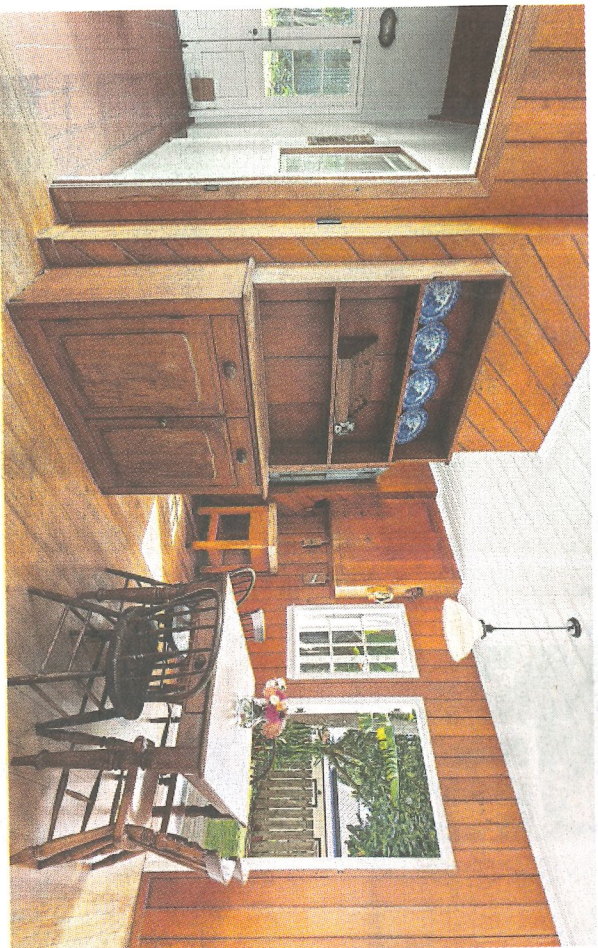


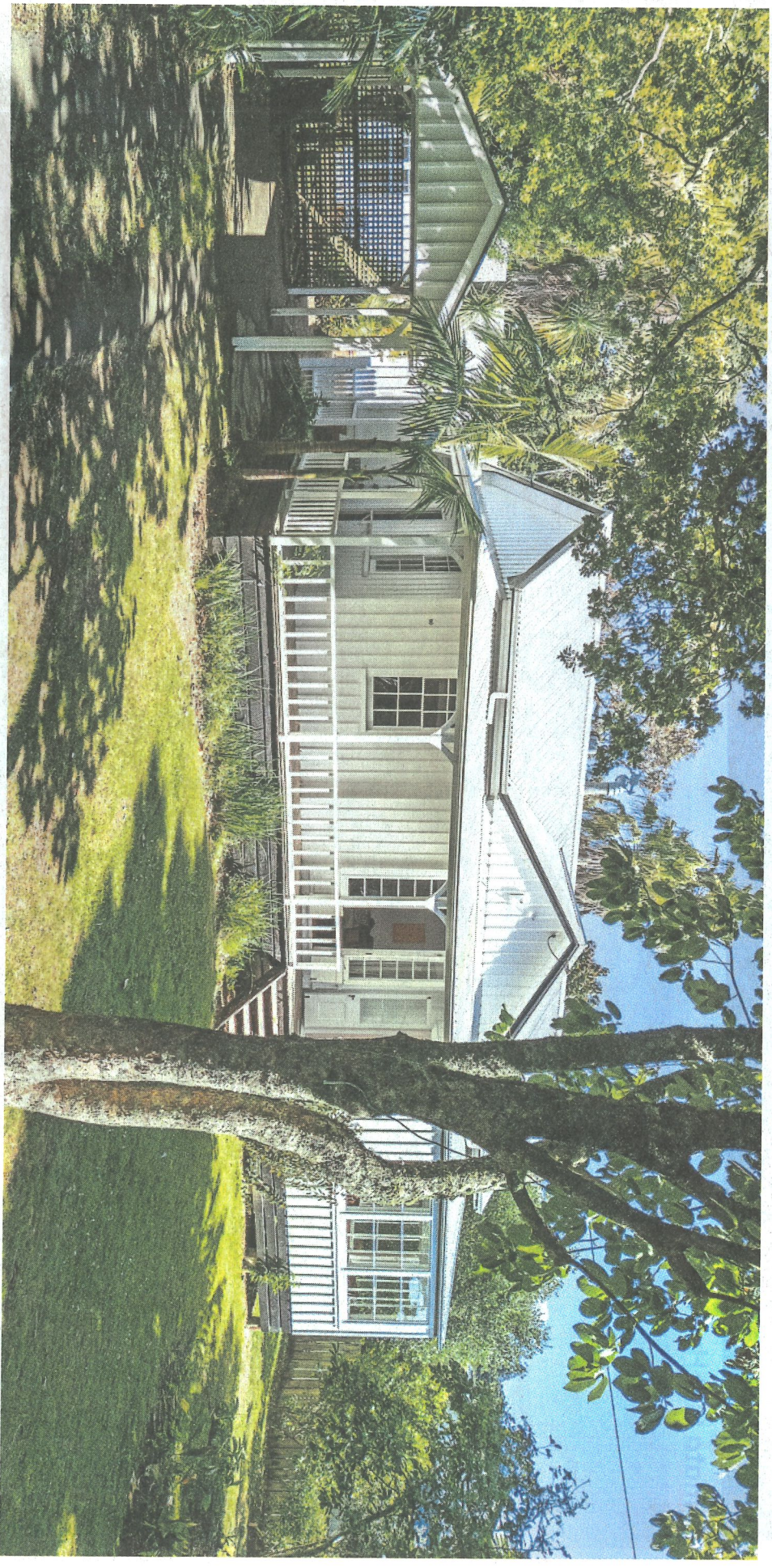
FEATURED PROPERTY

Rare sale of iconic colonial cottage



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lie at 90 Pendarves St in New Plymouth is flavoured by the city's history - embracing both its early years and more recent times.

That connection across 150-plus years is going to be appreciated by prospective buyers today, as evidenced by the immediate enquiries received by marketing consultant Tracee Pigott at Property Brokers.

This home is one of the city's renowned 'Hen and Chickens' cottages, built in the 1860s by English pioneer settlers Thomas and Grace Hirst. They initially built a home for themselves in 1863 off Cameron St (the 'hen home), and then built five identical cottages (the 'chickens') below on Pendarves St for four daughters and one son.

The black-and-white, board-and-batten cottages along Pendarves St are regarded as icons of New Plymouth's colonial years and only rarely change ownership. The coming sale of number 90 reflects their desirability - it was home to the late city artists Tom and Lesley Kreisler from 1972 and their family is only now letting the property go to new owners.

That more than 50 years of ownership almost didn't happen, son Aaron says. His Argentinian-born father travelled to Mexico in 1977 when his mother fell ill, and after she died he told Lesley to follow him: "I can't see myself coming back, so sell up everything and join me."

Aaron says his mother originally agreed, but then decided not to sell and set off overseas with three sons aged under 10 - Aaron, and his brothers Eugene and Nick. When the family returned two years later, they had their cottage to settle back into.

"Tom and Les had distinctive personalities, and they didn't always agree on everything," Aaron says. "Tom realised in hindsight, that Les was absolutely right in not selling."

Aaron says his parents both had a keen interest in art, design and architecture which had instantly attracted them to this dwelling.

"They transformed this colonial house into a dynamic cultural hub where fellow artists, writers, art gallery directors, curators and like-minded people found a haven to hang out and discuss a diverse range of matters over a rich medley of cuisines and strong coffee. The Kreisler family, and by extension this home, is deeply intertwined with the foundation years and ongoing development of the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery.

"In later years, Lesley opened Lesley Kreisler Gallery in the former front bedroom and main hallway of the cottage, where she showcased the work of acclaimed artists, such as Gretchen Albrecht, Shane Cotton, Séraphine Pick, Dick Frizzell, Julia Morrison and Simon Morris."

The cottage did see change during their time here, Aaron notes. "Over the period of their ownership, they made important and sympathetic adjustments to the original building: closing in the front verandah to create an expanded bedroom and connected sunroom, and adding the back kitchen, bathroom, washhouse and a large open studio space. These elements were designed to both harmonise with and enhance the flow and distinctive characteristics of the spaces throughout the house."

Those spaces can be appreciated on a walk through the cottage - two generous lounges, three bedrooms, the family bathroom, connected kitchen and dining areas, and the spacious studio with toilet that has potential to become self-contained. A verandah wraps around the sunny front corner of the cottage, there's a sheltered brick-paved courtyard warmed by morning sun, and a side deck off the dining area that soaks up afternoon sun. A single carport, like the studio, was designed to complement the original style of the cottage.

Character creates warmth and texture and is celebrated in this home - in the high ceilings covered with tongue-and-groove boards, the kauri and rimu floors throughout most of the rooms, wide architrave mouldings and tall skirting boards, and original open fires in each of the lounges.

It has been a home that welcomed family life, and has been well lived-in. Tom and Lesley valued places and things that had history, but were not precious about it. "They believed in having old things and using them ... that they should be appreciated for their original purpose ... and (a home like this) could be appreciated by living in it well."

This home is described as a cottage, he says, so it is not expansive in scale. "But the scale here really suits a family ... three boys and their parents lived in here easily."

Inner-city location has been a real bonus, Aaron says. "You can walk into town, and it's so close to Pukekura Park: we used to walk up to the cricket games. And Womad now ... you can walk home at lunchtime,

and then go back."

The property is pleasingly central, he says, "but it's own little world." Tom and Lesley planted most of the trees around the cottage, from palms to avocado, and the grounds have matured into an environment that seems almost subtropical. A protected pohutukawa, and a magnificent neighbouring oak, likely date back to when the cottage was first built.

"The garden reflects their diverse range of interests and vision, with a unique blend of native and introduced species that expanded on and responded to the rich tapestry of sensory experiences that took place within the home."

The property is ready for its next tenure of ownership, he says.

In recent times, the house and garden has been revamped with a new roof and fresh coat of paint on the outside, the addition of new heating systems, and insulation put in the roof and under the house. The family are bringing this architectural treasure to the market in a premium state, but they also recognise that this is a chance for new owners to add to the storied history and sensibility of this residence.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure a unique piece of Aotearoa New Zealand architectural heritage and make it your very own in the coming years." ■

NEW PLYMOUTH

90 Pendarves Street

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Viewing:
By appointment
Tender:
Closes 27 February, 2025, at 4pm



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