

A Showplace from the beginning

The first performance at the new Theatre Royal was a suitably dramatic prelude to events we may expect to see at the new TSB Showplace complex. Before first light, men and machinery began to gather at the cavernous site to pour the concrete floor of the new Theatre Royal's basement.

What a lot of concrete, with 700m² to be covered in the first stage - this equates to 120m³ of concrete. At 5m³ per truck, that works out to 24 truckloads altogether - and at 10 truckloads per hour, that's a truck every 6 minutes, or 50m³ of concrete poured per hour. The span of poured slabs is one of the longest in New Zealand.

Our photos show the Fletcher Construction crew at work, spreading

and screeding the concrete floor to be covered by the stage in the Theatre Royal.

These photos show the very early work on the site, at this stage, concentrating on the new portion (the Theatre Royal), the functions rooms and attached foyer. The foyer spaces in the existing Opera House will be increased as well.

The complex will feature a glass lift, improved access and stairs, functions rooms, multi-purpose rooms and bars, a new foyer and new backstage area with staff amenities. The building will have three main levels - the basement plus two public levels, with the plant room on top. There will be a service hoist and service lift. The architects have designed the development so that the original and

new facades will be complementary, with the glass lift tower as an integrating feature. The Theatre Royal will have a flexible seating arrangement, allowing many different types of events to be held. When these photographs were taken, 12 people from Fletcher Construction were working on the site. "It's not every day you get to build something like this" said Mike Ramsay, Project Manager. "The men on the site are really enjoying it." Fletcher Construction are working on the project with the architects, Boon, Cox, Goldsmith Jackson and New Plymouth District Council Engineers.

Construction began on the Devon Street side. Reconstruction of the existing Opera House auditorium was deferred until West Side Story completed its season. The project is due for completion next February in time for the next Festival of the Arts.

The viewing holes in the Devon Street platform have been a popular stopping spot for pedestrians. You may have noticed that some of the holes are a bit closer to the ground. David Crawford, of New Plymouth, can be thanked for that. David wrote a letter to Fletcher Construction early this year requesting the lower viewing hole so that children do not "have to stand on our tippy toes or climb up the wall to see." The company was delighted to oblige!

The colour photos (left) show the view from King Street as the pour was underway, New Plymouth District Council Engineer, Dave MacKay (at rear) watching the pour, and the damp-proof membrane, reinforcing mesh and cages for the foundations. (Below) the view from the Devon street viewing platform as the pump is readied for another pour.

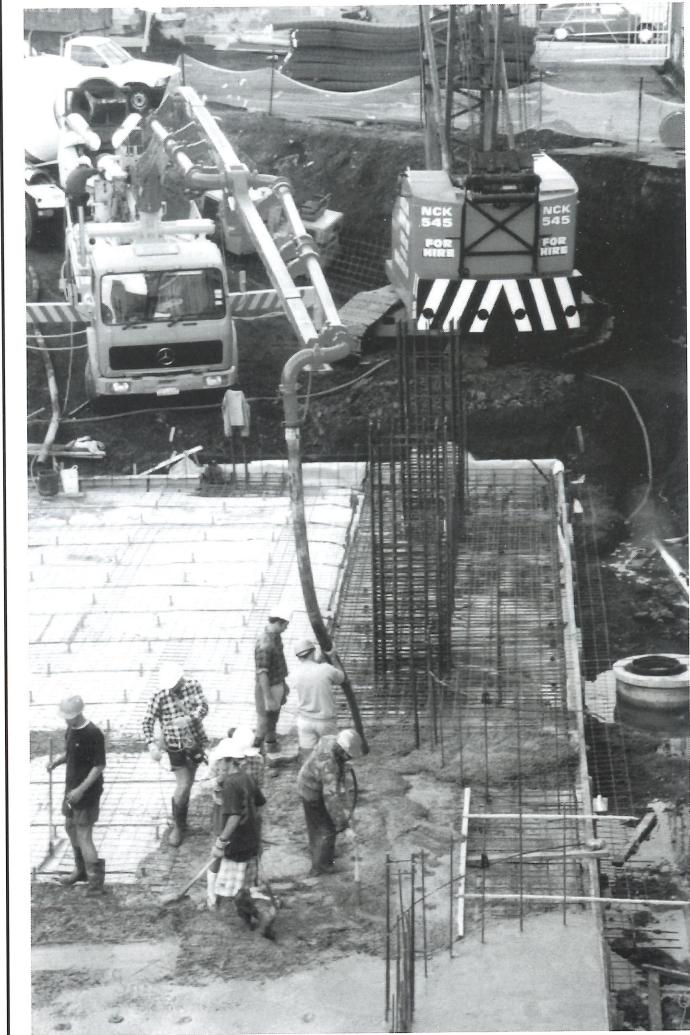




▲ Showplace from the beginning

(Above and right) Screeding and vibrating the concrete. Pumping and vibrating help spread the concrete, ensuring it flows and fills in all the gaps.

(Below) All hands on deck, screeding the concrete, with the truck and pump behind, looking up to King Street.





TSB SHOWPLACE
FOUNDATIONS - FIRST POUR

