

Memories outlive home of former Wehrle resident

House built in 1937 falls victim to state's plan to widen road

by DAVID F. SHERMAN
Managing Editor

When Wehrle Drive is widened later this year to accommodate the increasingly heavy traffic near Transit Road, one family's personal landmark will be lost.

Donna Gay was born in the house at 2566 Wehrle Drive on April 29, 1941. It holds countless memories of what it was like to grow up in those times.

In terms more familiar to engineers, the construction is known as Project 5209.40, according to the New York State Department of Transportation.

"I was born in my parents' bedroom, taking my first breath," she said. "My sister, Geri, recalls the whole family sitting on the bed picking a name for me."

Her parents were Clara and William Sinon, who built the home themselves after moving from Buffalo in 1937.

"My father worked days deliver-

ing ice to homes and restaurants, and nights and weekends building the family home," she added.

Her mother cared for three children, in addition to Donna.

Later, her father worked at Curtis Wright and eventually retired from Twin Coach. He passed away in 1972, "taking his last breath in the same bedroom where I was born," Gay said. Her mother lived in the house on Wehrle Drive well into her 80s, passing away at the age of 93.

The memories of growing up in the simple home are plentiful.

"I can still smell the wonderful aroma of fresh-baked bread coming from the kitchen. I placed marbles with my name and age in the cement floor of the patio," she recalled vividly. "Only now have I come to realize the importance of one's roots."

Years later, after new owners modified the appearance of the yard and the home itself, Gay said it still looked the same in her mind.

According to the DOT Web site, the primary purpose of the project is to widen Transit Road to match the traffic pattern that now exists north of Main Street.

Project 5209.40 will also reconstruct Wehrle Drive in the vicinity of Harding Road, where the Sinon home stands.

"Capacity and safety improvements at the Wehrle Drive/Transit Road intersection are major factors influencing design. The work



Built in 1937, this home at 2566 Wehrle Drive just west of Transit Road, Amherst, was home to the

Clara and William Sinon family. It will be demolished to make way for road improvements.

on Wehrle Drive will meet the widened pavement section being built by the Erie County Department of Public Works west of the Harding Road intersection.

"Two travel lanes in each direction will be constructed on Wehrle Drive, and will taper to meet the existing highway section east of Transit Road," according to the DOT Web site.

"Service roadways will require the purchase and removal of residential homes to provide right-of-way to construct these roads."

"A young father's dream from long ago was fulfilled," Gay said. "We now only have to close our eyes to dream about running barefoot and feel the soil beneath our feet."



A current view of the house reveals an overgrown lawn and few of the personal touches that made it a home.



William Sinon holds his daughter, Donna, in 1941.

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