

**PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION FOR
AREA IN NEED OF
REDEVELOPMENT DETERMINATION
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**CITY OF PLAINFIELD,
NEW JERSEY**

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JULY 7, 2022



Grace Episcopal Church Area in Need of Redevelopment Preliminary Investigation - Non-Condemnation

City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey

Presented and approved by the Planning Board on July 7, 2022

Prepared for:



The original of this report was signed in accordance with NJSA 45:14A-12.

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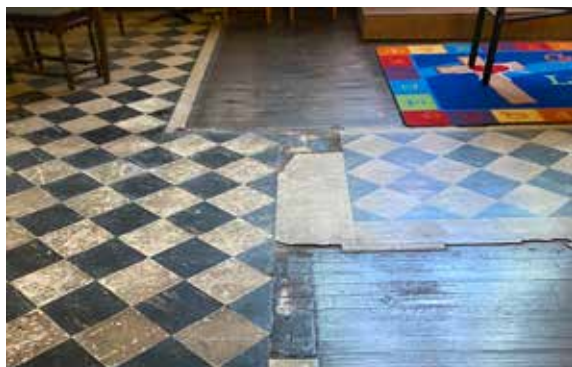


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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. (the "LRHL"), the City Council of the City of Plainfield (the "City Council") adopted Resolution R 190-22 on May 9, 2022, which authorized a preliminary investigation of Block 837, Lot 1 on the official tax maps of the City, commonly known as 117-127 East 7th Street (the "Study Area") to determine whether it meets the statutory criteria to be designated as a Non-condemnation redevelopment area.



Report Sections

This report contains five sections: Introduction, Study Area Characteristics, LRHL Statutory Criteria, Study Area Evaluation and Conclusion. Section 2 describes the Study Area in terms of its location, existing zoning and land use, physical, regulatory, fiscal and environmental conditions. Section 3 reviews and applies the statutory criteria and sets forth the findings based upon the characteristics and conditions of the Study Area that have been observed and analyzed. Section 4 summarizes and evaluates the Study Area, based upon the criteria set forth in the LRHL. Supporting documentation includes tax assessments, field observations, and photo surveys. Section 5 proposes recommendations to the City of Plainfield Planning Board relative to the designation of the Study Area as a Non-condemnation redevelopment area.

Methodology

On May 17, 2022, a site visit was conducted of the Study Area in order to investigate and analyze site conditions. A photo survey was completed to illustrate and inventory the physical conditions of the Study Area. Additionally, in preparation of this analysis, the following records and documents were reviewed:

- Official Tax Maps of the City of Plainfield;
- Tax records for the property located within the Study Area;
- City of Plainfield Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance;
- National Register of Historic Places nomination form;
- Home Inspection Report prepared by George White of Home Diagnostic Inspections, Inc. dated August 16, 2021 (the "2021 Inspection");
- Ownership information and property survey; and
- City Council Resolution R 190-22.

To this end, this report is a collection of the findings based on the research conducted.

1.1. Study Authorization

On May 9, 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution R 190-22 authorizing and directing the Planning Board to undertake an investigation of the Study Area and to make recommendations to the City Council as to whether the Study Area is “in need of redevelopment” in accordance with the criteria set forth in the LRHL. Once the Planning Board has made its recommendations, the City Council will consider whether to designate the Study Area as a Non-condemnation Redevelopment Area pursuant to the LRHL.

This report is written pursuant to Section 6 of the LRHL (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6) which requires the following:

1. No area of a municipality shall be determined a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality shall, by resolution, authorize the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in Section 5 of P.L. 1992/c.79 (C.40A:12A-5) ... The governing body of a municipality shall assign the conduct of the investigation and hearing to the planning board of the municipality.

2. (1) Before proceeding to a public hearing on the matter, the planning board shall prepare a map showing the boundaries of the proposed redevelopment area and the location of the various parcels of property included therein. There shall be appended to the map, a statement setting forth the basis of the investigation.

(2) The Planning Board shall specify a date for and give notice of a hearing for purpose of persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the delineated area is redevelopment area.

1.2. Scope of Study

This study is undertaken as a first step to engage, benefit and create opportunities through redevelopment planning, which involves the following steps:

- Conduct an inventory of the Study Area and physical characteristics of the same.
- Assess whether the existing characteristics and conditions meet the criteria to recommend the need for redevelopment, as outlined within the LRHL.
- Propose findings and recommendations relevant to the determination of the need for redevelopment of the Study Area.

1.3. Redevelopment Objectives

The renewal activities of the Study Area should be undertaken in conformity with, and should be designed to meet the following objectives of an area investigation:

- To improve the functional and physical layout of the project area for contemplated new development and the removal of impediments to land deposition.
- To provide redevelopment that minimizes the need to relocate residents or businesses.
- To create new employment/or housing opportunities for residents.

- To coordinate redevelopment activities that mitigate and eradicate blighted conditions.

1.4 Redevelopment Process

The LRHL provides the statutory authority for municipalities to engage in a number of redevelopment activities, including: designating an “Area in Need of Redevelopment,” preparing and adopting redevelopment plans and implementing redevelopment projects. More specifically, a redevelopment designation allows the municipality to:

1. Adopt a redevelopment plan that will identify the manner in which an area will be developed, including its use and intensity.
2. Issue bonds for the purpose of redevelopment.
3. Acquire property.
4. Lease or convey property in lieu of the public bidding process.
5. Collect revenue from a selected developer.
6. Grant tax exemptions and/or abatements.

The City can utilize the powers granted to municipalities under the LRHL to improve the conditions of the Study Area.

The LRHL sets forth a multi-step process that must be observed by the City Council and Planning Board in order to enable the City to lawfully exercise the powers of the LRHL. The steps required to declare an area in need of redevelopment must be undertaken pursuant to the LRHL. It should be noted that only upon completion of this public process is a municipality able to exercise the powers granted pursuant to the LRHL.

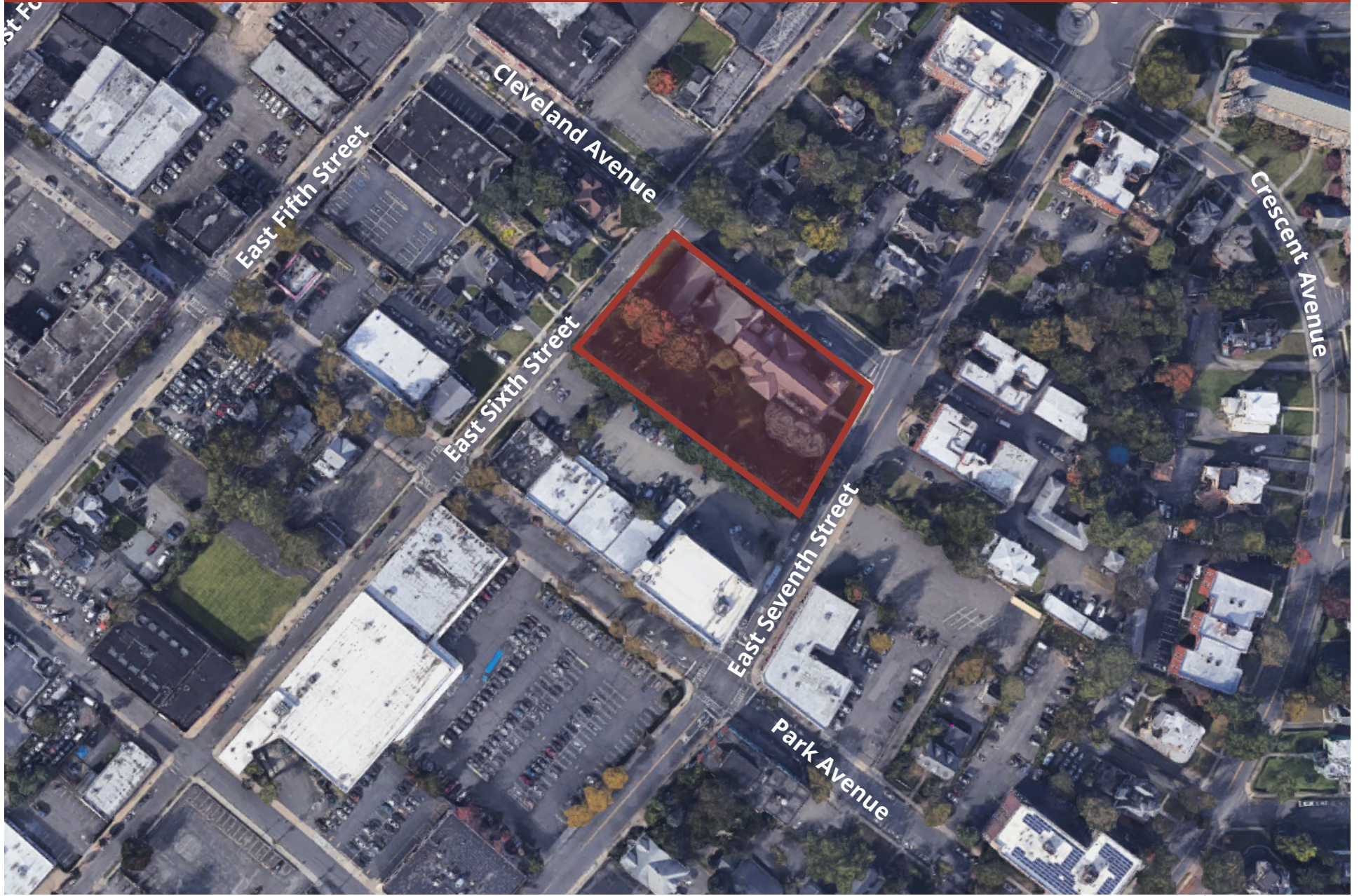
1.5. Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Areas

P.L. 2013, Chapter 159 amended the LHRL to allow two types of redevelopment area: Condemnation Redevelopment Areas and Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Areas. The amendment requires the resolution authorizing the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation to state whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the State Legislature for use in a redevelopment area other than the use of eminent domain (a “Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area”) or whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area, including the power of eminent domain (a “Condemnation Redevelopment Area”). The City Council authorized a study for a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area for the Study Area.

2.0 STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS

2.1. Locational Context

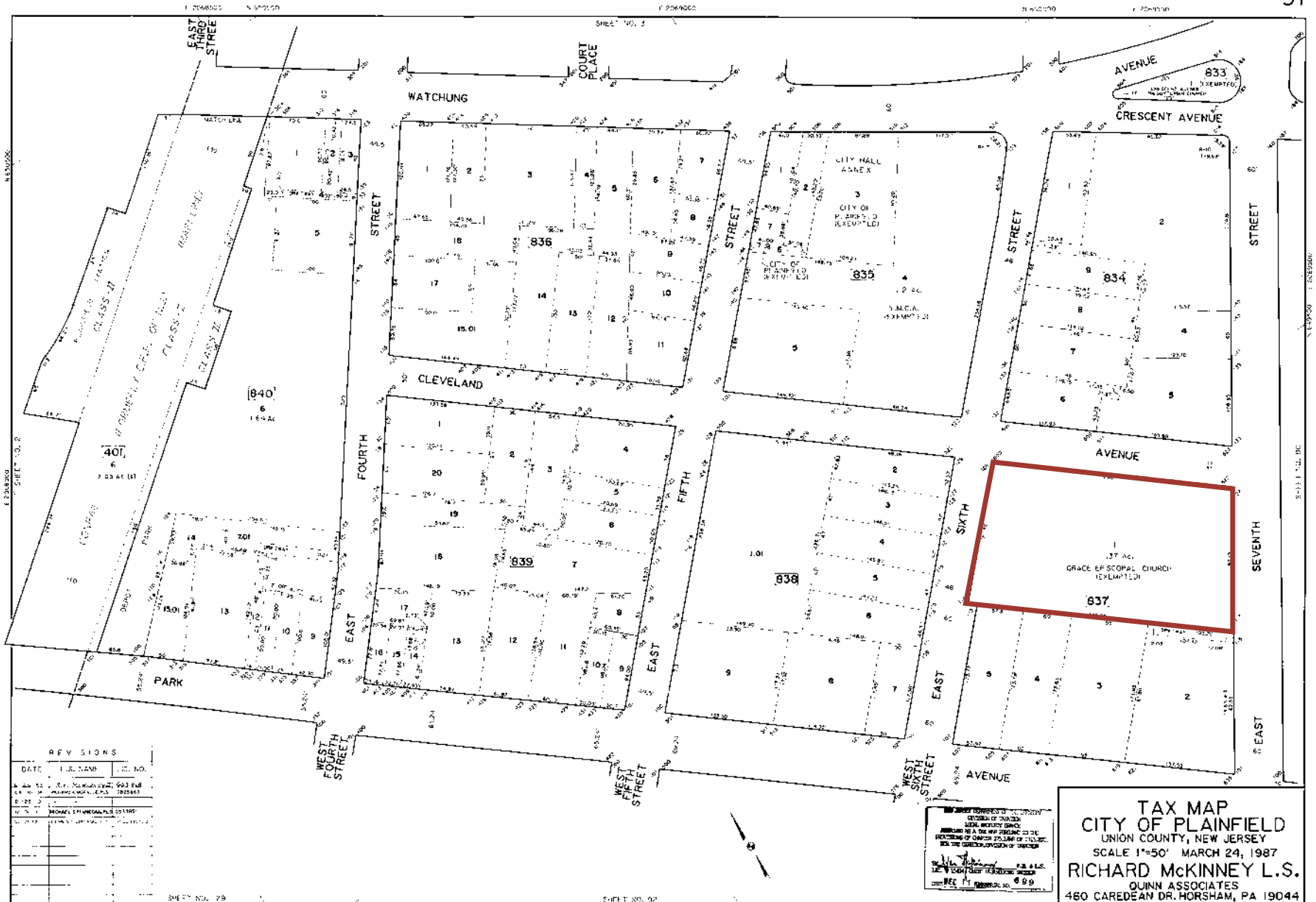
According to the 2020 American Community Survey, the Study Area is located in Census Tract 393.02, which has a total population of 3,129 residents. As depicted on Map 1, the Study Area contains frontages along three streets: East 6th Street to the north, Cleveland Avenue to the east and East 7th Street to the south. The Study Area consists of one tax parcel, as shown on Map 2. The Study Area has a total area of approximately 1.38 acres and is in the City’s 2nd Ward.



Source: Google Maps. Accessed 2022.



Map 1: Study Area



Source: City of Plainfield Tax Map 12

Study Area

Map 2: Tax Map



Brief Property Development Timeline

According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination form, the Grace Episcopal Church was constructed in 1892. The chancel was expanded in 1929 and in 1957 at which time the parish hall and kitchen were added. A second floor of the parish hall was constructed in 1957 to provide classrooms. In 1968, the Ackerman Memorial Garden was created.

Regional Setting

The City of Plainfield is located within Union County, New Jersey. Plainfield is bordered by eight municipalities: in Union County, the Borough of Fanwood to the north and the Township of Scotch Plains to the north and east; in Somerset County, the Boroughs of Watchung and North Plainfield to the west; in Middlesex County, the Borough of Dunellen to the south, the Township of Piscataway to the southeast and the Borough of South Plainfield to the east.

Public Transportation

The City is served by two train stations located on New Jersey Transit's Raritan Valley Line. These train stations are the Plainfield Train Station and the Netherwood Train Station. The Study Area is situated approximately 1,000 feet south of the Downtown Plainfield Train Station. Additionally, there are multiple New Jersey Transit bus routes that serve the City. The Study Area is located approximately 475 feet west of stops along Bus Routes 65, 114 and 819.

2.2. Existing Zoning

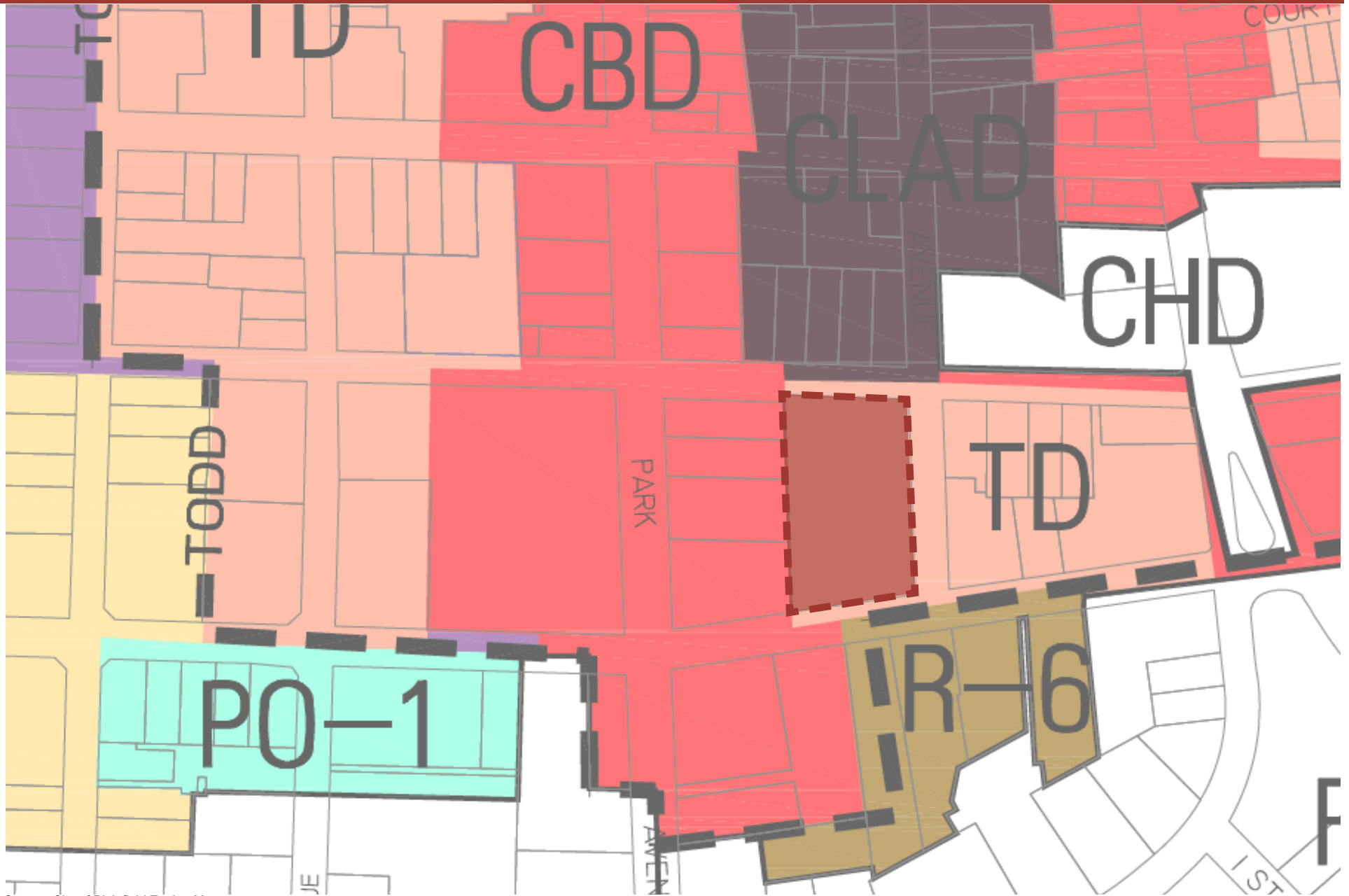
As shown on Map 3, the entire Study Area is located within the TODD/Transition District (TODD/TD). As discussed in the City's Zoning Ordinance (Section 17:9-18.2. I), the purpose this zone is that "[t]his district serves as a transition between the high intensity

uses permitted in the TODD, CBD, NAHD, CLAD and PD Districts and the surrounding lower density housing and commercial uses at the perimeter of the TODD Zone.." This zone permits the following uses:


- Mixed-use structures
- Apartments
- Townhomes
- Child care center
- Retail sales
- Personal service establishments
- Offices
- Art studios
- Art galleries
- Museums
- Taverns
- Restaurants
- Bank, with drive-through facility
- Bank, excluding drive-through facility
- Health and fitness club
- Banquet halls
- Parking lots
- Laundromats
- Nursing homes
- Adult day care facilities
- Assisted living facilities
- Funeral homes
- Houses of worship
- Fraternal organizations
- Open space

As indicated in Schedule B of the City's Land Use Ordinance, there are no bulk and area zoning requirements for the TODD/TD District.



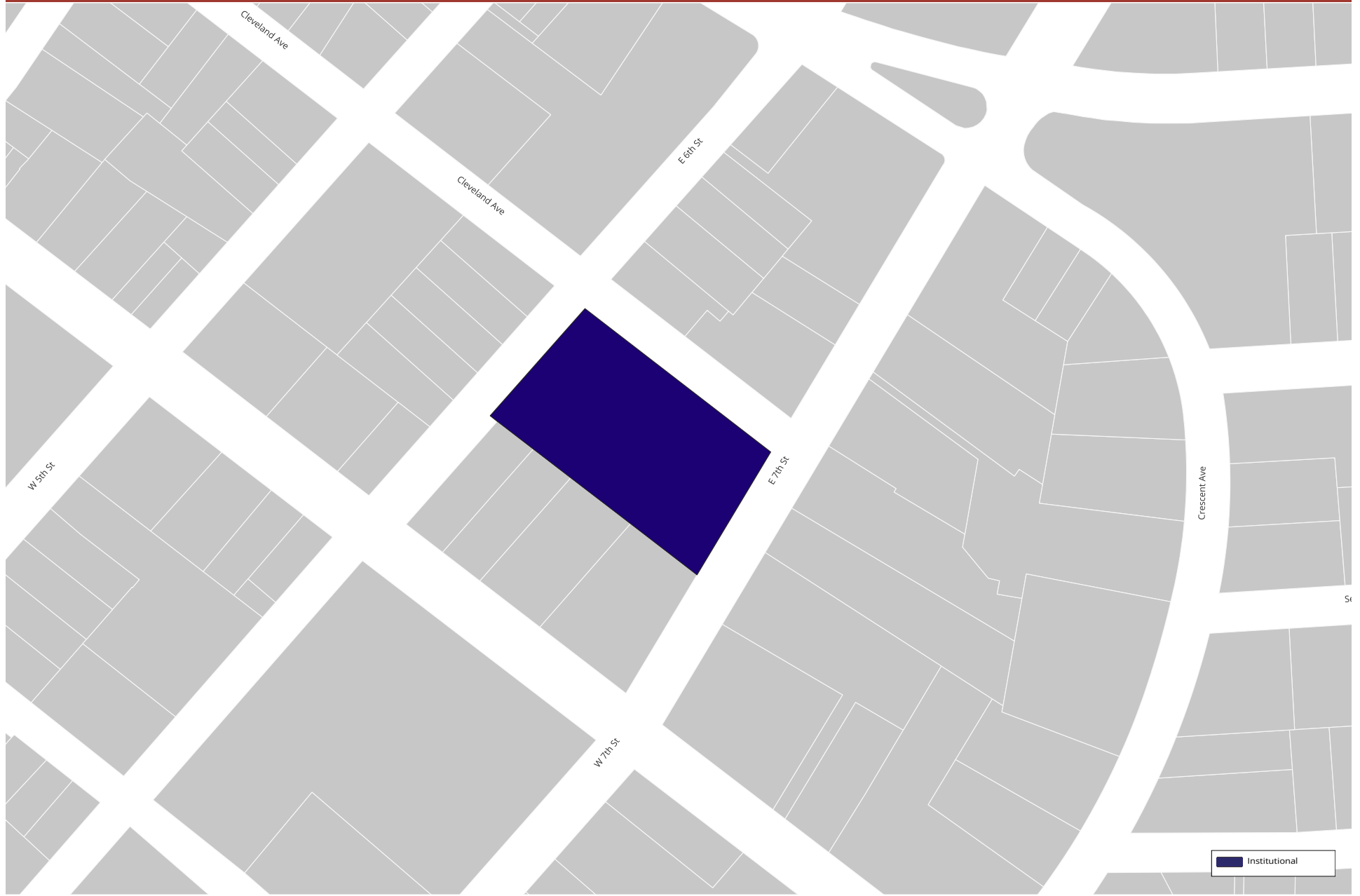


Source: City of Plainfield Zoning Map

 Study Area

Map 3: Existing Zoning





Map 4: Existing Land Use

2.3. Existing Land Use

The existing land use of the Study Area parcel is detailed on Map 4. Block 837, Lot 1 is classified as an institutional use as a house of worship, Grace Episcopal Church, occupies the site.

2.4. Relevant Planning Studies

2020 Master Plan

The City's 2020 Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Board in August 2020. There are numerous goals, objectives, and excerpts stated in this Plan that are consistent and relevant to the Study Area:

- Continue to further the goals from the 2009 Master Plan: Revitalize/redevelop underutilized areas. (Land Use Element, pg. 20)
- Promote the redevelopment of vacant, abandoned and underutilized properties. (Economic Development, pg. 66)
- "Diversify Housing Options: The City should continue to pursue the revitalization, and adaptive reuse, of dilapidated, obsolete, and underutilized commercial and industrial buildings for the production of new housing units where appropriate." (Housing Element, pg. 46/62)
- Continue to further goals from the 2009 Master Plan: Restore stability in "transitional areas". (Land Use Element, pg. 20)
- "Cleveland Avenue has the potential to serve as the gateway to the arts, as well as the City. Additionally, this designation could make the area attractive to ancillary businesses, such as arts supplies stores, music instrument shops and bookstores." (Economic Plan

Element, pg. 80)

Other Redevelopment Areas in the Neighborhood

TODD South Redevelopment Area

In January 2020, the City Council adopted the Transit Oriented Development District (TODD) South Redevelopment Plan. This plan has been subsequently amended in November 2020. The plan area is NJ Transit's Raritan Valley Line right-of-way to the north; Central Avenue, Madison Avenue, and Arlington Avenue to the west; East 6th Street and East 7th Street to the south; and Watchung Avenue to the east. This plan area is divided into multiple subdistricts: Central Business District; Cleveland Arts and Culture District; Institutional District; Light Industrial District and Medium/Moderate-Density Residential District. The goals of this Plan are: 1. Promote Transit-Oriented Development and Transit Usage; 2. Stimulate Economic Development; 3. Promote Active Commercial Corridors; 4. Infuse Arts and Culture into the Community; 5. Improve Site Design and Layout; and 6. Incorporate Principles of Sustainability.

Scattered City Owned Parking Lots and Adjacent Lots Redevelopment Area

In August 2020, the City Council adopted the Scattered City Owned Parking Lots and Adjacent Lots Redevelopment Plan. This plan consists of four City Owned parking lots as well as lots contiguous with Parking Lot #1. There are four subdistricts within the plan: East Second Street District, West Front Street Parking District, East Front Street District, and East 7th Street District. The goals of this plan consist of: 1. Promote Transit-Oriented Development and Usage; 2. Stimulate Economic Development; 3. Manage Parking, Circulation

and Accessibility; and 4. Incorporate Principles of Sustainability.

2.5. Urban Enterprise Zone, Opportunity Zone and Smart Growth Classification

Urban Enterprise Zone

The entire Study Area is located within the City's Urban Enterprise Zone (the "UEZ"). One of 32 designated UEZs in the State of New Jersey, business located within a UEZ are provided benefits such as reduced sales tax, tax free purchases on certain items such as capital equipment, facility expansions, upgrades and certain personal property, financial assistance from agencies such as NJEDA, subsidized unemployment insurance costs for certain employees, energy sales tax exemption, and tax options. Tax options consist of up to \$1,500 for new permanent full-time employee hired or up to 8% corporate business tax credits on qualified investments. The UEZ designation is important as it can be used as a mechanism for funding in efforts to revitalize the Study Area.

Opportunity Zone

The entire Study Area is located within a designated Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones are designed to drive long-term capital investments into low-income communities. Federal capital gains tax incentives encourage investors to support investment in designated low-income district communities through participation in Qualified Opportunity Funds.

Smart Growth Classification

Smart Growth commonly refers to growth that serves the environment,

economy, and community equally. When possible, it attempts to concentrate development into already-existing communities. Additionally, it addresses the inherent interconnections between environmental protection, social equity, public health, and economic sustainability. Selected areas throughout the State of New Jersey are designated as a Smart Growth Area. They are designated by the Department of State, Office for Planning Advocacy, from spatial data relating to the NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and several other master plans.

The City of Plainfield is located in the smart growth boundary for a Metropolitan Planning Area 1 (PA1). This area includes a variety of municipalities that range from large urban centers to 19th century towns shaped by commuter rail. The communities in the area have strong ties to major metropolitan centers-New York/Newark/Jersey City Metropolitan Region; the Philadelphia/Camden/Trenton Metropolitan Region; and on a smaller scale, the Easton/Phillipsburg Metropolitan Region.

The following are the ten (10) accepted principles of Smart Growth:

1. Mixed land uses;
2. Take advantage of existing communities assets;
3. Foster walkable neighborhoods;
4. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
5. Promote distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
6. Preserve open space, farmland and critical environmental area;
7. Strengthen and encourage growth in existing communities;
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices;

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION



- Study Area
- Bus Stops
- Open Space



- 9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective; and
- 10. Encourage citizen and stakeholder participation in development decisions.

The Study Area is situated approximately 0.3 miles south of the Downtown Plainfield Train Station. It is in close proximity to several community amenities and services including New Jersey Department of Human Services – Division of Developmental Disabilities, Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church, City Hall, Plainfield Police Headquarters, Plainfield Public Library, Evergreen Elementary School and Plainfield High School.

2.6. Municipal Actions

City records were requested from City departments regarding property management, building code violations, and other incidents within the Study Area. Research conducted indicates the following municipal actions.

Division of Code Enforcement and Inspections

The Division of Code Enforcement and Inspections provided records on June 14, 2021. There were no records that were dated since 2017. There was a hazardous sidewalk complaint in 2014.

Tax Collector

On May 11, 2022, the Tax Department provided tax records of the Study Area. The Study Area parcel has a property classification of ‘church and charitable property’. As indicated by the Tax Collector, there are no open City liens on this property.

Police Division

The Plainfield Police Division provided crime records on file for the Study Area parcel on March 11, 2022. There were 7 records of incidents that occurred between 2017 and present. These records are summarized in Table 1 below

Table12: Police Data - Block 837, Lot 1 - Crime Incidents

Incident Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total by Type
Robbery	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aggravated Assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burglary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Theft	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Theft of Motor Vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rape/Sexual Assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disorderly Persons	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Simple Assaults	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Total	4	0	0	0	0	0	7

Source: City of Plainfield Police Division

Fire Department

On May 12, 2022, the Plainfield Fire Department reported that



there were 20 fire or emergency incidents that occurred on the Study Area between 2017 to present. These records are listed in the Appendix of this report.

Division of Health

On June 16, 2022, the Division of Health indicated that there were no records on file involving the Study Area property.

Plainfield Municipal Utilities Authority (PMUA)

On May 11, 2022, PMUA provided information pertinent to the Study Area's sanitary sewer. It was noted that the lines are 80-90 years old and made of vitrified clay. The PMUA did not have any information regarding the laterals.

Planning Division

Environmental/Brownfield Records

The Study Area parcel is not listed as a brownfield site as per the City's Brownfields Map, dated April 2007.

Land Use Boards Applications

On May 23, 2022, the City's Planning Division advised that there were no land use application records involving the Study Area property from 2016 to present.

Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

On May 23, 2022, records from the City's Historic Preservation Commission were provided. Since 2012, there was one application

record on file. An application was filed for a new freestanding sign with lettering cabinet in 2015 and this application was approved by HPC.

3.0. LRHL STATUTORY CRITERIA

Criteria for Area In Need of Redevelopment

The laws governing redevelopment by municipalities in New Jersey are set forth in the LRHL - this statute grants the governing body of a municipality the power to authorize the Planning Board to conduct a study to determine whether an area is in need of redevelopment; to make such a determination following the completion of the study; and to adopt a redevelopment plan for the designated area. Such an area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment only if, after an investigation by the Planning Board and a public hearing for which notice has been given, it is found to meet one or more of the following eight criteria:

1. "Criteria A." The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.
2. "Criteria B." The discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies or such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable.

3. **“Criteria C.”** Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography, or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.

4. **“Criteria D.”** Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental



to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.

5. **“Criteria E.”** A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general.

6. **“Criteria F.”** Areas, in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the areas has been materially depreciated.

7. **“Criteria G.”** In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act, P.L. 1983, c. 303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L. 1991, c. 431 (C.40A:20-1 et

seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L. 1991, c. 441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). The municipality shall not utilize any other redevelopment powers within the urban enterprise zone unless the municipal governing body and planning board have also taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements prescribed in P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) for determining that the area is in need of redevelopment or an area in need of rehabilitation and the municipal governing body has adopted a redevelopment plan ordinance including the area of the enterprise zone.

8. **“Criteria H.”** The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.

In addition to the above criteria, individual properties that do not meet any of the statutory conditions may still be included within an area in need of redevelopment provided that within the area as a whole, one or more of the expressed conditions are prevalent. This provision is referred to as “Section 3” and is set forth under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-3, which states in part that “a redevelopment area may include lands, buildings, or improvements which of themselves are not detrimental to public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in this condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area of which they are a part.”

3.1. Application of Study Area Criteria

The finding that an area is in need of redevelopment is an area wide determination. As such, the statutory charge for a positive finding of redevelopment eligibility requires a demonstration of physical deterioration, illustrated by the presence of improvements, which are dilapidated, obsolete and faulty in term of arrangement, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities or in any way detrimental to the safety, health, morals or general welfare of the community.

The conditions evidenced by this Needs Determination Study are measured against the criteria for designation of a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area and summarized in a fashion that enables a determination to be made regarding whether one or more criteria is prevalent within the Study Area.

4.0. STUDY AREA EVALUATION

4.1. Study Approach

Nishuane Group, LLC conducted site visits and prepared a photo survey of the Study Area to establish and confirm existing conditions and land uses. The firm reviewed relevant plans and municipal documents (i.e. City of Plainfield's Master Plan, City of Plainfield's Zoning and Land Development Ordinances, and City Council Resolution) related to the Study Area. Property records of the Study Area were obtained from City agencies in support of the existing conditions assessment. The information retrieved by the firm allowed planners to holistically evaluate the conditions of the Study Area.

4.2. Property Evaluation:

The following is a breakdown of the Study Area, examining its characteristics, site analysis and LRHL criteria applied, if any.



117-127 EAST 7TH STREET (BLOCK 837, LOT 1) PROPERTY EVALUATION

Owner: Grace Episcopal Church

Property Class: 15D (Church and charitable property)

Property Characteristics:

Also commonly referred to as 600 Cleveland Avenue property has an area of approximately 1.38 acres. It has frontage along three streets: East 6th Street to the north, Cleveland Avenue to the east and East 7th Street to the south. The Study Area is located within the TODD/Transition District (TD) Zoning District. The Grace Episcopal Church stands on the property. It has a seating capacity of approximately 700 patrons. The Ackerman Memorial Garden is situated east of the house of worship building. An iron fence surrounds the perimeter of the property.

The former house of worship is listed on the State (December 20, 2001) and National (May 10, 2002; NR Reference #: 02000106) Registers of Historic Places¹. A Certificate of Eligibility is dated May 27, 1997. It was locally designated as City Historic Site on June 19, 2006.

Site Analysis:

A site visit was conducted on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 between 10:30am and 12:30pm. The interior of the building and the exterior grounds were observed.



¹As per the historic list prepared and maintained by the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office, the property is identified as Grace Episcopal Church (ID#62) with an address of 600 Cleveland Avenue.

At the lower level, there is a multi-purpose room/gym and choir room. Flanking the multi-purpose room are smaller rooms previously used as classrooms and offices serving the operation of the Plainfield Community Outreach organization. The main office of the Plainfield Community Outreach is accessed via the choir room. Various other utility rooms are also situated on the lower level. There is also a basement area used for storage, including the organ operational equipment and utilities. The main level contains Knickle Hall, which is the primary room where services were held. There is also a kitchen, main office, meeting room, vestry lounge, Chapel of the All Saints, Rector's office, parish office, sacristy, and Bell Tower, which houses the bell carillon containing 47 bells. Within Knickle Hall, there are stained glass windows made by Tiffany Studios. The upper level of the building contains classrooms, offices and stairwell access to the floors below.

There is limited use of the building. The only active portion of the building is the kitchen, which operates as a soup kitchen for only a few days per month. Worship services have not been held at the church for at least two years. As mentioned by representatives of Grace Church, with the lack of congregation services, parishioners and donations, limitations on financial resources have created significant obstacles in maintaining the building, grounds, and property in general. The lack of routine maintenance and repairs has caused significant deterioration of the building and property. With the lack of revenue anticipated for the future as well, this deterioration is expected worsen.

Homeless individuals have gravitated to this property and have previously broken into the church. These individuals have occupied the areas throughout the property for periods of time and have left behind debris, trash on the grounds and even brought mattresses

up to the roof to sleep.

The property contains areas of accumulated debris, which appear to have remained stagnant for a substantial period of time. The 2021 Inspection noted; (1) evidence of an underground oil storage tank, (2) the sidewalk along the west side of the parish hall is pitched toward the building contributing to apparent water leaks and resulting damage, and (3) the wooden ramp and staircase on the east side of the church is in poor condition and in need of major repairs due to loose boards and broken handrails.

The 2021 Inspection noted; (1) the exterior of the building contains cracks in the mortar, (2) several exterior doors are in poor condition and need to be replaced, (3) windows are in poor condition necessitating the use of plastic to prevent drafts, (4) there are many areas of the roof where shingles are missing and overall the roof is in need of major repairs.

The 2021 Inspection noted; (1) active termites in the west side of the basement under the sanctuary, (2) pipe-wrapped, asbestos insulation had fallen on many areas of the floor of the basement/crawlspace area under the sanctuary, (3) damaged and water stained tiles were noted throughout the building indicating that the roof is leaking, (4) vinyl flooring that contains asbestos was noted in all areas of the building and many areas of the flooring are damaged and could lead to fiber release, which is a health risk, (5) peeling and chalking paint was noted in many areas of the building and due to the age of the building, the 2021 Inspection surmised that the paint likely contains lead, (6) an existing circular staircase from the narthex to the basement is closed off and has a bottom post that is rotten and the 2021 Inspection warned not to use the staircase as it is dangerous, (7) Federal Pacific electric panels were

observed and are dangerous due to faulty breakers, (8) corrugated stainless steel tubing gas piping on the newer boilers with no #6 copper bonding cable, which is a dangerous condition, and (9) all six boilers need to be serviced as some have excessive corrosion in the flue pipes and others have leaks.

Satisfies LRHL Criteria:

- **Criteria "A":** Water stains and damage from water leaks were present during the internal site visit. This damage was noted on the ceiling and walls. Asbestos exists within the floor tiles, which is a known safety and human health hazard and is especially present in Knickle Hall, the building's primary gathering area. The water leaks and damage has led the painted walls to peel. Ceiling tiles in the kitchen were also peeling and in need of replacement. Similarly, there were floor tiles in the kitchen that were missing or in need of repair. The basement also demonstrated signs of deterioration with similar conditions, including exposed electrical wires, peeling paint, and scattered debris. Overall, these deteriorating building conditions create an unsafe and dilapidated environment rendering this building no longer conducive to wholesome living or working conditions.
- **Criteria "D":** The conditions of both the building and grounds are detrimental to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community. These physical conditions, especially the presences of asbestos and mold, are hazardous to the patrons, clergy and soup kitchen volunteers. Further, the property serves as an attractive nuisance as evidenced by incidents of individuals breaking into the building and bringing mattresses on the roof. With the deficiency of financial revenue, the lack of maintenance will continue and lead to further dilapidation. Collectively, these conditions contribute to the detriment of the public health, safety



and general welfare of the community and detract from the investment in the neighborhood.

- **Criteria "G":** The lot is located within the City's UEZ boundaries.
- **Criteria "H":** Block 837, Lot 1 is consistent with Smart Growth principles because the lot is approximately 960 feet south of the Downtown Plainfield Train Station. Additionally, it is in close proximity to several community amenities including New Jersey Department of Human Services – Division of Developmental Disabilities, Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church, City Hall, Plainfield Police Headquarters, Plainfield Public Library, Evergreen Elementary School and Plainfield High School.

Recommendation:

Based on the existing conditions of Block 837, Lot 1 as described in detail above, the Study Area satisfies Criteria A, D, G and H and should be designated as an "area in need of redevelopment".



4.3. Findings

Based upon the analysis above, it can be concluded that Block 837, Lot 1 meets several of the LRHL statutory criteria. It is suggested that the Plainfield Planning Board recommend that the City Council designate Block 837, Lot 1 as a Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area based on the findings below:

Area In Need of Redevelopment Criteria

A: Criteria "A" is applied to the Study Area. The Grace Church building conditions are, unsafe and dilapidated. Due to the damage and disrepair existing within the building, it is not conducive to

wholesome worshipping, living or working conditions in its current state.

B: Criteria "B" does not apply to the Study Area.

C: Criteria "C" does not apply to the Study Area.

D: Criteria "D" is applied to the Study Area. The existing building conditions exhibit deterioration both on the interior and exterior of the building and on the grounds. The presence of asbestos, water damage, peeling paint, exposed wires as well as other interior deficiencies are hazardous to the public health, safety and general welfare of patrons, soup kitchen volunteers, and clergy.



The accumulation of debris, litter, overgrown vegetation and other signs of neglectful property maintenance demonstrate negative impacts to the surrounding community, including attracting homeless and other nefarious activity. The site overall contains physical conditions that are detrimental to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

E: Criteria "E" does not apply to the Study Area.

F: Criteria "F" does not apply to the Study Area.

G: Criteria "G" is applied to the Study Area. The Study Area is located within the City's UEZ. Criteria G states "In municipalities in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the NJ Enterprise Zones Act, P.L. 1983, c.303 (c.52:37H-60et. seq.) the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of development. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs has designated Plainfield as one of the 32 Urban Enterprise Zones.

H: Criteria "H" is applied to the Study Area. In 2003, the LRHL was amended to include smart growth criteria which encouraged livable neighborhoods. It is a planning approach that directs new growth to locations where infrastructure and services are available, limits sprawl development, protects the environment, and enhances and rebuilds existing communities. The existing neighborhood, in which the Study Area is located, has public transportation options, is surrounded by mixed use development, open spaces and other City amenities. Consequently, Block 837, Lot 1 is a prime location

for redevelopment.

Section 3: Section 3 does not apply to the Study Area.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The foregoing investigation report has been prepared to determine whether the Study Area meets the statutory criteria for designating an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" pursuant to the LRHL. Block 837, Lot 1 demonstrates building and site deterioration and underutilization that is detrimental to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community, in addition to opportunities for new and appropriate development. The existing conditions of Block 837, Lot 1 do not support the development goals and objectives of the Master Plan.

For the reasons articulated in Sections 2.6 and 4.0 of this report, it is recommended that the City Council and Planning Board take the action necessary as prescribed by the LRHL to declare Block 837, Lot 1 as a Non-condemnation "Area in Need of Redevelopment". Once declared as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment", a redevelopment plan can be prepared and implemented to ensure proper utilization and development of the property.

6.0 APPENDICES

Site photos
Fire Department records
Resolution R 190-22





Grounds, Memorial Garden, and accumulated trash



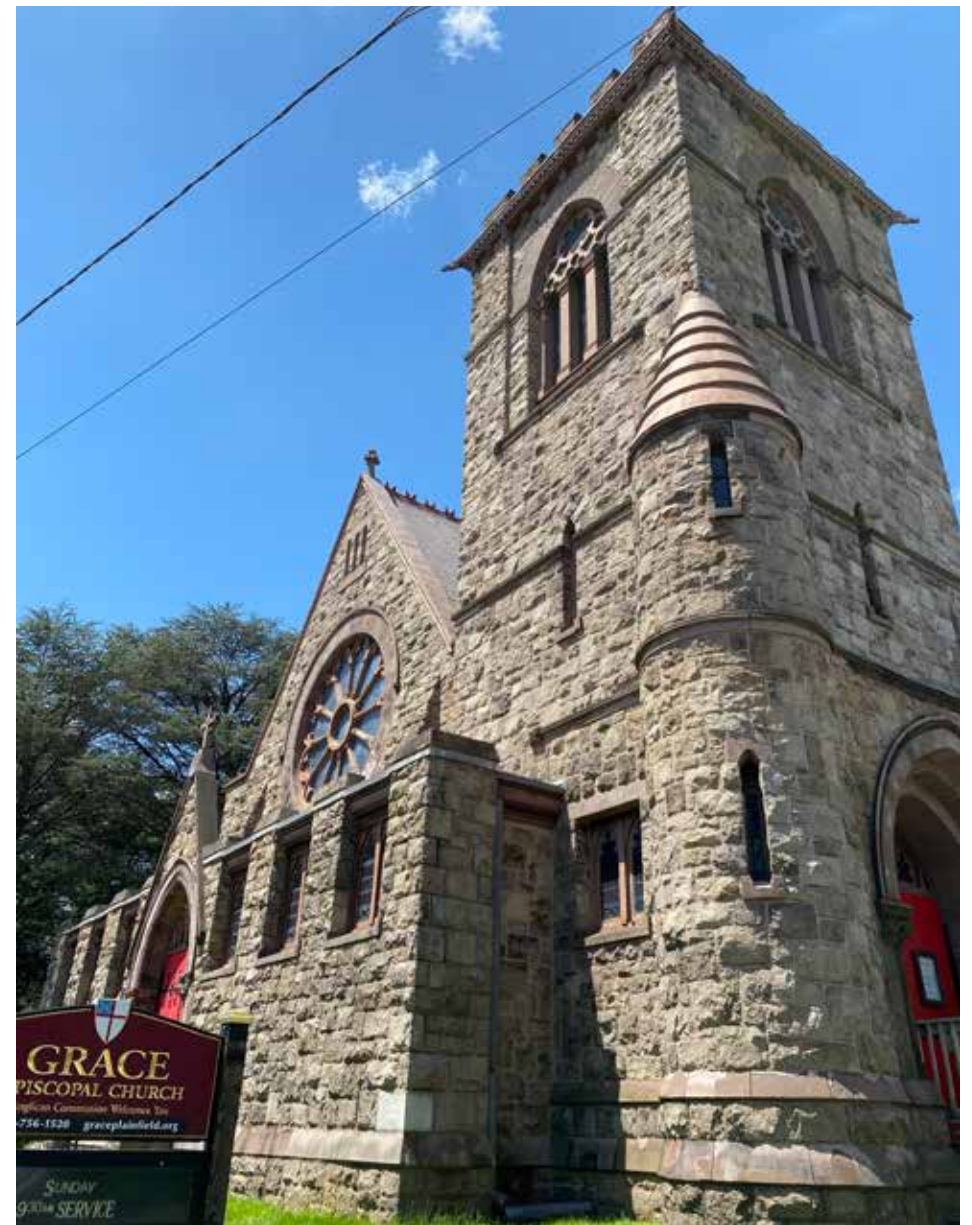
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION





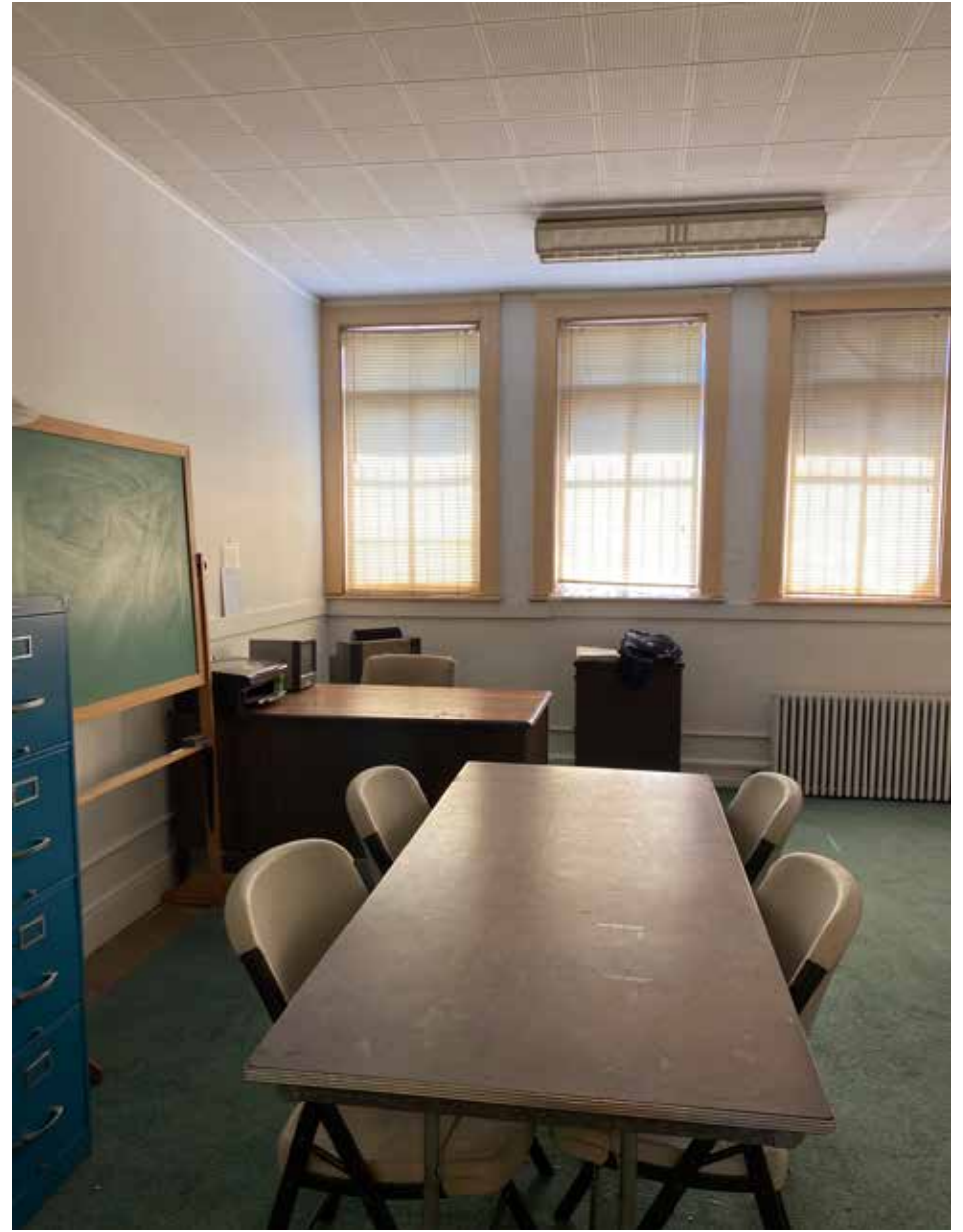


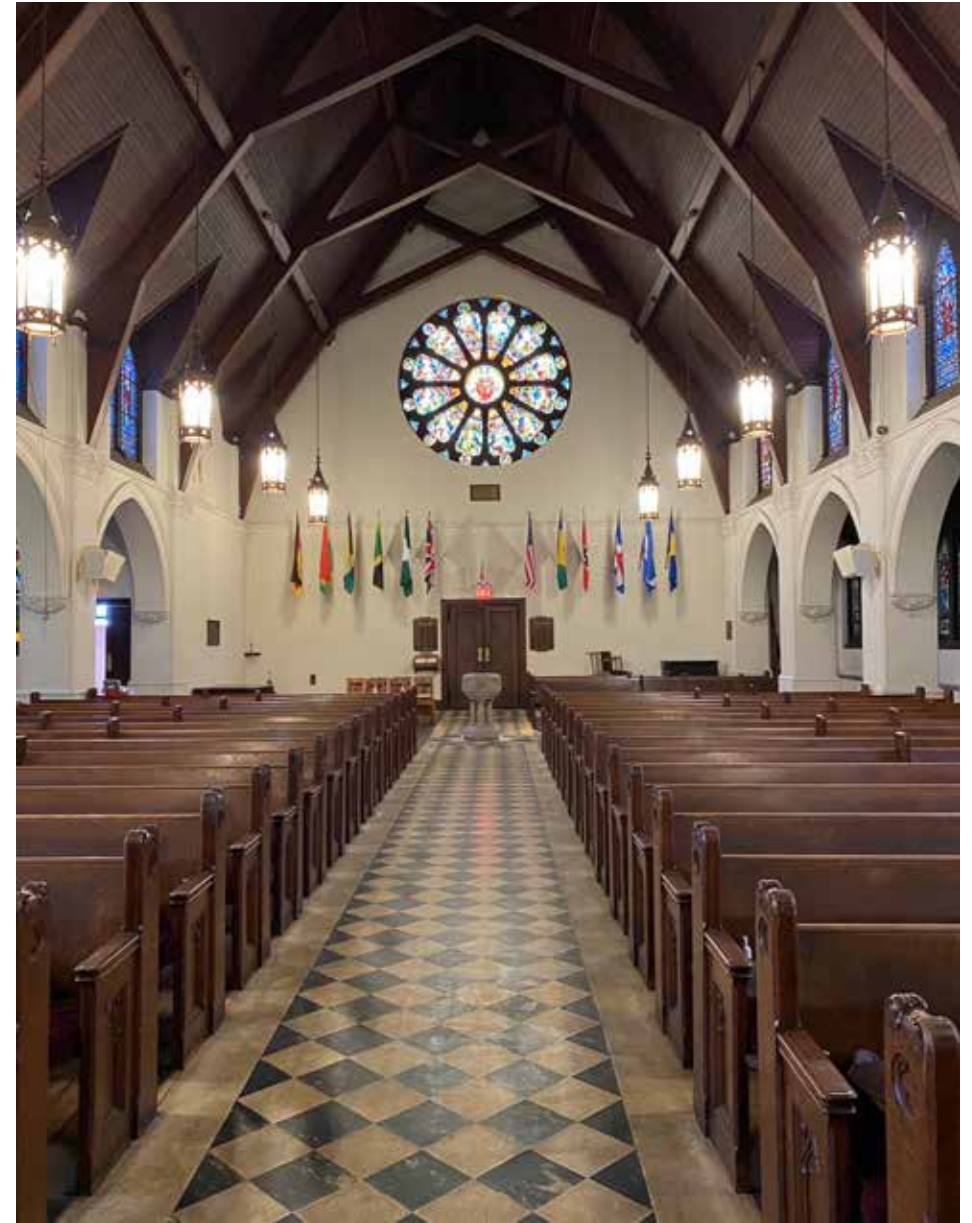
Meeting room and miscellaneous interior



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION





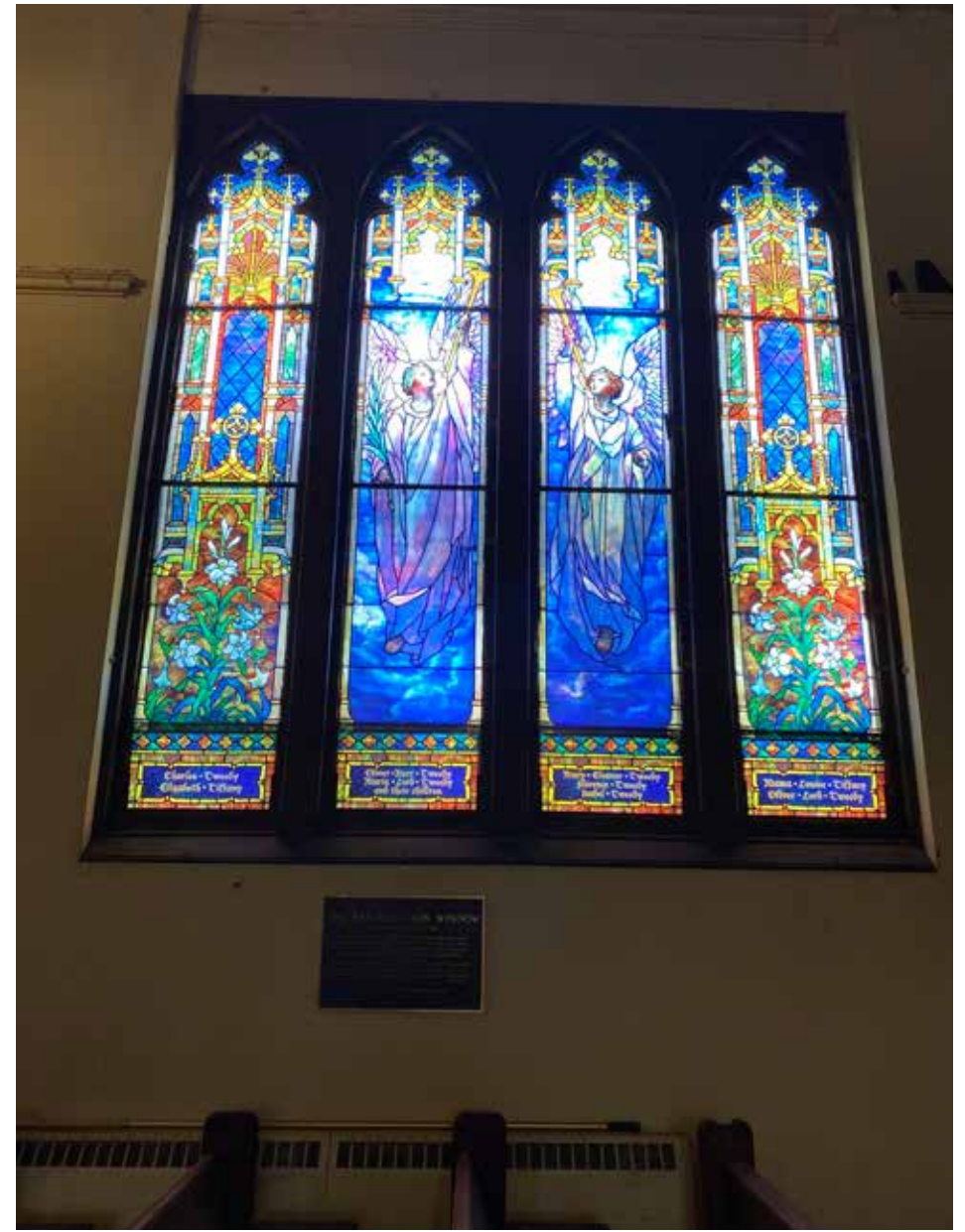
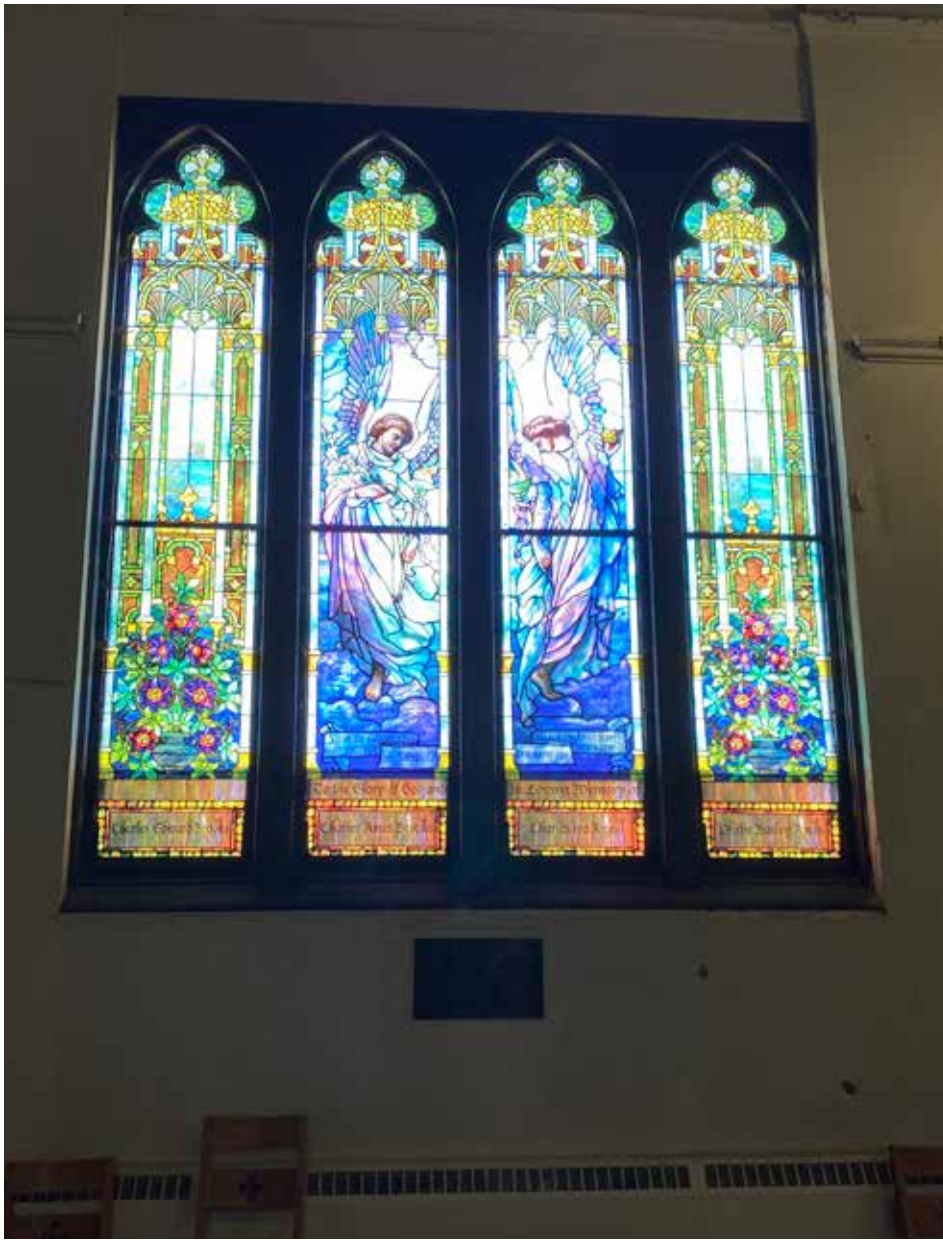






Hallways and common areas





Windows in Knickle Hall

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

Fire Division Records (provided May 2022)

Incident and Report Number	Date	Type/Offense	Location
22000010-0	1/1/2022	Assist police or other govern-mental	600 Cleveland Avenue
20002757-0	11/5/2020	Public service	600 Cleveland Avenue
20001784-0	8/1/2020	Public service	600 Cleveland Avenue
20001724-0	7/25/2020	Smoke detector activation, no fire	600 Cleveland Avenue
20001721-0	7/25/2020	Detector activation, no fire-unin	600 Cleveland Avenue
20001710-0	7/25/2020	Alarm system sounded, no fire-uni	600 Cleveland Avenue
20001703-0	7/24/2020	Alarm system sounded, no fire-uni	600 Cleveland Avenue
19003351-0	12/15/2019	Central station, malicious false al	600 Cleveland Avenue
19003005-0	11/5/2019	Central station, malicious false al	600 Cleveland Avenue
19002998-0	11/5/2019	Central station, malicious false al	600 Cleveland Avenue
19002996-0	11/5/2019	Central station, malicious false al	600 Cleveland Avenue
19002870-0	10/24/2019	Central station, malicious false al	600 Cleveland Avenue
19002613-0	9/30/2019	Central station, malicious false al	600 Cleveland Avenue
18003384-0	10/21/2018	Alarm system sounded due to malfunc	600 Cleveland Avenue
18003381-0	10/21/2018	Alarm system sounded due to malfunc	600 Cleveland Avenue
17002438-0	10/23/2017	Smoke or odor removal	600 Cleveland Avenue
17001054-0	5/19/2017	Central station, malicious false al	600 Cleveland Avenue
17001048-0	5/19/2017	Alarm system sounded, no fire-uni	600 Cleveland Avenue
17001047-0	5/19/2017	Central station, false al	600 Cleveland Avenue
17001046-0	5/18/2017	Central station, false al	600 Cleveland Avenue

CITY OF PLAINFIELD

R 190-22

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PLANNING BOARD TO CONDUCT AN AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT INVESTIGATION OF CERTAIN PROPERTY IDENTIFIED IN THE CITY'S TAX RECORDS AS BLOCK 837, LOT 1 ON THE CITY TAX MAPS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PLANNING BOARD FINDS THAT THE PROPERTY SATISFIES THE LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW IN NEED CRITERIA AND SHOULD BE DECLARED IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT, AND IF SO, COMMENCE WITH THE PREPARATION OF A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

WHEREAS, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (the "LRHL"), N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq., as amended and supplemented authorizes municipalities to determine whether certain parcels of land within the municipality constitute an area in need of redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, to make such a determination under the LRHL, the Municipal Council (the "City Council") of the City of Plainfield (the "City") must first authorize the Plainfield Planning Board (the "Planning Board") to conduct a preliminary investigation of the area and make recommendations to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes it is in the best interest of the City that an investigation occur with respect to certain property within the City and therefore authorizes and directs the Planning Board to conduct an investigation of the property identified on City Tax Maps as Block 837, Lot 1, commonly known as 117-127 E. 7th Street, along with all streets and rights of way appurtenant thereto (collectively, the "Study Area") and to determine whether all or a portion of the Study Area meets the criteria set forth in the LRHL, and whether all or a portion of said Study Area should be designated as an area in need of redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the redevelopment area determination requested hereunder, in connection with the Study Area authorizes City Council to use all those powers provided by the LRHL for use in a redevelopment area except the power of eminent domain (hereinafter referred to as a "Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area"); and

WHEREAS, the City Council therefore authorizes and directs the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation of the Study Area and to make recommendations to the City Council all in accordance with the LRHL,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Plainfield, New Jersey as follows:

1. The foregoing recitals are incorporated herein as if set forth in full.
2. The Planning Board is hereby authorized and directed to conduct an investigation, pursuant to the LRHL to determine if the Study Area satisfies the criteria set forth in the LRHL and should be designated a "Non-condemnation Redevelopment Area."
3. As part of its investigation, the Planning Board shall prepare a map showing the boundaries of the Study Area and the location of the parcel contained therein and appended thereto shall be a statement setting forth the basis of investigation.
4. The Planning Board shall conduct a public hearing in accordance with the LRHL, after giving due notice of the proposed boundaries of the Study Area and the date of the hearing to any persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the Study Area shall be an area in need of redevelopment.
5. At the public hearing, the Planning Board shall hear from all persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the Study Area is an area in need of redevelopment and evidence in support of those objection shall be received and considered by the Planning Board and shall be made part of the public record.
6. After conducting its investigation, preparing a map of the Study Area and conducting a public hearing at which all objections to the proposed designation are received and

considered, the Planning Board shall make a recommendation to the City Council as to whether the City Council should designate all or a portion of the Study Area as a Non-condemnation Redevelopment Area.

7. If the Planning Board recommends that all or a portion of the Study Area be designated as a Non-condemnation Redevelopment Area, the Planning Board shall commence with the preparation of the redevelopment plan without need of further action by the City Council.
8. If any part of this resolution shall be deemed invalid, such parts shall be severed and the invalidity thereby shall not affect the remaining parts of this Resolution.
9. A copy of this resolution shall be filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

ADOPTED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

May 9, 2022



Abubakar Jalloh, R.M.C.
Municipal Clerk

CLERK'S CERTIFICATION

I, Abubakar Jalloh, City Clerk of the City of Plainfield do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Plainfield City Council.

Abubakar Jalloh, R.M.C.
Municipal Clerk

✓ Vote Record - Resolution R 190-22						
			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted	Charles McRae	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted as Amended	Joylette Mills-Ransome	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Defeated	Steve Hockaday	Mover	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tabled	Ashley Davis	Secunder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn	Sean McKenna	Voter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Consensus	Terri Briggs-Jones	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Barry N. Goode	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>