

# Victoria Park work is taking shape

By RHIANNON HORRELL

It has seen more than a century of transformation and now Auckland's Victoria Park Market is being injected with fresh life to create a vibrant \$20 million shopping and dining hub.

The venue's facelift is on track for stage one completion in November with a grand opening at the end of March.

Market spokeswoman Carolyn Howden expects the freshened-up venue will become a regular shopping spot for the 4000 people living in apartments nearby.

Ms Howden says the complex "was such a dark and foreboding area" but there will be a lot more light when the upgrade is complete.

She says a huge amount of work has also been done with the Historic Places Trust to make sure the market retains its integrity.

Construction of the markets started in 1905 and it was first used as an incinerator and waste depot.

Ms Howden says heat

from the site was used to generate power for Auckland's first street lights.

A cobbled ramp, now a celebrity walk, was once used for horse and cart access.

Eighty retailers and restaurants will be in the revamped market including a Mexican eatery, an Argentinian steak house, a pita bread and sandwich bar, a creative artwork store, a barber shop and a French patisserie.

A medical centre is being considered and there will also be an Indian restaurant, a French wine bar and a New York-style tapas bar.

Barfoot and Thompson commercial real estate agent Marie-Anne Molloy says a number of the old shopfronts will have bifold timber doors and much of the brickwork is being painstakingly restored.

"The centre stage area will stay. We'll have monthly events - buskers, live music and old-time movies. We want to make sure there is an essence and a core."

Ms Molloy says there will also be a nightclub on the second level.



**Complete revamp:** Fresh life is being pumped into Auckland's Victoria Park Market which will soon be home to 80 retailers. Pictured are workmen Beto Lozada, left, and Eduardo Dos Santos.

Photo: JASON OXENHAM

The experts behind the restoration of Victoria Park Market's signature chimney have been named as finalists for a prestigious building award.

Winners of the 2011 New Zealand Institute of Building Awards for Excellence in the Building Professions will be announced on Friday.

The award goes to an individual or team rather than to the project itself.

The chimney has been worked on by Tony Howard of CMP Construction and it is in the Hayes Construction projects under \$5 million category and the innovation category.

The chimney cost \$600,000 to restore and has been refurbished using revolutionary techniques and a fibreglass lining.

"They have learnt a lot from the Christchurch experience," Victoria Park Market spokeswoman Carolyn Howden says.

It is unclear if lights or signs will eventually adorn the old chimney but "Santa will be perched up there at some point", she says.

A spokesman for the NZ Institute of Builders says one third of the entries get through to the finals.