

New building's modern style raises safety concerns



The all glass design of the new building makes lockdown drills more complicated, limiting the spaces that students can be completely out of view and forcing some to evacuate their classrooms | Kim

Lockdowns in the new building more complicated for students and staff

by Eleanor Kaplan and Alyssa Pak

The many glass windows of the newly-completed West Wing building have raised safety concerns among students after this year's recent lockdown drills.

According to Steve Linke, NT facilities manager for the past five years, a design with glass windows was envisioned since the beginning of the project. At the beginning of construction, everyone was involved, and the input of students, teachers, and parents was all taken into account.

However, some students have expressed concern over the windows in regards to lockdown drills.

Some of the classrooms on the second and third floors of the new building contain windows on three sides of them. Others have glass walls facing the new stairwells, and some have windows that follow the typical classroom format of just a window at the door.

However, a number of students have voiced concern over the windows following the school's most recent lockdown drills. "It's a little unsafe with so many windows in the new building. During lockdowns, there is nowhere in the classrooms where you can't be seen" said junior Lucy Conlon. "There are even windows near the ground,

so how are you supposed to hide?" she asked.

In most lockdown situations, Principal Denise Dubravec urged students to "find a place inside the building that is obscured from view unless you are directed otherwise."

Concerns over the window design became more evident when the building opened. Looking at a floor plan and deciding where students could hide in case of a lockdown is much different than going into a physical room and seeing the options, noted Assistant Principal for Administrative Services, Gerry Munley.

Due to the glass-heavy construction of the new building, the plan is that students should be flexible when it comes to lockdown procedures. "Some rooms may have to evacuate, if a classroom has all glass," said Dubravec. She stressed this need to be flexible and prepared. "In each individual room there's somewhat of a different instruction that might take place. Depending on what room you're in, you might have to relocate," said Dubravec. There are individual directions for the various safety procedures inside each room.

Assistant Principal for Student Services, Scott Williams added to the idea of flexibility when it comes to lockdown procedures. "If I'm in a room of glass, it might make sense to not stay there. It's a matter of assessing your situation and reacting to that. That's something we encourage people to do."

The school has been working with the police, the fire department, and architects since last year to address these

safety concerns. Dubravec stated that both the police and fire departments have reviewed safety procedure plans and have also been present in the building during all drills.

While the school is able to secure the entire new building relatively quickly, it is the glass-enclosed rooms that raise questions. In case of an emergency, the doors between the new and old parts of the buildings are automatically locked shut when a lockdown is initiated, with the goal of securing the entire new building.

Munley recently toured Vernon Hills High School during a lockdown drill. He noted that the school was completely locked down in just a few seconds, which is the goal for New Trier. Dubravec also noted that the administration has also visited multiple other schools to discuss lockdown tactics.

Vernon Hills, as well as some other high schools in the area, have such quick procedures because of new automatically locking doors both to the building and to the individual rooms. These locks are becoming increasingly popular due to reports of school intruders.

The rooms in the new building are also significantly bigger than those in the old building. Many students appreciate the more positive learning environment that comes with the extra space, such as junior Josh Hoffman.

While Hoffman loves all of the natural light that the West Wing has to offer, he expressed concern that "the open nature of the room makes it difficult to hide in cases of emergency. The windows close to the floors make it difficult to remain hidden during a lockdown."

Laurie Dann's 1988 school shooting hit close to home

One of the U.S.'s first school shootings committed by NT grad

by Mia Sherin

On May 20, 1988, Laurie Dann from Glencoe, Illinois executed a premeditated plan involving poison, an array of guns, and the New Trier community.

Although these events occurred on May 20, they really began far earlier, deep into Laurie Dann's past. She started off like any one of us.

According to the "Chicago Tribune," she grew up in Glencoe, graduated from New Trier in 1975, attended Drake University and transferred to University of Arizona, studying to become a teacher.

As the course of her life went on, the people around her noticed strange behavior, including signs of OCD and other controlling personality traits.

She married Russell Dan, but they divorced in 1985.

Russell and his family reportedly received harassing phone calls, but charges were never pressed. Laurie claimed multiple times that Russell was abusive, and her family defended her throughout. Her psychiatrist told police he did not believe that Laurie was suicidal or homicidal. Days before May 20, Dann

prepared rice cereal snacks and juice boxes, all poisoned with diluted arsenic, as explained by the "Chicago Tribune." She mailed them to her friends, ex-babysitting clients, psychiatrist, ex-husband Russell Dan, and others.

On the morning of May 20, the main portion of her plan began. She delivered these snacks and juice boxes around the community to friends, families whom she babysat, fraternity houses, and Leverone Hall at Northwestern University.

Thankfully, not many of these drinks or snacks were consumed because of their unappetizing appearance and immediate poor taste. And because they were so highly diluted, no one became seriously ill.

At 9 am, Dann arrived at the home of the Rushe family, her former babysitting clients, in Winnetka. She took their children to Ravinia Elementary School, where she mistakenly believed her sister-in-law's two sons were enrolled.

Leaving the children in the car, she went inside and tried to ignite a fire bomb in a hallway, which students quickly discovered after she left and was put out by a teacher.

She then drove the kids back to their home in Winnetka, where Dann lured the two kids and mother downstairs, used gasoline to set the house on fire, and trapped the three of them in the



1975 New Trier grad committed one of the first school shootings in US | AP

basement. They managed to escape, foiling another of Dann's plans.

With three hand guns, Dann drove to Hubbard Woods Elementary School, where she pushed a boy into a bathroom and shot him with a .22 semi-automatic Beretta pistol. She trashed her Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum revolver when it jammed when trying to fire at two other boys.

These boys ran out of the bathroom and pulled the fire alarm. Continuing in the school, Dann

entered a second grade classroom and ordered the students into a corner of the room. The teacher refused and tried to disarm her, managing to unload her Beretta pistol.

Dann drew her .32 Smith and Wesson from her waistband and shot five children, killing eight-year-old Nicholas Corwin and wounding two girls and two boys. She then fled to her car.

The Andrews family was her next victim. Dann entered the home

of 20-year-old Phillip Andrews and held him and his parents hostage, claiming that she had been raped in order to gain their sympathy. Philip Andrews persuaded Dann to free his parents, but once she saw police advance on the house, Dann shot him in the chest. Andrews escaped out the back door and was rescued by police.

Dann then went to a bedroom of the house and shot herself in the mouth, taking her own life.

This shooting is not only very relevant to our community, but also was the one of the earliest school shootings.

Officer Perez, police liaison for New Trier, believes that this shooting, along with others, has had an effect on schools today and what safety measures are being taken.

For example, Hubbard Woods Elementary now has only one way to get into the school, which many schools adopted after the Laurie Dann shooting.

New Trier, took a similar approach by having security at all entrances. Perez urges students to always stay alert and in touch with the community around them: "Our students are our eyes and our ears. They have to be willing to say something if they see something that is off. When you start to get the 'spidey sense' going on, all students should pay attention to that."