

TO LET AND TO LEASE

Room to spare in centre

Law firm moves to new offices (complete with a bright and funky cafe) in Shortland St building

BY COLIN TAYLOR

A SPARE floor is still available for lease in Auckland's newest tower block, the striking Manson-built Lunsley Centre in Shortland St.

Law firm Minter Ellison Rudd Watts has moved to new offices in the building, joining anchor law firm tenant Simpson Grierson, but there is more than enough room to spare with an entire floor available for sub-lease.

Minter Ellison Rudd Watts moved from the BNE Centre on Queen St into the new Poddie Sharp-designed, 28-level Lunsley Centre and has leased \$2000 m on an initial 10-year lease.

Colliers International and CB Richard Ellis are jointly leasing the 1280sq m spare floor at \$40/sq m on a 10-year lease.

It is the only full-floor tenancy available in a premium-grade Auckland office building, say Colliers International leasing brokers Andrew Reed and Jason Seymour. Vacancy rates in premium buildings are sitting at less than 1 per cent and Reed says it will suit a professional tenant or tenants.

The floor has been left as a standard shell so tenants can work on a fit-out to suit their needs.

Constructed by Manson Developments and sold to Deutsche Bank Office Trust for \$110.4 million, the Lunsley Centre has a hotel-style lobby on level nine, showcasing contemporary New Zealand artists, a Zen garden and a cafe/bar overlooking the harbour.

One level down is a business centre with three meeting rooms and a fully equipped gym



ALL SMILES:
Minter Ellison
Rudd Watts'
Russell Hay (left),
and Duncan
Smith.

for the use of tenants.

Minter Ellison Rudd Watts moved from small, inefficient floor plates at the BNE Centre. The law firm was the anchor tenant when the centre was erected in 1986 and still has two years to run on its lease, which Manson Developments has taken over.

Chief financial officer Duncan Smith says the firm started the search for new premises at the end of 2003 and looked at retrofitted space and new buildings.

"To retrofit an older building would have cost the same as starting from scratch in a new building and we would never have achieved the high standard of specifications we wanted in a retrofitted building," he says.

CBO Russell Hay says the final decision to become the second tenant in the Lunsley Centre took just eight months. "It was much faster than we had anticipated."

The relatively quick decision gave Minter Ellison Rudd Watts time to think about the size

of its business before it moved, and as a result IT, reprographics and the mailroom have been outsourced.

The firm's lawyers and staff work on three floors designed by Craig Moller that have slightly smaller glass partitioned offices for partners and senior associates than they have been used to.

To compensate, the floors have quiet rooms for small meetings and every person gets a view through the glass partitioning.

Most of the staff work in an open plan area, which Hay says creates a better environment for collaboration and teamwork. When staff are not working they relax in a bright and funky cafe with a drop-down projector and plasma screen.

Primarily, level 20 is Minter Ellison Rudd Watts reception and meeting rooms floor. Coming from a tired building to a reception area that provides a modern, eye window to the world is a huge boost for staff, says Smith.