

COMMERCIAL

Furnishing new opportunities

By SARAH-KATE SCICLUNA

BIDS above \$3 million are anticipated when a huge Newcastle West commercial building occupied by Freedom Furniture goes under the hammer later this month.

The furniture retailer is moving to Kotara after more than 20 years at the 980 Hunter Street site.

Being sold by a Sydney investor family, who paid \$2.8 million for it in mid-2000 according to Australian Property Monitors, it comprises a showroom of 1633 square metres with a 30-metre frontage.

The lower level is accessed via a laneway leading to the rear of the building. There is also a dispatch office, administration offices, amenities and a storage area of more than 1639 square metres.

The building sits on more than 1800 square metres of zoned mixed use land.

Colliers International Newcastle agent Peter Dodds, who is selling the site with Dowling Commercial agent David Rogers, said it could appeal to developers who could redevelop the site into a high-rise residential complex with commercial and retail below.

But Mr Dodds expects more interest from owner occupiers such as car or furniture retailers. Or it could appeal to an investor who could find a new tenant, with the building currently returning \$37,158 a month.

Freedom Furniture has decided not to take up its 10-year option following this year's expiry of its 10-year lease.

Mr Dodds said they were moving to the new homemaker centre at Kotara that is under development.

The building was refurbished around 10 years ago, with work including new flooring and plasterboard partitioning. It goes to auction on April 30.

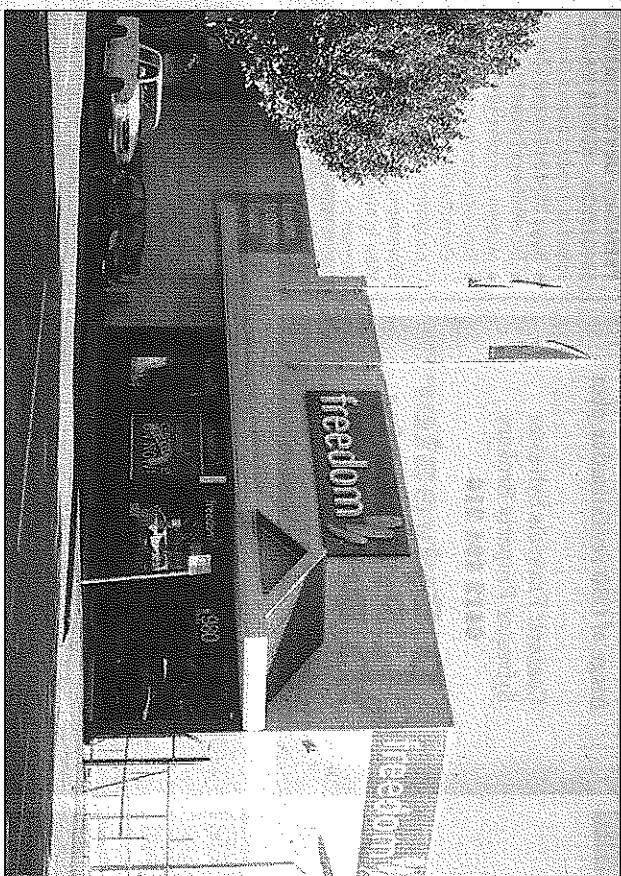
Also going to auction the same day is a partially completed 76-place childcare centre at 81 Richardson Road, Raymond Terrace, commercial/residential sites at 129 Matland Road and 31 Dora Street, Mayfield, a warehouse at 96 Excelsior Parade, Toronto, and a commercial-zoned cottage at 31 Llewellyn Street, Merewether.

Morpeth's River Royal Inn hotel at 97 Swan Street and the former Britz Worldwide Moving site at 10 Dangar Street, Wickham, will also go to auction that day.

High-rise Gosford bidding

A CENTRAL Coast investor has paid \$3.35 million at auction for a mortgagee commercial building at Gosford.

Three bidders competed for the 4-6 Watt Street building, sold via CB Richard Ellis agent Angus Klem and Chapman and Frazer agent Rob Wilcox.



ON THE MOVE: Freedom Furniture is vacating its Newcastle West site.

It was put to auction recently by receivers Taylor Woodings.

The 2334-square metre building has undergone several refurbishments since the late 1990s, including a major upgrade of its retail space.

It has 14 Strata lots and more than 30 secure car parks.

It is let to a mix of government-aligned agencies, medical operators, a telecommunications firm and a range of other commercial tenants. Mr Klem said the sale reflected a

12.5 per cent yield, primarily because of its short-term leases.

Hammering out private sale

A LARGE warehouse and office at 78 Kalaroo Road, Redhead, has sold for \$1.62 million, prior to its scheduled March 31 auction.

Colliers International Newcastle selling agent Byrne Tran, who sold the property with colleague Patrick Dodds, said the 1.3-hectare site was bought by a Lake Macquarie manufacturing business.

The warehouse, sold with vacant possession, is made up of 1872 square metres of lettable space. The sale is in line with bidding expectations of above \$1.5 million had the auction proceeded.

The mortgage property was formerly owned by Austrol Industries, a company that imported remote-control equipment, Mr Tran said.

It was sold on behalf of liquidators Ray Tolcher and Stewart Free of Lawler Partners.

Mr Tran said the site had attracted strong interest from businesses wanting the yard area for truck access, storage and future development.

Prime Hamilton location

A WAREHOUSE at Hamilton formerly occupied by L&G Print Group is for sale for \$390,000.

Listed with Darcy Real Estate's Rob Darcy, the 224 Hudson Street strata unit, in a complex of three, has a main warehouse area and six offices.

On 671 square metres of urban services land and a lettable area of 718 square metres, it has a high clearance, meaning a mezzanine level could be added to create more office space.

It is also air-conditioned. Owner Peter Goodwin said he was selling because his print firm had merged with Jennings Print at Green Hills.

Mr Goodwin said it would suit anyone in the printing, distribution or storage industries.