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Skeletons rattle building plans

1 000-YEAR OLD BONES FOUND

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Talks were held yesterday Wednesday September 15, to discuss the removal of a 1 000-year old human skeleton which is delaying construction of the non-motorised transport (NMT) lanes in Green Point.

Two months ago the contractors, Civils 2000, accidentally dug up two skeletons, crammed into a trench, and a third was found in a wooden coffin.

The construction, managed by Arcus Gibb Consulting Engineers, was under way to reinstate parking lost on Somerset Road in Cobern Road. It forms part of the non-motorised transport (NMT) lanes that links the CBD to Somerset Road.

Work on the NMT's parking bays in Green Point stopped during the World Cup but started days after the tournament ended and the last leg of the upgrade, which included work in the four side roads, were expected to finish at the end of this month.

The skeletons were uncovered in a shallow grave about 40cm below the pavement in July when work resumed.

Since the discovery, a cease works order for the section on the corner of Cobern and Main roads was issued by Heritage Western Cape until a decision was made about what to do with the remains.

Adrian Mackay of Arcus Gibb said workers found the two skeletons while they were digging

trenches between 60cm and 80cm deep.

The engineers then contacted archaeologist Mary Patrick, who has done work in the area.

Ms Patrick said because the two skeletons were already removed and exposed to the sun, she gave them to a colleague who works with her at the University of Cape Town.

However, the skeleton in the coffin is still buried and the area is screened off from the public and further construction.

Ms Patrick said of the profiling that she has been allowed to do, she has deduced that it is a juvenile between the ages of 13 and 15 years old, but cannot confirm the gender.

Looking at the "virgin" soil in which the skeleton was found, Ms Patrick said he was younger than that of the other two skeletons.

"This is wind-blown sand. It has fine particles so it is closer in time, the last 1 000 years or so," she said.

A cross-section of the soil, which can be seen because of the trenches, clearly displays the difference between the cement-filled pavement and the "virgin" soil, which has not previously been excavated for development, because it is lighter in colour.

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NMT lanes to be completed at end of year

Residents and businesses will still have to hang in there until Wednesday December 15 when construction related to the non-motorised transport (NMT) lanes is set to be complete.

Adrian Mackay of Arcus Gibb Consulting Engineering said the paving work on the mountain side between Varney Road and Glengariff Road has started and is set to be done by the end of November.

The work at Gallows Hill and the overflow parking area between Western Boulevard and Somerset Road is scheduled to be complete by the end of September.

The irrigation pipeline from Ebenezer

Road to old Vlei Road will be installed by the end of October.

A reminder that Napier, Cobern and Liddle streets have been closed and Alfred Street will be converted into one-way.

● Residents are also reminded that fibre optic cables are being installed along Beach Road in Sea Point to improve connection and is part of the project started in the CBD ("Optical fibre broadband comes to Cape Town", Atlantic Sun, February 25 and, "Mind your step between the trenches", Atlantic Sun, April 29).

The fibre optic cables will also be installed in Kloof Street, Sea Point.

