

Media release: 17 September 2008

FIRST RESIDENTS FOR PEGASUS TOWN

After over four years in planning and nearly two years to the day since work on the development began, Pegasus – North Canterbury’s newest town – will welcome the first members of its new community.

James and Bidy Gardner will become the town’s first residents when they move into their new three-bedroom home on Infinity Boulevard – named for the developers of Pegasus – on Thursday.

Infinity Investment Group, which bought the 420 hectares of green-fields land 25kms north of Christchurch in 2004, is creating a fully-integrated town – including a school, shopping, entertainment and business precincts, as well as numerous recreational features – for up to 7,000 people. Working in joint venture with Brookfield Multiplex, one of the country’s largest property businesses, the developers have been on-site since September 2006 establishing the roading, infrastructure and layout for the new town.

The Gardners, who have moved from their farm in Waiau, are excited to be Pegasus’ first residents.

“We weren’t really competing”, said James Gardner, who has been in regular contact with another couple who will take possession of their new house built by Mike Greer Homes this week. “We just wanted to get in and be part of it as soon as possible.”

The two couples won’t be the only members of the new community for long. Almost a quarter of the 274 titled lots at Pegasus are currently in the planning or development stage, with 25 houses currently being constructed in the town’s first three stages and a further 36 going through the building consent process.

James and Bidy decided to make Pegasus their new home after a visit to the Pegasus Display Centre in Addington. The Gardners had been considering a move to a North Canterbury town, but were yet to find the ideal community for their change in lifestyle.

“When we looked at the model and saw everything on offer, we both thought: ‘yes’”, said James.

“We just fell in love with it,” Bidy Gardner said. “It just felt right.”

Coming from the country, and a small rural community, the Gardners didn't want to be right in the centre of the new town, so they chose a section that offers space and sunlight, with views across the neighbouring Mapleham golf course – something James is looking forward to playing on when it opens next year.

Although admitting buying a section without first seeing the land felt a little like a shot in the dark, the couple were pleasantly surprised when they first visited the site of their new home.

“What they have done in developing the site far exceeded our expectations,” said James.

With four children, and six and ‘three-quarter’ grandchildren, the proximity of the local playground – the first of a long list of community amenities being constructed at Pegasus – was also a plus. Anticipating a fair amount of interest in the attractions of the new town, which will boast a feature lake, a temperature-controlled swimming bay and hot pools, cafes and restaurants, a Kidzone adventure park and numerous parks and reserves, the couple have built their home with an eye to creating an area where the grandchildren – and guests – can stay. “The grandchildren have already booked in,” says Bidy.

The construction of their new home was also a family affair; with son-in-law David Youngson helping select the site and building the Gardner's new home.

The appeal of Pegasus to a broad range of the community is something that the couple really appreciate.

“It's great to see everything here for families,” said Bidy, an early childhood teacher who works locally.

“This is not an elitist sort of place,” James said. “It's a Joe-average place. You don't have to win Lotto to get here. You can get a house and land for around \$400,000, which in today's market is pretty good.”

James and Bidy's experience of their new community began during the building process, when they received plenty of help from the town's current occupants – the teams of contractors and subbies working to build the houses going up all around them. The town's compliance supervisor, Grant Craig, has also been on-hand to ensure everything has gone smoothly with the building and consent process.

“You don't feel you are on your own here, which is quite different from what some of our friends have experienced building in a new development,” said Bidy. “Everyone's been great to deal with, and really helpful.”

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