

Town Hall expansion moving along on schedule

Process environmentally friendly

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Groundwork is being laid — literally — for the expansion of Milton's Town Hall.

On a recent sunny Tuesday afternoon a construction crew is busy working on the foundation that will sit below the 50,000-square-foot, two-storey addition being put onto the historic downtown building.

The lower level will also be used as an underground parking area for staff, project manager Lee Brown explained as he walked around the giant hole that's been excavated where the Town Hall parking lot used to be. "We've been busy getting the basement dug out and the foundation in place," he said, noting the work is pretty close to being on schedule.

Even with all of the digging, the majority of the trees around the Town Hall have been preserved and local residents can expect to see more trees and landscaping added as the project moves ahead.

Anyone who passes by the construction sight may notice that none of the workers stop to have a cigarette. Since the Town is striving to obtain a 'green' certification for the new building even the construction process has to be environmentally friendly, which means no smoking.

"We also have to clean up as we go," said Brown, explaining materials that are no longer needed, like old asphalt, are put into large containers and taken to a terminal to sort out what's recyclable.

Other green initiatives the Town is undertaking to comply with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards include installing underground cisterns to catch rain water for site irrigation and using local products.

"LEED tries to cut down on the transportation distance from the manufacturer to the site," said Brown.

Striving for LEED certification does require about 25 to 30 per cent more administration time, he noted.

And while there can be incremental costs associated with being environmentally friendly, Town Community Services Director Jennifer Reynolds said there's "long-term payback in operating efficiencies."

The Town is also striving to get top marks in accessibility with the new building. Reynolds said the structure is being designed to meet the City of London accessibility standards.

"That's the leading standard right now for meeting the Ontarians with Disabilities Act requirements," she said.

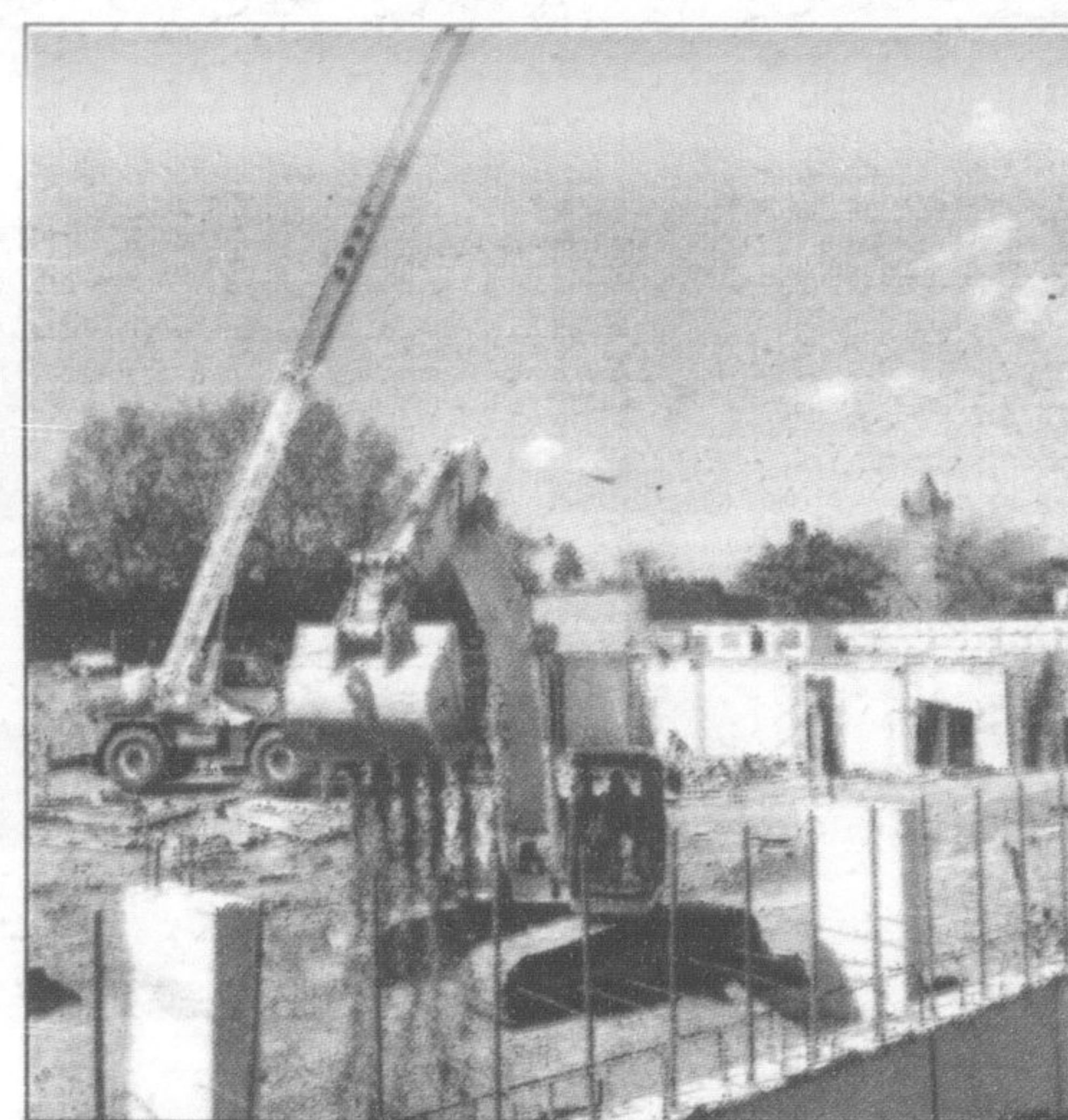
The existing Town Hall will be connected to the new building with a glass hallway that has been designated for a 'Walk of Fame,' which will honour Miltonians past and present who have earned significant recognition for their achievements.


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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

Construction of the Town Hall expansion project is well underway with workers pouring the foundation and walls for the underground parking garage. Above, a worker adjusts the forms for the concrete walls of the underground garage.



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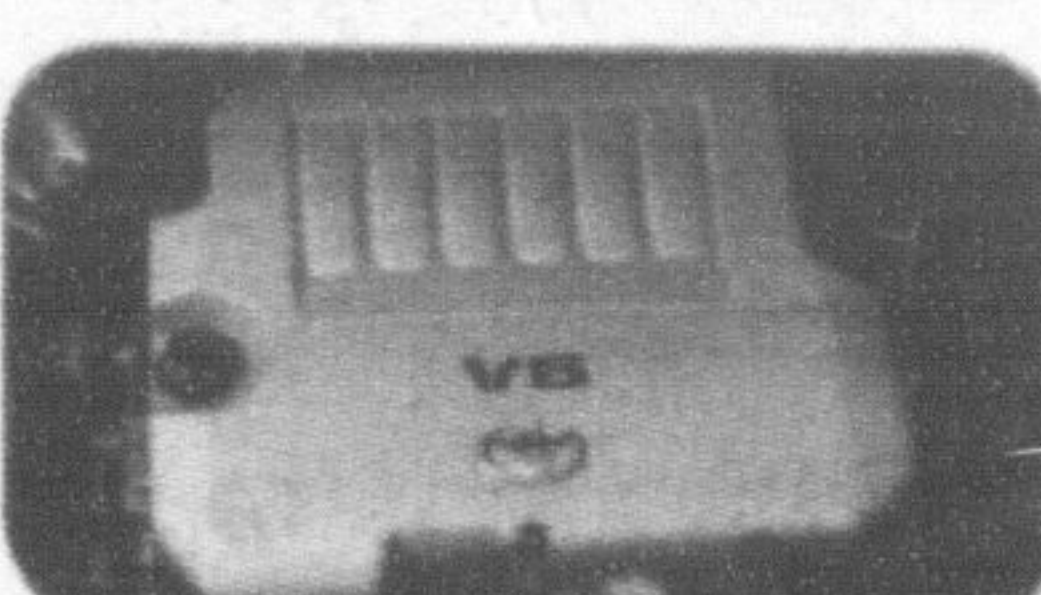
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