



FMW Renovation Update

December 9, 2018

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

— Dylan

One feature of our sprawling buildings is the abundance of natural light. We are almost never out of sight of a window anywhere at FMW.

As the construction now rises above the eaves of Quaker House, we might take a moment to mourn the loss of two dozen windows. Four already bricked in, six to be converted to interior passageways, and fourteen that will look out on interior spaces. Although we've tried to manage and minimize this, it is one downside of the renovation.

Monday ☀️

The day begins with preparations to pour the soon-to-be-little-used west stairs.



And ends with the stairs firmly in place.

Nearby, roofers remove the old slate shingles from the Quaker House roof.



The site utilities crew continues to till topsoil into the clay and install underdrains, working southward on the lower terrace.



And apply waterproofing, as they prepare to tie in the new corridor roof.



The concrete crew chips away at the Meeting House, preparing to pour the slab for the bluestone patio outside the Assembly Room.



Carpenters continue the march of wood eastward along the corridor on top of the steel beams.

Two electricians add more wiring to the Assembly Room.

Tuesday 🌞

Carpenters three raise their sights and start to frame in the Quaker House corridor roof, making considerable progress.



A busy site utilities crew starts to fill in almost two feet of topsoil to raise the lower lawn to its final grade



and installs an important trench drain for the foot of the new patio.



They also install the last drainage connection to tie new downspouts into the new drainage system.

Ironworkers install more steel, expanding the corridor east and up.



This post, being bolted to the corridor foundation, will be cemented into the adjoining stem walls and support the Carriage House upper corridor and roof.

The electricians complete their work in the Assembly Room and install conduit for the lights under the white oak tree.

Masons correct and continue concrete block walls for the base of the corridor.

The concrete crew continues to prepare for the patio slab and points up the new west stairs.



Wednesday ☁️

Rumors of snow don't amount to much.

Six carpenters on site now.

Four of them continue framing at Quaker House Living Room



while two prepare to install beams in the Assembly Room for the folding walls.

Topsoil continues to pour in,



while steel mesh is installed around the drains to reinforce the new patio.

With a changing crew of 20 or more every day, the individual workers are mostly anonymous in these reports.

But here's Geovanni Rivera of Langhorne Concrete.



He's engaged in helping to clean the mud off the foundation so that parging (a thin protective layer of concrete) can be applied.

To his left, you can see the newly installed drain that will receive water from the new downspout that will come down from the new roof.

So it's good that it's not raining today.

Douglas assembles scraps of wood to continue ramping up to the Phelps Place wall for an invasion of construction equipment next week.



With electrical, plumbing, and ductwork nearing completion, drywall makes it's debut on the Assembly Room bulkheads.



The flood of new topsoil continues to pour into the Assembly Room Terrace, held back on the south side by the efforts to clean off and waterproof the corridor foundation wall.



Thursday 🌤️

Carpenters continue framing the Quaker House Corridor and install LVL beams for the Nanawall (German folding wall manufacturer) tracks in the Assembly Room.



At the bottom, mostly underwater here, is the poured concrete foundation, surmounted by the concrete block foundation wall (to be parged on Monday and then buried), topped by the block stem wall with the steel posts cemented into it.

Above the stem wall will rise wood framing and windows and insulation and drywall, with veneer panels on the outside. The gap in the wall is for the doors.

Steve Lail, Monarc Superintendent, did superintendent things — noticed that a steel beam was 10 inches from where it was supposed to be, replaced a thermostat that somebody stepped on, asked the drywall guy if he had a current gun permit (he did) for his nail gun, had the electrician install an additional data conduit that it occurred to us to want, reminded various trades that things were supposed to line up, scratched out dates and wrote in new ones, reminded everybody to wear a hat, thought of interesting things for Douglas to do, and wrote one of the daily reports from which this report is cribbed.

Friday ☀️

Big day, starting with the close-in inspection of the Assembly Room work.

This is the inspection that takes place before the drywall goes up and hides everything that needs inspecting — the rough-in electrical, plumbing, ductwork, gas, etc.

All passed, so carpenters proceed with the drywall, and also finish installing the LVL beams for the Assembly Room folding doors.



LVL (laminated veneer lumber) is engineered wood, like plywood, but with the wood grain all running along the beam, like real timber, only stronger and more stable.

The concrete crew pours the patio.



It's going to be a cold night, and concrete should stay above 40° when it's setting, so they cover it with a blanket.



Concrete produces heat as it sets, so it will keep itself warm enough. They had a blanket on the area the night before, as well, to keep the ground from getting too cold overnight.

The concrete crew also prepares for one more pour at the new west stairs — a slab to connect the bottom of the new stairs with the top of the old.



Carpenters also start roof sheathing at Quaker House.



The corridor is starting to feel like a thing.

You can see that the roof is going to have to do several tricks in order to transition gracefully across pitched roofs at three different heights. Let's hope that it is up to the task.

More topsoil arrives, and backfill continues on the upper terrace.



Completion waits for the final waterproofing details at the top of the walls.

The afternoon is partly taken up in preparing the Assembly Room worksite to be turned back over to us for the Shoebox Project — clearing out, securing, making safe, mopping up.

By the end of the day you can almost picture a wedding reception in the new space.



On Sunday, more like a bus depot.



On Saturday, it looks like a shipping depot.



Looking Ahead

More mats and fencing have arrived in the east garden.



And new parking restrictions are posted on Decatur Place.



The project will be moving out into the streets, blocking traffic, tearing up pavement and generally annoying the citizenry. This week, for the first time, Monarc had to have two cars towed.

There will be work on Decatur Place, Florida Avenue, and Phelps Place.

In the yard, the elevator tower pit will be excavated and poured, the corridor will continue to extend eastward, and work on the now buried Lobby foundation may continue.

In the Assembly Room, the worst is over, and things will gradually look more civilized in the coming weeks.