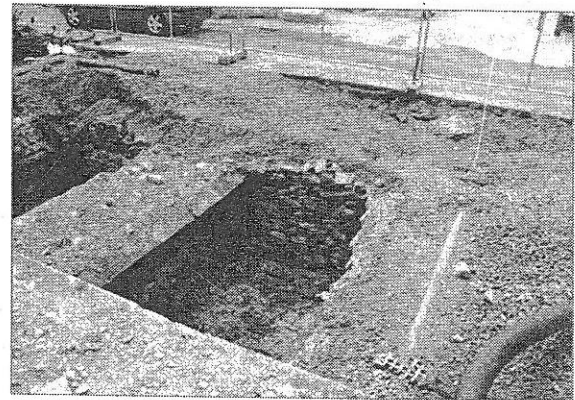
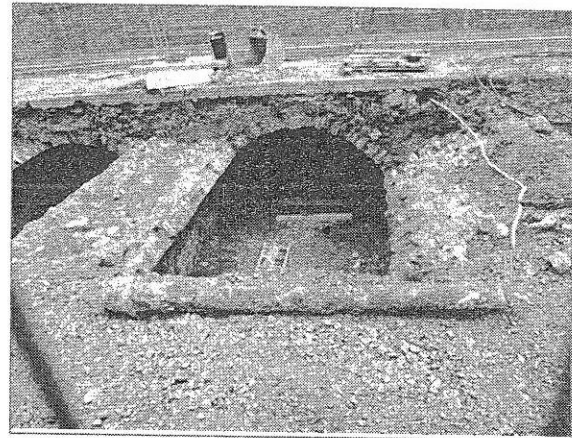


Concrete policy sparks outrage



History filled in: the view before the ongoing roadworks in William Street (see the two pictures on right) and what the street looks like after the vaults located beneath the street were filled in by Limerick City Council workers (picture on left)

Pictures: BocktheRobber.com

OUTRAGE has been expressed at the decision to fill in a series of 18th century Georgian vaults with concrete on Limerick's William Street as the multi-million euro works to relay the street continue, but Limerick City Council has denied accusations that it is "destroying the city's heritage".

A local website recently published pictures of the ongoing works on William Street, detailing how Limerick City Council was "smashing in the hidden treasures beneath our feet".

This comment on the popular Bock the Robber website - and the pictures of the 200-year-old Georgian caverns which have been

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filled in with a foam concrete due to safety concerns - have sparked a big reaction locally.

The Limerick Leader understands that this concrete-pouring solution to the problem of the network of underground tunnels that run throughout the city - due to the modern city centre's construction in Georgian times - has taken place in Bedford Row, Thomas Street and now William Street - and may become a major issue when O'Connell Street is remodelled as part of the 'Orbital Route'

plan. Vincent Murray, senior engineer with Limerick City Council, said that some of the cellars have been filled in in recent weeks, as they were not safe for the heavy overhead traffic.

"In general, we are trying to maintain what is in situ," Mr Murray said. "Some of these cellars are damaged, they have cracks in their roofs and are unsafe. Basically, when they were constructed, they were designed for horses and carts and not the traffic we have going through the city these days.

"Our project team surveyed them all and some of them have to be decommissioned as they are not safe in their cur-

rent state. The roofs are taken off them and they are then filled with a medium strength concrete. It is a foam concrete which will fill in all the crevices and gaps," he added.

But this explanation was not good enough for blogger Bock the Robber, who pointed out that Limerick City Council has "no conservation officer, no archaeologist, no heritage officer and no architect".

"I do believe that there is another unique, underground city under Limerick - it is an opportunity and could be developed into a tourist attraction, but we have destroyed this permanently," he added.