

‘This Place Matters’ spotlights Worcester buildings worth saving



Students from the Nativity School and Bancroft School hold signs outside the Central Building, Main St., Worcester, as part of Preservation Worcester’s annual “This Place Matters” project, highlight successfully redeveloped.

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WORCESTER - Carrying signs that read “I’m Old and Awesome,” “Don’t Go Breaking My Parts,” and “Honk to Save,” students from the Nativity School of Worcester joined members of Preservation Worcester on Thursday to celebrate and advocate that “This Place Matters.”

“We saved it and we’re here because we’re celebrating it,” Lander Perez, 11, a fifth-grade student at Nativity School, said of the Central Building at 332 Main St. Although once slated for demolition, the building is now [being redeveloped](#) into 55 units of affordable and market-rate housing as well as approximately 7,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space.

The students' mood was slightly different down the street at Lothrop's Opera House, formerly the Olympia Theater, at 17-27 Pleasant St. There, students successfully enticed passing motorists to honk in support of saving the building, which is on the Worcester Redevelopment Authority's Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan as a [potential "Building to be Demolished."](#) It is also on Preservation Worcester's [2017 list of Most Endangered Structures.](#)

"Old buildings are important to Worcester for their character," said Travis Clapper, 11.

Gerald Boateng, 10, said he'd like to see the building fixed up. "Because it shows history, it makes up the city, all these old buildings."

This was the third year Preservation Worcester partnered with the Nativity School on "This Place Matters." A student from the Bancroft School, in a co-op position, helped coordinate the role. In learning about the two buildings in Worcester - one in danger of being lost, and one that had been saved - students also learned the importance of historic preservation in maintaining a city's character and heritage. The lesson culminated with the "stand-out" Thursday in front of the buildings.