tunnels are just one part of Central frozen in time. Once serving a purpose to keep this great big structure running, the deterioration of old pipes. However, they hold a lot more meaning than that.

Boulas explained, “A lot of people don’t get to see the building like this.”

“Some of this is new, some of this is old. Like the internet you can see running through here,” Boulas said while pointing to a thin blue cable tracing the ceiling, looking out of place in the mess of gray piping.

With a building as old as Central, there is bound to be little nooks and crannies that one could spend hours exploring. Many don’t realize, but four feet of concrete below students’ feet, interconnecting tunnels are spread out end to end. These utility tunnels, although few in size, hold remnants of Central’s and Omaha’s past.

Back before Joslyn’s sculpture garden existed, a boiler room underground powered Central High School and Central Grade School, the elementary across the street that has since been demolished. Michael Carnabuci, custodian, explained that below room tunnels were just some of many passageways used by staff. Other underground walkways used to stretch underneath Omahach.

You walk in those utility tunnels, where you want to go downtown. You can get around down there, but it’s difficult.” Campbell said. Deb Boulas, head custodian, mentioned that below room passageways still exist, it’s impossible to explore them anymore. “They’re sealed off,” she said “I mean, we still use them as a matter of our (school) but nothing that connects with the city anymore.”

Boulas has been working at Central since 2000 and runs most of the mechanical aspects of Central from her computer. The stuff rarely makes the trek beneath the building, unless it is absolutely necessary. “If something goes down I have to go look at it and see what’s going on,” Boulas said, “but for the most part I can control the heat and air from my office.”

The heating and air conditioning units are accessible through the custodial office. This is where a connection of large rooms holds controls for the building’s maintenance, about half of which are still in use.

“When they remodeled this building over the years they would just abandon stuff and never take it out,” Boulas explained. “Every once in while you’ll get a smell (in the building) just from the way the wind is blowing and hitting the pipes because they didn’t take them out.”

The main room also contains strangely placed concrete wedges. Before it was removed in 2002 a large 10 feet tall by 10 feet wide fan sat on the blacks, constantly releasing fresh air into the building. In certain classrooms, two feet by two feet pavers run the length of the main room.

“We ran them in to control the moisture,” Boulas said, “they’re what we used to be used to vents that ran all the way to the basement, where the air was dry.”

In one corner of the main room, brick walls hold up huge concrete walls, which make up the west porch outside. While the Legacy Walk is currently under construction, these sides will be meet as some are higher up than others. The entire west side of the school building will be shut down during the summer because of this.

These initial rooms and the sets of tunnels that branch from here are just accessible from the basement element. However, there are many other entrances into the secret sections of Central.

Through a locked door in Scott Mead’s office across from the auditorium, is a winding wooden staircase leads down to a small tunnel segment that branch three separate ways. Large steam lines, electrical cables and other various pipes run the full length of the corridor from west to east.

“Some of this is new, some of this is old. Like the internet you can see running through here,” Boulas said while pointing to a thin blue cable tracing the ceiling, looking out of place in the mess of gray piping.

Boulas explained a “lot of people don’t get to see the building like this.”

It’s true that there is plenty left unexplored below the building and sections that haven’t been used in decades. To the common eye, the chambers beneath the school might just seem like a collection of old pipes. However, there is a lot more meaning than that. Once serving a purpose to keep this great big structure running, the tunnels are just one part of Central frozen in time.
When one first sees Central, it is common to think the building is a courthouse, or a state capital building. When they are told that, no, this building on 20th and Dodge is a high school, many people think that it was an official government building, and now it's being used for a school. This common belief is a misconception. The building our school occupies has always been used for a high school, but the land we sit on was at one point for the state capital.

The current building was built starting in 1900 and ended in 1912. Total, the new building designed by John Latenser, cost $750,000. Central as we know it was built around the previous high school used, and the site of the old building is where the courtyard stands today.

Central shows a style of architecture known as Second Renaissance Revival. Commonly, the style was used for capitol buildings, which is another reason the school is often mistaken for a state building. Another building in Omaha with two Renaissance style is the old Omaha Public Library on 18th and Harvey, which is now used for law offices. Neo-Renaissance style homes and buildings are often cube shaped, with a symmetrical façade, stone walls, columns and arched entryways. Central high shows all of these characteristics.

Limestone is primarily used in Central's exterior. Inside, Central's interior displays more renovation. The school may experience more renovation. A gym and auditorium were added in 1930 for $250,000. Other things, like the fourth floor, have been renovated more recently.

Within the next two months, the city and OPS board will be deciding on a renovation plan for OPS elementary, middle, and high schools. The project is totaled at costing $650 million if totally approved. The project has divided schools into 3 groups, with group 1 classified as needing the most repairs. Central is in group 1.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.

The total recommended cost of repair at Central is $38,059,000. Part of the huge cost for Central's renovation has to do with the need to expand. As Central grows and becomes more popular for students to attend, it is estimated to be over capacity by 2027.