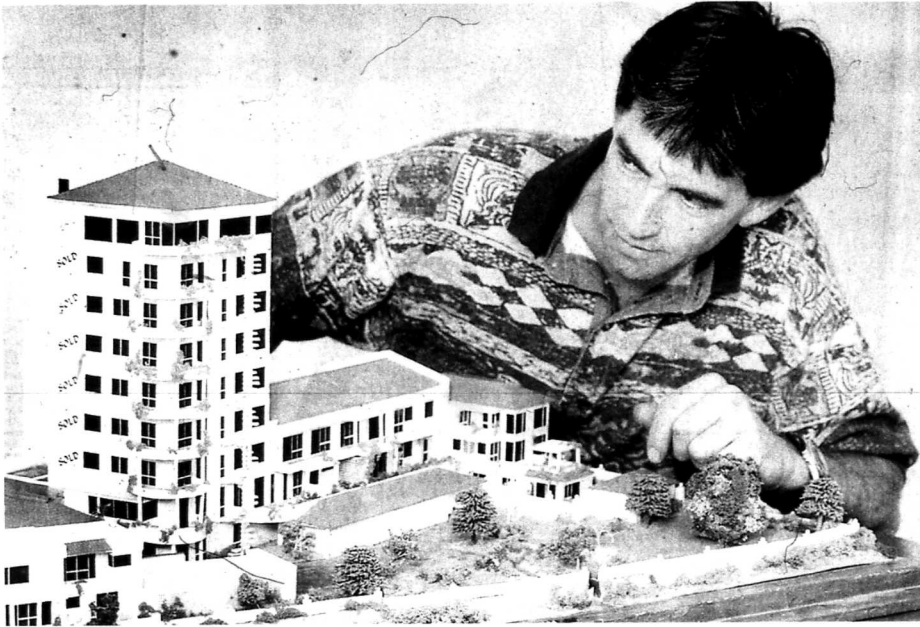


Richmond Estate

A Daily News Advertising Feature



OVERVIEW: Richmond Estate partner Gary Pigott with a model of the completed project. The last apartment work is detailed on the right hand end of the model.

Final apartments under construction

Text by MIKE SHAW
Photos by TREVOR READ

THE final stage of the Richmond Estate apartment development is underway in New Plymouth.

Four years ago project partners Gary Pigott and Cedric Grantham took on a challenge and a dream — to convert the former Tasman Hotel property into upmarket apartments and townhouses.

The dream quickly became reality as people saw the opportunity to own a share in a unique piece of real estate on the city foreshore.

Work was planned in several stages.

The tower block was transformed, each floor opening up to accommodate a single apartment. A penthouse was added to the tower to complete that stage.

Three townhouses were built out in the former hotel carpark as the next stage. At the same time, the estate walls and gate were finished to provide the full security promised in the concept.

Now the partners are proceeding with the transformation of the hotel's former bottle store facility into the final two apartments of the project.

Walls are coming out and new ones going in, smart new interiors are being installed and decks added to take in the expansive views of the sea and coast.

Each of the new apartments will have more than 220m² of living space. Drive-in access off St Aubyn St will be convenient — and secure. Electrically operated gates will govern vehicle access to each of the two apartments and security cameras will observe the grounds.

Early interest has been shown in the new apartments, according to Gary Pigott. "But people are waiting until they take more definite shape. As with each of the earlier apartments, they have to see the walls and partitions in, it's easier to visualise," he said.

These last apartments are being built ahead of the original schedule. The bottle store lessees decided to buy out the lease

and vacate the premises and that allowed the apartment development to proceed.

A manager's flat is also under construction beneath them to make the project operationally complete.

"People who have bought already will get the last part of their agreement as well," Gary said. "They will own one-fourteenth of the manager's flat."

An interim arrangement for property maintenance and administration has been in place and will continue until the manager's flat is built and the manager appointed.

"The body corporate is up and running and financial and the maintenance programme is on its way," he said.

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Richmond Estate

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AT EASE: Richmond Estate residents, from left, Jean Sharrock and Stuart and Marion Green, take time out for an end-of-the-day cooler on a tower balcony.

Allure lay in coastal site

THE Richmond Estate had a uniqueness about it when first proposed and built. The concept involved turning a commercial building into residential apartments - a first for New Plymouth.

But it was the foreshore site that provided the real allure for potential residents. The tower apartments rose eight storeys and looked out over the rocky shore only metres away.

Townhouses in the development enjoyed even closer proximity to the sea, set almost on the boundary of the property which then dropped away to the rocks and waves. All the residences are a short walk from city services and conveniences.

The site is still a rare position in the city but some of the estate's uniqueness has gone, according to project partner Gary Pigott.

"Inner-city living is taking off," he said. "Willie Still has completed his apartment on the Kings Building and there is another planned for the old Colliers Building."

The nearby Devonport flats were also selling well and improving in value, he said.

In its first four years, Richmond Estate has developed as a living community, according to Gary and his partner Bronwyn.

And despite the walls and security provisions, the apartments and townhouses are far from restrictive, the couple say. The residents are a varied group - some older, some younger, some with children, others hosting grandchildren.

Richmond Estate occupants are not forced into close contact by the estate concept, either, Gary emphasises. The various residents of the estate mixed as much or as little as they wanted



HANDY: Covered walkway links foyer to basement recreation.

— but all enjoyed a good relationship together, he said. "It's fabulous living here, and great for the kids," Bronwyn said. Their four fit easily into the spacious, two-level townhouse.

"The pool at Kawarua isn't far away, we are handy to town and there are enough grounds here to enjoy the outside as well."

Tower apartments obviously lack the grounds enjoyed by the townhouses but that is part of the appeal of high-level living for residents there.

Developments in the area have also benefited Richmond Estate residents. "The recent rezoning of Club Taranaki across the road was an unexpected and added bonus," Gary said.

Any area of a town or city has a certain amount of coming and going among property owners and Richmond Estate is no exception — confirming its development as a community, according to Gary.

"One apartment has changed hands due to a family development and another is on the market with owners moving out of town," he said.

"No-one who has bought here to my knowledge has had any regrets. People are even investing in further development to suit themselves."

As with conventional property ownership, apartment owners are planning and completing improvements to their residences.

The first couple to occupy quarters in the tower, Hugh and Peg Primrose, are altering their semi-circular deck. They are closing it in with a glass conservatory to enjoy year-round use of the facility.

Owners of another apartment are planning a canopy over their expanse of deck.



ALL IN: Basement swimming pool is enjoyed by young and not-so-young residents.

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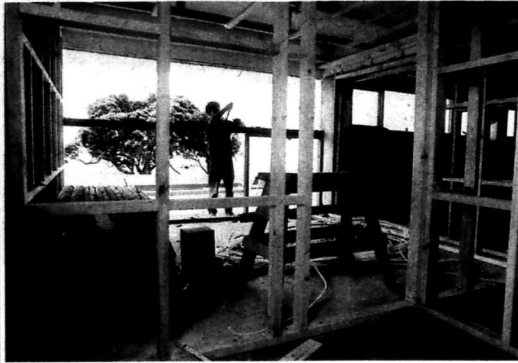
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WORK: Walls are going in and coming out to create final two apartments at Richmond Estate.

Project progress follows the plans closely



ALSO: In the tower, a balcony becomes a conservatory.



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AT LAST: With project end in sight Gary and Bronwyn will have more time to enjoy the Richmond Estate.

THE Richmond Estate was a gamble on the part of project partners Gary Pigott and Cedric Grantham. But they had their bets covered.

The bottle store facility at the foot of the tower block had a six-year lease and the income met the financial demands of owning the property if the project had not proceeded.

One completed apartment in the tower block was the promotional step they took after buying the property. That was the showpiece for the project, used to sell the remaining tower block apartments.

"We had to have five presold to prove the viability of the project," Gary Pigott said. "We just rolled on from there."

The pair had an early confidence in what they were doing — and both have since taken up their earmarked apartments and reside on the estate.

Project progress had followed planning very closely with little alteration to the concept, said Gary. The townhouses are the only elements of the project to see significant change between plan and completion.

Living quarters and bedrooms were reversed from the plan provisions and the lounge and kitchen areas now enjoy the elevated views from the upstairs level. Transformation of the former bottle store into the final two apartments is another change — and that is only in timing. Completing them early is a task Gary and Cedric have turned to happily, seeing the end to four years intensive planning and development.

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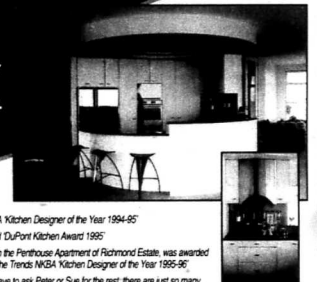
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