

**RESOLUTION  
TOWNSHIP OF MONTCLAIR  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AMENDED  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LACKAWANNA PLAZA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN  
PREPARED BY PHILLIPS PREISS GRYGIEL LEHENY HUGHES, LLC and  
SMITH + MARAN ARCHITECTS**

**HPC-23-01**

**January 27, 2023**

**WHEREAS**, Phillips Preiss Grygiel Leheny Hughes, LLC and Smith + Maran Architects, were retained by the Township to prepare a Redevelopment Plan (the “Plan”) for the Lackawanna Plaza Redevelopment Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Council, by Resolution dated December 2022, referred the Plan to the Planning Board for a report, pursuant to NJSA 40A:12A7(e); and

**WHEREAS**, Section 347-134 (F) of the Township Code empowers the Montclair Preservation Commission (“Commission”) to “make recommendations to the Planning Board and the Township Council of the historic preservation implications of any proposed or adapted zoning or development ordinance(s)...”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission reviewed the October 2022 Draft Plan prepared by Phillips Preiss Grygiel, Leheny Hughes, LLC and Smith + Maran Architects, provided individual comments to the Commission Secretary, and deliberated their findings and recommendations on the Plan as set forth in this Resolution at the regularly scheduled meeting on January 12, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission was created in 1994 by Ordinance Section 347-129 with the purpose of applying the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 347-134, as follows:

- Safeguard the heritage of Montclair by preserving resources within the Township which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic and architectural history.
- Encourage the continued use of historic and/or noteworthy buildings, structures, objects and sites and to facilitate their appropriate reuse.
- Maintain and develop an appropriate and harmonious setting for the historic and architecturally significant buildings, structures, sites and district with the Township.
- Stabilize and improve property values within the Township.
- Foster civic pride in the history and architecture of the Township.
- Encourage proper maintenance of and reinvestment in buildings and structures within the Township.
- Regulate appropriate alteration of historic sites as well as new construction within or near historic districts to ensure compatibility with the existing built environment and the Master Plan of Montclair.

- Discourage the unnecessary demolition or other destruction of historic resources.
- Further the public's knowledge of the history and development of the Township as well as its appreciation of the Township's historic sites.
- Enhance the visual and aesthetic character; diversity, continuity and interest of the Township and its neighborhoods.
- Encourage beautification and private investment in the Township.
- Promote the economic welfare of the Township through the preservation of its historic sites and landscapes.

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Board of the Township of Montclair has adopted an *Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan* which has identified the Lackawanna Plaza Redevelopment Area as being within the *Town Center Historic District and Historic District Expansions* (2002, 2003, and 2004) and includes structure(s) listed in the *New Jersey Register of Historic Places* (August 7, 1972), the *New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation Historic Sites Inventory of 1980*, the *National Register of Historic Places Inventory* (January 8, 1973), and designated as a "key" building within the *Town Center Historic District* (May, 2003); and is deemed a "key" resource in the *Thematic listing of Operating Passenger Railroad Stations* (October 14, 1977) and is identified in the *NJ CRGIS online viewer* of the NJ DEP, Historic Preservation Office; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lackawanna Plaza Redevelopment Area, including its historic structures, building and open spaces, is the most significant historic site within the Township as the development of the railroad was instrumental to the secession of the area that would become Montclair from Bloomfield, its incorporation as its own municipality, and its growth as an economic and cultural hub of New Jersey. This finding is further supported by former township historian, Jack Chance, in a letter dated 1981 and in the collection of the Montclair History Center in which he highlighted the architectural significance of the site, the architectural genius of the architect, William Hull Botsford and the importance as a transportation center in the history of the township of Montclair; and

**WHEREAS**, *NJ Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2023-2028*, states: "New Jersey was historically the most densely tracked state in the nation. For about 80 years, rail was the unchallenged, dominant transportation technology and gave New Jersey a railroad landscape."; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission, at its meeting of January 12, 2023, heard the presentation of Thomas B. Connolly, AIA of Connolly & Hickey Historical Architects, and adopted as the Commission's findings, the findings in his report on the Plan dated January 7, 2023, that:

- The Train Station, inclusive of the sheds, is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places and is locally designated as a landmark. Such designations are not to be taken lightly and are based on the history and development of the site and the level of integrity including the value of an adaptive reuse.
- The Lackawanna Train Station in downtown Montclair is a significant architectural and engineering resource reflective of the expansion of the American railroad system at the turn of the 20th century. The significance of the station is viewed in its entirety meaning the station, the adjoining train platforms including the sheds that covered them, and the various entrance points for both pedestrians and the trains are all part of its significance as a cultural resource. Historically, train stations were a new form of architecture when passenger service was added in the late-19th century, and they created a relationship with the communities they served that

did not exist previously. It became a building with two fronts, one facing the community and one facing the railroad, each of equal importance. In addition, deep overhanging roofs or canopies either attached to the station or freestanding were defining architectural features in station architecture. The Lackawanna Station in Montclair served as a terminus for the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad becoming a hub for a growing suburban community with easy connections to Newark and Hoboken with only a short ferry trip to New York City from Hoboken. As such, the railroad company provided the Montclair community a distinctive station, architecturally, with six platforms to handle the daily traffic.

- The design and placement for the new buildings, the loss of context for the platforms especially separating them from the main station, as well as the renderings showing a passenger railcar in the middle of a plaza with bits of railroad track show the authors of the plan neither understand nor appreciate the historical significance of the site, its roles in the development of the Montclair, and the historical and architectural significance of the Montclair Town Center Historic District.

**WHEREAS**, the Commission finds that the Plan - which permits the demolition and/or disturbance of all existing historically designated structures, aside from the Terminal Waiting Room - is inconsistent with the established policies for preservation of all of the existing historic structures native to the Lackawanna Plaza Redevelopment Area, as set forth in the *Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan*, Section 347-126, et seq., of the Township Code, and the *2004 Nomination Report* which includes the entirety of the Lackawanna Plaza Redevelopment Area within the Town Center Historic District; and

**WHEREAS**, The Commission finds that the current Plan does not connect to the surrounding neighborhood in a significant manner and does not integrate with the eclectic styles of the Town Center Historic District as described in 347-127, which advocates that “new construction within or near historic districts ensure compatibility with the existing built environment and the Master Plan of Montclair; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission finds that the buildings, masses (height, width and depth) are out of scale and disproportionate to the historic scale of the immediately surrounding neighborhood and that the massive buildings will dominate and minimize the historic significance of the train station and the historic Redevelopment Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission submitted its recommendations to the Planning Board and Township Council in a resolution dated January 19, 2023, and the Commission now amends the resolution at a Special Meeting held January 27, 2023 to clarify its recommendations with respect to the Plan; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Historic Preservation Commission of the Township of Montclair that it does hereby recommend to the Planning Board and the Township Council that the Historic Preservation Commission shall be permitted oversight and approval of any historic element or structure slated for demolition and in order to bring the Plan into conformance with the *Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan*, the entire project be scaled down in order to conform to the preservation objectives of the *Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan* and to maintain the historic character of the Town Center Historic District and the Plan should be amended as follows:

1. I. I.B. INTRODUCTION – Plan Overview

Add sentence: “Preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, viewshed and historic structures on the site is required. The design should incorporate the historic structures, features and preserve the site’s heritage as a railroad terminal and gateway to Montclair.”

2. III. D. Bulk and Yield

III.D.4 Replace first sentence with: “Separation of upper floors to permit narrower towers in order to preserve the viewshed”.

Add “The upper story step back of Building A must be at the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (versus the 4<sup>th</sup> floor) to reduce its perceived scale relative to the train station and the neighborhood buildings”.

3. Section III.F, HISTORIC FEATURES AND STRUCTURES

Identify the historic structures on the Western Parcel and Eastern Parcel and illustrate in an Appendix as follows:

- Waiting Room – the two-story structure fronting on Lackawanna Plaza and abutting the western most portion of the Parcel; currently occupied by the Pineapple Express Restaurant. Ref. images 1,2 and 3 of the Appendix.
- Terminal Shed – the Structure comprising the western façade abutting Lackawanna Plaza (the street). Ref. images 4 and 5 of the Appendix.
- Steel stanchions – original structure creating the train platforms running parallel to Bloomfield Ave., Ref. images 6 and 7 of the Appendix.
- Horse trough. Ref. image 8 of the Appendix.
- Reinforced concrete stairs, balustrade and railing leading from the ground level parking lot to Grove Street. Ref. image 9 of the Appendix.
- Lighting columns (6 in total) which define the perimeter of the site. Ref. image 10 of the Appendix.
- Viewshed – open area from the corner of Bloomfield Ave. and Grove Street to the waiting room structure fronting on Lackawanna Plaza. Ref. image 11 and 12 of the Appendix.
- Copper Dome with concrete columns on the Eastern Parcel. Ref. image 13 of the Appendix.

Section III, F., HISTORIC FEATURES AND STRUCTURES

Description of the HISTORIC FEATURES AND STRUCTURES shall contain the word “SHALL be preserved” rather than “should” with the exception of the Copper Dome with concrete columns on the Eastern Parcel are to be described as “SHOULD be preserved”.

Add sentence: “If during excavation, original train tracks are uncovered, on either the west or east parcel, they should be adaptively integrated into the plaza”.

These features may, at times, be collectively referred to as the “historic structures and features”.

Add sentence: "All historic structures and features shall be retained in their original location".

The Commission recommends that Building C be eliminated to protect and enhance the viewshed from Bloomfield Avenue to the historic waiting room. The Main Plaza and the Station Plaza should be a single coherent plaza in order to protect the viewshed and maintain the stanchions, horse trough, and train sheds in their original location. At a minimum, the Commission recommends that the base dimensions of Building C be substantially reduced or the design of the building be otherwise altered so as not to interfere with the historic viewshed to the waiting room building and the identified historic structures and features.

#### 4. Section ID, CONTEXT

##### I.D.1 SITE – Addition to 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph:

"The Lackawanna Plaza Redevelopment Area is within the Town Center Historic District and Historic District Expansions (2002, 2003, and 2004) and includes structure(s) listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places (August 7, 1972), the Jersey Office of Historic Preservation Historic Sites Inventory of 1980, the National Register of Historic Places Inventory (January 8, 1973), and designated as a "key" building within the Town Center Historic District (May, 2003); and is deemed a "key" resource in the Thematic listing of Operating Passenger Railroad Stations (October 14, 1977) and is identified in the NJ CRGIS online viewer of the NJ DEP, Historic Preservation Office".

##### 5. I.D.1. SITE –

Include a graphic depiction of the Plan Area showing the historic site overlay on the entire site as shown in NJ CRGIS online viewer of the NJ DEP, Historic Preservation Office and the Town Center Historic District and Historic District Expansions (2002, 2003 and 2004).

#### 6. ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

##### III. D.9

Add additional bullet: "A meaningful pedestrian connection to Crane Park shall be provided".

#### 7. II GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – VISION

Second sentence to read: "The Plan includes standards for high-quality, pedestrian-oriented design, while respecting the historic character of the original Lackawanna Railroad Terminal site, including the Lackawanna Terminal waiting room, and additional features and structures of the entire site".

#### 8. II GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – LAND USES

Bullet 7 – Replace with "Adaptively reuse historic elements into the redevelopment project."

#### 9. II. C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – DESIGN

Bullet 1 – replace "reflect" with "complement".

Bullet 8 – replace "recommended" with "required".

10. III. C. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS -

III. C. 1. Intent

Bullet 2 – Replace sentence with: “Preserve the historic waiting room and terminal train shed. Any new building bordering these structures shall be set back and separate in order to accentuate the terminal train shed and the waiting room building”.

Bullet 4 – Replace 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence with “The retention in place of historic features such as the illuminated masonry piers, horse water trough and steel stanchions which support concrete canopies, known as ‘butterfly sheds’ over the train platforms shall be applied”.

11. VI PLAN CONSISTENCY REVIEW

VI. A. 1. Include reference to page 97 of HP Element of the Master Plan – Relevant preservation objectives:

1. Preservation and protection of historic fabric for present and future generations as a tangible link to the community’s past and as a record of the Township history.
2. Promotion of sustainability through the retention of existing historic buildings.
3. Cultivation of civic appreciation of the Township’s architectural, social, and cultural history and stewardship of its historic resources.
4. Safeguarding of the Township’s distinctive visual character through the retention of existing resources and the discouragement of the demolition of historic structures.
5. Encouragement of contextually appropriate new design that contributes to a sense of cohesiveness and meets the Township’s needs as a growing community.



Kathleen M. Bennett, Chair  
Montclair Historic Preservation Commission

## APPENDIX

### Waiting Room



Image 1.



Image 2.



Image 3.

## Terminal Shed



Image 4.



Image 5.



## Steel Stanchions



Image 6.



Image 7.

## Horse Trough



Image 8.

**Concrete Stairs, balustrade and railing**



**Image 9.**

**Lighting columns**



**Image 10.**

## Viewshed



Image 11.



Image 12.

## Dome



Image 13.