

Budget Rent A Car grows in New Plymouth

# New/old home for city rental car company

An initial six-vehicle rental fleet seven years ago has mushroomed into more than 60 cars, vans, buses and trucks for the Taranaki Budget Rent A Car franchise.

And that growth has meant the recent expansion of the New Plymouth-based company's facilities in the city to accommodate the business.

The rental operation, formerly operated from the Powderham Petrol Station in Powderham St, has shifted



John Armstrong

next door to an old home, renovated to retain its style but also to provide the services required for its customers.

Service station owner John Armstrong purchased the Taranaki franchise for the rental car operation in 1980.

Although the Budget name was virtually unknown in the province at the time, John Armstrong had had considerable experience overseas with rental cars and recognised potential in Taranaki for the business.

He also saw similarities in the development by Budget company owner Bob Ansett to principles he had used in establishing his service station.

An important move in 1983 was the acceptance by the New Plymouth City Council — unlike some airport authorities in New Zealand — of an application for an airport counter for the company's rental cars.

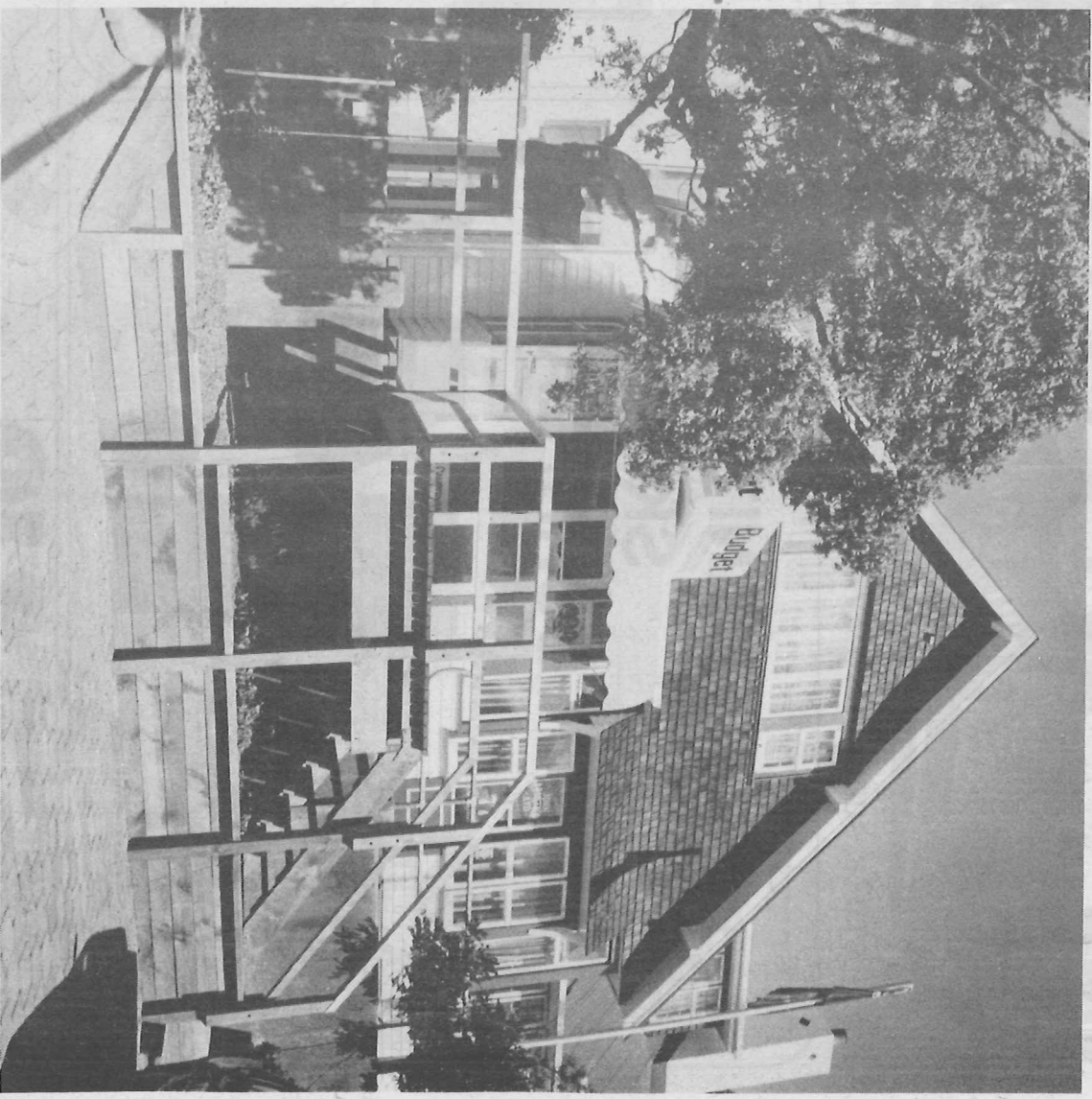
Considerable growth in demand for the rentals in the following years prompted the formation of a new company, John Armstrong Ltd, in 1986 to take over the rental operation and fleet. The more than 60 vehicles were valued at \$1.5 million.

The rapid development of the business also made it necessary to find more space and in May last year the property adjacent to Powderham Petrol Station on the corner of Robe St was bought.

A dilemma of whether to rebuild or refurbish was resolved with the decision to refurbish.

This proved a time-consuming and expensive project but early this year the house and grounds had been transformed into the attractive premises now operating as Budget Rent-a-car.

Considerable thought went into the retention of the trees on the property and the end result is a pleasant oasis of greenery on a busy commercial street.



Below — Andrea Cooper helps a customer while general manager Mike Brinsley answers a telephone inquiry in Budget Rent A Car's New Plymouth office.

Above — Established trees, natural timber and a sympathetic renovation make an attractive home for Budget Rent A Car in New Plymouth.

