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North Branch chosen as GC for conversion of elementary school: EnviroVantage hired for environmental cleanup

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The city of Manchester is facing a shortage of affordable housing for the elderly, a challenge facing virtually every New England municipality. Blessed, or cursed, with an abundance of old buildings, many of which have fallen into disuse or simply have been abandoned, the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority chose to convert a city owned elementary school into a 34 unit apartment building. The site on Armory St. in the city's west side is close to Catholic Medical Center, some shops and small restaurants, conveniences every resident enjoys.

North Branch Construction, a N.H. based general contractor in business since 1958, was awarded the contract by MHRA to perform the renovation and conversion of the closed neighborhood school. North Branch chose EnviroVantage as its partner to perform the environmental cleanup and the selective demolition needed as part of the conversion.

For EnviroVantage, it was the "perfect storm" with project requirements that included:

- *Interior Lead Paint
- *Exterior Lead Paint
- *Asbestos Floor Tile
- *Asbestos Pipe Wrap
- *Wall Demolition
- *Ceiling Demolition
- * Concrete/Brick Saw cutting for Windows
- *Concrete Slab Removal in and out
- *Debris removal including desks, lighting, ceilings
- *Floor Cleaning and Prep
- *Built-in Air Conditioner removal and
- *PCP and Mercury Removal

The advantage that EnviroVantage brought to the table, North Branch Construction had learned, is that by utilizing a contractor with multiple licenses and experience in multiple disciplines, the project could go forward without interruption, regardless of the unexpected hazard uncovered.

The industrial cleanup required the removal of desks and chairs, bathrooms, ceiling debris on the floors that was the result of a building being closed for multiple N.E. winters. After multiple 100 yard dumpsters were filled and removed, with materials separated for recycling, the environmental issues were addressed, room containment built, lead then asbestos, pcb's and mercury each separated and disposed of per regulatory statute. When weather permitted, the outdoor work progressed on the roof with the removal of central air conditioning units, the building walls containing the lead paint and then the concrete slabs surrounding the school and finally the removal of the topsoil near the school to eliminate the lead that had leached into the ground from the lead paint on the building.

The final requirement of the project that was performed for North Branch was concrete saw cutting to enable the installation of windows for each unit.

Today, Manchester Housing has a wonderful apartment building, 34 units occupied - all from a dismal old brick school house filled with environmental issues that many in the area may have considered a parking lot as an improvement.

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