



This building at 1001 E. Brighton Ave. in Syracuse looks like it might have been part of a railroad depot at one time. Developer Joe Hucko said he may preserve the building when he redevelops the property with a complex of office, retail and apartment buildings. (Rick Moriarty / [rmoriarty@syracuse.com](mailto:rmoriarty@syracuse.com))

# Mystery ‘train depot’ might be saved

By Rick Moriarty  
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It looks like it’s waiting for the next train to pull up. But no railroad ever ran past the mysterious structure — at least not where the building stands on East Brighton Avenue.

The small, yellow building with an overhang roof looks like it once stood at a railroad depot. Instead, the long-vacant building stands where developer Joe Hucko is planning to build Brighton Mews, a \$6.2 million mix of commercial, retail and residential building and a nature trail.

The property at 1001 E. Brighton Ave. contains an abandoned gas station, a vacant home and garage — and the building that looks like it belongs at a railroad depot.

Plans Hucko submitted to the city for his project include demolishing all of the structures on the property. But Hucko told The Post-Standard

he might not demolish the railroad-style building because it is unusual. Instead, he said he may move it to the rear of the property, a wooded area where he is planning to create a nature trail.

No railroad runs past the property, so it’s unclear what the building is doing on the site. It has a door and three windows on the front, one window on each of its two sides and two windows on the back of the building.

Inside, the building is filled with junk, including old chairs, a table umbrella and a bag of calcium chloride, a salt used to melt ice on walkways and driveways. They look like they’ve been quite a while.

Hucko said he does not know the history behind the building — like where it came from or what it was used for.

Pamela Priest, archivist and research center manager at the Onondaga Historical Association, said she could

find no evidence that the building was moved from any local railroad depots.

Dennis Connors, curator of history for the association, said the building was vacant when he looked at it about 30 years ago when researching old trolley buildings. Trolley buildings often have an octagonal shape, so he decided this one, being square, was probably never part of a trolley stop, he said.

But while checking it out, a man who lived or worked in the Brighton Avenue area approached him and said the building was once used as a hot dog stand, Connors said.

“It does have an unusual design,” he said. “It looks like a place that could have served hot dogs or ice cream.”

*Do you know the history of this building? Email reporter Rick Moriarty at [rmoriarty@syracuse.com](mailto:rmoriarty@syracuse.com).*

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What they’re saying about the mystery “train depot.”

► **OLD GAS STATION:** It’s the original Zerebny gas station. Pete Zerebny’s parents, Metra and Mary, who were from Poland, started business in this small one-room gas station. When they built the new station they just moved the old station out back because living through the great depression they never demolished or threw away anything that could possibly be put to another use. Also I think Pete kept it for nostalgic reasons. — **alwayslookingforthetruth**