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Breaking News

Old Elcho school is tumbling down

The slow-motion demolition of the old Elcho elementary school is picking up steam this week.

The project ♦ justifiably cautious due to the proximity of the building to the new construction and the rest of the school complex ♦ quickened pace on Monday when Eckart's Demolition heavy equipment began clawing at the brick walls and supports of the structure, completed in 1940 as a Depression-era WPA project.

"They built it to last," Earl "Doc" Smith of EDS Builders, the construction manager on the \$18 million addition and renovation project, said. "It's a very strong building."

The building may be strong, but it was rendered obsolete by changing technologies, an antiquated heating plant, and winter weather that was slowly compromising the brick facade.

"It was time," Smith said.

Voters made the decision in November, 2016 to replace it with new construction and the death knell came following the final day of classes in May, when the long demolition process began.

Work was scheduled to be completed over the summer months, but was delayed by the discovery of asbestos, which officials had thought was abated during the 1990s. It was also a painstaking process, since the old building abuts the new construction, meaning a wrong move could have big consequences.

Smith said he expects the work to be completed by mid-October.



Heavy equipment clawed into the west side of the old Elcho elementary school on Monday, just feet from where students were having class in the new building. It's a careful process.