high:** New Plymouth architect Murali Bhaskar's proposed two-storey apartment on top of his four-storey Victoria Building on King St is in breach of height restrictions in the area. Photo: ROBERT CHARLES/FAIRFAX NZ