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Tearing Down the Old Country Club House

By Sophie Braccini



Excavator takes the first bite of the club house roof Photo Doug Kohen

Like a T-Rex tearing at the flesh of its prey, the giant jaw of the excavator grabbed and tore out chunks of the Moraga Country Club House, slowly but surely devouring the whole building. On November 4, demolition of the structure started at 9:00 a.m. sharp and continued on, unabated, for three days. Sitting in his Caterpillar 330C, Stephen Blackmon, from Carone and Company, maneuvered the powerful hydraulic excavator with the delicate touch of an expert. The leveled ground is now ready for the erection of the new Club that was approved by the Town of Moraga and financed by the Club's members. The work is expected to be complete in 10-11 months.

"We've been preparing for this for over a month," said Frank Melon, General Manager and Chief Operating Officer of the Moraga Country Club, "we had to remove all of the hazardous material, divert electrical power, water supply and sewer and identify everything that could be recycled." Russ Kain is the Senior Superintendent from Overaa Construction, the general contractor for the project. "We got the demolition permit from the Contra Costa County Building Department and the recycling plan for the Town of Moraga," said Kain.

Blackmon took his time to avoid collateral damage. The site was constantly hosed down so no dust was projected into the air. Tennis players in the nearby courts played, undisturbed. Nonetheless the noise level was significant and each time the excavator knocked out a big piece of the building, the ground shook.

"This is so exciting," says Kathe Foster, the Assistant General Manager who's been working at the Club for 20 years. The mix of sheer power and precision was impressive. The truck driver alternatively used the machine to either demolish a part of the building, or delicately pick up a recyclable beam as if it were a matchstick, or pound debris that will be hauled away to Keller Canyon Landfill in Pittsburg for further recycling. Some of the material, such as concrete and asphalt, will be recycled on site during the construction of the new building.

The Lamorinda weekly has more photos and a video online. Interested kids of all ages can check it out at www.lamorindaweekly.com/mcc.html.



Old concrete will be recycled and reused at the site Photo Doug Kohen

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