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Waldwick Train Station among state's most endangered historic buildings

Thursday, May 19, 2011

Last updated: Thursday May 19, 2011, 10:22 AM

BY JODI WEINBERGER

Waldwick Suburban News
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Waldwick - Preservation New Jersey announced this week that the Waldwick Train Station has made its 17th annual list of the 10 most-endangered historic places.

Buildings on the list, which also include the Zabriskie Tenant House in Paramus and the Atwood-Blauvelt Mansion in Oradell, were chosen based on historical significance, critical nature of the threat indentified and the likelihood that inclusion will have a positive impact on efforts to protect the endangered building. Sites were nominated by residents.

Doug Cowie, president of the Waldwick Community Alliance, a group of residents dedicated to restoring the station, said he hopes being on the list will increase awareness about the need to save it.



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The Alliance has worked tirelessly to restore the building, but hurdles presented by the state, county and NJ Transit has slowed progress.

The Alliance leased the station, and 8,546 square feet around it, from NJ Transit in 2009 but has since only been able to put a tarp on its dilapidated roof. The goal, Cowie says, is to transform it into a history museum.

To satisfy state and county requirements, the Alliance spent nearly \$30,000 producing studies and reports, including a historic structure report in 2009 and another that detailed the scope of the project.

"What is so difficult to stomach is that the WCA will be spending over \$50,000 in fees and paperwork before we even pick up a hammer," Cowie said. "This is due to how our state runs."

Recently, the Alliance was also asked to conduct a seismic study of the station, which was built in 1886, but closed by NJ Transit in

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the '70s.

The Alliance's architect, Grace Lynch of L&C Design Consultants in Secaucus, and historic preservationist Wayne McCabe, of McCabe and Associates, were able to convince the state that the study was not necessary.

There has been some progress, however.

Cowie said the Alliance recently awarded a contract to Precision Building & Construction of Bridgewater. He said Wednesday, May 18, that the entire project will likely cost more than \$500,000.

He explained that a historic preservation contractor costs more than other contractors because the firm has to be approved by the county and state to work on historically registered properties. Cowie said the Alliance will also have to pay workers "prevailing wage...which will increase our labor cost three to four times," and that NJ Transit is making the contractors carry "extremely high insurance policies and performance bonds equaling 120 percent of the cost of the work."

Cowie said he expects restoration to begin this summer. Phase 1 of the project includes removal of asphalt, re-grading of the site to provide better storm water drainage,



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replacing a rotten sill plate, making foundation repairs, the dismantling of an unstable chimney and the installation of a new chimney replicating the original. It will also include the installation of a new roof made of either natural or synthetic slate, and improvements to the building's windows, doors and siding.

E-mail: weinberger@northjersey.com

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