

New owner takes Bayswater helm

Softly softly approach to onshore developments

Chris Hutching

Bayswater Marina's new owner, Simon Herbert, wants to turn the adjacent area of reclamation land into a "people-friendly" precinct that will incorporate cafes and apartments for North Shore residents.

But the Auckland businessman says he is taking a slow and long-term view and over the next year or so he will be consulting interested parties – such as the Takapuna Boating Club – about the shape of any developments.

"This is a rare and precious commodity and at the moment it's only zoned for what I would call people-unfriendly activities like boat repairs and cleaning. It's not much use as a windswept car park."

Mr Herbert said he would consider expanding the 430-berth marina some time in the future but not yet.

Initially, he would look at

building a breakwater to reduce wave action.

"At the moment the demand for berths means the marina is pretty full most of the time but the demand is not quite high enough for expansion yet."

The sale of Bayswater Marina assets has taken more than a year of negotiating with the estate of the marina's founder, Martin Jones.

One of the biggest issues was concluding talks with the Crown over settling a 15 metre marginal strip for public coastal access.

Conservation Minister Chris Carter recently agreed to the 15 metre strip, paving the way for the deal to go ahead.

The public access strip has been subject to court reviews, with the previous developer seeking a much smaller strip and the Ngataranga Bay Society wanting 20 metres.

Mr Herbert has acquired the management rights to the

marina, bought 26 of the "super yacht" berths (most berths are owned privately), plus a 105-year leasehold interest from the Crown for the 3.34ha of adjacent reclamation land.

There will be no immediate operational or staff changes at the marina as a result of the sale.

Mr Herbert said it was a long-term investment from his point of view.

"It's a fabulous asset in a part of Auckland that's quite undeveloped with a large amount of coast.

"We are delighted at the decision by Mr Carter to grant the lease," Mr Herbert said.

The restrictive zoning that Mr Herbert will seek to change is known as variation 65 and he said he looked forward to hearing from the community over the marina's future and a positive and also a co-operative relationship with the North Shore City Council.