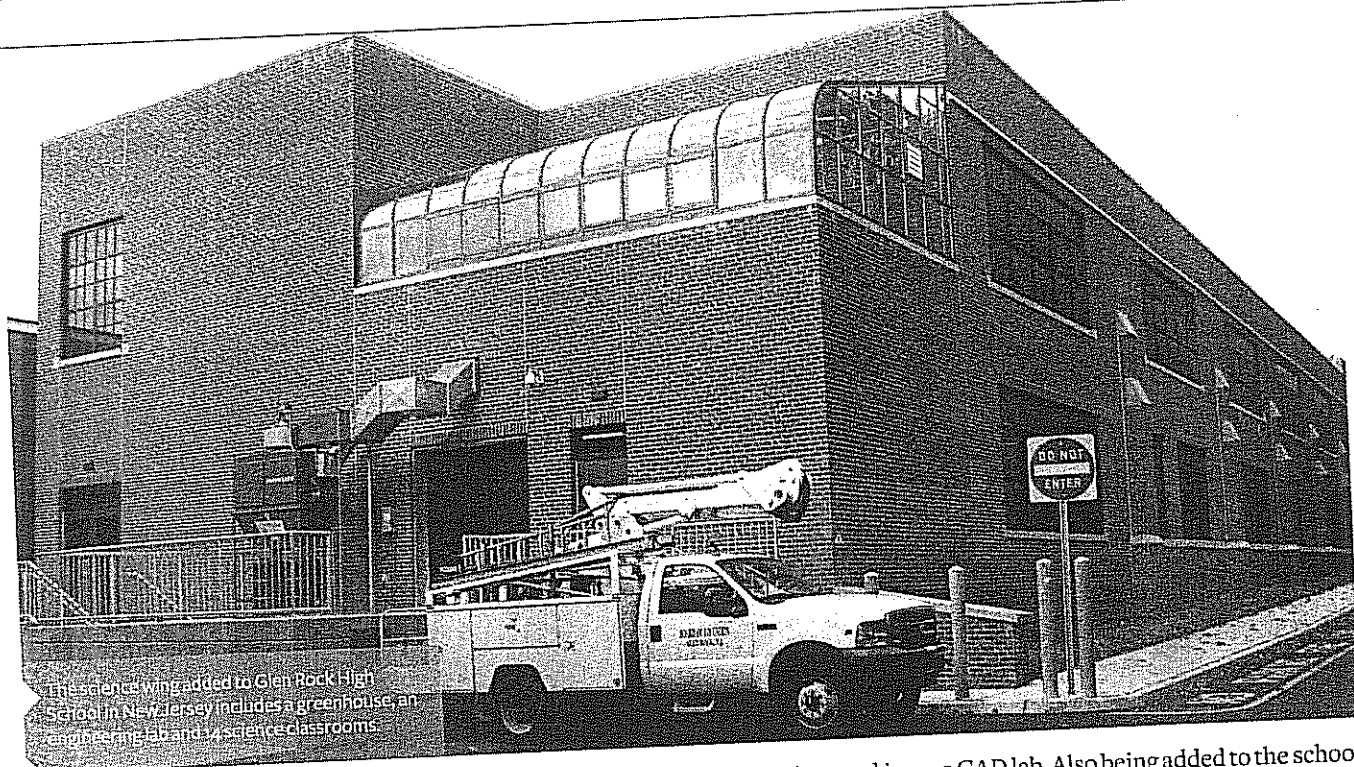


Arts and Science

✦ Renovating and adding to a combined middle and high school will help upgrade its curriculum as well as students' skills. *By Russ Gager*

"The ultimate goal is always to complete the project on time, to the owner and architect's satisfaction."

> Robert Vanas, vice president



The science wing added to Glen Rock High School in New Jersey includes a greenhouse, an engineering lab and 14 science classrooms.

Vanas Construction Co. Inc. — Glen Rock High School

www.vanasconstruction.com

Project cost: \$23 million

Location: Glen Rock, N.J.

Employees on site at peak: 1-3

Scope of Work: Renovation and three additions to a combined middle and high school

> *If clothes make the man, facilities sometimes make the student — or at least they help.* Glen Rock Middle and High School, Glen Rock, N.J., will be able to test that theory when its new science, music and art wings are completed in February 2011. The schools have been undergoing a \$23 million renovation and addition since June 2009.

The 221,247-square-foot, two-story school building combines middle and

high school grades six through 12 and is having three new wings built that will add 45,582 square feet to the finished structure. The new wings will be for classrooms and labs in science, music and art, along with administrative offices.

The science facilities are designed to unite teaching in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in a program dubbed STEM that is based on research into science teaching, some of it by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The school district plans to start middle school students on pre-engineering courses taught in the new science wing along with high school students in more advanced courses.

Included in the science addition will be a greenhouse, an industrial arts room, 14 science rooms, an engineering lab and

a CAD lab. Also being added to the school is the music wing — which will include a band room, two practice rooms, a music office and music storage — and the art and administrative wing, both of which are the only one-story structures in the school.

The art and administrative wing will consist of two art rooms, a graphics and photography lab, and administrative offices that will be the new home of the Glen Rock Board of Education.

Renovating the School

Two of the three additions are completed, reports Robert Vanas, vice president of Vanas Construction Co. Inc., general contractor on the project — the science and music wings. "The administrative and art room wing was an existing wing of the school that we demolished in its >>

>> entirety down to the steel and floor slab,” Vanas explains. “The entire wing is to be reconstructed. Once the new science wing was completed, students and staff moved to that location in order to vacate the administration and art room wing so the work could be performed.”

The school has a steel frame with masonry walls around it and red brick veneer that is matched on the additions. Much of the school underwent renovation, Vanas notes. “Various locations of the existing facility were renovated and/or reconstructed,” he reports. “In addition, the existing auditorium was completely renovated, including new seating, floor and wall finishes, stage floor, stage curtain and rigging.”

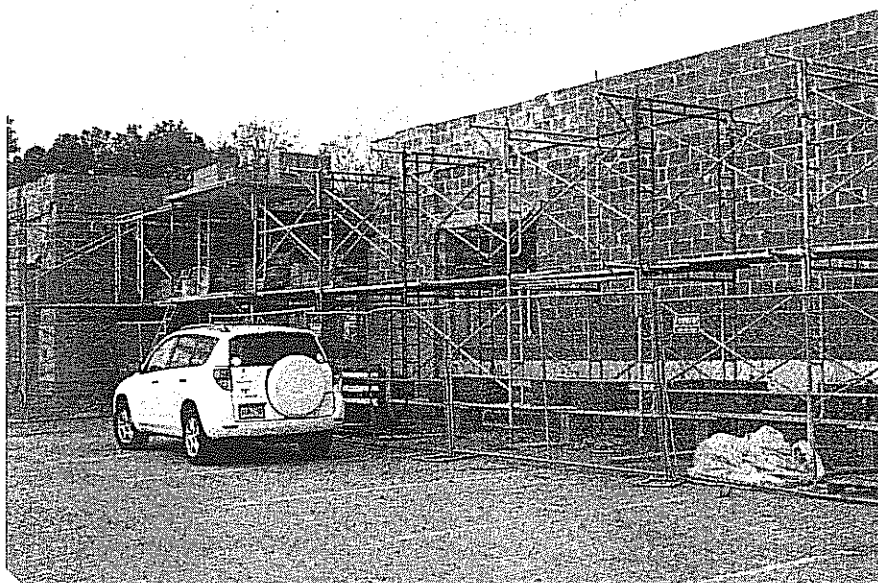
Vanas Construction also renovated classrooms. “If an existing classroom were to be converted from the current use to an art or computer room, the work was performed over summer vacation,” he says. Much of the school’s existing brickwork also had to be restored. “Over time, the brickwork had deteriorated in spots,” Vanas notes. “So all the joints were tuckpointed.”

High-efficiency Systems

The existing school also underwent extensive reroofing with a light-colored, single-ply, mastic-applied thermoplastic membrane. “So it was quite a bit of work that was done on the existing school,” Vanas points out. Although not aiming for LEED certification, the school features insulated glass windows, high-efficiency appliances, boilers and hot water heaters,

HEDINGER & LAWLESS, LLC Congratulations to Glenn and Bob Vanas and the entire Vanas organization on your recognition in *Building & Construction Northeast* magazine. Through dedication and honest dealings with its clients, subcontractors and suppliers, Vanas has reached the enviable position of being one of the top, public construction firms in the eyes of the dozens of municipalities and school districts it has built projects for. Your unyielding approach to building a project – the recognition of and solution to issues and problems before they become a claim or dispute – has resulted in New Jersey’s public owners, upon seeing that Vanas Construction has purchased the bid package, hoping that the company submits the lowest bid. That is a status not stumbled upon, it comes only from hard work, dedication, honest dealing and a commitment to excellence.

Much of the work done during Glen Rock High School was done during the summer months to avoid interfering with classes.



and a photovoltaic system on the roof to generate electricity from sunlight.

Vanas has self-performed various scopes of work on the project, including supervision and rough and finished carpentry. Plumbing, electrical, HVAC and steel work are being performed by prime contractors. Vanas estimates from 30 to 35 subcontractors are working on the project at any given time, which includes masons, concrete, roofing and drywall contractors.

The schools are being upgraded technologically with wireless Internet, data and phone wiring, smart boards, classroom projectors and computers.

“We’ve installed quite a bit of that,” Vanas reports.

Work and Learning

Construction has proceeded in fenced-off areas while school was in and out of session. “A main objective is coordinating the work with the school so as to cause as little disruption as possible to the students and staff while at the same time maintaining all safety measures,” Vanas asserts. “The safety of students

and staff is of paramount concern.”

Walkways and fire exits must be maintained so in case of an emergency, students, teachers and officials still will be able to evacuate the school safely in as little time as possible. “That is challenging sometimes, as is getting different areas scheduled for completion even when the school isn’t in session,” Vanas continues. “The school has many activities going on in it throughout the summer.

“They have different sporting events – there’s always something going on at the school that we have to schedule quite closely with the board of education and construction manager to make sure we’re able to do the work in a safe manner when students and staff are present,” he notes. “We do a lot of work during the summer when the kids are out. We try to jump in on Christmas vacation or whenever we’re able to take advantage of the kids not being in school.”

Educational Specialist

Vanas estimates that approximately 90 percent of his company’s work is educa-

tion-related. "The majority of our work is the educational sector," he notes. "We have also done state, municipal and private sector work, but during the past few years, most of our work has been in the K-12 educational arena."

The company builds projects throughout New Jersey. "The market is as slow as I've ever seen it, especially in the public sector," he says. "Referendums are not doing very well lately. Because of the economy, a lot of people don't want to be taxed further. All the government agencies and municipalities are having monetary challenges."

"It's been fairly slim picking for the last three years or so, but we've been lucky to have three or four projects going on," he continues. In good times, the company used to have five or six concurrent school projects. "I'm hoping it's

bottomed out, but I'm not sure what's going to happen in the next couple of years," he admits. "I want to be optimistic that things will turn around, but I don't know if it will come back earlier than a couple years."

"When I talk with people in the industry - engineers and architects - they get the projects long before they come out to bid," he observes. "If they're busy, it's going to come down to the contractors within a year or so. But if they're not busy, it's at least a year, year-and-a-half - they have to get busy for us to get busy. Right now, I don't see them very busy, which leads me to believe we may have some tough times for the next year or so."

Family Owned

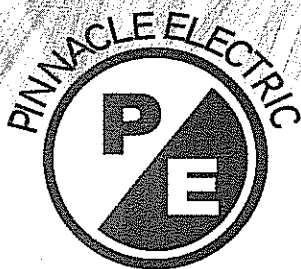
The president of Vanas Construction Co. Inc. is Glenn Vanas, Robert's brother.

The company was founded in 1970 by their father, also named Robert.

"We strive to work closely with the owner and architect to insure that all work is completed safely, on time and within budget," Vanas says. "Our projects are intensely schedule-driven, while maintaining a standard of workmanship for which the owner is entitled."

"The ultimate goal is always to complete the project on time, to the owner and architect's satisfaction while paying special attention to the safety of all occupants of the building and workmen alike," he adds.

For the future, "We are hoping that the economy improves and the construction industry in this area will turn around," he says. "It has not been good for quite some time. It cannot get much worse. All we can do is hope for the best." ●



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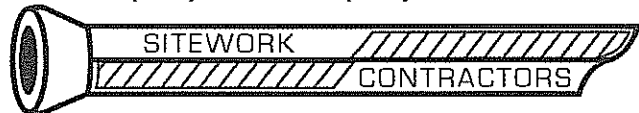
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