

Locals bring new life to landmark Devonport home

Curious locals may have been wondering what's taking place behind the hoardings at 24 Victoria Road. This iconic heritage site, regarded as the oldest existing house in Devonport, is being carefully returned to glory and is set to open as a new bar and restaurant for its next chapter in local history.

Signal Hill is the vision of Jyoti and Alistair Davidson. The couple live in Devonport with their two children, and while they are no strangers to the hospitality industry, they have long wanted to open a local establishment that would add something different to our community's entertainment scene.

"It's been a pipeline dream for around two years. We walked past that grand old building, and imagined turning it into something the whole community could use - a relaxed place where you could take the family, watch the world go by in a relaxed atmosphere in the sun", Jyoti explains.

The result is a family-friendly bar and restaurant that will suit the laid back, outdoor-loving lifestyle of the Devonport community, while also serving as a draw-card for city dwellers across the harbour alike. You can sit down for a meal inside the formal dining room or on the deck in the sunshine, or choose from something lighter off the snack menu to quell the appetite.

Al, a life-long Devonport resident, says that even before Covid changed the way many people are working, he also envisaged a space where local professionals and community groups could connect and work remotely. The 'Cigar Room', a convenient, private meeting room, can be used free-of-charge for local boards, businesses and community groups.

Signal Hill's name is a nod to the building's historic roots. The home was originally built around 1846 by William Oliver, one of the earliest settlers on the North Shore and the first person laid to rest at Signal Hill - the landmark we know now as Mt Victoria.



The couple are aware of the significance of being stewards of such a prominent building, and preserving and refining the character features of the home in order to maintain this slice of history for the community was top priority.

Original features - such as the bow window crafted by Oliver - remain, while additions - including a fireplace mantle recovered from their own heritage home restoration - have been made with careful consideration.

"We've lovingly renovated our own heritage home here in Devonport, so we knew to some degree what this would involve. We love this town's old buildings and the character they bring and really wanted to play on that. We've taken the beautiful kauri wood floors and the high ceilings back - painstakingly - to how they used to be as much as we can", Jyoti says.

As proud locals, Jyoti and Al have already thrown their support behind school and club sports teams, and it's this community feel that is what they love most about living and raising their family in Devonport.

The support they've received in return from the community has already been huge, and after a long journey bringing Signal Hill to life the couple are looking forward to tearing down the hoardings and inviting the community in to enjoy the reinvigorated space.

Al says - "Our friends, our family, our neighbours, our sports clubs - we've created this as a place for people just like them. We've done this work with pride and our standards are really high - we want people to be as proud of what we've created as we are".

An all-new familiar local

Lovingly brought back to life to serve as a welcoming bar and restaurant where locals and visitors can enjoy great food, and share their own tales over a glass with family and friends.

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