

FMW Renovation Update

July 1, 2018

The cure for this ill is not to sit still,
 Or frowst with a book by the fire;
 But to take a large hoe and a shovel also,
 And dig till you gently perspire.

— Rudyard Kipling

Monday

Gentle digging this week, with decent weather forecast.

Part of the work is to whittle down the hillside where the lower terrace will be.

The diggers can't go too far, because drilling equipment needs to perch on the hill for a while before it can be removed.

Early focus goes to a difficult section above the hill, between the Costa Rican Embassy and the Meeting Room —

They must dig down 10 or 11 feet in this narrow space to install a complex of drains to drain the surface, the window wells and, at some future date, to connect to a perimeter drain in the furnace room.

All without disturbing the structures on either side.

But first, they must receive the pipes and drain basins and inlets and other things.

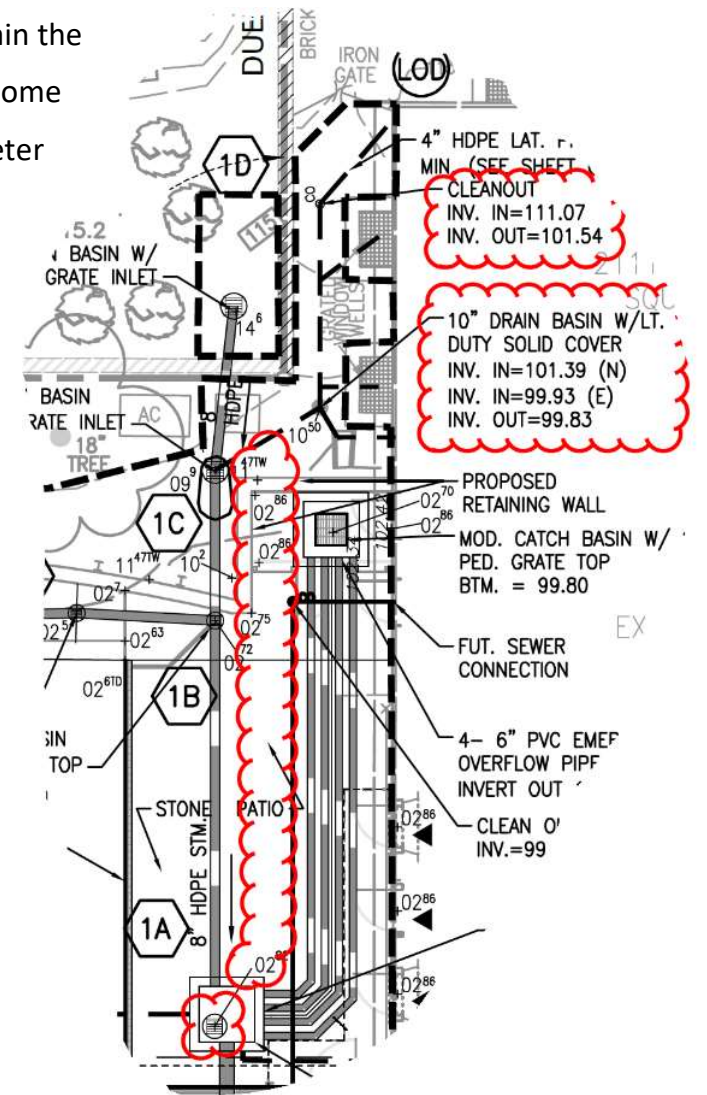
The demolition is a little ahead of schedule, but they could not reschedule the shoring subcontractor to catch up. So this was a quiet week.



Monarc sends a proposed subcontract for much of the landscaping portion of the work.

We suggest they hold off until we see how much gardening Friends want to do themselves.

We notice that the new subsoil being uncovered by the excavators shows signs of being starved for oxygen, as if the soil below drains very poorly.



Tuesday

Monarc notifies the Costa Rican Embassy that they are planning to dig up their garden to put in the new drain next week. They also shove some dirt around in our garden.



The architects send us invoices for \$21 thousand in services performed by them and the civil engineers in June. They did work pretty hard in June.

Wednesday

Neighbors write to point out that the new parking restrictions are 24/7, even though the work seems to be from about 7 to 4. They feel, reasonably enough, that they ought to be able to use those spaces at night. Turns out to be complicated, and discussions continue.



Monarc proposes to order a Schindler elevator somewhat smaller than the Otis elevator on the plans. We suggest a Schindler elevator a tiny bit larger.

Thursday

The architects send the Assembly Room plans off to Monarc for review and pricing. They also attempt to walk the plans through DCRA for permitting and almost succeed. The holdup appears to be in Structural, although the changes have nothing structural in them.



Monarc sends a draft of a monthly invoice for \$214 thousand for things done and stuff ordered. It goes to the architects for review.



Debby looks out her window and notices that somebody is doing something to the west door of Carriage House.



Friday

Having some time on their hands, Monarc keeps a few masons busy making windows and doors disappear. By Friday, the door is gone and the corner of the building where the gate wall was removed has been repaired.



The Carriage House door had been several steps down, in a concrete trench, but is now at ground level.

The two air conditioners under the two windows flanking that door are gone, and the openings have been bricked in.

Also, a bathroom window is disappearing (above the scaffolding).

The window to the right of that will be replaced by the entrance to a corridor leading to the Quaker House stairs.



Over in the corner of Quaker House, another bathroom window has vanished, and a storeroom window (on the left) is disappearing. The little window in the center will also become a hall entrance.

On the inside, alas, the bathroom is not much improved by losing its window.



During the week the excavators have gradually reformed the back garden into a multilevel working area, with a sort of zigzag road from the entrance to the top.

They must work down low, on the left, where the foundations for the new corridors will go. They must work up high, on the right, with drilling rigs that will drill holes for the steel pilings to reinforce the retaining wall. The drilling rigs are not available until mid-July, so they can't fully dig down until then.

But, like a floor painter working from the far end of the room toward the door, they must start work at the far end and work toward the construction entrance.



They also have to start at the bottom, with the trenches and drains, and work their way up to the foundations, the walls, the roofs, etc. That's why our modest-sized job will take nearly a year to complete.

Digging is one of the big unknowns of this work. We have made a few test drillings, but the different soil, rock, and water below the surface can greatly affect the work.

Digging into the middle of the yard, the excavators uncover a mysterious layer of Meeting subsoil that seems to be more liquid than solid.

Click on the photo to see the squishy dance.



Photo credit – Ken Orvis

Footwork – Steve Lail

We hope this is local and will disappear as we get further down.

Looking Ahead

The drainage work starts on Monday with the nearest corner of the Costa Rican Embassy property, where a drain will be installed to intercept some of the water that now sinks into the hillside and can cause flooding in the Assembly Room.

Sheeting and shoring was on the schedule to begin Monday, but it appears the subcontractor will not be available until mid-month for a while.

Our biweekly Wednesday meeting with the contractor will be delayed to Thursday for Independence Day.