

Preserving the Character of Dover High School

The front lawn of Dover High School will look quite different in the next few weeks. As work on the new building progresses, we move closer toward the changes needed for the parking and front lawn of the new school. Preserving the neighborhood look and the trees that are currently on site has always been a priority for the district. As we knew this would take the knowledge of experts, our work began over 18 months ago.

In March of 2017, the district reached out to Davey Resource Group to study, catalog, and provide recommendations for the trees around the current building. Arborist Jim Jenkins provided district personnel with an analysis of 18 trees and, based on their condition, made recommendations to preserve or remove each tree. Of these trees, five were recommended to be removed based on cavity decay, root damage, or poor overall structure.

Since then, our architects and construction manager have worked to design the front lawn, parking, and drop-off areas for the new DHS. Overlaying this information onto the analysis of the current trees has enabled the district to formulate a plan to preserve the trees that will not be impacted by pavement or drainage pipes. At this time, the two large pin oak trees close to Walnut Street will be preserved.

Another question to be answered was if there was any value to selling the timber in the trees that are going to be removed. A local forestry consultant was contacted to look at the trees for this purpose. Based on the current timber market, he advised the trees had little to no timber value.

Importantly, there are also memorial trees with dedication plaques in this area that have significance in our school community. After consulting with a local landscaping specialist, our plan is to remove the trees and then replant healthy, new trees with the original plaques in place. The replanting will be a part of the new overall landscaping plan for the building site.

Removal of the trees at this time allows space on-site for stockpiling of dirt to be used later in the site completion. Re-using dirt removed from other portions of the site for future backfill saves the district money in the long term. It will also make room to begin the work to prepare for the abatement and demolition of the current building in the spring.

Dover High School resides in the heart of our city and is an important part of the fabric of our community. Having a thorough plan to preserve the landscape was something we took very seriously. We are excited to see the final site become reality soon and we are confident that our residents will be pleased with the results.