



Pine Street residents trying to hang on to neighborhood they call home



The Pine Street neighborhood was built by Italians and African Americans, and centered around Mt. Carmel Church.
PHOTO BY KELLY NICHOLAIDES

By Kelly Nicholaides
for Montclair Local

The Pine Street Historic District contains a blend of early-19th-century brick apartment buildings, multiple one- and two-family houses in disrepair, and residents who include the middle class and working poor.

Most of the small businesses that built the neighborhood a century ago are gone. A mix of Italians who escaped economic depression in the 1870s and African Americans who came during the Great Migration planted the area's middle class economic and social roots, bringing in craftsmanship and culture.

As luxury housing redevelopment takes shape around the area where few mom-and-pop shops and eateries remain, residents say it will come at a cost of Montclair's identity by pricing out the most vulnerable residents.

Pine, Baldwin, Bay, Grant and Sherman streets and Glenridge Avenue make up the one-mile historic area. Businesses dotting the area include Nicolo's Italian Bakery, which has been there since the 1960s, Urban Chicken, Bivio Panificio, Diesel & Duke burgers and a liquor store.

Picking up a friend in the Pine Street area across the street from Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Fourth Ward resident Ciara Butler, 18, acknowledged that some of the housing stock needs maintenance, but not replacement.

"People come here to live because of the diversity. If you take this part of town out and replace it with

something more like Upper Montclair, then you push out middle-class families. Montclair loses part of its identity and what it stands for, which is having communities that are different than other parts of Montclair. The buildings, the corner stores, the pizza place and the church all bring people together,” said Butler.



Several residents and parishioners expressed concerns that the church property will be the next place to disappear along with affordable housing.

KELLY NICHOLAIDES/ FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Fatimah Leftwich, 37, has lived at the end of Pine Street above a liquor store on Glenridge Avenue, since 2013 with her two children. A crossing guard, Leftwich rents a three-bedroom unit for which she gets a housing voucher to help with payments. The property was sold in May 2017, and she was informed that her lease was being terminated. But she is determined to stay.

“They’re trying to get us all out of here. The new management company wants to renovate. They’ll probably charge \$2,000 a month or more for rent. You can’t get housing when rent goes up past what the voucher will cover. I may have to move to West Orange. We should be able to stay here. But they want to make room for the train people,” Leftwich said, referring to commuters who rent upscale units.

Although she admits that she has been in trouble with the law last year after punching a police officer who responded to a disturbance on Pine Street, Leftwich said the matter was resolved to her satisfaction. She says that she has stayed out of trouble since then, and indicated that she cares about the people who live in her community.

In a walkway behind her residence, Deshon Samuel, a 61-year-old unemployed African-American, is seated and contemplating where he will go when the weather turns colder. He is homeless. A former auto technician, Samuel, was born and raised in Montclair. He says he lived in housing on Pine, Walnut and Forest. For at least the past five years, he estimates, he has been living on the streets — after a combination of lack of work and rental increases.

“I live outside now,” Samuel said. “I had jobs but sometimes the work dried up. Landlords kept selling the buildings and raising the rent. You get some assistance, but if they want you out, they find ways, like coming in and redoing [renovating] everything.”

Unmarried and with no children, Samuel moved to Georgia and lived with his sister until her death, later returning to Montclair and back to life on the streets.

[READ: Renter fighting back on large rent increases](#)

[READ: Homage to Pine Street](#)

The liquor store below Leftwich’s residence is one block from Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church. Several residents and parishioners expressed concerns that the church property will be the next place to disappear

along with affordable housing. At the Sept. 25 Mayor and Council meeting, former Montclair Police Chief Tom Russo reminisced about the parish's history through his childhood when the streets were lined with Italian and American flags, fig trees and grapevines, and the area was steeped in the Catholic faith. He rattled off dozens of names of small businesses from delis to butchers, a gas station, cobbler and more.

"The site of my first homicide investigation was at a butcher shop," Russo said. "All of these businesses in a six-block area are gone, except for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel church, which is an anchor."

Historic Preservation Commission member Kathleen Bennett said the church represents the only Romanesque Gothic architecture in Montclair.

"It's a key piece of history in the Pine Street Historic district. I want everyone to know the significance of this building," Bennett said.



Pine Street was built by Italians and African Americans.
PHOTO KELLY NICHOLAIDES

She added that despite the church being on state and national historic registers, it's up to local historians to protect it.

"If someone buys it and proposes to knock the buildings down, the Archdiocese can sell, although any site plan changes would need town approval. These buildings are important because of the people in the community they serve." Bennett said.

Raffaele Marzullo, President of the church's St. Sebastian Society, said that immigrants from hundreds of Italian villages came to Montclair and settled in the Fourth Ward. "The church ran community outreach programs and funded restoration. It's now a racially, ethnically, economically diverse community, with 112 years of accomplishments. But everything is going away. At what point do we value money more than people's needs? We have worked to bring other programs to Mt. Carmel like Spanish mass. Anything to keep the community going," Marzullo said.

Reverend Michael Spievy of Citadel of Hope Church in Bloomfield told the council at the meeting, he doesn't think enough attention is placed on what a building does in community. "It's not a church thing, but a people thing. It would behoove you to get in partnership with more than 50 ministries of Montclair which are the lifeblood of this township. I see an influx of people coming in. We can move ahead with the times, but I don't want to lose the flavor of the community. We will partner, gather clergy to protect the legacy of the Pine Street historic area," Spievy said.

In 2016, Mt. Carmel merged with St. Teresa of Calcutta to improve fundraising through tricky trays, Toys for Tots, Italian feasts and renting out parking to pay for maintenance and capital improvements. Newark Archdiocese spokesperson Jim Goodness said the church will stay. "The Archdiocese is definitely not selling the property," Goodness said.

However, the Archdiocese sold property at 147 Bloomfield Ave. to make way for the Vestry, a five-story upscale apartment building with 46 units, of which eight are earmarked as affordable housing. Montclair has 3,000 people throughout the state on a waiting list for affordable housing, the township planner confirmed.

In the historic Pine Street area, construction is underway for 110 luxury housing units on Baldwin Street in Glen Ridge—half a block from Nicolo’s Italian Bakery in Montclair. Other high-end housing includes the Montclarion at Bay Street.

Alisyn Gay, 37, said she grew up in the Pine Street historic area and moved back five years ago. “It has changed, but my kids love it. The church is a good place. I think it will stay in the area,” Gay said.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is the anchor of the Pine Street Historic District, but many people who live around it need more than faith to be able to stay.



More parking options offered for Seymour Street area



The South Willow Street parking lot is closed for the next year during the construction of the Seymour Street arts and entertainment complex.

ADAM ANIK FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

By Jaimie Julia Winters

winters@montclairlocal.news

More parking options may be offered to relieve parking woes in the Third Ward being caused by the [Seymour Street Redevelopment Project](#).

An ordinance, expected to be introduced at the Oct. 23 township council meeting, will create more 'N' parking permits, which allow for overnight parking in metered spots.

"An overnight off-street night permit shall entitle the holder thereof to park a designated passenger motor vehicle (not including a bus) in any available metered parking space or in any available parking space within a permit area of any public parking lot between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. Sunday through Saturday, inclusive during the entire period for which the permit is issued," reads the ordinance.

Area residents claim their \$1,200 yearly parking permits have been rendered almost useless after the South Willow and South Fullerton parking lots closed in August and September to make for the development. The two lots contained a combined 100 metered and permit parking spaces.

Now, residents are forced to park several blocks away at the Crescent Deck. But parking is now more competitive than ever in the already well-used lot, especially when concerts are held at the nearby Wellmont Theater. Some said they are wary of running errands on the weekends for fear of losing their parking spots.

Officials are attempting to lessen the impact. In September, the council removed the meters from the Plymouth parking lot at 41 South Fullerton Ave. and made it permit-parking only. Parking is now allowed on the eastern side of Seymour Street as well.

But residents attending the Third Ward meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 10, said parking issues remain a constant burden. Many cars are parked illegally with little or no enforcement, they said.

The council may also create a Red Zone in the area. Parking violation tickets in that area would be doubled.

The council is also considering \$2 hourly parking at some decks. The cost to park in the North Fullerton Deck will go from \$.75 per hour to \$2, while the Crescent Deck will go from \$1 an hour to \$2. A change to Bay Street Deck pricing will see a \$2 hour charge from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. Monday through Friday, as well as all day Saturday and Sunday.

The Seymour Street development approved last year will consist of two buildings when completed in 2019. The first structure will have 200 residential units, 232 parking spaces, 10,000 square feet dedicated to arts and entertainment and 30,000 square feet of retail space facing Bloomfield Avenue and Seymour Street. The second building will feature two stories of office space and five floors of municipal parking that will eventually help alleviate the area's parking woes.



Planning board looks toward no knock down rule for older homes



The Aubrey Lewis House was razed in May to make way for eight townhouses. The planning board is investigating recommending a no knock-down law. DEBORAH ANN TRIPOLDI/STAFF

By Jaimie Julia Winters

winters@montclairlocal.news

In response to a recent increase in home demolitions, the planning board is investigating bringing back a no-knock down ordinance.

Following the demolition of the Marlboro Inn, in 2007 Montclair created “time-of-application rule” or a waiting period of one year for demolition permits of homes 75 years or older. The period was given to derail developers from razing older homes and to allow the permit to be deferred until the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) could investigate the history of the building, analyze its architectural features and consider whether it should be an official, protected historic landmark. In 2012, planner Janice Talley suggested it be pulled due to changes to the municipal land use regulations, which she said made the local law moot.

“Our planner, rushing the council to change a law that no one contested and with no attempts to even modify it to be in compliance with land use laws, has unnecessarily put the entire old housing stock at risk,” said planning board member Martin Schwartz.

Earlier this month, an application was filed with the planning department to demolish two homes on 28 acres of land on Undercliff and Lloyd roads to make way for “Lloyd Estate.” Both homes would have fallen under the 75 year rule.

In May, the Aubrey Lewis Estate was demolished. In June 2017, BNE Real Estate received the planning board’s approval to subdivide the Lewis Estate’s site and build eight houses on the 2.7 acres. A condition of that

approval was that the real estate company had to offer up the sale of the Lewis house to anyone who could move it. BNE offered \$10,000 for relocation costs. Even with a sale price of \$10, no one took the developer up on his offer.

[READ: Two homes could be razed to make way for mega mansion](#)

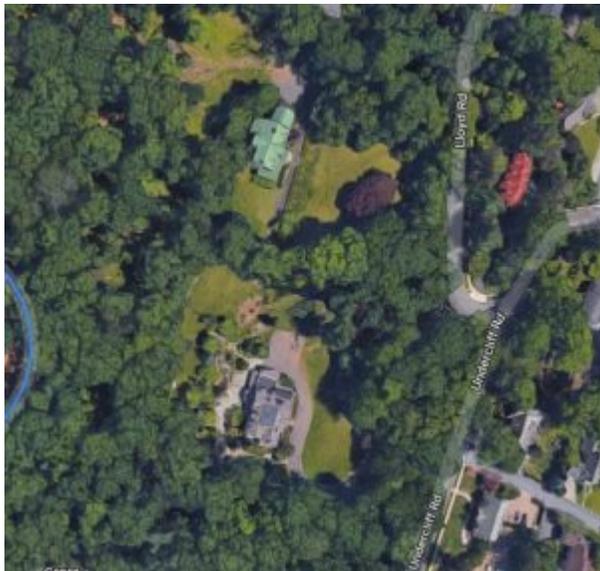
[READ: Aubrey Lewis estate lost to townhouses](#)

At the Oct. 15 planning board meeting, Schwartz presented the board with the suggestion of a “light protection zone” for properties 95 years or older or that are on a list of 1,000 properties from the 1982 “Preservation Montclair” compiled by the Junior League.

Properties in the zone would be flagged on property cards. Suggestions include Historic Preservation Commission oversight for demolition permits for those properties and a year wait to exhaust all other efforts. Those homes would not be under the same constraints with facade changes as historically designated homes.

Talley said at the meeting, “The law would not stop demolition, only delay it.”

Jersey City has a similar law that prevents the demolition of buildings 150 years or older or those on the historical registry without the approval of the historical commission.



[While residents lament tree loss, much bigger](#)

plans in motion for Lloyd Road



A developer has plans to raze the two homes at 14 Undercliff and 172 Lloyd Road and create a dream complex.

Courtesy Google Satellite

By Jaimie Julia Winters

winters@montclairlocal.news

While residents have been lambasting town officials over the removal of trees at the corner of Lloyd and Undercliff roads, most have no idea what is actually in the works at the hillside properties that abut Eagle Rock Reservation and sold to one developer recently.

An application for “Lloyd Estate,” a massive compound proposed for two properties on Undercliff and Lloyd roads, was filed with the planning department on Tuesday. Two homes will be razed to make way for an estate that will include, along with typical living quarters such as a family room and a kitchen: a basketball court, a spa, a gym, a bowling alley, a movie theater, indoor and outdoor pools, a staff wing, a billiards room, a library, a computer lab, a nine-car motor court, two garages, seven guest rooms, three kids’ rooms, a homework room, a master suite with a kitchen and his-and-her balconies, all accessible by two elevators.



Courtesy M.D, Schneider

Equipment stands by at Lloyd and Undercliffs roads as an application is pending for a mega estate.

The properties at 14 Undercliff and 172 Lloyd roads along Eagle Rock Reservation were purchased by 14 Undercliff LLC in January and May respectively and will equate to 28 acres in total. The properties were purchased for a combined price of \$7,463,400, with taxes at a combined \$119,000. The LLC was formed in July 2017 by Dennis Jenkins a managing member of the South Orange based Mecca Property Development, according to records filed with the state Division of Revenue and Finance.

The newly filed application did not include the square footage of the proposed home.

To date, two variances are being sought for height of 38.5 feet where 35 is allowed and for a rear set back of 25 feet where 141 is required, said Graham Petto, assistant township planner. The application is being handled by attorney Alan Trembulak.

Permits for tree clearing on the properties were granted in May, with the trees being taken down in July, prior to the developer filing the site plan application with the planning department. The permit was filed in October 2017 by Montclair Tree Experts. Town officials contend only three trees have been removed.

The town's tree ordinance does not regulate how many trees can be taken down on private property, only that a permit be obtained and the trees be replaced one for one, or the town be paid \$250 for each tree taken down. The Montclair Environmental Commission does not see the applications for tree clearing permits, but at times reviews site applications, said MEC planning board liaison Keith Broderick. He said the tree arborist conducts a spotcheck of the number of razed trees after the contractor completes the job to ascertain the number that needs to be replaced.

After residents questioned what they thought was new tree clearing and trees marked with pink ribbons for further clearing and called town hall, a township code enforcement officer was dispatched to the properties.

"The construction project manager (Petry Engineering, LLC) said that no additional trees are currently scheduled for removal and the marked out trees are for site survey purposes. If additional trees need to be removed, they will apply for the appropriate permits," said communications manager Katya Wowk.

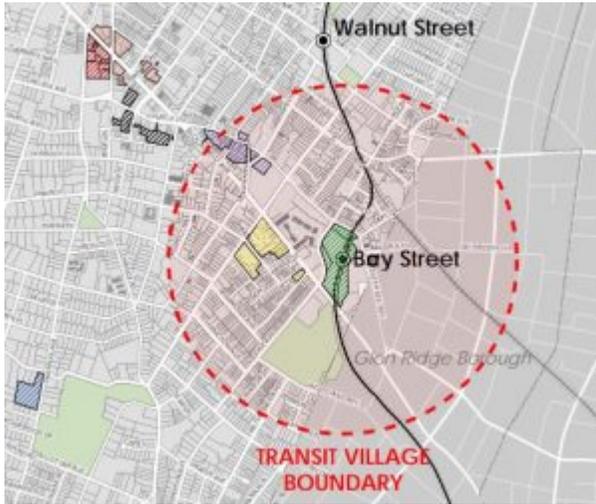
An engineer, hired by the township under its steep slope ordinance, has compiled a report for the hillside properties requiring that a plan be submitted for retention of the hill, stormwater runoff, retaining walls and a permeable soil test.

The applicant will also need approval for land disturbance by the Hudson, Essex, Passaic Soil Conservation District.

The application will first go to the Historic Preservation Commission for comment as the two homes set for razing are located in the Estate Historic district, said Wowk. Although the Estate Historic district is a potential historic district, any development in potential or designated districts must be reviewed by the HPC, said HPC Chair Kathleen Bennett. The homes, at 14 Undercliff built in 1865 and 172 Lloyd built in 1907, were surveyed for Preservation Montclair in 1982, but were never registered on the historical register.

The application will then head to the zoning board of adjustment for review, probably in December, said Wowk.

"If it's approved, knocking down these two classic older homes will be the biggest policy failure to date allowed by our town planner and planning office," said planning board member Martin Schwartz. "A major selling point for Montclair remains its character and world-class classic architecture. We use to have a 75 year, no knock down law that protected older homes from just this kind of McMansion building speculation. If we allow this kind of old house knock-down and over the top building effort instead of mandating only reasonable and balanced growth, we will just lose what we have here over time."



Lackawanna shared-parking plan calls for 360 spots less than required



The developers are asking for a variance to lose 360 parking spots based on the area where they said 30 percent of the proposed development residents will not have a car due to the area being a transit village and close to mass transit.

Photo Courtesy Montclair

By Jaimie Julia Winters

winters@montclairlocal.news

Lackawanna Plaza developers presented a parking plan to the planning board Monday night proposing a total of 457 spots for the retail and housing development, rather than the 817 spots required, relying on the closeness of mass transit and a shared-parking strategy plan.

Shared parking is a land-use development strategy that optimizes parking capacity by allowing complementary land uses to share spaces, rather than producing separate spaces for separate uses.

Pointing to Lackawanna's inclusion into Montclair's "Transit Village" based on its location near the Bay Street train station, Dan Disario of Langan Engineering testified that NJ Transit data shows residential developments within a quarter mile of station can plan for a 30-percent reduction in parking, from the standard requirement of 1.8 parking spaces for a one-bedroom residence and two for a two-bedroom, a third of which must be covered.

According to Disario, with good access to mass transit and ride-share services such as Uber and Lyft, people are less dependent on cars and therefore fewer people own cars. He envisioned empty nesters and young professional couples moving into the building without cars.



*The developers plans to incorporate the steel stanchions from the train platforms into the parking lot.
Courtesy Marchetto Higgins Stieve*

With 154 residential units planned for the east side of the Lackawanna development, the developer presented a plan for 230 parking spaces — 130 under the building, 100 in the lot — where 254 spaces are required. During the day, the covered residential spaces would be utilized by employees of the retail, supermarket and medical center on the west side of the project.

He projected that 20 percent of the local employees will not use cars to come to work. But for those that drive, Disario said that “one space can serve someone who lives in the building, and while they are at work, can serve an employee [at Lackawanna].”

Under this plan, the lot servicing the supermarket and retail on the west parcel would have 227 spaces, while a lot in front of the medical center on Lackawanna Plaza would have 30.

Disario estimated that 20 percent of restaurant, medical, retail and supermarket patrons will use taxis or mass transit, or walk, to the development.

According to the engineering firm’s shared-parking plan, the area would be short about 17 spaces, but should only feel the effects of the shortage at peak times, which are 1 p.m. on weekdays and 11 a.m. on Saturdays, mainly during the holiday months and specifically December.

To compensate for any shortage of parking, the developer proposed attendant-assisted parking where cars would either be valeted to the lot in front of the medical center or on the west parcel, or patrons would be directed to park their own cars in aisles.

Christian Sukich of ProPark America, who testified on the attendant-assisted parking, addressed planning board members’ concerns that employees would not comply with their designated parking spots on the east side of the lot and instead take up patron parking, saying that the company would also be monitoring employees’ license plates.

Montclair’s parking consultant, Gerard Giosa, said he saw a “saturation” of the parking lot in front of the supermarket and that the demand would be higher than the supply. He suggested the medical office offer full valet service from that lot.

Board member Carmel Loughman didn’t buy Disario’s claim that the residents will come with fewer cars.

“People still need and want cars even with good mass transit,” she said.

While council liaison and board member Robin Schlager questioned the lack of visitor parking for the building’s residents. At one point it was suggested by Sukich that a pay lot would be offered, but the developer’s attorney quickly countered saying visitor parking had not been worked out yet.

New Jersey Administrative codes require “an adequate number of off-street parking in all developments to accommodate both residents and visitors.”

Plans now also include a four-lane driveway off Grove Street.



Preservation commission presents ‘viable’ plan to save train sheds



The Lackawanna train sheds were enclosed by glass in the 1980s to create an archade shopping mall. Developer’s plan call for the razing of sheds to make way for parking.

Adam Anik/ for Montclair Local

By Jaimie Julia Winters

winters@montclairlocal.news

The Historic Preservation Commission voted Monday night to amend a resolution reiterating its recommendations that the train sheds at Lackawanna Plaza be saved, after board members David Greenbaum and John Reimnitz presented plans to incorporate the sheds into a supermarket and raze the old Pathmark.

The application for the historic Lackawanna railroad station property calls for a multi-use development including 154 units of housing with a rooftop pool and garden, a supermarket and some retail. The ticket area and waiting station, now the Pig & Prince restaurant, would be kept intact.

But developers contend the train platforms, now part of glass-enclosed mall, need to be razed to make way for more parking in front of the the supermarket to be housed in the former Pathmark. Historic preservationists however, seek to incorporate the train platforms, which are in front of the Pathmark, into the plans as part of the supermarket or an atriumed market.

A plan presented by developers at the Aug. 27 planning board meeting would increase the store square footage by 4,291 feet, up to 47,786, by bringing the former Pathmark store out to meet a set of covered train platforms, incorporating them into a glass-facade entrance. Plans were presented to keep 74 of the columns in place at the front of the retail and supermarket as covered atriums, and throughout the parking lot as decorative fixtures, while 24 would be removed with some of the those being relocated for use in a covered bus stop and at the entrance of the tunnel.

[READ: Architects on school staircase collapse](#)

[READ: Developers plan bigger supermarket](#)

Developers Pinnacle and Hampshire are in serious negotiations with a supermarket tenant, according to their attorney Tom Trautner. The name of the prospective tenant has not been released due to pending negotiations.

The commission's amendment, including the new plans as a viable alternative to razing the sheds will be inserted, into the April 26 memo that states "the commission finds the proposed demolition of the historic train sheds to be inconsistent with Montclair Criteria for Demolition and with the Historic Preservation Element of the Township Master Plan. The commission recommends the applicant explore alternatives to retain the historic train sheds, including the concrete roof and steel support structures in their existing location. The Commission finds that the demolition of the historic train sheds is not necessary and contra to the intent of Montclair's preservation ordinances and suggests that demolition of the defunct Pathmark store, a 1980's redevelopment addition, be explored."

The presentation opened with Greenbaum and Reimnitz's survey of area big box parking lots.

The developers' plans call for the current 234-foot parking lot to increase to 371 feet, which Greenbaum said is larger than the length of a football field, as well as lots at big box stores such as Toys R Us on Routes 46 and 10, Kohl's on Route 46 and Costco near Willowbrook Mall. Parking lot lengths at those stores range from 264 to 350 feet.



*An aerial view of Lackawanna with the Pathmark demolished to make a second parking area.
Rendering by John Reimnitz*

"And these are high speed, state thoroughfares. Proposed parking is out of character with this historic district" he said.

Although the sheds were mistakenly identified as Bush sheds earlier in the process, chair Kathleen Bennett said the fact they were later identified as Butterfly sheds should not take away from their historical value. Bush sheds transitioned into Butterfly sheds in the 1920s because they were less expensive to build and reflect fiscal conservatism of the era, she said..

Greenbaum reiterated that the local, state and national historic designations of the train plaza include the sheds.

“They are preserved, and they are intact,” he said.

The redevelopment of the train sheds in 1984 by Montclair resident and architect Richard Blinder “was a brilliant vision by a brilliant architect,” Greenbaum added.

“Twice this property has met the needs of the community while keeping it intact,” he said.

Greenbaum pointed to other successful repurposed markets such as the Reading Terminal in Pennsylvania, West Side Market in Cleveland, the Central Market in Lancaster and the Grand Central Market in New York City.

Greenbaum presented plans to repurpose the sheds into a 56,000-square foot supermarket with dual entrances on Bloomfield and Glenridge avenues. With the demolition of the former Pathmark, parking would be placed on both sides keeping the current lot of 234 feet on Bloomfield Avenue. A dine-in area would be to the left of the Bloomfield entrance.



*A rendering shows the train sheds as the supermarket.
Renderings by John Reimnitz*

Reimnitz said the number of parking spaces would be consistent with the developer’s plan for about 200 spots and a loading dock in the rear.

James Cotter, on behalf of the Grove Terrace and Clover Hill Place neighborhood association, said the plans take in all the considerations by the neighborhood, including pedestrian access, better traffic flow, retention of a grocery store and, most of all, historical preservation in the Fourth Ward where much has been lost.

“The Crane House has been moved, the YMCA demolished,” Cotter said. “We support the HPC efforts to save the history in the Fourth Ward.”

The amendment and seven pages of the plans will be forwarded to the planning board. The next Lackawanna hearing with the planning board is set for Sept. 24.



Seymour Street residents: We're stuck in arts-area parking quagmire



The Willow Street lot closed last week due to the construction of the Seymour Redevelopment Project.
ADAM ANIK/ FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

By Kelly Nicholaides
for Montclair Local

Seymour Street apartment complex residents are lamenting the loss of their neighborhood parking lot since it closed last week due to the construction of the development project near the Wellmont Theater.

Now, residents are forced to park several blocks away at Crescent Deck to employ their \$1,200 annual residential parking permits. The residents said the parking issue was exacerbated when South Willow Street parking lot closed on Aug. 22. The South Fullerton lot is scheduled to close around Sept. 7.

"Inconvenience is not an appropriate word for this. We're tailoring our lives around parking," said resident Kathleen Santangelo.

Residents said visitors attending concerts at the Wellmont Theater and dining at area restaurants take up permit parking spaces, adding they are wary of leaving on the weekends for fear of losing their parking spot.

"We are constantly battling for parking with tourists, especially by the Wellmont. If we don't get spots by Friday, we won't get any until Monday," resident Mary Ann Reidy said at the Aug. 28 council meeting. "Imagine that you just went to Trader Joe's or took your dog to a park. You came back and had to walk for blocks [from Crescent Deck] with bags of groceries. Consider the logistics."



Seymour residents attended the council meeting complaining about the lack of parking due to the area being under construction.
KELLY NICHOLAIDES/ FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

The South Willow and South Fullerton parking lots contain a combined 100 metered and permit parking spaces. Additionally, the Plymouth Street lot near Seymour Street has 50 parking spaces that fill up by 7 p.m., residents said.

Visitors take permit parking spots when there's overflow at meters, Reidy explained. She suggested that the Plymouth lot meters be eliminated so residents can use the lot exclusively for permit parking.

[READ: Seymour Street Redevelopment gets approval](#)

[READ: BID searching for new director](#)

The [Seymour Street development](#) approved last year will consist of two buildings. The first structure will have 200 residential units, 232 parking spaces, 10,000 square feet dedicated to arts and entertainment and 30,000 square feet of retail space facing Bloomfield Avenue and Seymour Street. The second building will feature two stories of office space and five floors of parking.

A centerpiece will be a 14,000 square foot public pedestrian mall located directly in front of the Wellmont on Seymour Street, which will be closed to traffic. Street parking there will be eliminated.

The Seymour Street residents attending the meeting said they feel renters are being disrespected.

Dorothena Barnes said walking home from Crescent Deck presents a safety issue.

"This is Montclair but there's still crime and I'm a woman walking home a longer distance," Barnes said.

Resident Brian Cowherd asked the council to allow Seymour Street residents to park on the street, bypassing the no overnight parking rule, between 2 a.m. – 6 a.m., around the Seymour Street area. "Whether we transfer to the Crescent or not [when construction ends], we need the ability to park on the street. We need an exception to the [no overnight] parking rule," Cowherd said.

Township attorney Ira Karasick noted that the town will take the residents' concerns under consideration. "This is a dynamic situation. When we see people in distress, we want to make adjustments," Karasick said.

Alternate parking since the closure of the South Willow and South Fullerton lots include the Crescent Deck, Maple Plaza, the Orange Road Deck, and the Fullerton and Midtown lots.



Two lots to be closed near Wellmont Theater



A rendering of the Seymour Street redevelopment, which will be adjacent to the Wellmont Theater.

Two municipal lots will close during construction in the area of the Wellmont Theater for the Seymour Street redevelopment project. South Willow Street Lot was closed last week and South Fullerton East Lot will close by Friday, Sept. 7.

Five handicapped parking spots will be made available - three on South Willow Street and two on Roosevelt Place.

According to Montclair Center the facilities could be closed for about a year.

See related story on [Seymour Street redevelopment](#).



Store gets bigger, push for a more pedestrian-friendly Lackawanna



*Plans presented at the Aug. 27 planning board meeting incorporate more of the train platforms.
Rendering Hampshire*

By Jaimie Julia Winters

winters@montclairlocal.news

New plans for Lackawanna Plaza include a larger supermarket and more repurposing of the train platform columns, but less parking. But one board member is pushing for more pedestrian accessibility with the proposed development.

A plan presented by architect Bruce Stieve and engineer Kevin Web on Monday, Aug. 27, planning board meeting would increase the the store square footage by 4,291 feet, up to 47,786, by bringing the former Pathmark store out to meet the covered train platforms, which would be incorporated into a glass-facade entrance. By doing so, 20 of the proposed parking places would be lost, said Web.

“By maintaining the current placement of the train sheds, it gave us an opportunity to increase the the size of [supermarket],” said Web.

The application for the historic Lackawanna railroad station property has been debated by the planning board for four years. Current plans call for a multi-use development including 154 units of housing with a rooftop pool and garden, a supermarket and some retail. The ticket area and waiting station, now the Pig & Prince, would be kept intact. But developers contend the train platforms, now part of glass-enclosed mall, need to be razed to make way for more parking for the supermarket. Historic preservationists seek to incorporate the train platforms into the plans as part of the supermarket or an atriumed market, however.

Plans were presented to keep 74 of the columns in place at the front of the retail and supermarket as covered atriums, and throughout the parking lot as decorative fixtures, while 24 would be removed with some of the those being relocated for use in a covered bus stop and at the entrance of the tunnel. A prior plan called for

salvaging 76 of the 98 stanchions with 47 remaining in place.



*Board member Carmel Loughman envisions a more pedestrian-friendly development.
Rendering Hampshire*

Trautner said developers Pinnacle and Hampshire are in serious negotiations with a supermarket tenant, who he said was amicable to the change in plans incorporating the stanchions leading to less parking. He would not release the name of the prospective tenant due to pending negotiations.

Board members questioned if a survey of the train platform columns had been conducted. The board had asked for the survey of the age of the columns at the last meeting after the developers' historian made claims that some of the stanchions were original, but some were added in the 1980 mall remodel of the train platforms.

Board member Martin Schwartz questioned why the developers' professionals had not met with the planning board's consultant.

"Nine months later ... and we haven't reviewed why they [the train platforms] need to be knocked down yet. We have made no progress on what was proposed months ago. We are facing a monologue here," he said.

Attorney Tom Trautner said that the developers preferred an open dialogue about the project and could not "sit behind closed doors" to work out the details.

But Steive said the developers learned in a meeting with the fire department that keeping the canopies over the stanchions in the parking lot would interfere with emergency access. He added, the plan was close to one of the options planning board consultant Barton Ross had given in his report on salvaging the train platforms by opening them up and incorporating them into covered parking.

Also discussed was four loading docks in the back of building, three taxi spots and seven handicap spots. Parking would be straight-on, with two-way drive aisles. Plans for the historic horse trough call for it to be restored and moved to in front of the Pig & Prince restaurant and connected to a water feature. Plaques with the history of the station would be placed on the horse trough and in a walkway to Greenwood Avenue.

Motorists would access the parking lot through egresses on Grove Street and Bloomfield Avenue. Pedestrians would have access through a walkway from Greenwood Avenue directly next to the store, the restored stairway from Grove Street and Bloomfield Avenue.

But board member Carmel Loughman contended the plans lacked pedestrian-traffic consideration and pushed for back-door access along Glenridge Avenue.

"We are building this big building, we are 300 spaces short, we are in an urban area. Why are we talking more about parking and not about pedestrian access?" she asked.

Chairman John Wynn said most supermarkets do not have front and back entrances and are set up with registers and entrances in the front facing windows, which in this case would be facing Bloomfield Avenue. He said the higher grading in the back and the loading dock zone would not be customer-friendly.

Questions were raised about an easement through the tunnel under Grove Street, which is currently slated only for the private access of supermarket employees and residents of the housing planned on the east side.

Ross said he approved of much of the plans with the exception of installing lighting on the stanchions, calling it not historically correct, and the proposed decorative asphalt to mimic train tracks, which he said could be confusing for pedestrians. He also suggested that angled parking with one-way drive lanes could save more of the columns.

In July, Bradley Knab of Mehmert Store Services in Wisconsin testified that a 45,000-square foot was too large for an urban area. In his opinion, a smaller specialized supermarket of 30,000 could compete at the center of the 15 bigger chains already within a 2.5-mile radius.

The next meeting on the project is set for Sept. 24.



Parking facilities close due to construction



The garages shown in red could be closed for up to one year.

Two municipal lots will close during construction in the area of the Wellmont Theater for the Seymour Street redevelopment project. South Willow Street Lot will closed last week and South Fullerton East Lot will close by Friday, Sept. 7.

Five handicapped parking spots will be made available - three on South Willow Street and two on Roosevelt Place.

According to Montclair Center the facilities could be closed for about a year.