

I was delighted to see the ground breaking for the third fire station in Midlothian. While I am served by fire station #2, I still want my taxes utilized to the best for Midlothian. However, I am very concerned with the construction of this station. I am a Dallas firefighter (26 years) and own a construction company (commercial & residential building for 25 years). My biggest issue is with the hardy board to be used in lieu of brick.

- EFFICIENCY – Heating & cooling bills will be higher with a hardy board exterior versus brick. The station will be manned 24/7 and in this building for up to 50 years. This will be month after month after month of increased utility and maintenance bills.
- UPKEEP – Hardy board must be painted. After a few years, it must be repainted to maintain its appearance and then repainted again when needed. There is minimal to no upkeep to brick.
- CONSTRUCTION COST – The initial cost of hardy board might be a little cheaper than brick, but only a little. Labor costs to install brick or hardy board will be about the same.
- ESCPECTIC VALUE – Almost all the homes in this area of Midlothian are brick. New construction in this area is mostly limited to masonry exteriors.

One other concern is the height of the doors for the apparatus to be placed at this station. It is difficult to determine by the pictures how tall the doors will be. If a quint or ladder truck is to be used in the future, the doors must be at least tall enough to accommodate them. Hopefully, this has been addressed in the design of the building.

It appears to me that in the long run, it would be wiser to brick this station than go with the short-term solution of hardy board. I would appreciate your intervention with this construction plan to upgrade to a brick exterior.

Sincerely,

Joe & Gail Betzel
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