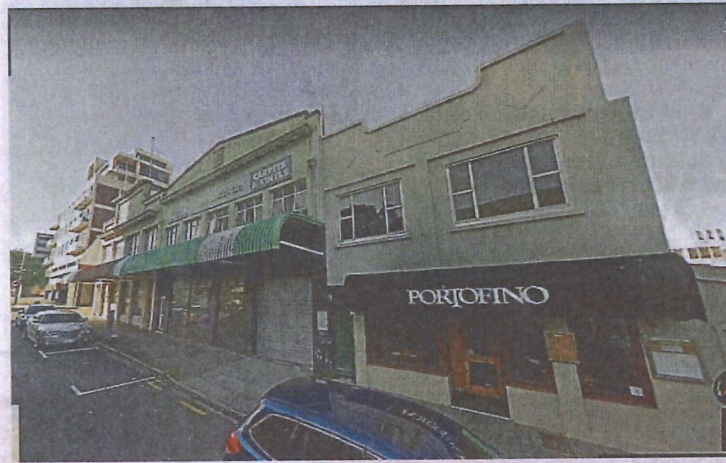




Before and after: Kibbys Metal Pressing on Devon St West and Dawson St has been replaced by Dawson House, which opens today.

ANDY JACKSON/STUFF



Before and after: Two old buildings on Gill St, near Centre City Shopping Centre, were demolished to make way for the Metrotel, which opens soon. ANDY JACKSON/STUFF

Two new builds give modern look

BRITTANY BAKER

After months of work New Plymouth's newest office block opens its doors today - with the city's swish new motel set to follow in a matter of weeks.

Four government agencies have moved into Dawson House, on the site of the former Kibbys metal pressing factory at the corner of Devon St West and Dawson St, while over on Gill St two old buildings were pulled down to make way for the 31-unit Metrotel, which

is opposite the Centre City shopping mall.

Dawson House will host four Government agencies: the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Vulnerable Children - Oranga Tamariki (MoVC), Housing New Zealand, and the Ministry of Education (MoE). Its doors were opening to the public at 1pm today

Bev Markham, MoVC Taranaki regional manager, said having the four different departments in one location would make it easier for people to access services faster.

"Also staff can work together in one place instead of making phone calls. It's wonderful, both for the public and for staff," she said.

The MoE, MoVC and MSD are moving from Gill St, which the three agencies have occupied for 26 years.

Housing NZ is shifting from 315 Devon St East.

While MoE does not shift into the new site until mid-September, Rae Karipa, acting director of education for Taranaki, said staff were busy packing for the move.

He said the new space offered

an open plan so staff could more easily work together on projects.

Though the new build extends between Devon St West and King St, a vintage lighting shop will remain on the corner.

Site owner Marsh Kibby said one of the carparks was behind schedule by "a couple of weeks".

Meanwhile, 750 metres away, the finishing touches are being put to The Metrotel. The building, on three levels, includes a manager's apartment and 17 car parks and is set to open in three weeks, owners Susan and Neil Drought said.