

**CRDC**  
Claymont  
Renaissance  
Development  
Corporation

# *Revitalization in Claymont*

## Progress Report



2009 Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation



Claymont

Wilmington

New Castle



To Philadelphia  
20 Miles

Delaware River

Delaware  
New Jersey

Christina River

Delaware River

NJT

## 2009 Board of Directors

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Heckler & Frabizzio

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Laborers' International Union of North America

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Claymont Historical Society

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Claymont Center

## Our Mission

The Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation (CRDC) mission is to develop and implement strategies that will increase

the economic vitality of the Claymont community, enhance Claymont's reputation as an attractive and desirable place to live, and build on Claymont's unique history and character to strengthen its role as an area of cultural and social activity.



As a public/private funded, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, the CRDC will work in partnership with the New Castle County Executive, County Council, State, Federal officials, and with private, public, and not-for-profit organizations that support economic development of the Claymont Community.

Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation will endeavor to:

- Increase employment, support existing businesses, attract new businesses including retail, restaurants and entertainment;
- Focus on connecting community and civic assets, and creating a attractive place where people could live, work, shop, learn, and worship;
- Promote an attractive, friendly, and pedestrian-oriented environment;
- Stimulate educational, arts, cultural activities and events;
- Encourage collaborative efforts with community organizations and surrounding areas; and,
- Attract an increasing number of visitors from throughout the region and beyond.

## Brett Saddler

### *Executive Director*



Walking into a relatively drab meeting room in the Claymont Community Center in early 2001, I did not know what to expect. I had recently been named to the Board of the Claymont Business Owners Association and was informed that there were nascent plans underway to revitalize our community. I was intrigued but very skeptical. This public meeting, the first of regular monthly meetings that continue to this day, was heavily attended with more than sixty residents vying for a seat or leaning against a wall. Councilman Bob Weiner and several Claymont civic leaders had recently secured a grant for \$25,000 from New Castle County to begin a comprehensive redevelopment strategy. This was to be known as the Claymont Renaissance.

At the meeting, we were introduced to Tom Comitta, an expert in town planning and traditional neighborhood development. Tom and Councilman Weiner spoke in broad strokes about what Claymont's future could look like. That vision was very different from the reality of the day. Several members of the public walked out of the room after loudly stating "it ain't gonna happen".

I am proud to report that Claymont Renaissance stakeholders are proving those skeptics wrong. Eight years later, a consensus-driven, neo-traditional redevelopment plan is ensconced in New Castle County zoning law, and industrial Claymont is the cutting edge of smart growth in Delaware

This civic partnership which became the Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation (CRDC) has assembled strong financial, regulatory, and political commitments from state, county, and private interests. In addition to a County commitment to modernizing an aging sewer system and a State commitment to multi-modal streetscape improvements, more than \$130 million of new private investment capital is underway or planned for housing, offices and retail.

The project with the most immediate impact on the community will be Darley Green, a 1226 unit mixed use community. It will be the largest new residential community to be built in Brandywine Hundred since Graylyn Crest was completed nearly forty years ago. Presently we are working to secure the Federal and State funding for a new Claymont train station that will accommodate the influx of new residents.

Tom Comitta told me early on that a community's revitalization could take a generation, but he believed that with Claymont's assets and the active engagement of its residents and elected officials, this "renaissance" would occur much sooner. On the following pages you will be introduced to the remarkable progress that Claymont has made and what is literally "coming down the Pike" in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett Saddler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

## 2001–2002

### *Lets make a Plan*

After a successful visioning component with the Claymont Community, design workshops were held to shape a plan for a revitalized Claymont Center. In addition, a streetscape plan for Philadelphia Pike had emerged with a focus on the enhancement and beautification of the historic road.

The key elements of the Claymont Renaissance include:

- Setting the stage for the construction of the proposed improvements along Philadelphia Pike and in Claymont Center.
- Work with residents and businesspersons, along with the local and state political leaders to give Claymont a new identity;
- There are only a few property owners in control of the land where the new and improved Claymont Center is located, limiting the complexity of the revitalization effort;
- The principles of Context Sensitive Design are being evaluated by the community advocates and DeIDOT, giving Philadelphia Pike a good chance to be pedestrianized;
- Drafting a Claymont Hometown Overlay District to better enable redevelopment and revitalized efforts;
- The strengths of the community in terms of location, rail access, highway access, and nearby higher income demographics, bode well for redevelopment attractiveness.



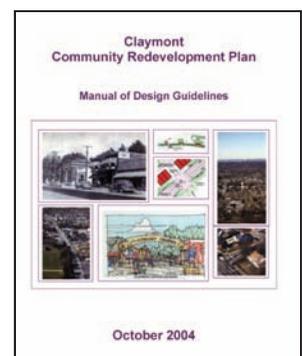
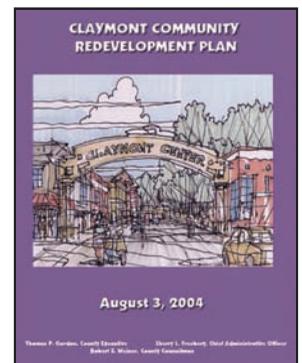
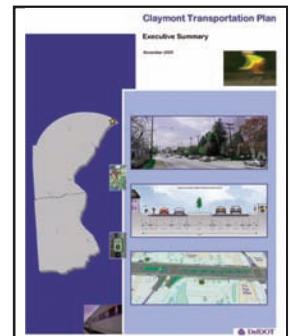
## 2003–2004

### *Laying the foundation*

In these years, significant revitalization plans were produced as guiding documents for the community. Having made much progress coordinating the redevelopment with our residents, it was time to inform others in Delaware about Claymont's plans.

During this period the Claymont Renaissance accomplished:

- NCC Council passing the Claymont Hometown Overlay which gave Claymont a say in its land use decisions.
- A DelDOT Claymont Transportation Plan that included streetscaping, pedestrian, and safety improvements.
- Incorporation of the Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation (CRDC), an IRS designated 501(c)3, with offices located in the Claymont Community Center.
- CRDC became an active member of many local and state business and professional organizations.
- CRDC made presentations to various civic and service organizations about Claymont's progress and vision.
- A regular line of communication was made between the CRDC and local media outlets.
- Launched [www.claymontrenaissance.org](http://www.claymontrenaissance.org) as a portal for all information relating to our redevelopment.



2005 – 2009

*Beginning of Revitalization*



Claymont Fire Company's new state of the art building.



Grubbs Landing will offer new retail space.

2005 – 2009

*Beginning of Revitalization*



Our gateway signs are of similar design as Wilmington's.



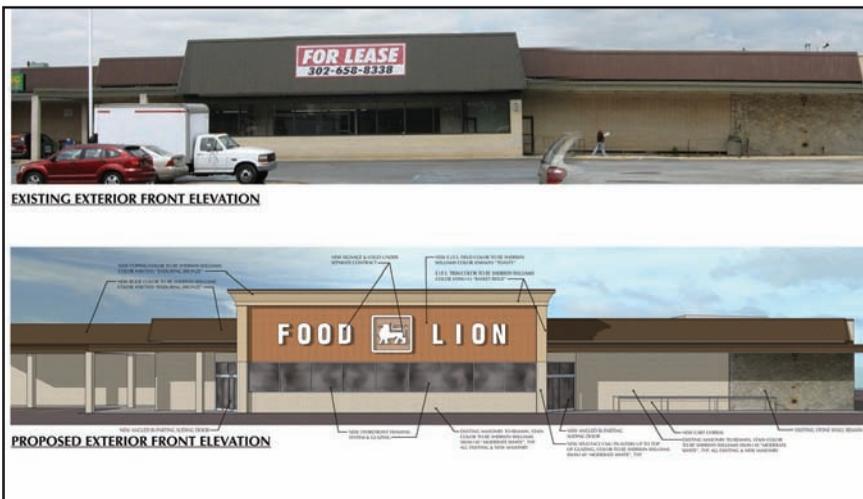
McDonald's was persuaded not to build a retro 1950's model in favor of this conservative one.

2005 – 2009

## *Beginning of Revitalization*



Wawa's Delaware flagship store was once the site of a lumber yard.



Food Lion Supermarkets will occupy this site across from Archmere Academy.

2005 – 2009

*Beginning of Revitalization*



Waterfall Banquet & Conference Center was the first major investment in a revitalized Claymont.



Goodwill Industries recently upgraded their Claymont store.

## 2005 – 2009

### *And more*

As seen on the previous pages, much has been accomplished. Here are some other revitalization activities that the CRDC has fostered.

- Working closely with NCC Dept. of Land Use and the Claymont Design Review Advisory Committee, the Claymont Overlay now has comprehensive signage guidelines that are business friendly and will foster a “Main Street” feel.
- Dunkin Donuts – Only two story Dunkin Donuts in the region.
- Solar Lighting – Obtained a grant from the Delaware Energy Office to assist with the costs of providing solar lighting for the four Claymont gateway signs.
- CRDC hosted tours of Claymont for the American Planning Association (2006) and Urban Land Institute (2007) when their respective annual conferences were held in Philadelphia.
- State Farm Insurance (old Buffington’s ) and Rita’s Water Ice (1930’s gas station) – Adaptive reuse of an historic buildings.
- Seminole Building – Adaptive reuse of an historic building with multiple shops and apartments.
- Felix O.C. Darley House – State of Delaware owned historic building currently being renovated. The CRDC and the Claymont Historical Society offices to be located there beginning in Fall 2009.
- Claymont Named the 2005 Delaware Small Business Community of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).
- CRDC was a founding member of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sponsored Claymont Industry Partnership.
- In 2006 CRDC and New Castle County were awarded the National Association of Counties (NACo) Sustainable Communities Award for our planning efforts.
- Launched the *Claymont Renaissance News*, a quarterly newsletter available at many area businesses and online.



## Darley Green

### *A partnership*



The key component of Claymont's revitalization is the 66 acres site of the former Brookview Apartments.

Built as a model rental community in 1952, it has been called home by many notable Delawareans including Vice President Joseph Biden, Delaware Secretary of State Jeffrey Bullock and former Lieutenant Governor John Carney. Over past several decades, the complex suffered a dramatic decline.

The Claymont Renaissance working closely with New Castle County government created multiple incentives to foster redevelopment of the site. In September of 2005, the property was purchased by the Wilmington based Commonwealth Group. The new developers promptly hired the nationally recognized new urbanist land design firm Torti Gallas & Partners. Commonwealth Group and Torti Gallas promptly convened a 5 day charette that brought together government, business and civic stakeholders to design a neighborhood that would meet the developers needs and be compatible with the Claymont Community Plan.

The result was a 1226 mixed use development that utilizes the best practices of traditional neighborhood design and new urbanist principles. Also included was a voluntary workforce housing agreement with the developer, the first of its kind in New Castle County. After much site work, construction began in March 2009 with an expected build out period of five years.



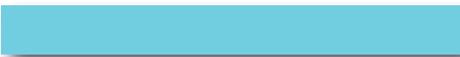
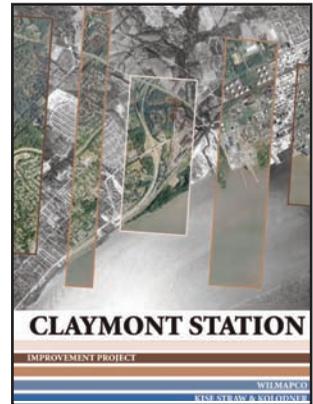
# Claymont Train Station

## *Preparing for Growth*

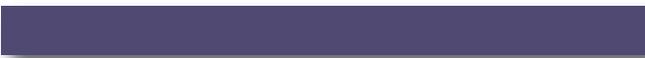
Since the 1830's, the railroad has served the Claymont community. First by making the town accessible so well to do Philadelphians could access their “summer estates” and later offering an easy commute for our residents who worked or shopped in Philadelphia.

The Claymont station is the first SEPTA R2 station in Delaware after crossing the state line from Pennsylvania. It has 35 weekday departures to Philadelphia and Wilmington with a peak travel time to center city of only 37 minutes. Claymont station today is a simple low-level platform station with a narrow pedestrian tunnel under the tracks offering few amenities for passengers. Bus shelters are provided for weather protection. A total of 450 spaces are provided at Claymont Station making it one of the largest park-and-ride stations on the SEPTA Regional Rail system. The lot is well used and is regularly full, forcing those who arrive by car to seek parking near the I-495 foot bridge to the station.

In 2008, a comprehensive study was completed for the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) and CRDC that recognized the need for an upgraded station. It is widely assumed that many of the nearly 3000 potential new residents of Darley Green will utilize this station for their commute to Philadelphia. The Claymont Train Station Improvement Project Report can be found at: [www.wilmapco.org/claymont](http://www.wilmapco.org/claymont)



2001 Claymont Station Septa R2  
Ridership: 205,477



2008 Claymont Station Septa R2  
Ridership: 283,087

\*Increase in ridership 2001–2008 : 77,610 or 38%

# Historic Overlook Colony

## *Blueprint Community*

The CRDC Board reviewed and discussed some of the serious issues affecting Claymont neighborhoods, and how revitalization efforts could help sustain a higher quality of life throughout all Claymont neighborhoods. In 2008, The CRDC submitted an RFP as to be included in the Delaware Blueprint Communities Program sponsored by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh (FHLBP) and the University of Delaware.

The Blueprint Communities Neighborhood Revitalization Program offers a comprehensive approach to improving neighborhoods. The program identifies and/or links neighborhoods with resources needed to deal with community social, physical and economic needs that are particular to a neighborhood to further improve the quality of life for its residents. Neighborhood revitalization could include, but is not limited to, the following elements: community, economic, social and physical improvements. In the focus neighborhoods of Overlook Colony and Clearfield Village, the CRDC will partner with for and non profit housing agencies to identify, purchase, rehabilitate homes to sell to low/moderate income persons. Thanks to the support of DelDOT and local elected officials, the Commonwealth Ave. & Philadelphia Pike entrance to the neighborhood is slated for pedestrian and streetscaping improvements in Spring of 2010.

To learn more about Historic Overlook Colony Vicinity Blueprint Community visit:  
[www.blueprintcommunities.com/de](http://www.blueprintcommunities.com/de)



**PUBLIC AUCTION SALE**  
**186 Dwellings and 31 Acres of Land**  
**AT**  
**OVERLOOK, CLAYMONT, DEL.**  
**WILMINGTON, DEL. and CHESTER, PA.**  
 TO BE SOLD AS ONE PARCEL  
 WEDNESDAY 12:00 P.M.  
**Saturday Aft., MARCH 1st, 1924**  
 At 2 o'clock on the Premises - Rain or Shine

HISTORIC  
OVERLOOK  
COLONY  
VICINITY

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**REVITALIZATION PLAN**

Blueprint  
COMMUNITIES

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Claymont Hometown Overlay • New Castle County, Delaware • January 2009

## Funding and the *CRDC Budget*

The CRDC has long realized that for sustainable economic growth and community revitalization the must be a partnership between citizens, business, and government.

New Castle County government took the lead in support of the CRDC both financially and legislatively. in 2001, New Castle County Department of Land Use assigned a community planner who has given guidance to the CRDC and the Claymont Design Review Advisory Committee. The Claymont business community has also supported the CRDC through contributions and in-kind support.

### **Funding Partners:**

New Castle County Department of Land Use  
New Castle County Office Of Economic Development  
New Castle Councilman John Cartier  
State Representative Greg Lavelle  
Former State Representative Bob Valihura  
Carolyn Mercadante  
John Gilbert, esq.  
Sunoco  
Claymont Business Owners Association  
Commonwealth Group  
TD Bank  
Evraz Claymont Steel  
Delaware National Bank  
Delmarva Power & Light Company  
Laborers' International Union of North America  
Waterfall Banquet & Conference Center  
Gunnip & Company

**The CRDC has a 2009 operating budget of \$77,170.00.**

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[www.claymontdevelopment.org](http://www.claymontdevelopment.org)