
MINUTES

BOARD: HISTORICAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CITY OF BETHLEHEM

MEMBERS PRESENT: SETH CORNISH, CRAIG EVANS, ROGER HUDAK, GARY LADER, KENNETH LOUSH, MICHAEL SIMONSON, BETH STARBUCK

MEMBERS ABSENT: TONY SILVOY

STAFF PRESENT: DARLENE HELLER, JEFFREY LONG, CRAIG PEIFFER

PRESS PRESENT: ED COURRIER

VISITORS PRESENT: EVAN BLOSE, JORDAN CLARK, DAVID DE LOS SANTOS, MISSY HARTNEY, CURTIS MITA, RAFAEL PALOMINO, JEFFREY QUINN, ANTHONY SCARCIA, JOHN TRIPANI

MEETING DATE: JANUARY 25, 2021

The regular meeting of the Historical Conservation Commission (HCC) was held on January 25, 2021, at the City of Bethlehem Rotunda, Bethlehem City Hall, 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, PA as well as via GoToMeeting virtual meeting platform. HCC Chair Gary Lader called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Agenda Item #1

Election of HCC Officers:

HCC upon motion by Mr. Cornish and seconded by Ms. Starbuck unanimously approved Mr. Lader to serve as HCC Chair.

HCC upon motion by Ms. Starbuck and seconded by Mr. Cornish unanimously approved Mr. Evans to serve as HCC Vice Chair.

Ms. Heller introduced Mr. Simonson as a new HCC member.

Agenda Item #2

Property Location: 740 East Fourth Street

Property Owner: Lauray Gregory

Applicant: Fast Signs

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a semi-detached, 2-bay, 3 ½ story, brick masonry commercial and residential building with a gambrel roof and a large wall dormer. This structure was built in ca. 1910, as attested by segmental brick arched window openings at the second floor level and is simplified Queen Anne in style. The storefront was altered sometime during the mid- to late twentieth century and includes a recessed entrance, double shop window and beige brick veneer. The original lower cornice has been lost and the resulting void is covered with metal panels while the projecting upper cornice is covered with metal siding.

Proposed Alterations: It is proposed to install a flat wall sign above the storefront windows.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 9.** -- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- It is the purpose and intent of the City of Bethlehem to promote, protect, enhance and preserve historic resources and traditional community character for the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public

through the preservation, protection and regulation of buildings and areas of historic interest or importance within the City.

- **Historical Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Signage and Awnings'** -- Care should be taken in mounting signs and awnings to minimize damage to historic materials. This includes reusing hardware or brackets from previous signs. If reusing existing hardware or attachment locations is not an option, select mounting locations that can be easily patched if the sign is removed. This includes locating holes in mortar joints rather than directly into bricks or masonry, which will facilitate repair if the sign is removed or relocated in the future.

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to replace existing temporary banner with rigid wall sign depicting corporate name and logo. Proposed sign measures 20-inches tall x 108-inches wide; to be fabricated using 1/8-inch rigid Dibond (Aluminum Composite Material) panel and installed into existing brick veneer above double shop windows using 1/4-inch Tap-Con fasteners. Company name includes "EMPIRE" in large, upper-case, bold, stylized, sans-serif lettering in medium brown color above "WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS" in smaller, upper-case, stylized, sans-serif lettering in dark blue color. At left of company name is corporate logo comprised of silhouettes of three stylized high rises, all in dark blue color. Overall background of sign is ivory in color.

Proposed signage is appropriate with following revisions:

- integrate off-set pinstripe detail in complementary medium brown color or dark blue color around outer sign perimeter
- holes for fasteners should be located in existing mortar joints rather than directly into existing brick veneer so they can be easily patched if sign is removed to minimize damage; Tap-Con screw heads should be painted to match sign background after installation

For more appropriate alternative, Applicant is encouraged to consider blade sign centered above entrance rather than installing façade sign that repeats information visible within shop window; blade sign existed at adjacent commercial location (see detail image), as evidenced by remaining metal scroll bracket. Applicant might be more successful in advertising business with new, double-sided sign hanging from similar decorative scroll bracket above recessed entrance.

Discussion: Evan Blose represented proposal to install flat wall sign above storefront windows. Applicant agreed that blade sign would be most effective solution at commercial location and previously discussed with business owner; however, upper floor levels include residential tenants and installation of sign bracket would involve access inside relevant apartment unit for through-bolting. Applicant agreed with suggested revisions by Mr. Long and provided Ms. Heller via email with updated design that includes off-set pinstripe detail with scalloped corners in dark blue color around sign perimeter.

With agreed revisions, Mr. Evans noted COA Application appears ready for approval, with option as flat wall sign or as blade sign. Ms. Starbuck expressed concern about size of wording in relationship to overall sign background ... especially with revised design that now includes pinstripe detail; recommended more blank space between lettering and border, with vertical dimensions more critical than horizontal dimensions. Mr. Lader inquired if Applicant would be willing to shorten overall length of sign so edges align with tops of shop windows rather than extending across entire length of wall section; Applicant responded that wall surface above shop windows has extensive damage from previous signage so current proposal hides damage ... noting signage graphics align with shop windows below.

Public Commentary: none

Motion: HCC upon motion by Ms. Starbuck and seconded by Mr. Hudak adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed work as presented, with modifications described as follows:

1. Proposal to install flat wall sign above storefront windows was presented by Evan Blose.
2. Approved signage includes following details:
 - a. sign measures 20-inches tall x 108-inches wide; to be fabricated using 1/8-inch rigid Dibond (Aluminum Composite Material) panel and installed into existing mortar joints of brick veneer above shop windows using 1/4-inch Tap-Con fasteners

- b. corporate name includes “EMPIRE” in large, upper-case, bold, stylized, sans-serif lettering in medium brown color above “WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS” in smaller, upper-case, stylized, sans-serif lettering in dark blue color; at left is corporate logo comprised of silhouettes of three stylized high rises, all in dark blue color
- c. sign background is ivory in color and off-set pinstripe detail is dark blue in color and has scallop details at each corner
- d. graphics (as originally presented) must be reduced minimum 10% to allow for more space between pinstripe and top/bottom of lettering

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #3

Property Location: 13 East Fourth Street (Nawab Indian Restaurant)

Property Owner: Edward and Rosalie Vogrins

Applicant: DSigns & Awnings, Inc.

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a 3-story, 3-bay attached masonry commercial and residential building with a flat roof. Constructed in ca. 1880, the building is Italianate in style, as evidenced by the detailed projecting upper cornice and decorative lintels at the upper-level windows. The original lower cornice was lost when the storefront was altered during the mid- to late twentieth century to create a centrally-located recessed commercial entrance flanked on either side by shop windows and secondary entrances to residential units above. The original brick façade at the upper levels is painted light gray while the entry-level façade is sheathed with brown ceramic tiles in various formats. Remnants of an abandoned projecting sign (perhaps originally illuminated with neon) extends vertically on the main (south) façade, slightly off-center and leading up from the upper portion of the tiled storefront ... presumably associated with a previous commercial tenant.

Proposed Alterations: It is proposed to replace the faces of two internally-illuminated signs.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (SIS) 9.** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Historic Conservation Commission ‘Guidelines for Signage and Awnings’** -- see Agenda Item #1

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to re-face two internally-illuminated box signs. Each proposed replacement sign face measures 24-inches tall x 120-inches wide. Left two-thirds of each sign includes “NAWAB” in large, upper-case, bold, serif lettering next to gold crown logo with red accents above “INDIAN RESTAURANT” in smaller, upper-case, serif lettering ... all on bright white background. Thick vertical stripe in gold color separates company name and logo from right third of sign, which includes such secondary information as “Dine-in”, “Takeout”, “Delivery” and relevant telephone number in serif lettering in white color on red background.

Relevant design guidelines describe appropriate signage within Historical Conservation District as rigid panels attached directly to buildings or suspended from brackets as well as individual letters pin-mounted to building facades. Guidelines state “HCC encourages ... (r)emoval of pre-manufactured ... sign boxes with internal fluorescent lights” and continue “HCC ... strongly discourages re-facing existing internally illuminated box signs”; thus, proposal to re-face existing box signs is inappropriate. Applicant is encouraged to consider options for rigid panels or pin-mounted letters as appropriate signage; if ambient street lighting is insufficient, lights consistent with character of historical buildings (ex.: gooseneck fixtures) are encouraged. Applicant is also encouraged to consider rehabilitation of abandoned projecting sign, which would be most appropriate solution.

Should HCC approve proposal for replacement sign faces, following revisions are suggested:

- darken background to avoid glare from internal illumination through bright white color
- integrate off-set pinstripe detail around outer sign perimeter in complementary color

- remove gold vertical stripe and locate secondary information (Dine-in; Takeout; Delivery; phone number) to more appropriate location, ex.: within storefront windows; organize remaining lettering and logo as one long graphic rather than two rows of text to fill sign face

Discussion: David de los Santos represented proposal to replace faces of two internally-illuminated signs. Applicant agreed to revise proposed sign faces, as recommended. Mr. Lader noted that Applicant has three options, with full removal of box signs and rehabilitation of historical projecting sign as most appropriate solution. Ms. Starbuck commented that historical sign has not functioned for at least 20 years and noted lack of representation by Property/Business Owner so signage company cannot be expected to comment on potential rehabilitation. Applicant confirmed two box signs remain functional and business owner's intent is limited to replacement sign faces. Ms. Starbuck requested clarification from Mr. Long concerning similar previous COA Applications; Mr. Long confirmed that previous Applications to improve existing box signs resulted in compromise solution, with HCC approval of new sign face designs when Applicant agreed to disconnect internal illumination. Ms. Starbuck requested Applicant to clarify that Business Owner would be amenable to Mr. Long's suggested revisions as well as HCC request to eliminate internal illumination feature; if so, revised signage design should be submitted to HCC Chair and Historic Officer for final approval; otherwise, different signage design proposal necessitates subsequent COA Application and resulting HCC review.

Public Commentary: none

Motion: HCC upon motion by Ms. Starbuck and seconded by Mr. Evans adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed work as presented, with modifications described as follows:

1. Proposal to replace faces of two internally-illuminated signs was presented by David de los Santos.
2. Approved signage includes following details:
 - a. each replacement sign face measures 24-inches tall x 120-inches wide
 - b. corporate name includes "NAWAB" in large, upper-case, bold, serif lettering next to gold crown logo with red accents next to "INDIAN RESTAURANT" in smaller, upper-case, serif lettering
 - c. sign background is ivory in color and off-set pinstripe detail is red or gold in color
 - d. internal illumination feature is no longer allowed
3. Revised design of signage proposal that reflects approved motion must be submitted via City of Bethlehem to HCC Chair and Historic Officer for final approval prior to fabrication; otherwise, different signage design will necessitate new COA Application and subsequent HCC review.

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #4 -- note: Mr. Lader confirmed a conflict of interest with this agenda item, abstaining from discussion and resulting resolution.

Property Location: 306 South New Street (ZEST Bar & Grille)

Property Owner: Greenway 1, Inc.

Applicant: John Trapani

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: Construction of this semi-detached 6-story commercial building located on the corner of South New Street and West Third Street was initiated in 2016 and is contemporary in style. The primary facades on both streets are clad in brick on the 2nd through 4th floors, while the other floor levels and the corner are clad in glass and metal panels. The façade of the 6th floor is set back 12-feet and has a thin projecting roof to hinder visibility from the street, creating an open-air terrace along the north and east facades. As a reminder, HCC is mandated with preserving structures dating from the designated era of the Historical Conservation District (ca. 1895 - 1950); thus, this building is not considered a contributing structure to the District.

Proposed Alterations: It is proposed to install heaters and awning on the east terrace and an alternate awning on the north terrace.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 9.** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Signage and Awnings'** -- see Agenda Item #1

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: Minutes from HCC meeting on November 19, 2018, record discussion of COA Application to increase footprint of conditioned space for 6th-floor restaurant by enclosing large segment of existing north terrace through installation of accordion-style folding metal and glass wall system. HCC denied Application 8:0:1; however, case was overruled during subsequent City Council meeting and enclosure was completed soon thereafter.

Minutes from HCC meeting on April 15, 2019, indicate discussion of COA Application to install canvas awning along remaining portion of north terrace not enclosed by folding wall system. Application was approved 5:1 for canvas awning at remaining 6th floor terrace along north façade in gray color to match metal façade panels; pitch of approved awning was maximum 1.5/12 and set back from terrace parapet minimum 12 inches. Seasonal use of awning was limited to May 1 through October 15.

Minutes from HCC meeting on August 17, 2020, indicate HCC Chair Philip Roeder presented walk-in agenda item (not represented by Applicant) requesting amendment to previously-issued COA. In response to outdoor dining option as preferred approach during current pandemic, Applicant requested approval to extend timeframe for use of awning. HCC unanimously approved amending COA for seasonal use of rooftop terrace from May 1 through December 1 or until first snowfall of season, whichever comes first.

Current COA Application indicates intent to replace existing seasonal canvas awning at north terrace with permanent awning, to install similar permanent awning on east terrace and to install elevated radiant heaters within both awning canopies to create year-round sheltered and conditioned outdoor terraces; Applicant justifies new proposal as response to on-going dining restrictions due to COVID-19. Recent inspection of project site confirms elevated heaters are already installed so COA Application seeks approval of heating units after completion. Relevant design guidelines recommend visible mechanical equipment should be painted to match adjacent wall surfaces or hidden behind screens. No product information for proposed awnings (beyond Certificate of Flame Resistance for trade name "Fireresist") was included with Application. Small computer-generated drawings of proposed awnings (at bottom right of Drawing Sheet A3.01 and at top right of Drawing Sheet A3.02) are provided; however, drawings are not at any scale and labels are too small to decipher so further clarification is warranted.

Relevant design guidelines "encourage ... installing awnings in locations that complement a building's architectural features"; however, those guidelines are specific to street-level storefronts and not applicable to current scenario. Proposal to enclose existing upper terraces with permanent awnings at north and east façades contradicts conditions of previous COAs agreed upon by Property Owner/Developer. HCC and City Council approval of current 6-story structure was predicated on condition that upper-most floor level is recessed 12 feet to diminish street visibility. Proposed 6th-floor awnings would extend to edge of terrace parapet handrail, making them visible from below and in violation of approved design intent. Along with already-installed radiant heaters, proposed all-season awnings also represent permanent solution to short-term (albeit serious) health crisis; thus, heaters and awnings are inappropriate, as currently proposed. Should HCC approve proposed permanent awnings as presented, existing elevated heaters will be hidden from public view and require no subsequent HCC approval.

Discussion: John Tripani and Curtis Mita represented proposal to install all-season awning on east terrace and to replace existing seasonal awning with all-season awning on north terrace as well as to approve newly-installed elevated heaters at both terraces. Applicant presented sample of proposed new awning material and noted more detailed drawings of awning configurations were provided to city's Planning Office; Ms. Heller agreed to forward additional details to Historic Officer for reference. Applicant confirmed elevated heaters were previously installed and apologized for being unaware of need for HCC review prior to installation. Applicant justified items within proposal as attempts to address current restrictions and resulting concerns of dining patrons due to on-going pandemic.

Ms. Starbuck inquired if existing seasonal awning could be retained and something similar installed at east terrace, noting HCC approval of original building design was predicated on deep recesses at 6th floor level to help minimize overall building height; continued that permanent awnings along both street-facing façades would mitigate intent of approved design. Applicant clarified that north façade terrace recesses approx. 12-feet while east terrace recesses approx. 8-feet, which explains two different awning proposals. Ms.

Starbuck continued by inquiring if proposed awnings are removable so requested approval could allow year-round awnings until health-related restrictions are lifted and then become seasonal awnings. Applicant responded that current proposal is for permanent awnings so subsequent seasonal removal would be cost-prohibitive; combined with elevated heaters, proposal envisions permanent opportunity for year-round outdoor dining.

Mr. Simonson requested clarification that proposed awning for north façade is different from existing seasonal awning. Applicant referenced drawing detail sheet (as provided to Ms. Heller) indicating that existing awning and structural frame with pitch away from building façade would be replaced with new permanent structural frame and awning that pitches toward building façade; structural steel frame measures 14'-2" at front façade, to be installed several inches inside existing parapet handrail, with roof support frame pitching back to façade (pitch = 2/12) and terminating into gutter, with series of PVC downspouts between existing windows. Mr. Evans inquired why existing seasonal awning approved by HCC less than two years ago must be replaced ... noting sympathy for business owner's current restrictions while also noting views of and through Historical Conservation District will be compromised by fully enclosing recessed terraces. Applicant explained that fixed rigid PVC roof panels would extend across entire length of terrace and also extend down approx. 4'-2" from peak of awning to provide sun and wind protection; existing elevated heaters would keep patrons warm while also melting away snow while pitch away from façade would prevent snow melt and rain from dripping down to street level below. Ms. Starbuck noted comment within provided detail about "removable/retractable sidewall curtains with clear PVC glass" as potential option to be installed beneath front canopy valance; Applicant explained that optional curtains were originally considered but are no longer part of proposal. Ms. Starbuck continued by inquiring if front and roof panels could be fabricated with clear or highly-transparent panels to mitigate impression of solid enclosures as potential compromise; Applicant suggested vertical awning components could be fabricated from clear panels but clear horizontal (pitched) surfaces are impossible to keep clean. Mr. Simonson noted that detail for new awning at east façade appears different from proposed alternative awning at north façade. Applicant confirmed that east façade terrace is shallower than north façade terrace so proposed awning at east façade extends down 6-feet from roof overhang, with very steep pitch and terminating to align with existing parapet handrail with no front valance flap. Mr. Simonson continued with concern that east façade awning has no gutter so snow melt and rainfall would drip down to street level below; Applicant noted that proposed awning mimics approved street-level awnings approved elsewhere by HCC and would not result in more water than similar awnings.

Mr. Hudak expressed sympathy for Applicant under current dining restrictions and would support proposals if they reflect only possible options. Mr. Cornish countered that proposed awnings represent permanent solution to temporary situation and cannot support. Mr. Loush agreed that current proposal represents significant and permanent revision to original compromises with design of building but under current difficulties would reluctantly approve, as presented. Mr. Simonson agreed with commentary that current circumstances require compromise as long as Applicant presents best-faith efforts to address and expressed support to proposal as long as proposed awning frame is structurally sound and also receives review by relevant parties within City Planning & Zoning Office. Ms. Starbuck also sympathized with Applicant and expressed support for continued success but also noted concern that proposed awnings will remain after Applicant vacates building, resulting in scenario that awnings have no tenant to maintain them.

Public Commentary: Missy Hartney, SouthSide Arts District Downtown Manager, expressed support for Applicant's proposal to install permanent awnings at both dining terraces. Ms. Hartney explained current restrictions might be temporary but consequences for businesses will be long term, noting general public will remain cautious about indoor dining long after epidemic is eradicated. Waiting for public perception to change will result in additional loss of local businesses that survived pandemic restrictions.

Motion: HCC upon motion by Mr. Simonson and seconded by Mr. Hudak adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed work as presented, with modifications described as follows:

1. Proposal to approve new permanent awning on east terrace along with new permanent awning to replace seasonal awning on north terrace was presented by John Tripani and Curtis Mita.
2. Approved permanent awning at north façade includes following details:
 - a. existing seasonal awning and structural frame at north façade that pitches away from building to be replaced with new permanent awning and structural frame that pitches toward building

- b. structural steel frame measures 14'-2" high at front façade, to be installed min. 6-inches inside existing parapet handrail, with roof support frame pitching back toward building façade (pitch = approx. 2/12) and terminating into gutter, with PVC downspouts installed between existing windows; all structural frame, gutter and downspout components to be painted light gray in color to match existing building façade
 - c. fixed rigid PVC roof panels extend across entire length of terrace in light gray color to match existing building façade
 - d. fixed rigid translucent panels extend down approx. 4'-2" from peak of awning as front valance flap; west awning end to remain open, with no end wall or wrapped corner
 - e. removable/retractable curtains or other vertical panels suspended below front valance flap are prohibited
3. Approved permanent awning at east façade include following details:
- a. new structural frame and awning pitch away from building façade
 - b. structural steel frame measures 14'-0" high at front façade, to be installed beneath existing roof overhang and extending down 6-feet, with steep pitch and terminating to align with existing parapet handrail; all structural frame components to be painted light gray in color to match existing building façade
 - c. fixed rigid PVC roof panels extend across entire length of terrace in light gray color to match existing building façade, with no gutter or front valance flap; ends to remain open, with no end walls or wrapped corners
 - d. removable/retractable curtains or other vertical panels suspended below awning are prohibited
4. HCC motion conditional upon subsequent review of awning details by City's Planning & Zoning Office prior to fabrication and installation

The motion for the proposed work was approved 4-2-1 (disapproval by Mr. Cornish and Mr. Evans; abstention by Mr. Lader).

Agenda Item #5 -- note: Mr. Loush confirmed a conflict of interest with this agenda item, abstaining from discussion and resulting resolution.

Property Location: 317, 319, 321, 323, 325, 327 South New Street

Property Owner: 325 South New Street Development, LLC

Applicant: Rafael Palomino and Jeffrey Quinn (325 South New Street Development, LLC)

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: A building was never constructed at 317 South New Street, which currently serves as vehicular and pedestrian access to a collection of rear additions and parking spaces within the interior of this city block.

The structure at 319 South New Street is a single-story, semi-detached commercial wood-framed building with a flat roof. The building dates from ca. 1900; however, many architectural features have been lost over time so it can no longer be assigned a defining style. An ornamental cornice at the main (west) façade has been covered over by a steep shed roof with asphalt shingles. The remaining front façade as well as side and rear façades are painted beige. The storefront includes a large double shop window with upper dividers set in wood frames, a paneled and glazed entrance door and a retractable awning.

The structure at 321-323 South New Street is a 3-story, 4-bay attached, commercial and residential brick masonry building with a flat roof, ornamental upper cornice, decorative window heads and altered storefronts. The building dates from ca. 1885 and is Italianate in style. The original brick façade is painted beige while the two storefronts include large, divided glass display windows set in aluminum frames, recessed entrances and retractable awnings. The property also includes a series of two-story and single-story rear additions, several dating from the early 20th century, as evidenced by segmental brick arched window and door openings.

The structure at 325 South New Street is a 3-story, 3-bay attached, commercial and residential brick masonry building with a flat roof and altered storefront. Like the adjacent structure, this building dates from ca. 1885 and was probably Italianate in style; however, the exposed front façade was treated with a stucco veneer and given an etched pattern (often referred to as "Brickote") in imitation red brick sometime during the mid-20th century. The storefront was probably altered at the same time, resulting in one set of steps

leading up double doors into a commercial space and flanked on either side by small shop windows while another set of steps lead up to a single door servicing residential units at upper floor levels. A shed roof with asphalt shingles delineates the entry level from upper floor levels and includes a retractable awning. The remaining visible side façade and the rear façade have been covered in yellow stucco with a textured surface. Original architectural features were lost during façade renovations so it can no longer be assigned a defining style. The entire structure seems to be vacant.

The structure at 327 South New Street is a single-story, attached commercial wood-framed building with a flat roof and includes a large, single-story masonry rear addition with a flat roof. The main building dates from ca. 1900, as does the rear addition; however, many architectural features have been lost over time so it can no longer be assigned a defining style. An ornamental upper cornice at the main (west) façade remains visible and is painted deep red while the upper façade has been covered over and painted bright white. The remaining front façade is painted deep red while the rear façade has been covered in yellow stucco with a textured surface. The storefront includes an off-center paneled and glazed entrance door, a large shop window set in wood frames, two smaller shop windows set in aluminum frames and a retractable awning.

Proposed Alterations: It is proposed to demolish four buildings and construct a new, twelve-story mixed-use building.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 2.** -- The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 5.** -- Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 6.** -- Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 9.** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Historical Conservation Commission 'Design Guidelines' concerning demolition** -- HCC will not recommend approval for demolition unless proposed demolition involves a non-significant building, provided that the demolition will not adversely affect those parts of the site or adjacent properties that are significant.
- **Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines concerning New Construction** -- including but not limited to following: Size, Scale and Proportion; Rhythm and Patterns; Window and Door Openings; Materials and Textures; Architectural Details; Shape and Massing; Streetscapes.

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to demolish four existing structures located at 319-327 South New Street as well as develop adjacent alley located at 317 South New Street and replace with new 12-story commercial and residential building. Accompanying engineering report completed by Bällina Group bases recommendation for demolition of all existing structures on "Life Safety & Code Compliance" issues as well as "Environmental Concerns" observed during visual property inspection conducted on August 11, 2020. Applicant's cover letter as well as accompanying architectural renderings and drawing sheets describe proposed replacement structure as 12-story, mixed-use building approx. 110-feet wide, approx. 75-feet deep and approx. 135-feet high. Proposed entry level includes 6,500 SF of commercial and community spaces while proposed upper floor levels include 8,000 SF each, with mix of one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments totaling 82 units. Roof landscapes include rooftop terrace and mechanical penthouse.

Assessment and recommendations for approval focus on three main concepts: proposed demolition of four existing structures; size and scale of proposed development project; proposed construction, with storefronts at street level and traditional façade treatments for upper floors.

Relevant design guidelines concerning requests for demolition note that HCC encourages Applicant to "evaluate significance of buildings within historical district" and "all attempts to reuse historical buildings are exhausted prior to considering demolition". Guidelines continue that HCC will not recommend approval

unless “proposed demolition involves non-significant buildings or building additions, provided demolition will not adversely affect parts of the site or adjacent properties that are significant” or when “Applicant has demonstrated they have exhausted all other options and will suffer undo economic hardship”. Strictly interpreted, all four existing buildings qualify as “contributing structures” to Historical Conservation District because they were constructed during district’s period of interpretation (1885-1950). Provided engineering report offers overview of various structural, environmental and code-compliance deficiencies; however, report does not differentiate findings according to structure so discerning if recommendation to demolish is valid for one or all four buildings is difficult. Visual inspection to inform historical assessment concludes that structures at 319, 325 and 327 South New Street have been significantly compromised over time so that all three can no longer be assigned architectural styles. As single-story structures, 319 and 327 South New Street also do not conform to typical two-, three- and four-stories of contributing structures within Historical Conservation District; rather, both are perceived as appendages or infill to adjacent structures. However, structure at 321-323 South New Street does exhibit typical size, scale and proportion as well as window openings of district’s mixed-use buildings and retains original architectural detailing; thus, it continues to serve as contributing structure within Historical Conservation District. Based upon relevant design guidelines, proposal to demolish structures at 319, 325 and 327 South New Street is conceivable; however, demolition of structure at 321-323 South New Street is inappropriate.

Should HCC approve demolition as currently proposed, requests are predicated on Applicant’s ability to replace lost buildings with new structures that satisfy Design Guidelines within Historical Conservation District. Applicant’s supplemental “Compliance Statement” correctly identifies various categories of design principles from relevant guidelines ... starting with: Size, Scale and Proportion. Guidelines note “new construction should reflect the dominant cornice and roof heights of adjacent buildings and proportions of building elements to one another and the streetscape” and continue “In South Bethlehem, where two-, three- (and four-) story buildings are the norm, buildings that digress from these standards by any great degree seriously impact the Historical Conservation District. If large-scale construction is considered, particular attention will be given to ... the effect of the proposed building on the streetscape and the (District) as a whole.” Current design proposal addresses dominant cornice height by incorporating such details at third-floor level; however, overall roof height after rising another nine stories significantly digresses from roof heights of adjacent buildings. While this approach might succeed at street level, much broader issue is overall impact of proposed high-rise building within Historical Conservation District. Based upon relevant design guidelines, current proposal for 12-story structure is inappropriate for immediate streetscape and more generally for overall Historical Conservation District, best illustrated by current photo of 300 block of South New Street looking northeast.

Relevant design guidelines continue by referencing such important issues as: Rhythm and Patterns; Window and Door Openings; Materials and Textures; Architectural Details; Shape and Massing; Streetscapes. Applicant concludes by explaining that principal façades of proposed development project reflect neighborhood streetscapes and incorporate elements from buildings proposed for demolition. Floor heights match those of neighboring buildings while intermediate cornice emphasizes transition from commercial street level to upper residential floor levels. Though conceived as one structure, building massing shifts in materiality to appear as two buildings that share common party wall. Architectural features include bay windows, cornices and lintels while proposed materials consist of brick masonry, limestone, concrete and terra-cotta. Overall development proposal successfully addresses relevant guidelines concerning appropriate design features and elements found elsewhere within Historical Conservation District; however, subsequent reviews with HCC should consider specific details such as proposed masonry types, window and door styles, cornice profiles, handrails, lighting fixtures, etc. For on-going project development, Applicant should note that tinted or reflective glass is inappropriate within Historical Conservation District. Applicant should also reference specific ‘Guidelines for Storefronts’ before finalizing details of proposed storefronts. Similarly, Applicant should reference specific ‘Guidelines for Signage’ to create overall concept of building signage to facilitate future HCC reviews of individual sign proposals by new tenants.

Discussion: Jordan Clark, Rafael Palamino, Jeff Quinn and Anthony Scarcia represented proposal to demolish four buildings and construct a new, twelve-story mixed-use building. Mr. Lader explained 45-minute limit for initial presentations of large-scale projects; requested Applicant to focus on demolition proposal before transitioning to discussion massing and scale of proposed replacement development. Mr. Lader continued by sympathizing with Applicant’s desire to maximize development allowed by zoning ordinance (i.e. replace existing structures with 150-foot tall building) but inquired if Applicant is willing to

explore integration of contributing building into overall project. Applicant noted existing structures were individually considered for rehabilitation but ultimately concluded all four structures have exceeded anticipated lifespans and would better serve to inspire style and architectural details of proposed new development. Applicant agreed to explore potential to salvage front façade of contributing building (321-323 South New Street); however, interior spaces of that structure as well as all components of remaining buildings exhibit code-compliance, life-safety and environmental issues that preclude future viability. Applicant recounted series of previous discussions with City representatives (Planning Director, Zoning Officer, Mayor, etc.) resulting in various revisions to proposed development project prior to submitting for HCC review ... including streetscape development on initial three floor levels before transitioning to high rise design above as well as bay windows inspired by adjacent structures along South New Street. Mr. Lader explained HCC's request to incorporate contributing building into overall project development might result in similar design inspiration.

Ms. Starbuck inquired if contributing building is occupied; Applicant confirmed entry-level commercial locations currently have tenants and all upper-level rental units are inhabited. Ms. Starbuck continued by questioning Applicant's claim that entire structure cannot be retained due to various building violations, noting need for regular building inspections to address life-safety issues and to ensure code-compliance. Applicant clarified that observed violations are allowed due to "grandfathering" (i.e. old rules continue to apply to existing situations while new rules apply to future cases). Mr. Lader reminded Applicant that HCC is tasked with maintaining historical fabric of overall district, which requires balance between encouraging new development while adhering to relevant design guidelines; continued by encouraging Applicant to study potential to incorporate façade of contributing structure within overall project while developing remaining site.

Mr. Evans commended overall design as attractive and successfully responding to design guidelines; however, proposal to replace existing one- and three-story structures with one 12-story building is not compatible with design guidelines ... for immediate streetscape/block as well as for overall Historical Conservation District. Mr. Hudak agreed that proposed replacement structure is too tall for proposed context and would result in deep cavern along that portion of South New Street; continued that Applicant's suggestion for tenant parking in nearby surface lots and newly-completed garage cannot succeed because Lehigh University faculty and students already fill those spots ... with very few remaining parking spaces for patrons of local businesses. Applicant responded that initial discussions with Bethlehem Parking Authority confirmed 60-70 required parking spaces for tenants can be accommodated in nearby garage (currently offers 200+ available spaces), resulting in \$60K-\$70K guaranteed annual revenue. Applicant continued that proposed building height results in 80+ living units so prospective tenants will activate local businesses as well as nearby Greenway. Applicant summarized food-court concept for entry-level commercial space that will also create new jobs and enliven what is currently "dead block". Proposed food court would offer various cuisines and allow eat-in as well as take-out concept while rooftop terrace is available to tenants as well as for use by general public. Applicant also noted upper-level apartments respond to post-pandemic design approach (one-bedroom/one-bathroom and two-bedroom/two-bathroom units; various amenities and technology, etc.) so and include affordable housing component so proposed building height is justified to financially support current development proposal. Mr. Lader expressed appreciation for proposed amenities and overall attractive design but also noted recent HCC approval of nearby 6-story structure involved series of reviews and many compromises ... including on-going reviews to address certain issues. Mr. Cornish agreed that proposed project would result in positive economics for developer and would encourage economic activity at project location; also recounted recent exploration of South Bethlehem to notice inherent rhythm and scale of existing two-, three- and four-story buildings that are key components of Historical Conservation District. Mr. Cornish continued by explaining HCC is not charged with encouraging economic development but rather with preserving and rehabilitating existing historical structures and architectural details that support neighborhood's history and vibrancy; concluded that any development project taller than five stories is inappropriate within boundaries of Historical Conservation District and should be encouraged to consider development options elsewhere.

Mr. Lader appreciated Applicant's ability to address adjacent Greenway, incorporate affordable housing and commercial components to attract new jobs; inquired if provided feedback by HCC was sufficient for moving forward. Applicant countered commentary that proposed structure is too tall, noting contemporary structure across South New Street is six stories tall but individual floor heights are taller because of commercial (office) tenants. Ms. Starbuck noted nearby contemporary structure is 90-feet tall (much lower than current proposal for 135-feet) and cautioned Applicant from referencing contemporary structure as appropriate

design solution within Historical Conservation District. Ms. Starbuck continued by noting City's on-going cooperation with outside consultant to revise Zoning Ordinance (specifically concerning allowable building heights) so Applicant should be aware of potential for new height limitations; continued by expressing appreciation for proposed façade materials, bay window design and incorporation of double-hung windows (but not plate glass windows at select areas). Ms. Starbuck inquired about ownership of adjacent alleyway; Applicant noted that site is public (City) property so initial discussions were also conducted with Public Works and Fire Marshal to improve access to site interior while also allowing proper access for emergency vehicles. Ms. Starbuck continued by noting that in return for guaranteed public access at entry level, Applicant receives multiple floor levels of square footage to develop without purchasing associated property. Ms. Starbuck requested clarification about provided view of front façade, noting building above support pillars at side access seems to cantilever out beyond, which is inappropriate; Applicant responded that upper building portion is not intended to extend beyond column line below. Mr. Evans inquired about intended location for trash collection; Applicant responded that trash shoots are available at each residential floor level next to elevators, with refuse collected in basement in dumpsters that are wheeled out at rear of property on dedicated trash collection days.

Public Commentary: Missy Hartney, SouthSide Arts District Downtown Manager, expressed support for Applicant's proposal of commercial and residential high rise building, noting current pandemic and resulting restrictions have proven that economic success of South Bethlehem depends upon accommodating (Lehigh University) students with places to live and to patronize.

Motion: HCC upon motion by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Hudak adopted the proposal to table the decision to approve proposed demolition and resulting project development. HCC felt it provided sufficient feedback concerning inability to approve current proposal for demolition and encouraged Applicant to return for subsequent review of development proposal that responds to expressed concerns.

The Motion to table the decision to approve proposed demolition and resulting project development was approved 6-0-1 (abstention by Mr. Loush).

New Business: Ms. Heller mentioned recent activities of South Side planning project, including one public (virtual) meeting and two meetings with task force members organized by external consultants; City's Planning & Zoning Department is now cooperating with consultants to formalize findings. Results of findings should offer potential revisions to Design Guidelines as well as to Zoning Ordinance ... specifically issue of building height limitations. HCC agreed to virtually meet with city staff and consultants during separate meeting (outside of traditional monthly meeting) to discuss in more detail ... noting Monday evenings work best. Ms. Heller agreed to circulate potential meeting dates and times for consideration.

Note: extra-ordinary HCC meeting to discuss South Side planning project was subsequently confirmed for Monday, February 1, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m.

General Business: Minutes from HCC meeting on December 14, 2020 were unanimously approved by those attending that meeting, with abstention by those not previously in attendance.

HCC Chair Mr. Lader officially welcomed Mr. Simonson as newest commission member; also noted one on-going commission vacancy. Ms. Heller clarified that vacant position is dictated by relevant ordinance to be resident of Mount Airy Historical Conservation District so finding qualified and interested parties prove difficult; continued that City is currently considering potential revision to ordinance that would allow for broader range of potential commission members.

Mr. Evans noted that City should address problematic trash corrals at 213 West Fourth Street (Dunkin' Donuts at corner of Broadway). Mr. Long recalled walk-in discussion with Raj Saraswati (Property Owner) during HCC meeting on Jan. 21, 2020, when various solutions to trash corrals were offered; Mr. Saraswati agreed to further explore and return to HCC with preferred options. **Note:** minutes confirm Mr. Evans was absent from that HCC meeting.

Mr. Evans inquired about status of project at 217 Broadway (former Lehigh No. 1 Firehouse); City representatives had no updates to present.

Mr. Lader inquired about status of 401-405 East Fourth Street (twin residential mixed-use structures and dilapidated rear garage) owned by Kalavathi Shunmugam; Mr. Simonson noted City of Bethlehem is cooperating through Redevelopment Authority to garner ownership of property from Ms. Shunmugam.

There was no further business; HCC meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



BY:

Jeffrey Long
Historic Officer
South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District
Mt. Airy Historic District