



## FMW Renovation Update

October 7, 2018

Here comes the sun (doo doo doo doo)

Here comes the sun, I say

It's all right.

— George Harrison

Monday ☀️

Undaunted by unaccustomed dryness, the backhoe takes another savage bite at the entryway.

The drainage guys also repair the 10-inch drain from the upper terrace that had been inadvertently cut by the concrete crew.



In the “garden”, nine concrete activists lay up the first panel form for the angled west retaining wall and stairs, and work on assembling the other panel.



In an unrelated development, a pair of plucky plumbers proceed to plug the newly placed pipes with inflatable rubber balls, so they can be pressure tested.

In a dramatic development, a pair of Monarc officials tell us that they have looked at the Assembly Room renovation schedule and would like to demolish the Assembly Room next week, if we don't mind. So it will be a busy week for Meeting staff and committees. On the bright side the weather will be nice when we lose the HVAC, and we will have the new space from December onward.



A lone carpenter, tired of waiting for the masons to build the Storage Room south wall, decides to put a door frame in it.

In the masons' defense, it's not a good idea to build a wall with wet blocks, and that's all we've had on site for weeks.

**Tuesday** 🌤️

Drain gang completes installation of the second manhole.



As you can see from the picture, it's several inches away from the first manhole. The one on the left will be right in the middle of the top step of our new bluestone front entrance, and the one on the right will be in the middle of the bottom step.

DC Water only knows why they are there.

They are supposed to be connected by a 15-inch pipe, which will be nearly as wide as it is long. They went to pick up the pipe from the supplier and discovered that it had not been stamped with the required DC inspection stamp. Take one step backward. They will have to dig back down and connect it later.

Eight concrete workers complete the forms for pouring the angled retaining wall.



Then Monarc notes that some of the stair lights are not in the right place.



Fortunately, the ones that need adjusting are close enough to the top of the forms that they can still be fixed.

Three ironworkers enter the scene and install steel columns that will support the corridor structure.



In preparation for the Assembly Room renovation, staff starts cleaning out, giving away some extra chairs.

**Wednesday** 🌞

The three ironworkers return to finish the post and beam installation.

Two surveyors lay out drainage lines and confirm the layout for the tricky curving wall along the north side.

Two electricians adjust the stair light junction boxes to prepare for the afternoon pouring of the wall.

The drainage crew finishes up the manholes and restores the construction entrance in the morning.

Nine concrete workers make final preparations for the new concrete.





After lunch, the pouring begins.



Indoors, three plumbers start to install supply pipes for the new janitor's utility room.

**Thursday** 🌞

The drought continues, making another busy day possible.

Seven concrete wranglers take down the forms from yesterday's pour and a new wall appears.





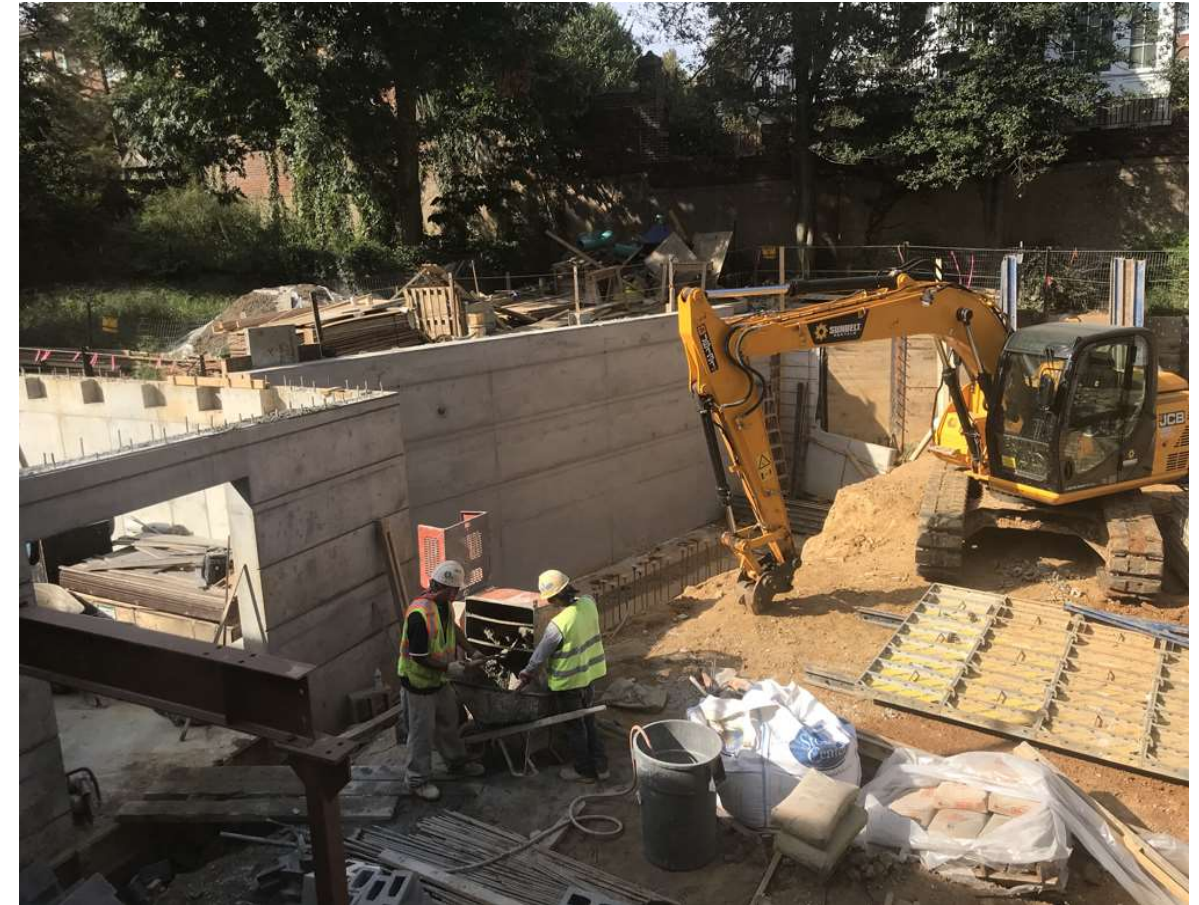
Meanwhile, nine determined masons start work on the Storage Room south wall.

And finish it.



The lower corridor begins to look like a corridor.

Here you can see the edge of the upper Terrace and, in the foreground, the edge of the upper corridor.





Meanwhile, four drainage workers make another yawning pit . . .



. . . and stuff a large drainage basin into it.

This basin will gather all the waters from the various drains in the back garden and send them (we hope) far away.

They quickly cover it up.

The tragedy of being a drainage worker is that you can never proudly point out your work.



“That flat spot over there? I did that!”

“All that water you don’t see right here? Me again!”

“Smell something funny? No? Nailed it!”

**Friday** 🌤️

Partly sunny is predicted, but it turns out to be a very gray sort of day, but a good day to get stuff done.

A good day, for example, to connect the big square thing to the big round thing.

The fabulous four are back to dig a trench:





And then lay some 12-inch pipe in it.



And then, of course, cover it back up.



Although you will never see that pipe, it is very important, as it goes under the Lobby to the street, and it's the only way for water falling on the back garden or coming down from the Costa Rica Embassy drain to get out of our enclosed yard.

It's either through the Lobby or under it.



Nine concrete workers are also here, and they are busy preparing to pour the other side of the stairway. The masons have also been at work here.



The masonry wall on the right will support the right side of the stairs.  
The forms on the left will form the concrete for the left side (coming down).  
You can faintly see the junction boxes for the lights, marching down the wall.  
The black form panels are the place where the stair reaches a landing and turn right, out onto the lawn.  
The stairs come down from the Quaker House Patio on top of the Storage Room in the background.

A little like this, except we couldn't afford all those bricks:



The masons, practically every day, are also installing bearing plates to hold the steel beams that will carry the floors of the upper level.





## Looking Ahead

We engaged a turf maven this week to advise us as to whether the Meeting can actually grow grass on this prehistoric mud we have uncovered.

He sent soil samples to Richmond to be tested, and it turns out that the technical name for what we have is “absolute crap” — impermeable, extremely acidic, completely lacking in all plant nutrients except for magnesium (which makes it gummier). Not even suitable as subsoil.

The turf doctor says we need to replace the top two feet of the stuff with new soil and put some drain pipes under it to keep our guests from disappearing into the bog.

So we’re trying to figure out how to do some of that in the three weeks before Monarc closes the entrance.

In trying to keep the East Garden stormwater drain away from our big oak, we routed it close to one of the city’s big street trees. DC Water then demanded that we stick one of their manholes right next to the tree, which has important roots at that spot. The DC Urban Forrester would like to know if DC Water would care if we just shoved the manhole closer to the corner.

We would like to know that as well. We hear that DC Water likes pipes that come in at right angles, because they don’t like surprises. When you dig up old pipes, there are a lot of surprises.

The big event next week is the beginning of the two-month makeover of the Assembly Room.

This Sunday is the last chance to take “Before” pictures. By the following week, the floor and the ceiling will be gone and new work will be under way.

The near side of the stairway will be poured in the coming week, and work on the foundation for the big north retaining wall will be well along.