Laying of stormwater main

Trench work will start on the $7 million Te Aro stormwater main next month.

The trench, up to six metres deep, will be dug from the Taranaki Street end of Arthur Street, with sections of pipe laid in stages. The 2.5 metre diameter main is to be laid along vacated land on the northern side of Arthur Street. Work will continue in stages along the remaining bypass route, until Willis Street where it veers up Palmer Street to Aro Park.

The project, commissioned by the Wellington City Council to coincide with the bypass construction, is due for completion prior to Christmas 2006. It is part of ongoing expansion and upgrade of the stormwater system that drains rainwater from the Brooklyn and Aro Valley catchments. The existing brick main is about 130 years old and around 1.5 metres high and one metre wide, and is now too small to deal with heavy downpours.

Did you know ...?

Temporary spraypaint markings on roads and pavements mark locations of essential services, such as gas, water and power mains.

These markings are to assist the contractor to avoid cutting utilities to neighbouring properties and thereby safeguarding workers, residents and the public.

Fulton Hogan will ensure the footpaths and roads are reinstated appropriately, with markings removed, once work in the vicinity is completed.

Contact us

If you would like to discuss any issues or need answers to specific questions please contact:

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Wellington Inner City Bypass will start this month beside Oak Park Avenue, while digging is to start on the Te Aro stormwater project in early April.

Work on the trench structure to take northbound traffic under a new Vivian Street bridge, south of the Terrace Tunnel, is due to start. Excavation will begin around the former site of the Avonside boarding house, recently shifted from 215 Vivian Street, and the old Correspondence School in Oak Park Avenue, demolished in January. This area off upper Vivian Street is the site of the southern section of the trench to the Terrace Tunnel. From Willis Street the new bypass road gradually moves down into the trench, alongside Oak Park Avenue and Bulier Street. The trench is a reinforced concrete and soil-nailed structure with a depth of up to eight metres. Excavation will be carried out in layers to enable ground strengthening work, such as soil-nailing, and drains to be laid at each stage.

This part of the project is expected to take about 18 months, with minimal disruption to city traffic as it is west of the current northbound onramp to the motorway, and away from the busy part of Vivian Street.

Visitors’ centre opens

Are you interested in finding out more about the Wellington Inner City Bypass?

Then why not come to our Visitors’ Centre, opened at 319a Willis Street, 11am-2pm, or by appointment outside those hours.

The centre offers the public and groups such as school parties, residents’ associations, and service organisations the opportunity to look at detailed route plans, watch a 5-minute video on the project, and ask questions.

The visitors’ centre is a Transit New Zealand initiative aimed at making information about the two and a half year project easily accessible.

It is preferable for groups to make an appointment. This can be done by phoning WICB public liaison officer Sandra Ford on 801 5559. Otherwise visitors should go to the front gate at 319a Willis Street.
Archaeologists investigated the archaeological site in the centre of Te Aro recently. They provided commentary on the history of the area, matching historical records with evidence from the ground. After the houses in Tonks Avenue are relocated, the archaeologists will return to look under the buildings for evidence of prior land use, and to record the position of the foundation posts. A report on the investigations will be written and will include an analysis of the buildings and their interior decoration (where that information has been made available), and a description of the archaeology and the artefacts found. This has been a substantial project, producing a large amount of data, and the report will take the archaeologists about a year to write.

Clearing the way

Relocation of heritage buildings in Arthur Street and Tonks Avenue, Kensington, Cuba, Willis and Vivian streets will continue over the next few months, with restoration to start in May. A total of 16 heritage buildings are to be relocated. Four heritage shops in upper Cuba Street are to be repositioned on the western side of the street at the entrance to new Tonks Avenue—about 25 metres north of the existing Tonks Avenue. Three cottages and two stately homes, including the former Stagecraft Theatre, are to be relocated from Tonks Avenue to the new Tonks Avenue/Kensington Street area.

Moving buildings

A 33-tonne digger demolishes a brick building at number 2 Oak Park Avenue last month. Prior to demolition, the interior was stripped of recyclables such as metal flooring, timber windows and doors. Roofing in reasonable condition was removed and recycled. Exterior walls were then collapsed inward, allowing the excavator bucket to extend into the building. This was done to ensure the building was demolished safely, rather than having an existing two-storey building collapsing.

The former Catacombs building in Willis Street is to be relocated to 138a Abel Smith Street. Three shops in Willis Street including the old Bodega cafe, are to be shifted a little way down the road, closer to the old dental school. Other buildings to be relocated, ready for restoration, are numbers 14 and 21 Kensington Street, which are to be repositioned between Kensington Street and the end of the new Tonks Avenue.

A well found between heritage cottages in Tonks Avenue, that is still full of clear water.

Archaeologists checking an 1878 survey map saw the presence of a well between numbers 5 and 9 Tonks Avenue. Last month, the archaeologists scraped away soil in the vicinity and lifted the concrete cap. The well is over seven metres deep, lined with bricks and still full of clear water. The well provided water to the two households prior to the early 1880s when water was ‘laid-on’ in Wellington city. As the well is not within the route of the road it will be protected and made available for viewing as a park feature, at the end of the project.

Meanwhile domestic and industrial debris from the 1860s onward has been found during excavation of ground under demolished or restored buildings. The artefacts provide a sequence of changing styles and patterns of domestic ware throughout time, and the development of local businesses, particularly soft drink manufacturers.

Excavations in Arthur Street have also proved interesting. The foundations of a late 1860s house were found under one metre of fill that was deposited when the house was demolished in the late 1880s. Several sites in this street have shown a succession of buildings over time. Bricks from the Tonks brickworks were used extensively on all houses—both as chimneys and as paving in the yards of the houses. Rubbish pits in the backyards of the houses have been uncovered and excavated. The contents of these pits give clues to what people were eating (bones), drinking (bottles) and the types and shapes of domestic cups, plates and dishes popular at the time. A pit behind one house contained several broken chamber pots.
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Archaeologists checking an 1878 survey map saw the well, and mid 18th century house foundations are among finds from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust’s archaeological investigation of sites on the bypass route.

A team of 26 archaeologists from around the country assembled in Te Aro in late January for a month-long project to excavate and examine the buildings and sections in historic Tonks Avenue and Arthur Street. The investigations, and open days for the public, were among conditions set by the Historic Places Trust in the authority allowing modification of the archaeological sites.

Archaeologists have pieced together a picture of the history of the area, matching historical records with evidence from the ground.

The Tonks family built several houses in Tonks Avenue and rented them out, so there was a mix of family members and tenants living in a well-defined area. Early members of the Tonks family owned a brickworks on Webb Street adjoining Tonks Avenue from the 1860s, and at various times also had a drapery, a shipping company, and bread factory, and were responsible for reclamation of part of Wellington harbour.

A buildings’ archaeologist has examined the Edwardian homes and pre-1900s workers’ cottages built side-by-side in Tonks Avenue, to learn the patterns of construction, phases of additions, and materials used. Several of the dwellings that are being relocated metres away in a new Tonks Precinct, to the north of the bypass route, date back to the late 1860s.

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After the houses in Tonks Avenue are relocated, the archaeologists will return to look under the buildings for evidence of prior landuse, and to record the position of the foundation posts.

A report on the investigations will be written and will include an analysis of the buildings and their interior decoration (where that information has been made available), and a description of the archaeology and the artefacts found. This has been a substantial project, producing a large amount of data, and the report will take the archaeologists about a year to write.

Archaeologists investigate site

Glass and stoneware bottles, colourful ceramics, a brick well, and mid 18th century house foundations are among findings from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust’s archaeological investigation of sites on the bypass route.

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