

## Then and Now: 5 Main Street (Walkill Valley Railroad Station; La Stazione Restaurant) ([Click on Image for Transition](#))

The distinctive clapboard structure now at 5 Main Street was built in 1907 on the site of a



previous structure constructed in 1870 by local builder John C. Schaffer. Schaffer was originally contracted to build a 20 x 80-foot depot for the Walkill Valley Railroad, which at the time was extending its service from Montgomery to Kingston. Rail service in New Paltz began December 20, 1870 and the station opened the following year. Passenger service at the New Paltz station was discontinued in 1937 and

freight service in 1958, though the nearby tracks continued to be used by the Penn Central and Conrail systems until all services were discontinued on December 31, 1977.

The original Schaffer building burnt on April 23, 1907, and a new structure was built that same year. The second station was built according to the tastes of the period: a fine example of vernacular railway design, with a gently sloped hip roof, numerous shingle-style details, and expansive porches.

The building fell into disrepair after the suspension of rail services in 1977, and was nearly torn down in the years following, but major exterior renovations and a historically sensitive restoration were completed in 1987 by Wilro Builders of LaGrange. By this time the large water tank to the north of the building had been torn down. In 1999 the building became a restaurant; a major expansion followed in 2002-03, adding approximately 370 square feet of interior space to the south end of the 1907 building and a 1,000 square-foot outdoor terrace. In 2002 a number of mature oak trees were removed from the site in order to create an automobile exit onto Huguenot Street and to improve drainage.

The building has historic landmark status by the Historic Preservation Commission. The nomination form notes that this structure is the last Walkill Valley Railroad station remaining in its original location. It is a significant and beautifully preserved example of its style. An Italian restaurant since 1999, the building has been the home to several local enterprises in the years since the structure was abandoned as a rail station, most notably a public-access

television studio, a real estate office, and a wellness center.

Sources: Address book, Haviland-Heidgerd Historical Collection, Elting Memorial Library  
Carlton Mabey and John K. Jacobs, Listen to the Whistle: An Anecdotal History of  
the Wallkill Valley Railroad  
in Ulster and Orange Counties, New York (2009)