Graffiti shows all around the former Grand Rapids Press building. A vandal somehow gained access to the fenced-off structure that is being demolished. (Chris Clark/MLive.com)

Graffiti artist tags upper floors of former Press site in its final hours

By Jim Harger
jharger@mlive.com

A graffiti artist who tags buildings and walls around the city with the moniker “ASIS ZANI” struck the former Grand Rapids Press building in its final hours.

The freshly painted images appeared on interior and exterior walls of the building overnight Tuesday.

The images likely are to disappear within days as demolition crews continue to pick apart and haul away the 49-year-old structure at 155 Michigan St. NW.

It was not clear how the vandal was able enter the fenced-off site or gain access to the upper floors of the crumbling building for hours next to one of downtown’s busiest and most well-lit freeway exits.

“The guy trespassed. We don’t know how he got in,” said Louis Pitsch, vice president of Pitsch Companies, the demolition contractor hired by MSU.

Grand Rapids Public Services Director James Hurt said the city treats graffiti seriously and attempts to abate graffiti on public rights of way or adjacent to public rights of way within 48 hours — 24 hours if it’s offensive.

“If it’s on private property, we have to have a release form from the owner,” he said.

“It seems like a waste of paint,” Hurt said, when told about the graffiti at the demolition site.