



LOS ANGELES COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT

2013

A Historic Makeover: The Hall of Justice Receives a Major Renovation



Hammers are in full swing. Backhoes are removing dirt, and building materials are being poured. It's all part of the \$234 million dollar construction and renovation project going on at the Hall of Justice in downtown L.A., a major undertaking by Clarke Construction.

The Hall of Justice was built in 1925 and used to be home to the Sheriff's Department, inmates, and the L.A. County Coroner. The building was closed after being damaged in the Northridge Earthquake, but this renovation will bring it back to life.

"Clarke essentially gutted down to the concrete encased steel columns and beams," said James Kearns, Assistant Deputy Director of the L.A. County Department of Public Works.

The Hall of Justice has a lot of historical significance. Charles Manson was jailed here, and Clarke Construction plans to keep those block of cells untouched as part of the building's interpretive center. All of the other jail cells have been removed, along with the 11th and 13th floors. The marble of the grand lobby will remain as well as the original ornate ceiling. But there is one feature that is being majorly upgraded: the elevators.

Assistant Deputy Director Kearns explained the magic. "Rather than just coming and punching a button, and you expect that car to come to you, what it will do is you punch the floor that you want to go to, and there will be an announcement of, 'Please step to the elevator to your right, or to your left'. You'll hop on that, and it will be an express to your floor."

Construction crews also want to keep as much of the original material as possible, which has proven to be a challenge, according to Greg Zinberg of Clarke Construction.

"We're tying into existing 80-year-old steel that's been encased in concrete. Everywhere where you uncover the steel there's a new condition to deal with. We've been able to work collaboratively with the County and with our design partners to identify and deal with the challenges in an efficient manner."

The building will have a parking structure with 1,000 parking spaces, and crews will be cleaning the granite on the outside of the building, restoring the façade to its original beauty.

Once completed, the Hall of Justice will house the headquarters of the Sheriff's Department and the District Attorney's Office.