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With Loss of 220Year Old White Oak, Tudor Place Re-Invests in Old-Growth Canopy
--- planting the tall trees of tomorrow today ---

WASHINGTON, DC – Chainsaws and a 75-ton crane will arrive in the Tudor Place North Garden Monday morning, May 12, to remove a white oak tree looming more than 100 feet tall that may have taken root in the 18th century. Arborists have determined that the oak is leaning dangerously, and soil fissures at its roots indicate failure. Press are invited to witness the procedure and the planned replacement planting in fall. Archival photographs like the one at right from the early 1900s show that the tree towered over past generations of the Peter family, who owned the estate for more than 180 years.

For safety reasons, the tree’s removal had to be scheduled with little notice: Its upper limbs were thinned Tuesday as a temporary measure while awaiting a crane’s availability. Tudor Place staff, Board, and supporters are bidding a reluctant farewell to this old friend. The tree stands out even on a property renowned for old-growth specimens, including the ancient Tulip Poplar named by the America the Beautiful Fund as D.C.’s “Millennium Tree.”

“The loss of this majestic tree will reshape Tudor Place’s north landscape,” said Executive Director Leslie Buhler. “However, just as previous owners honored the site’s past while planning for its future, we will replace it with a new white oak in the fall.”

While a sad event, it’s not without an optimistic side, especially for history lovers and curators accustomed to a the long view: Measured against the Peters’s two centuries of stewarding the landscape, the time it takes for a replacement sapling to mature into a future “old-growth” tree is the proverbial eye blink. It’s not hard to picture the day when it will offer coming generations shade and the same powerful feelings stirred by nature’s gifts at Tudor Place today. (It is hoped donors will share the same vision: To defray the extraordinary cost of removing and replacing the oak and sustaining and replenishing the site’s other tall trees, a dedicated fund will be formally announced.)

Since 1983, Tudor Place Foundation has continued the Peter family tradition of nurturing the city’s tree canopy. With green spaces under threat all around us, our long view of the past that equips Tudor Place to foresee – and prepare for -- a leafy future to come.