

Lights go out on State picture theatre

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SATURDAY will be the last day a jaffa rolls down the floor of the State picture theatre.

The lights will dim for a final time, the chatter will cease and the last movie to screen at the New Plymouth establishment will begin at 8pm.

The demise of the 55-year-old theatre will probably be as sad for the public to see as it will be for the 10 employees — three of the longest serving who are

(from left) usherette Colleen Tanner (19 years in the job), cashier Jean Hickling (16 years) and candy bar attendant Florence Winder (17 years) with manager Michael Sambrook.

"It's going to be terribly, terribly sad to see the theatre go," Mrs Hickling said. "We love our work and that's why we have stayed for so many years."

Mr Sambrook said the Devon St East building was sold to

Trevor Clegg Furnishers, who planned to convert it to a shop, because the theatre was becoming uneconomic to run.

Its former owners, Amalgamated Hoyt, still remained non-committal when contacted yesterday about plans to develop a new cinema complex in the city but managing director Joseph Moodabe said discussions were under way.

The Auckland man would not

disclose any plans but the company earlier told The Daily News that it had planned to develop a twin cinema complex in the Downtown Arcade — a proposal abandoned when the developers, Downtown Development Co Ltd, became insolvent.

Meanwhile Trevor Clegg said he would try to keep the character of the State Theatre during alterations which should be completed by September.