

Urlampe septic tank project



Septic tanks are often buried with no access shaft to ground level. This makes the task of exposing the septic tank for pumping-out or simply for inspecting its condition a difficult one. None of the five houses at Urlampe had cover slabs. The tanks were buried about 500mm underground, with only the inspection pipes protruding above ground.

This means that anyone trying to de-sludge the tanks would have to excavate the earth above the tank and then backfill again afterwards, a large amount of work for what should be a simple operation.



In consultation with the residents it was decided, as one part of a broader works and maintenance plan, to install coverslabs with 600mm lightweight gatic openings. The septic tanks were rectangular rather than the conventional cylindrical tanks. In place of a pre-cast saddle, two courses of concrete blockwork were laid with the coverslabs bedded onto the top course.

Each one of the lids weighed about 600kg, far too heavy for even several strong men to possibly lift. The lids were lifted and placed with the vehicle loading crane on the ITS Isuzu truck, an operation that proved extremely efficient. The exact placing of the lids was particularly important, as the lip had to be bedded exactly over the blockwork. The crane allowed precise placement while being quick enough to create a solid mortar joint.

After the lids were in place and the mortar was cured, a new concrete apron was constructed around the inspection pipes adjacent to the new lid. The existing cast iron cover was reused and cast into the new in-situ apron.

This operation was completed on all five houses at Urlampe.



The outcomes and impacts which have resulted from this project include:

- improved occupational health and safety for pump-outs
- improved ease and effectiveness of inspections, allowing for more frequent inspections and speedier identification of and response to issues
- significant decrease in the time and cost of de-sludging the septic tanks

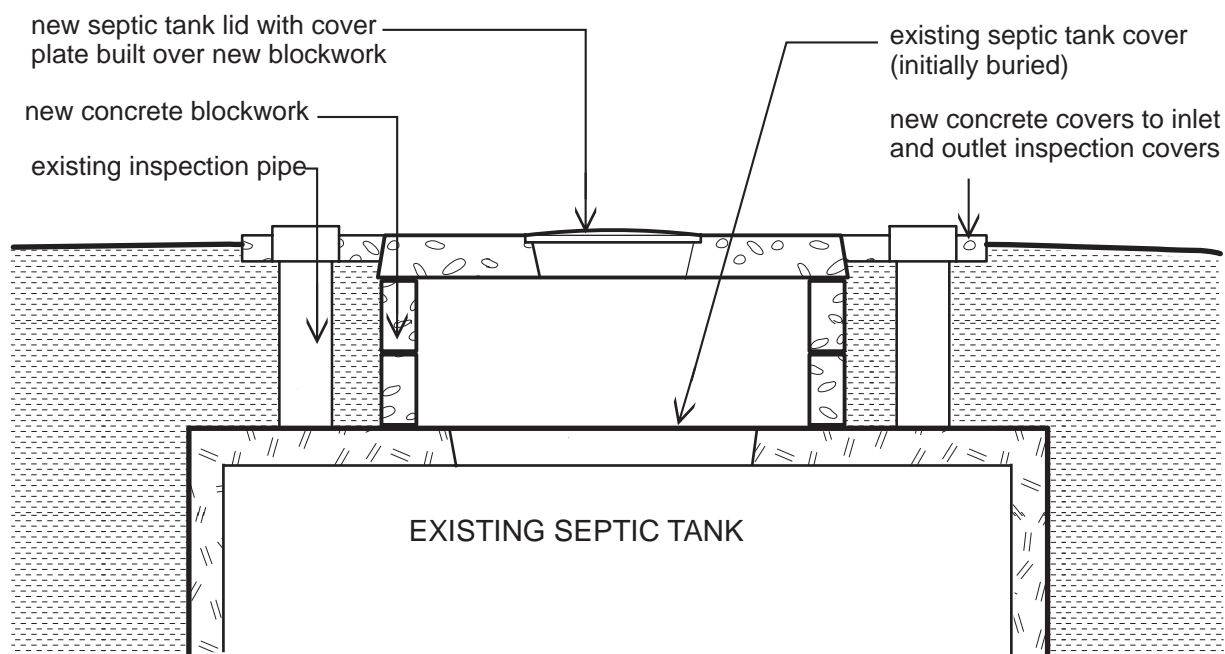


Figure 1: Cross section of septic tank & cover slab