

Grand old city building returning to hotel past

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By ROB MAETZIG

ONE OF New Plymouth's oldest buildings will return to a former use, thanks to a grand plan by city restaurateur Terry Parkes.

Mr Parkes, who owns the Espresso Cafe, bought Brougham House, on the corner of Brougham and Vivian streets, in 1996, and now intends to develop it into a boutique hotel with bistro-style restaurant.

The style of the hotel would be a first for Taranaki, he said yesterday.

"It will be a small, luxury hotel, offering six rooms. I intend it to offer a very high level of accommodation and service, of a standard new to Taranaki."

The building dated from 1856. It was opened as the Commercial Hotel, Mr Parkes said.

It had since served as a hospital, private residence and doctor's surgery. During the last 20 years it has been professional offices.

Taranaki Museum director Ron Lambert said folklore held that the building was used as a military hospital. The rounded parts of the frontage were added



HISTORIC HOTEL: City restaurateur Terry Parkes outside Brougham House.

Photo: REBECCA SCOTT

about the turn of the century.

Mr Parkes said that underneath the additions it remained a beautiful structure that lent itself to redevelopment.

"When the project is finished, the hotel will have a dining room with large open fire for dinner parties, house bar, cellar, library,

art gallery, and wine cellar.

"The guests who stay there will be totally pampered. It will be expensive, but guests will go to bed with shortbread and a hot toddy, and they'll wake up to blueberry porridge."

Mr Parkes plans to have the hotel operating by May.