



Wilmington, Delaware Paving its Brownfields “Green”

October 2005

The Brandywine Village is in one of Wilmington’s most historic districts and is also a gateway into the city. In the middle of this historic neighborhood stood a former gas station (the Hi-Tech gas station property) that had become vacant and fallen into disrepair since the mid-1990’s, becoming an eyesore for the community and a hindrance for future development. Using EPA Assessment grant funds combined with multi-level government and neighborhood cooperation and funding, the city completed its first brownfield project. The Hi-Tech former gas station site has been transformed into the Brandywine Village Green.



The completed Brandywine Village Green.

For over 5 years the Hi-Tech gas station sat abandoned until the property gained notice from the city and numerous partners. In 2001, the city used EPA Assessment grant funding to perform Phase I and Phase II assessments on the property. Soon after the assessments were completed, the city purchased the property using \$100,000 in Community Transportation Funding from the Delaware Department of Transportation. According to the purchase agreement, a portion of the purchase price (\$30,000) was held in escrow to pay for the cleanup of the property. In February 2003 following the purchase of the property, the state excavated four underground storage tanks (USTs) and removed 3,000 gallons of free product and contaminated water from the tank excavation. In addition, the canopy and kiosk from were also demolished.

The city wanted to include the community in the visioning process for the redevelopment of the property. To create a redevelopment plan that benefitted the surrounding community the city approached the Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization Group (GBVR). Numerous community meetings were held to determine the desired reuse of the property. The City and the GBVR decided that a park and a parking lot fit the immediate needs of the community.

The Brandywine Village Green combines pleasing green space and a needed parking lot with an innovative plan for reducing storm water. The parking lot is constructed from a pervious paving material that enables water to collect in piping under the parking lot. The water is then transported to a bioswale - a depression in the surface used to collect storm water - which allows water to be absorbed into the ground. Below both the parking lot and the bioswale is sand and peat moss used to absorb any contaminants that may have been transported by the runoff.



The former Hi-Tech gas station sat abandoned for over five years.

Mayor James Baker remarked, “This achievement for the neighborhood encompasses all the constructive elements that should go into every project of this type, including strong benefits for neighborhoods and citizens, economic development benefits for the City, a vast array of intergovernmental cooperation and support, and elected officials stepping forward, both collectively and individually, to support a project that will help the people they represent.”

Please visit EPA’s Region 3 Web site at www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/bfs for more information.