

VILLAGE EXCHANGE - EXCITING CHANGE!

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The \$25 million Havelock North Village Exchange development is set to kick off in the new year, now that plans are finalised and all necessary consents have been granted.

It's an exciting milestone for a project that has been in the making for more than a decade says Lowmac Properties developer, David Mackersey.

The development company, locally co-owned by Lowe and Mackersey families, has worked closely with Hastings District Council for almost ten years to ensure the development would enhance the village's overall appeal.

"It is timely to rejuvenate this iconic site in a contemporary yet complementary way," says David.

"What we're planning will add to the village offering long term, future-proofing the heart of Havelock North as the major boutique shopping centre for years to come."

The 'Happy Tav' bar and restaurant, a relic of the 1960s currently located on the corner site, will close at the end of this year so the site can be cleared and excavated. The two-year development project will begin in January 2015, ultimately offering a 40 room, five-star boutique hotel, bar and restaurant, function and conference facilities, a central courtyard with a water feature, seven retail spaces including a café, multiple first-floor offices and a basement car park with 96 spaces.

Andy Lowe, whose father Graeme Lowe was a Hawke's Bay business icon and visionary, is delighted the Village Exchange project has the official go-ahead.

"This development was a long-time dream of my father's, so it's fantastic to see the vision he had for the site finally coming to fruition."

Refining the Village Exchange project in partnership with the Hastings District Council may have taken many years but the detailed planning will ensure the 'village' feel is retained.

Instead of one large building on the 4,300 square metre site, approved plans include three separate buildings encircling a central courtyard. Each building has its own unique façade architecturally designed to be visually appealing from each of the three frontages visible from the surrounding roads.

Project architect Shaun Thompson-Gray, of Architecture HDT Hawke's Bay, says the Village Exchange project design redefines the retail, office and hospitality experience for Havelock North, ensuring the new buildings are

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meaningfully connected to the site and complementary to Havelock North's village character.

From a practical perspective, many plans are in place to minimise the impact of the large-scale development on nearby businesses, pedestrians and shoppers.

The construction site, including the Council-owned 'old fire station' car park at the rear of the site, will be fenced throughout the project to maximise safety; this car park will be reinstated for public use once the project is completed.

Trucks will be instructed to avoid the village so they do not disrupt everyday traffic, and all trucks will access the site across Porter Drive via a new entranceway. In addition, a service lane at the rear of the site will provide access for project vehicles and ensure minimal disruption occurs in general village traffic flow.

Sam Jackman, President of the Havelock North Business Association, says any development within the village that will attract additional visitors is welcomed.

"There has always been a hotel on the site since the 1800's and this new development, run by a seasoned operator, will continue this historic element of the village," he says.

"Additionally, having the new hotel's advertising and marketing budgets to promote the village and Havelock North as a premium holiday destination is also a very welcome bonus for the entire village business community.

Mr Jackman says it is expected that any development of this size and stature will bring some disruption to everyday life in the village, but this comes with a 'silver lining' of sorts.

"The Havelock North Business Association is very mindful that during the construction period there will be many trades people undertaking the various construction and fitting out work whom will all spend money within the village during the development process and that means additional income and revenue for our cafes, restaurants, service providers and other members that would not necessarily have come to the village."

David Mackersey says this project is the single largest investment in the Havelock North village to date, and will employ over 50 people on site at any one time during 2015 and 2016.

"We are striving to keep our business within the Bay, using local consultants, contractors and services throughout the design and build phase - the good news for nearby businesses is that there will be a lot more hungry, thirsty workers in the village for the next few years!"

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Even when the development is completed there will be ongoing employment opportunities through the new hotel, cafe, retail and office spaces says Mr Mackersey.

“This as a significant investment in Havelock North’s future and there will be multiple benefits for us all in both the short and long term.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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KEY FACTS

- > Lowmac Properties has owned the property for 15 years.
- > The site has three street frontages, one facing Havelock Road, another facing the roundabout and Te Aute Road and the third facing Porter Drive.
- > Architects: Architecture HDT Hawke’s Bay
- > Engineers: Strata Engineering
- > Project Manager: Terry May, Tanglin Group
- > The two-year development project will commence in January 2015 and consists of three connecting buildings, with the ground level of the boutique hotel being used for hospitality (restaurant/bar/conferences) and the two upper floors for accommodation. The adjoining buildings will include office and retail space; potential tenants can sign up for lease from mid 2015, for occupancy the end of the following year.
- > The ground floor retail/commercial area is 1560m², in up to 10 separate tenancies.
- > The office area is 2,200m² in two separate buildings each of two levels.
- > The boutique hotel has 40 rooms and will be 5 star hotel; David Mackersey has experience with other boutique accommodation including The Crown Hotel and Navigate in Napier.
- > The restaurant and bar associated with the hotel is 360m².
- > The project is expected to be finished at the end of 2016.
- > Lowmac Properties has successfully completed a number of other Havelock North developments including Cinema Gold, Village Court and the new Porter Drive building.