

**Town of Westfield
Historic Preservation Commission**

To: Mayor and Council

From: Maria Boyes, Chairwoman, Historic Preservation Commission

CC: Jim Gildea, Town Administrator; Tara Rowley, Town Clerk; Don Sammet, Town Planner; Tom Jardim, Town Attorney

Date: October 26, 2021

Re: Recommendation to Locally Designate as Historic the South Avenue Train Station Kiosk

At its regular monthly meeting of October 25, 2021, the Westfield Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to nominate the kiosk located at the Westfield South Avenue Train Station for preservation as a historic landmark, pursuant to the Town's Historic Preservation ordinance, G.O. 2183.

As you know, the kiosk, which had fallen into some amount of disrepair, has been fully renovated as a result of an appropriation of funds by the Mayor and Council. In addition, the Mayor and Council recently awarded a contract to a private company to operate a coffee and concierge service from the kiosk, an action that has wide support from the public, based upon a 2018 survey. The Commission fully supports these efforts, and we thank the Mayor and Council for its actions to protect this historic structure.

As required by section 5 of the Town of Westfield Historic Preservation ordinance, the Commission has prepared a nomination report examining the history of the kiosk, which is likely the last surviving in the country made of wooden construction, and represents a link to Westfield's past and to the American Newspaper conglomeration that served news to millions of Americans across the country. A copy of that report is attached.

For the reasons set forth in the report, and pursuant to Section 5(B)(1) of G.O. 2183, the Historic Preservation Commission nominates the kiosk for local designation as an historic landmark. Pursuant to Section 5(B)(1), should the Town Council accept the nomination of the Commission, such designation shall be adopted by ordinance as an amendment to the zoning ordinance, following the review required by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law.

Westfield Historic Preservation Commission Local Designation Nomination

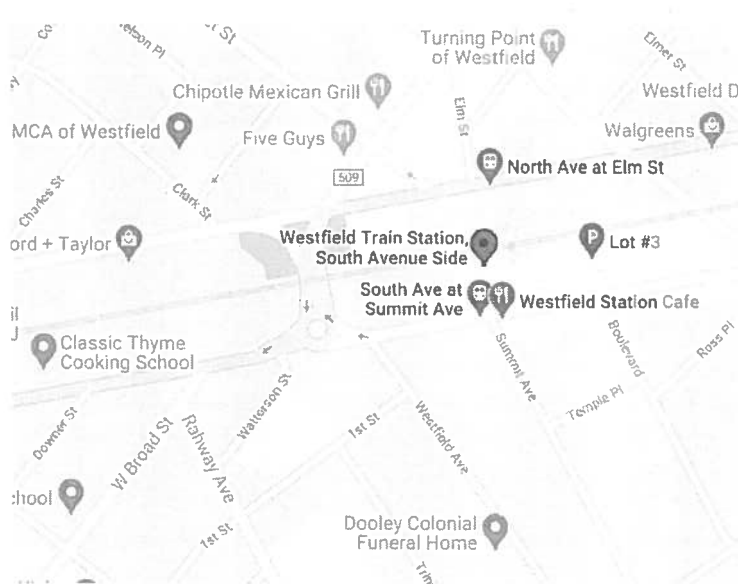
**Address: Union Company Newspaper Stand AKA Coffee Kiosk
Westfield, NJ 07090**

Location: Currently located at the South Street Train Station

Date of Establishment: 1893

Overview:

The Union Company Newspaper stand located at the South Avenue Train Station is a remnant of a by-gone era. Often referred to as the Coffee Hut or Coffee Kiosk, this diminutive structure is a physical remembrance of a time when newspapers controlled the flow of information throughout the United States and the railroad controlled the country's mobility.



Location Map – Source Google Maps

Historical Perspective

The American News Company consisted of two New York City Newspaper companies that merged in 1864. Sinclair Tousey's company on Nassau St., and the firm Dexter, Hamilton & Co. at 22 Ann St. were the two largest news organizations in New York City. With the end of the Civil War, and the completion of the trans-continental railroad in 1869, Congress legislated that railroads had to transport newspapers at a second class bulk rate at a specialized low rate of 1 cent per pound for any distance between news agencies. Newspapers could be shipped across the country as effectively the same cost as from Manhattan to Newark. The American Newspaper Company utilized the subsidy to expand their distribution network across the continent. Individual subsidiaries were developed to create newsstands across the country at all the rail stations as the primary source of delivering news to the American public. The Union News Company was the subsidiary in the Northeast and responsible for leveraging these news outlets at each of the major train stations in the form of specifically constructed newsstands.



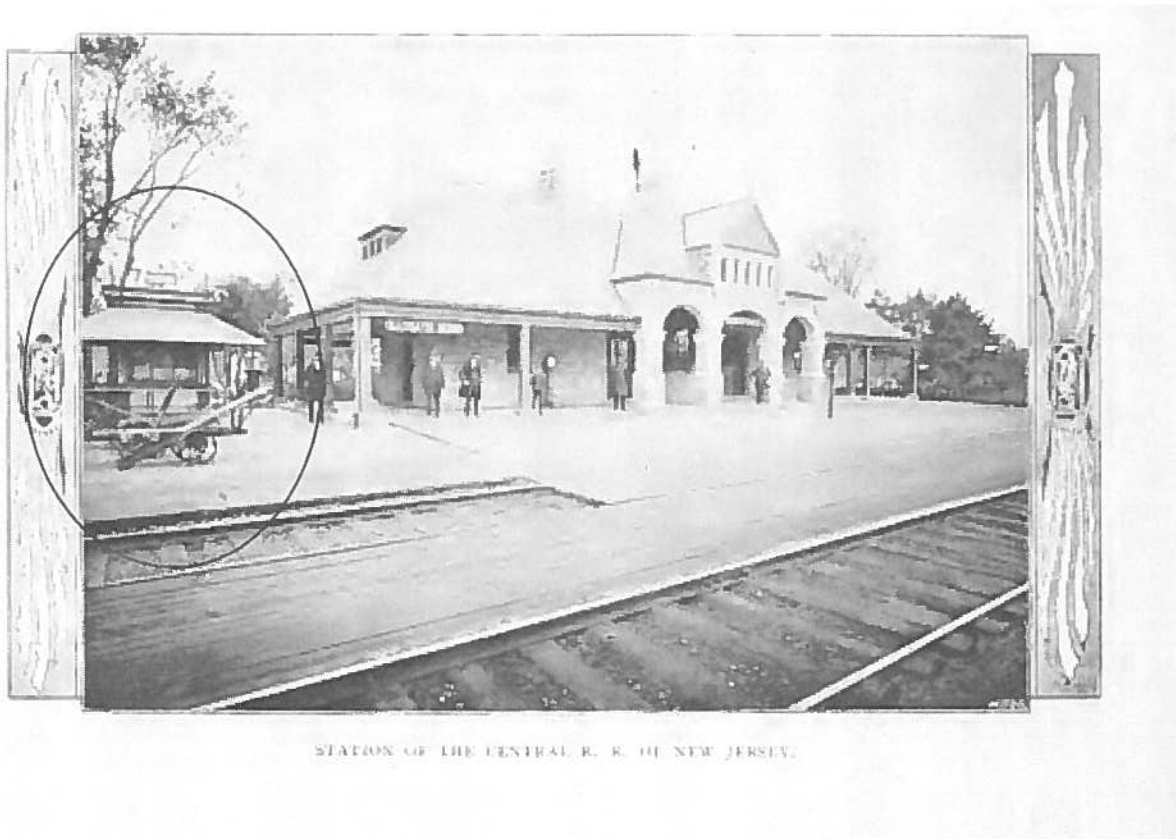
Westfield's newsstand or news kiosk is one of the last remaining exterior stands in the country and there are no more than a handful left countrywide. Those that do still exist, are indoors at specific rail stations (such as in the Buffalo Railway station) pictured below:



CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0)

Public Domain Dedication

However, the others do not date back as old as the Westfield kiosk which dates to 1893 at a minimum as illustrated in Hooker's Realtor book on Westfield, NJ homes and structures. It is quite possibly as old as the North Side train station itself which was built in 1892. Further research continues on the structure, but its age is certainly confirmed in the below photograph to 1893.



STATION OF THE CENTRAL R. R. OF NEW JERSEY.

Source: Westfield, NJ Illustrated by Ralph Moreton Hooker

Information is limited but there are photographs from the first couple of years after the North Avenue train station was built which shows the kiosk in place to the right of the North Avenue train station building on the West/North side of the tracks.

It was subsequently moved to the East/South side in the 1980's where it sits today. This structure is most likely the last surviving in the country of wooden construction and represents a link to Westfield's past and a link to the American Newspaper conglomerate that served news to millions of Americans across the country. This is an irreplaceable historic gem.