
M I N U T E S

BOARD: HISTORIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CITY OF BETHLEHEM

MEMBERS PRESENT: CRAIG EVANS (VICE CHAIR), ROGER HUDAK, GARY LADER (CHAIR), MICHAEL SIMONSON

MEMBERS ABSENT: TODD CHAMBERS, DESIREE STRASSER

STAFF PRESENT: LAURA CLIFTON, JEFFREY LONG

PRESS PRESENT: ED COURRIER (BETHLEHEM PRESS)

VISITORS PRESENT: JOHN CALLAHAN, DINO CARLINO, ELLIOT NOLTER, ED REED, LARISSA WOODS

MEETING DATE: JUNE 17, 2024

The regular meeting of the Historic Conservation Commission (HCC) was held on June 17, 2024, at the City of Bethlehem Town Hall Rotunda, 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, PA. HCC Chair Gary Lader called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda Item #1

Property Location: 325 Broadway

Property Owner: Sycamore Hill Farm Development

Applicant: Elliot Nolter, East Spruce, LLC

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a 3-story, 2-bay, brick masonry, attached commercial and residential building. The building dates from ca. 1900 and is Italianate in style with one-over-one double-hung windows, a corbeled upper parapet and flat roof. It includes cast masonry details around upper-level windows and near the upper cornice. The entry level of the front (south) façade received various modifications during the late 20th century, including an applied Exterior Insulation Finish System (EIFS), new storefront windows and recessed entrance door with aluminum framing; however, it has retained potential remnants of the original sign band above the storefront, including lower cornice with dentil moulding and carved support brackets.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to replace the existing storefront, to remove the existing EIFS system and to install an awning and signage for a new commercial tenant.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 7.** -- Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- **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.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 10.** -- New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
- **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.

- **Historic Conservation Commission ‘Guidelines for Signage’**
- **Historic Conservation Commission ‘Guidelines for Storefronts’**

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to replace existing storefront, which dates from late 20th century and is non-contributing to Historic Conservation District (HCD). Based upon relevant guidelines, HCC can approve Applicant’s request to demolish existing storefront. Provided supplemental drawings are insufficient to determine if replacement storefront is appropriate. Subsequent COA Application should include larger scale measured drawings with all relevant dimensions of storefront divisions, sizes of various framing elements, apron beneath storefront, etc.; accompanying product details and specifications/cut sheets for proposed storefront system and apron (materials, sizes, factory finishes, etc.) are also requested ... noting appropriate glazing is not tinted, colored or reflective. Provided supplemental drawings fail to depict existing sign band and lower cornice (perhaps hidden behind proposed awning), which are potentially original details. Based upon relevant Secretary of Interior’s Standards, sign band and lower cornice are distinctive historical features that should be preserved if they are original to structure, so discussion is warranted to confirm Applicant’s intentions.

Applicant proposes to remove existing EIFS system, which also dates from late 20th century and is non-contributing to Historic Conservation District (HCD), in order to reveal original brick façade. Based upon relevant guidelines, HCC can approve Applicant’s request to remove existing EIFS; however, initial selective demolition is encouraged to determine quality of brick façade beneath and potential for distinctive historical features that should be preserved before entire EIFS is removed. Secretary of Interior’s Standards do not recommend use of physical or chemical treatments to historical façades, so discussion is warranted to confirm Applicant’s intentions for possible treatments to revealed brick façade.

Relevant design guidelines consider awnings with front valance flaps at storefronts appropriate within HCD. Applicant proposes retractable awning in black color with lettering on front flap that reads “THE PIZZA JOINT” in slender, sans serif, all upper-case lettering in bright white color at 125-inches wide; overall awning dimensions are 49 1/4-inches tall x 276-inches wide and extends 84-inches out over and 102 3/4-inches above public right-of-way. Discussion with Applicant is warranted to determine if proposed awning includes appropriate details, such as Sunbrella (or comparable) canvas cover (not metal, vinyl, or synthetic material), includes open ends with no exposed metal frames, does not include internal illumination, etc. as well as clarification about intended installation method that does not damage historical lower cornice and sign band or revealed brick façade. HCC traditionally encourages avoiding bright white color, so proposed letters should be revised to warm white or ivory.

Proposed raised stoop that connects to adjacent sidewalk and associated ADA-compliant ramp satisfies building code requirements and is not under HCC purview to assess. Similarly, proposed guardrail at curb of raised stoop does not physically touch historical building façade and is not under HCC purview to assess.

Subsequent COA Application should include larger to-scale measured drawings with all relevant dimensions of various signage, including references to proposed materials and intended installation methods. Appropriate signage within storefront windows and glazed entrance door should be installed on inside glass surfaces; appropriate signage affixed to brick façades should take advantage of mortar joints for installation locations to avoid damaging masonry units.

Discussion: Dino Carlino and Elliot Nolter represented proposal to replace existing storefront, to remove existing EIFS system and to install awning and signage for new commercial tenant. Applicant confirmed most details of existing lower cornice (dentil moulding, carved support brackets, etc.) and associated sign band are composed of late 20th century patches and materials, so few original historical features remain; continued that flashing atop cornice is improperly installed and/or failing, so alternative solution is needed. In response, Applicant is requesting to remove lower cornice and sign band before replacing with proposed awning. Mr. Lader agreed that most details of existing cornice and storefront seem to date from mid- to late 20th century (perhaps same period of EIFS installation) and can be removed, pending Applicant’s ability to provide more detailed information about proposed replacement.

Applicant conducted investigations into potential storefronts after submitting COA Application and now proposes system to match storefront at adjacent structure at 327 Broadway (anodized aluminum with

bronze finish) that previously secured HCC support. Applicant proposed rectangular format tiles laid in double soldier course for apron beneath storefront, with same tiles in singular soldier course above storefront. Mr. Lader encouraged Applicant to conduct more exploration of façade by removing existing cornice and selective removal of EIFS to determine condition of brick façade beneath ... noting such exploration could also happen from interior. Applicant noted selective initial interior demolition already confirmed existence of structural beam at top of sign band, so desire is to open new storefront to that height; continued that interior demolition also confirmed brick façade at right side of storefront (as seen from Broadway) still exists while existing materials above and at left side of storefront remain uncertain, so desire is to “install what is needed to make it work”. Mr. Evans inquired about Applicant’s “backup plan” upon removal of EIFS in case façade above and/or at left of storefront opening is damaged or missing. Applicant suggested brick veneer that closely matches existing brick units at right side of storefront as potential solution to damaged or missing façade. Mr. Lader explained that Secretary of Interior’s Standards encourage new materials to differentiate from existing historical materials, so Applicant might wish to consider alternative solutions ... noting that lack of any brick façade at left of storefront is most likely indicative of previous entrance door leading up to residential units above.

Mr. Simonson inquired about proposed retractable awning. Applicant described ongoing collaboration with Kaplan Awnings in Easton, PA and confirmed proposed awning material is canvas, with open sides. Mr. Lader inquired if retractable motion is manual or motorized; Applicant explained that awnings with deep overhangs (such as proposed) require motorized action. Mr. Simonson continued by inquiring about depth of awning when retracted and Mr. Lader inquired about details for attaching awning into building facade; Applicant agreed to present HCC with requested details within subsequent COA Application upon conditional approval of proposed awning.

Mr. Simonson inquired if proposed raised slab with new curb will connect with public right-of-way in front of adjacent structure. Applicant responded that proposed new stoop will seamlessly tie into raised sidewalk at adjacent building at left and aligns with finished floor level of existing structure ... allowing Applicant to remove steep entrance ramp just inside storefront. Mr. Simonson continued by inquiring if proposed slab will also connect with existing steps at adjacent building at right; Applicant confirmed that proposed slab will tie into existing steps at adjacent building. Mr. Simonson inquired about ADA-compliant details of proposed raised slab. Applicant explained that ADA-compliant ramp leading up to height of proposed slab already exists at adjacent building at left, so intention is to take advantage of that detail to comply with needed curb cut while nosing of new slab and associated handrail (with detailing similar to railing to rooftop parapet of adjacent structure) will be provided in to-scale drawings with future COA Application. Mr. Evans noted depiction of floor mosaic tile design at new entrance within supplemental drawings. Applicant described design idea based upon existing floor mosaics at entrances into select storefronts within HCD that include name of commercial tenant; current proposal spells out “PIZZA JOINT” in red tiles on white background with outer border in red tiles and offset pinstripe surround in black tiles; proposed tiles are small square units and rated for exterior use.

Applicant concluded by requesting HCC support of general design concepts, with understanding for need to return with subsequent COA Application that includes more specifics. Mr. Evans expressed appreciation for Applicant’s current approach while also assuming need to table any motion until Applicant can provide larger to-scale drawings of critical design elements along with cut sheets and specifications of proposed materials along with summary of results from exploratory demolition of EIFS and more clarity about proposed solutions for resulting façade. Mr. Lader supported suggestion to table any motion, also requesting more details about proposed awning (associated mechanism, critical dimensions, installation method, etc.) along with important details of various signage. Mr. Simonson recalled that Mr. Long’s building description notes one-over-one double-hung windows as well as cast masonry details around upper-level windows and near upper cornice. Provided supplemental photos corroborate those details; however, accompanying drawings indicate various cast details are missing and existing windows will be replaced with four-over-four divided sash. Applicant responded that proposed revisions to exterior façade are limited to storefront level and agreed to amend future drawings to reflect that no proposed changes to upper-level façade are intended.

Public Commentary: None.

Motion: Commission upon motion by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Simonson unanimously adopted proposal to table any decision about appropriateness of proposal to replace existing storefront, to remove existing EIFS system and to install awning and signage for new commercial tenant. HCC felt it provided sufficient feedback concerning inability to determine appropriateness of various proposals and encouraged Applicant to return for subsequent review of revised proposal that responds to expressed concerns. Applicant received permission to conduct selective demolition of EIFS and then summarize resulting findings via City of Bethlehem for comment by Chief Building Inspector, HCC Chair and Historic Officer to foster progress with proposed project.

Agenda Item #2:

Property Location: 128 Rink Street

Property Owner: Luis Rivera

Applicant: Larissa Woods

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a 2-1/2-story, 2-bay, semi-detached, brick masonry residential building with 1-over-1 double-hung windows that dates from ca. 1910. It is the mirrored twin of the residential building at 130 Rink Street and includes a common recessed front porch at the entry level. A contemporary brick masonry pier and low brick wall have replaced the original porch support column and balustrade. The gable roof with cross gable is sheathed in medium gray asphalt shingles. The original brick façade was treated with a light beige dash (rough) stucco finish sometime during the mid-20th century. A 2-story rear appendage dating from the mid-20th century is also covered with light beige dash stucco. This cladding obscures various defining features and prevents assignment of a specific architectural style; however, the structure's adjacent mirrored twin includes expressed windowsills as well as segmental brick arched window and door openings commonly found throughout South Bethlehem.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to replace existing roof sheathing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles in English gray; paint all previously painted surfaces, including the stucco masonry in Charcoal Slate and all other surfaces, including window trim and eaves, in black. Masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 7.** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **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

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to replace existing roofing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles. Current roofing involves 3-tab asphalt shingles, which is considered inappropriate within Historic Conservation District (HCD). Similarly, current roof includes closed valleys and no visible flashing, which are also inappropriate details. As appropriate alternative when original roofing has been lost or cannot be replaced in-kind, HCC traditionally considers GAF Slateline asphalt shingles in 'Antique Slate' color as appropriate replacement to slate shingles in satisfaction of SIS 9 by differentiating itself from old while also being compatible with historic materials, features, size, and scale to protect integrity of property and its environment. In response, proposed replacement roofing is appropriate, pending confirmation of following details:

- new roof sheathing is GAF Slateline non-architectural shingles in 'Antique Slate' color; **note:** Applicant proposes 'English Gray' color
- during removal of existing roofing, any damaged wood should be replaced in-kind, with new ice and water shield to be installed in all valleys and gutter edges and new underlayment to be installed over decking at remaining areas
- new ridge vent detail should be installed under roof-cap shingles for proper ventilation to ensure product longevity
- all valleys at gables, chimneys, etc. should be open and lined with copper flashing, rather than woven closed with asphalt shingles

- new metal drip edges should be installed and painted to match adjacent trim

In addition, Applicant should clarify intentions with gutters and downspouts (salvage and rehang existing or install new); appropriate new gutters should be smooth and half-round while appropriate new downspouts should be smooth and round.

COA Application also indicates intent to paint all previously painted surfaces, including stucco over masonry; masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is. HCC considers stucco applied directly onto masonry façades as well as painting of masonry façades in violation of SIS 7 and therefore inappropriate because those treatments cause damage over time to historic materials; however, HCC traditionally allows Applicants to repaint previously painted stucco and masonry surfaces, so discussion is warranted. HCC does not review paint colors but traditionally encourages Applicants to avoid bright colors. Applicant's intent to refrain from painting masonry surfaces not previously painted is appropriate.

Discussion: Larissa Woods represented proposal to replace existing roof sheathing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles in English gray; paint all previously painted surfaces, including the stucco masonry in Charcoal Slate and all other surfaces, including window trim and eaves, in black. Masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is. Because same Applicant also represents subsequent agenda item, HCC encouraged Historic Officer to summarize Building Description, Proposed Alterations, Guideline Citations along with Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District and Recommendations for adjacent structure before discussing both COA Applications -- see below; however, two resulting motions will reflect two unique street addresses.

Public Commentary: None.

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Lader and seconded by Mr. Evans adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as presented, with modifications described herein:

1. The proposal to replace existing asphalt roof sheathing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles and to paint all previously painted surfaces, including the stucco masonry façade, window trim and eaves, was presented by Larissa Woods. Masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is.
2. Appropriate details for replacement roofing include:
 - a. new roof sheathing is GAF Slateline non-architectural asphalt shingles in 'Antique Slate' color
 - b. during removal of existing roofing, any damaged wood should be replaced in-kind, with new ice and water shield to be installed in all valleys and gutter edges and new underlayment to be installed over decking at remaining areas
 - c. new ridge vent detail should be installed under roof-cap shingles for proper ventilation to ensure product longevity
 - d. all valleys at gables, chimneys, etc. should be open and lined with copper flashing, rather than woven closed with asphalt shingles
 - e. new metal drip edges should be installed and painted to match adjacent trim
 - f. new metal gutters are half-round and new metal downspouts are round
3. Painting of previously painted stucco masonry is charcoal slate in color while painting of all other surfaces, including window trim and eaves, is black in color; masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is.

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #3

Property Location: 130 Rink Street

Property Owner: Luis Rivera

Applicant: Larissa Woods

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a 2-1/2-story, 2-bay, semi-detached, brick masonry residential building with 1-over-1 double-hung windows that dates from ca. 1910. It is the mirrored twin of the residential building at 128 Rink Street and includes a common recessed front porch at the entry level. A contemporary brick masonry pier and low brick wall have replaced the original porch support column and balustrade. The gable roof with cross gable is sheathed in slate shingles. The brick façade has been painted light beige in color. Defining architectural features include expressed windowsills as well as segmental brick arched window and door openings commonly found throughout South Bethlehem.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to replace existing roof sheathing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles in English gray; paint all previously painted surfaces, including the brick masonry in charcoal slate color and all other surfaces, including window trim and eaves, in black color. Masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is.

Guideline Citations:

- **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) 7.** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **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

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to replace existing roofing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles. Current roofing is slate shingles (potentially original cladding) with open valleys, which are all appropriate details within Historic Conservation District (HCD). Applicant proposes to replace existing roof with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles, which HCC traditionally considers appropriate when original roofing is lost or cannot be replaced in-kind. As described above, original slate roof is not lost and according to SIS 5, existing distinctive features such as slate shingles should be preserved. In addition, according to SIS 6, existing slates should be repaired rather than replaced, with new to match old in design, color, texture, and material. Based upon relevant guidelines, Applicant’s proposal to replace existing slate roofing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles is inappropriate.

However, this property is contiguous with previous Agenda Item, so HCC might consider common replacement roofing for both structures appropriate ... resulting in overall unified roof landscape. Both properties face secondary street that is otherwise dotted with service entrances and garages for main structures facing more prominent Graham Place and West Fourth Street, so discussion is warranted if asphalt shingles are appropriate for these two cases. If so, HCC traditionally considers GAF Slateline asphalt shingles in ‘Antique Slate’ color as appropriate replacement to slate shingles in satisfaction of SIS 9 by differentiating itself from old while also being compatible with historic materials, features, size, and scale to protect integrity of property and its environment. In addition, Applicant should also confirm following details:

- new roof sheathing is GAF Slateline non-architectural shingles in ‘Antique Slate’ color; **note:** Applicant proposes ‘English Gray’ color
- during removal of existing roofing, any damaged wood should be replaced in-kind, with new ice and water shield to be installed in all valleys and gutter edges and new underlayment to be installed over decking at remaining areas
- new ridge vent detail should be installed under roof-cap shingles for proper ventilation to ensure product longevity
- all valleys at gables, chimneys, etc. should be open and lined with copper flashing, rather than woven closed with asphalt shingles
- new metal drip edges should be installed and painted to match adjacent trim

In addition, Applicant should clarify intentions with gutters and downspouts (salvage and rehang existing or install new); appropriate new gutters should be smooth and half-round while appropriate new downspouts should be smooth and round.

COA Application also indicates intent to paint all previously painted surfaces, including brick masonry; masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is. HCC considers painting of masonry façades in violation of SIS 7 and therefore inappropriate because those treatments cause damage over time to historic materials; however, HCC traditionally allows Applicants to repaint previously painted masonry surfaces, so discussion is warranted. HCC does not review paint colors but traditionally encourages Applicants to avoid bright colors. Applicant's intent to refrain from painting masonry surfaces not previously painted is appropriate.

Discussion: Larissa Woods represented proposal to replace existing roof sheathing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles in English gray; paint all previously painted surfaces, including the brick masonry in charcoal slate color and all other surfaces, including window trim and eaves, in black color. Masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is.

Applicant presented HCC with sample of proposed GAF Slateline (non-architectural) asphalt shingles, agreeing with suggestion that 'Antique Slate' color is more appropriate and works well with proposed paint color scheme. Mr. Lader inquired about condition of existing slate roof. Applicant confirmed current slate is original to structure, noting no recent leaks but ongoing need for repairs and slate replacement while describing overall condition as "not great". Mr. Lader continued by inquiring if both properties reflect two distinct tenants. Applicant clarified that each structure reflects unique tenants at first floor level; however, layouts of second and third floor levels do not overlap with separations below and cannot be segregated according to unique street addresses. This also explains Applicant's desire to "make both properties look like one house". Mr. Evans inquired about intentions with exposed aluminum fascia beneath eaves; Applicant responded with desire to paint metal sheathing beneath eaves in black color to match trim elsewhere. Mr. Lader inquired about intentions with gutters and downspouts; Applicant responded with desire to replace existing gutters and downspouts with metal gutters and downspouts with factory-applied finish in black color. Mr. Lader noted that appropriate replacement gutters are half-round and appropriate downspouts are round. Mr. Lader continued by explaining that appropriate valleys should be open and lined with copper, with flashing as needed elsewhere also in copper. Applicant inquired if open valleys and flashing could be aluminum with metallic finish; Mr. Evans explained relevant design guidelines define appropriate flashing for open valleys, etc. is copper.

Applicant concluded by noting desire to replace existing window at third floor level with larger window to provide more natural light inside. Mr. Simonson welcomed Applicant's suggestion for larger window to improve egress conditions at third floor level. Applicant agreed to collaborate with City's Planning Office for potential replacement window options before submitting subsequent COA Application for HCC review. Mr. Lader encouraged Applicant to include to-scale measured drawing of front façade that depicts proposed replacement window along with specifications and cut sheets of proposed window type as important supplements to subsequent application.

Public Commentary: None.

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Lader and seconded by Mr. Evans adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as presented, with modifications described herein:

1. The proposal to replace existing slate roof sheathing with GAF Slateline asphalt shingles and to paint all previously painted surfaces, including the brick masonry façade, window trim and eaves, was presented by Larissa Woods. Masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is.
2. Appropriate details for replacement roofing include:
 - a. new roof sheathing is GAF Slateline non-architectural asphalt shingles in 'Antique Slate' color
 - b. during removal of existing roofing, any damaged wood should be replaced in-kind, with new ice and water shield to be installed in all valleys and gutter edges and new underlayment to be installed over decking at remaining areas

- c. new ridge vent detail should be installed under roof-cap shingles for proper ventilation to ensure product longevity
 - d. all valleys at gables, chimneys, etc. should be open and lined with copper flashing, rather than woven closed with asphalt shingles
 - e. new metal drip edges should be installed and painted to match adjacent trim
 - f. new metal gutters are half-round and new metal downspouts are round
3. Painting of previously painted brick masonry is charcoal slate in color while painting of all other surfaces, including window trim and eaves, is black in color; masonry surfaces not previously painted shall remain, as is.

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #4

Property Location: 311 East Third Street

Property Owner: PD Taylor, LLC

Applicant: John Callahan

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a detached, 5-story, 10-bay, mixed-use, masonry structure with a flat roof and inner courtyard. Though conceived as one structure, the overall building mass changes in façade materials to appear as a series of row houses. The fourth floor terminates in an ornamental cornice while the fifth-floor façade is clad in scallop siding to help “read” as a Mansard roof. Defining architectural features include traditionally inspired glass storefronts, a simplified cornice at the lower sign band, a combination of double-hung windows, casement windows, and Juliette balconies as well as cast sills and lintels. HCC assessments of this new development project, which references Italianate detailing found throughout South Bethlehem, were conducted in 2021 through 2022 and construction is almost complete; thus, the structure is a contemporary building and therefore non-contributing to the Historic Conservation District (HCD).

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to install a new 3'-6" x 20' wall sign for a newly constructed mixed-use structure.

Guideline Citations:

- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **Historic Conservation Commission ‘Guidelines for Signage’**

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to install one 240-inch-tall x 42-inch-wide sign at front (south) façade along East Third Street that also wraps around corner with same 240-inch-tall x 42-inch-wide dimensions at side (west) façade along Taylor Street. Provided scale drawings indicate both sign fronts are 4-inches thick and bottom of sign measures 19-feet (228-inches) above public right-of-way, resulting in top of sign at 39-feet (468-inches). According to COA Application, proposed corner wrap sign is fabricated from extruded aluminum cabinet with 1/8-inch Aluminum Composite Material (ACM) faces (final color “to be determined”), with aluminum angle brackets installed using galvanized through bolts. Letters are 1/2-inch deep pushed through lettering with acrylic faces in bright white color. Each sign face includes words “TAYLOR FLATS” oriented vertically in 19-inch tall, slender, sans serif, all upper-case lettering. Proposed signage also includes internal illumination using LED lights, with no visible conduits, raceways, or junction boxes.

Proposed signage represents Applicant’s response to HCC comments about initial proposal for projecting blade sign at front (south) façade along East Third Street, near corner at side (west) façade along Taylor Street, during meeting on April 15, 2024. Current proposal has same vertical and horizontal dimensions of previous sign; however, it now wraps around two building façades while original proposal was visible on one façade. Previous blade sign was 12-inches thick and projected 9-inches from building façade while current proposal is 4-inches thick and is flush with both building façades. Previous sign proposal included such details as stylized logo in teal color, matrix of white dots as design detail and band in teal color along vertical edge of sign while current sign is reduced to lettering on contrasting background.

During previous assessment, Applicant was requested by HCC to reconsider overall size of proposed sign, so it better relates to appropriate signage found throughout HCD; original blade sign measured 240-inches tall x 42-inches wide while dimensions of current corner wrap sign remain 240-inches tall x 42-inches wide at each façade. Applicant was encouraged to locate new sign above mid-block entrance into residential apartments to avoid confusion with commercial tenant located beneath proposed corner location; current wrap sign remains at corner location. Applicant was also informed that internally illuminated signs are inappropriate within HCD according to relevant design guidelines, so discussion of this feature is warranted. Should HCC consider proposed internal illumination as appropriate, relevant design guidelines indicate illumination should be warm white, with HCC traditionally recommending maximum 3000K LED color temperature lights. Though not defined within relevant design guidelines, Applicant was also informed that HCC traditionally discourages use of bright white color within HCD and encourages offset pinstripe detail around sign perimeter in complementary color; current proposal includes bright white lettering and no offset pinstripe detail, so discussion of these details is warranted.

Not referenced within Project Description field on COA Application nor within resulting HCC meeting agenda, page 4 of supporting documentation includes additional proposal for individual pin-mounted lettering offset from building façade, with backlit detail resulting in halo effect; each letter measures 12-inches tall and overall dimension is 136-inches wide. Proposed letters are 1 1/2-inch-thick aluminum with acrylic polyurethane finish that spell out "TAYLOR FLATS" in slender, sans serif, all upper-case lettering; each letter is pin-mounted into existing sign band, with 1/2-inch spacer behind. Pin-mounted letters within sign bands are appropriate according to relevant design guidelines; HCC recently determined backlit letters and signs with halo effect as appropriate, as well. Applicant was previously informed that HCC traditionally recommends maximum 3000K LED color temperature lights for all lighting, so proposed 6500 LED lights are inappropriate. Applicant should confirm that no conduits, raceways or junction boxes are visible with signage proposal; Applicant should also clarify intended location of proposed lettering.

During previous assessment Applicant was informed that new exterior lighting fixtures were never assessed by HCC, so relevant product details (cut sheets with fabricator, dimensions, colors, etc.) are requested for final review; LED lights are limited to maximum 3000 LED color temperature. During recent site inspection, it was observed that gooseneck lights (not assessed by HCC) are inappropriately installed centered within horizontal sign band; appropriate fixture location is above sign band to provide illumination for signage within sign band, so discussion is warranted.

Discussion: John Callahan and Ed Reed represented proposal to install new 240-inch-tall x 42-inch-wide wall sign for newly constructed mixed-use structure. Applicant explained revisions to previous signage proposal are based upon initial HCC feedback: revised double-sided blade sign to flat sign affixed to two façades and color scheme reduced to white letters on black background.

Mr. Evans expressed concern about proposed internal illumination, noting comments made during previous discussion that relevant design guidelines discourage internally illuminated signs; continued that many similar signs have been eliminated from HCD over time, so HCC's hesitation to approve current proposal is based on avoiding precedent for potential future Applicants. Mr. Evans continued by encouraging Applicant to consider backlit sign as appropriate alternative, resulting in similar effect without internal illumination. Applicant called attention to provided "nighttime view" among supplemental images, explaining individual letters will be routed out so emitting light is limited only to lettering; continued that letters will be "crisply set off from black background" as preferred approach to hazier illumination offered by backlit halo effect while noting black backgrounds absorb more light and becomes less effective. Applicant also confirmed willingness to limit lights to maximum 3000K LED color temperature. Mr. Simonson appreciated nighttime view provided by Applicant but expressed concern that proposed signage will seem flat during daytime; continued by suggesting that Applicant might benefit from dimensional letters pin-mounted onto flat backer. Applicant countered that thin-stroke letters in bright white acrylic faces offer sufficient contrast with black backer to "read" during daylight hours. Mr. Evans expressed uncertainty about such claims and suggested individual letters in black color pin mounted onto lighter background and backlit for halo effect would be more effective and also relates better to Applicant's similar signage elsewhere. Applicant clarified that previous intent for signage to relate with corporate signs at other project locations is no longer desired.

Mr. Lader repeated previous concerns about size and scale of proposed signage, noting Applicant did not reduce size of sign from original proposal; continued by explaining personal struggle with larger buildings

that promote billboard-scale signs with no adherence to relevant design guidelines and have no relation to appropriate signage elsewhere within HCD ... noting typical signs are significantly smaller in scale and announce commercial tenants inside. Mr. Lader agreed that current proposal represents improvement from previous blade sign but questioned logic of wrapping sign onto two unique façades. Mr. Evans suggested thickness of backer should be reduced; Mr. Lader suggested eliminating rigid backer by pin-mounting individual letters directly into building façade and limiting signage to one façade. Mr. Simonson supported proposal to include signage on both façades if Applicant removes rigid backer and pin mounts lettering directly into building façade. Applicant expressed preference for dark backer that offers more visual impact by contrasting with white letters. Mr. Evans encouraged Applicant to consider offset pinstripe detail in complementary color around sign perimeter if rigid backer is preferred and also to reduce current 4-inch thickness of backer. Mr. Simonson inquired about proposed material for backer; Applicant responded that backer is fabricated from extruded aluminum cabinet with 1/8-inch Aluminum Composite Material (ACM) faces. Mr. Lader suggested Applicant might consider opposite approach by using rigid backer with letters routed out so existing building façade is visible beneath and potentially backlit to reveal letters at night but expressed concern that relevant design guidelines might not support such proposals; Mr. Long noted existing contemporary structure does not contribute to HCD, so HCC might determine such proposals appropriate at this location while potentially inappropriate for contributing structures. Mr. Evans expressed preference for pin-mounted letters on rigid backer over Mr. Lader's suggestion; Applicant confirmed same preference, as well.

Mr. Simonson inquired if signage of individual pin mounted letters depicted on page 4 of supplemental drawing set is intended as alternative to proposed larger scale sign. Applicant clarified that secondary signage is intended in addition to larger sign, noting location is within sign band and centered above entrance lobby for residential tenants at southeast corner of project site; continued that letters are backlit for halo effect and confirmed willingness to limit lights to maximum 3000K LED color temperature.

Mr. Simonson noted gooseneck fixtures were never assessed by HCC and confirmed Mr. Long's observation they are incorrectly installed within sign band rather than above; Applicant agreed to speak with relevant contractor to understand what happened. Mr. Evans observed that gooseneck fixtures are not needed for proposed backlit signage; Mr. Lader noted consequence of incorrectly installing gooseneck fixtures within sign band prevents proper installation of future signage within sign band.

Public Commentary: None.

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Lader adopted the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as presented, with modifications described herein:

1. The proposal to install a new large wall sign and other new signage for a newly constructed mixed-use structure was presented by John Callahan and Ed Reed.
2. Appropriate details for one large wall sign include:
 - a. 240-inch-tall x 42-inch-wide sign at front (south) façade along East Third Street that also wraps around corner with same 240-inch-tall x 42-inch-wide dimensions at side (west) façade along Taylor Street
 - b. sign backer is less than 4-inches thick; bottom of sign measures 19-feet (228-inches) above public right-of-way, resulting in top of sign at 39-feet (468-inches)
 - c. sign is fabricated from extruded aluminum cabinet with 1/8-inch Aluminum Composite Material (ACM) faces, with aluminum angle brackets installed using galvanized through bolts
 - d. each sign face includes individually pin-mounted letters that read "TAYLOR FLATS" oriented vertically in 19-inch tall, slender, sans serif, all upper-case lettering; aluminum letters are 1 1/2-inch thick with acrylic polyurethane finish, with 1/2-inch spacer behind
 - e. offset pinstripe border around sign perimeter in complementary color to frame sign
 - f. LED lighting for halo effect is maximum 3000K LED color temperature; no conduits, raceways or junction boxes are visible

Note: Applicant agreed to submit preferred color selections for rigid backer, lettering and pin stripe detail via City of Bethlehem for final review by Chief Building Inspector, HCC Chair and Historic Officer prior to fabrication and installation.

3. Appropriate details for smaller signage includes:
 - a. individual pin-mounted lettering offset from building façade, with backlit detail resulting in halo effect; signage is centered vertically within sign band and centered horizontally above entrance lobby intended for residential tenants at southeast corner of project site
 - b. each letter measures 12-inches tall and overall dimension is 136-inches wide
 - c. letters are 1 1/2-inch-thick aluminum with acrylic polyurethane finish that spell out “TAYLOR FLATS” in slender, sans serif, all upper-case lettering; each letter is pin-mounted into existing sign band, with 1/2-inch spacer behind
 - d. LED lighting for halo effect is maximum 3000K LED color temperature; no conduits, raceways or junction boxes are visible

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

General Business:

Minutes from HCC meeting on May 20, 2024, were approved by those attending that meeting, and with abstention by those not previously in attendance.

Mr. Evans inquired about status of HCC requested modification to City Ordinance that allows for “over counter approvals” by qualified personnel; if that process is on-going, HCC might explore other potential revisions such as makeup of HCC ... noting current membership does not include required real estate broker, South Bethlehem business owner, etc. Mr. Simonson explained previous HCC recommendations to amend ordinance are currently being reviewed by city’s legal counsel. Mr. Evans continued by inquiring if proposed revisions also include punitive consequences for Applicants who violate terms of COAs; Mr. Simonson recalled that proposed revisions include various fee structures. Mr. Lader inquired if Agenda Items #2 and #3 from today’s HCC meeting would qualify for over-counter approval if proposed revisions to ordinance were already enacted. Mr. Simonson responded that both agenda items would still require HCC review under revised ordinance because they do not reflect in-kind replacement; continued that replacing existing slate roof with new slate roof would qualify for over-counter approval while replacing existing slate roof with new asphalt shingle roof would still require HCC review. Mr. Evans noted importance of treating all Applicants in same manner and need for HCC to review all proposals that reflect potential changes to existing façades.

There was no further business; HCC meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



BY: _____
Jeffrey Long
Historic Officer
South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District
Mt. Airy Historic District