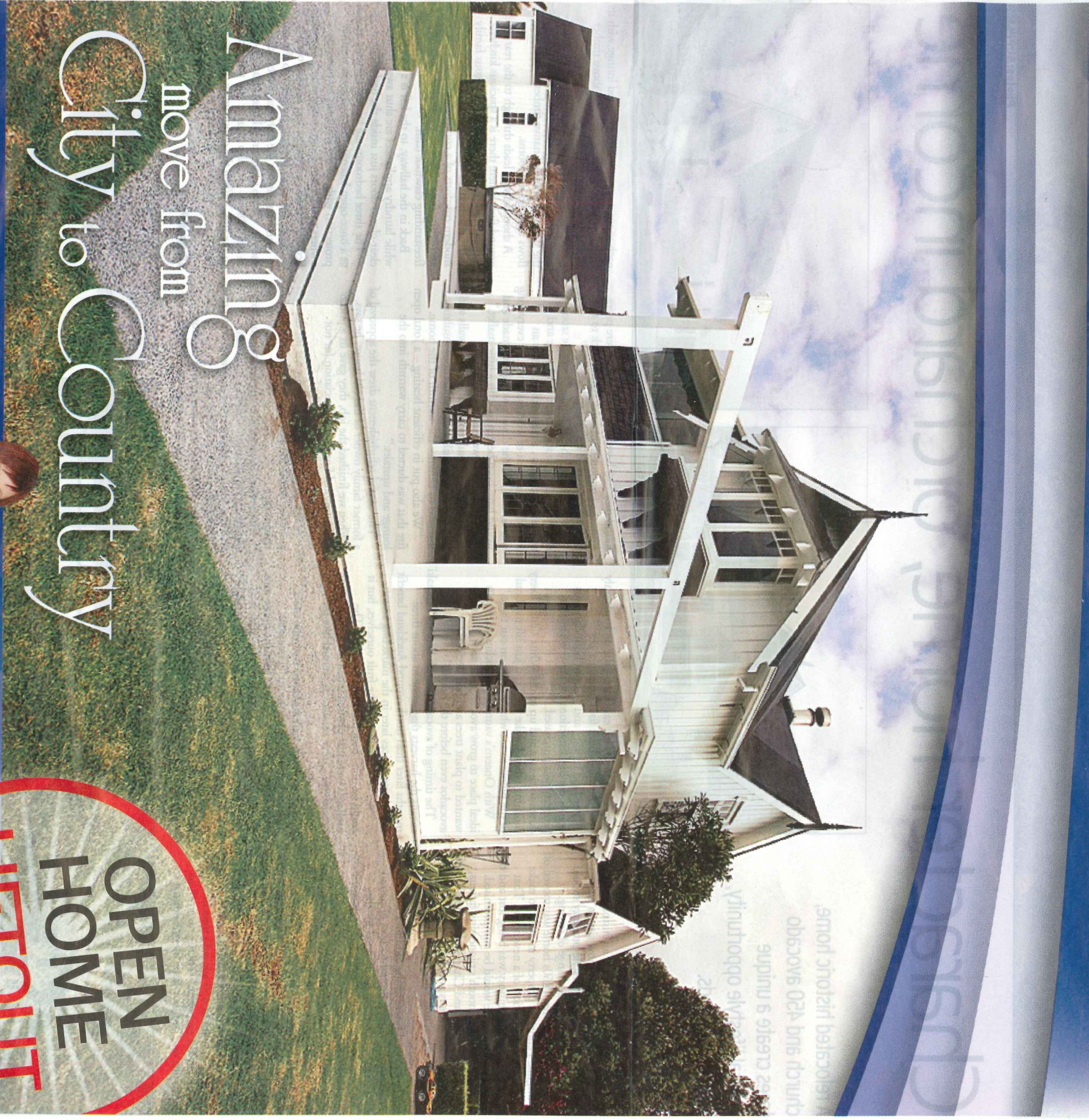


Your Property Weekly

Current to August 30, 2013



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Marketed by **Jamie Gemmell**
at Western First National
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Inside



DAILY NEWS
TARANAKI

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

Character home, orchard income

A relocated historic home, church and 450 avocado trees create a unique coastal lifestyle opportunity, Mike Shaw finds.



Former family owners of an historic New Plymouth home that now sits on an Onaero seafront lifestyle property should rest easy over the change of setting.

The two-storey 1860s home was moved off its original Pendarves property in 2002 to make way for the construction of a new home. That raised concerns that history was being lost and the integrity of the home would be compromised.

Two of New Plymouth's pioneering fathers, William Messenger and Charles Hursthouse, were reportedly early owners and the well-known Allen family of medical note later lived there for more than 50 years.

The eventual buyer of the old home and today's Onaero owner, Steve, brought a love of period villas to the project that he planned for the Onaero property. "Once a villa lover, always a villa lover," he quips.

"It would have been wrong for this home not to be restored and kept in the Taranaki area. So we tried to achieve the best results for the property, without turning it into a modern home. It's still much as it came off the original property."

The new site is a 4.269ha (about 10 acres) property than sits on the seafront just before Onaero. It's an orchard lifestyle here, rather than livestock, with about 450 avocado trees offering a fruitful harvest each year. "There's no stock to shift – just one paddock kept for one animal to

keep us in meat. It's easy care – the orchards only need mowing about four times a year."

The land fertility and seafront boundary was one of the big attractions for Steve when this property was purchased. "We get the viewshaft down to the sea and up to the White Cliffs. Every morning when I wake up, I can just lift my head of the pillow to see what's going on out there."

With Onaero's vaunted microclimate, it's an ideal place to grow avocados, he says. "I always wanted to plant trees and had decided on avocados even before the house."

The timing of avocado growth here in Taranaki means the harvests that come in about three months later than north around Auckland benefit from better prices later in the marketing season.

"We've opted to pick the fruit ourselves, but it could be done by a professional team. "The orchards were just planned when the house option turned up," Steve recalls. "It seemed like the right thing to do."

A careful approach governed both the move and the following renovation. "The usual approach would have been to split the house into four for the shift . . . we paid extra to shift it in two pieces, so there was only one cut through it."

On site, during the home's placement and renovation, they discovered hidden information about its origins and the quality of the structure. "When we took off the scrim on the walls, we

found they had been papered – there were pages from the London Illustrated, dating back to the later 1800s, pasted on under the scrim."

The quality of the building's structure stood out, he says. "The studs were all mortise and tenon and dowels . . . not nailed. It was an incredible amount of workmanship . . . everything was housed and the dowels were hand-made and would have been beaten in with a little mallet."

Improvements were made during the refurbishment. Insulation was put into walls and ceilings where possible and underfloor insulation installed to enhance the warmth of the home.

"We also put in efficient heating – a Jotal open fire that was ducted to carry warmth into the lounge and upstairs."

The careful refurbishment drew the approval of a former family owner of the old house, he says. "When we finished the job, they gave us a photo of the original house in appreciation for not destroying the family home."

A visit to the home today impresses for the character detail that has been retained and enhanced.

The formal entrance is at the front of the home where decks have been added to offer easy outdoor living – and to enjoy the views down over the avocado orchards to the sea.

A pair of lounges sit either side of the front entry. Rich heritage colours have been chosen for

each room – green in the left-hand lounge with its feature window seat and dark red above timber panelling to the right where an impressive riverstone hearth frames the Jotal fire. Battered ceilings in both lounges look crisp in white, while the sheen of polished native timber floorboards flows through the rooms.

A short hallway leads through to the rear of the ground floor where there is a spacious kitchen-dining room to the right and a generous family bathroom behind it. The bathroom balances the modern comforts of a corner shower and black-and-white floor tiles with the period touch of a freestanding clawfoot bath.

Back in the hallway, to the left is a second toilet while laundry appliances are shut away behind clear-glazed doors just inside the back door.

The three bedrooms are located upstairs, as well as a once-open balcony that was given weather protection with sliding windows by previous owners to offer sun-room convenience. The main bedroom boasts a window seat with its own inspirational views over the property to the sea.

This home is not the only historic building on the site. Okato's former St Lukes church – built in the 1880s – was also bought and transported to the site. "When the opportunity came to buy the church, we chose to shift it here and utilise it

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as more space. We originally intended it as more accommodation so it has power and sewer services . . . it's also been insulated to future-proof it for later development – there's no point in doing a half-pie job on any restoration.

Plans were modified after the 'church' was settled into place and large doors were carefully crafted into the side to create a character double garage option for the property. The rest of the building can be used for entertaining – Steve calls it his 'gentleman's club'.

That fits in well with the Onaero community feeling, he says. "There's always someone catching snapper and you get a very social environment." As an example, Steve notes that just a few days

earlier, another local brought in a catch of snapper and put a smoker to good use for a communal snack.

Onaero has grown noticeably in the last 10 years or so, he says – from basic fish-and-chips and the pub to a friendly cafe lifestyle.

"The area's grown up . . . come into it's own. It's a very satisfying lifestyle out here . . . and it's only 18 minutes into Fitzroy, even with traffic."

Western First National consultant Jamie Gemmell is marketing the property and says it offers a special buyer a grand lifestyle.

"If it is something that extra bit special, life in the country or a property that allows quick access to the coastline for a day's fishing, this property offers many more choices than most," Jamie points out. "Not only do you get an impressive

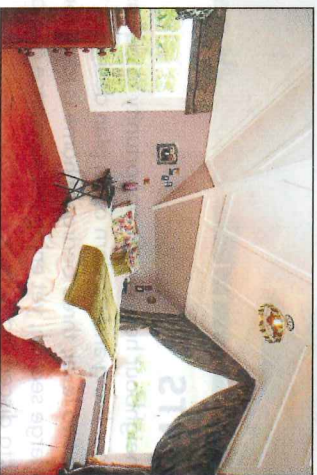
character home, but also a church and 450 avocado trees!"

As well as a property that can generate an income, options for a new owner could include a home stay, function venue, or extra guest accommodation, she says. "This home is simply shouting out for the next owner to relish the lifestyle that is offered."



WEB EXTRA
See extra photos of this property at taranakidailynews.co.nz

Your Property Weekly is available online at taranakidailynews.co.nz - click the special titles tab



QUICK LOOK

WHERE: 961 Main North Rd, Onaero.

HOW BIG: 4.269ha in land with extensive avocado orchards, about 220sqm in home with separate garaging.

HOW MUCH: Buyer inquiries over \$1,150,000 invited.

WHAT YOU GET: Striking character and history in a finely refurbished 1860s residence that has been resettled on a seafront Onaero lifestyle property. An historic 1880s church building complements the house with garaging space. And then there's the income potential of the established avocado orchard and the friendly coastal community around here.

MARKETED BY: Jamie Gemmell at Western First National – 06 757 5101 or 0276 719 532.

ON THE WEB: newplymouthfn.co.nz – ref 2454170. zueibng.beqeszdnef

SEE IT: Open home on Sunday, August 25, 1.30pm-2.30pm.