



First the rules for this extraordinary construction site. Daily check-ins for COVID, steel-toed boots, safety vests and hardhats for all. 75-80 crew working today.

As Vic High's bones are revealed, all involved in the project agree...Vic High was built to very high standards with progressive building techniques and excellent workmanship.



School District 61 on-site Project Manager Gord Wallace starts the tour by showing us some ceiling trim samples being prepared to replicate trim uncovered during demolition. Samples of removed pieces are being kept for the Vic High Archives.

(Both Gord's kids are Vic High grads. Cool.)



Original ceiling trim uncovered when false ceilings were removed. The plan is to replace it in the 2nd floor Heritage Corridor running east to west inside the main Grant Street entrance.



Samples of new high-density concrete block tiles to replace severely damaged terra cotta ones on the school's exterior. Despite the baked-on speckled finish, terra cotta is porous and absorbs moisture causing cracks and damage over the years. These concrete ones won't. Most tiles, though, are in very good shape, specially for being 107 years old.



Wallace shows where sample concrete tiles are installed to check colour match. Each one is attached to a rod drilled into the tile sub-surface once its placement is lined up with special openings on the back of the tile.



Window casings will get refurbished and repainted, or possibly replaced. All options are still under consideration. Exterior trim colours have not yet been chosen.



Walls surrounding the interior stairwells in the 2nd floor Heritage Corridor can be removed now as the project scope includes installation of fire sprinkler systems. This leftover bulletin board was hiding on one of them.



Original 1914 stained glass windows in all stairwells are fully boarded up to protect them during the project.



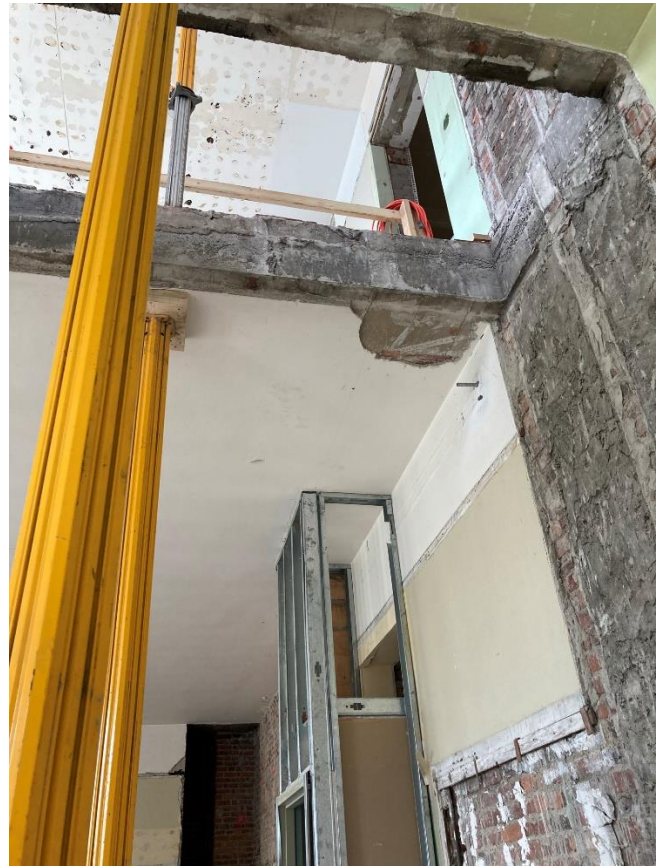
Big empty spaces everywhere. This is the west half of the 3rd floor library. Yellow jacks throughout the building provide load support while upgrading work goes on.



More empty spaces. This is the northwest side of the 4th floor. If you look closely, you can see in the doorway to a classroom, interior walls made of bricks.



The old gal may be gutted and excavated with extra support everywhere, but her Principles of Learning stay firmly in place amidst all the chaos on a 3rd floor wall. Forgotten in the move-out?...or left behind for a reason?



Interior brick walls look as strong and vital as the day they were installed. We know now, though, that earthquakes are a regional risk and these walls would not withstand a significant seismic event.



Gorgeous view from the 4th floor. So well thought-out was the design for Vic High that classroom windows were placed high enough that students sitting at their desks wouldn't be distracted by the view, but might be uplifted by the sky and the world beyond.



The Roper Gym west wall. Original footings are behind the ladder, about to be dug out and reinforced underneath now that new concrete shear walls are in place either side of it.



Excavating beyond the east wall and footings of the Roper Gym, ready to build shear walls.



The exterior wall above the excavation site reveals the staggered stained glass windows that line each set of the South interior stairs. The original building was E-shaped (auditorium was in the middle bar of the "E"). The spaces either side were enclosed when the 1955 addition was built.



Small front end loaders, brought inside through openings created by removing sets of windows, remove soil and clay from the excavation site outside the Roper Gym east wall.



In smaller areas, excavation is done by hand and workers carry bags of soil to fill the bucket of a front end loader which then carries them out of the basement.



Framing for the old bleachers sits on the floor of the Andrews Gym waiting to be moved out. The flooring here was removed to allow removal of its creosote-treated plywood subfloor, which caused a curious odour over the years.



Hundreds of bricks were carefully removed from walls in the Roper Gym and await re-installation once the concrete shear walls are constructed. Their sides bear the shiny white baked-on finish we'd associate today with a flat ceramic tile. Original to the building, many are cracked or damaged and as they used to line all walls in the Gym, their reflective surface produced a significant echo. How many will be re-installed and where will be determined later.



A new smooth concrete shear wall above the floor fan was built using interlocking rebar, then filled with shotcrete (concrete shot from a nozzle). With new basement-to-ceiling shear walls installed and taking the load, the original footings (to the right) can be excavated so reinforcing concrete can be installed underneath.