



SITE ADDRESS: 205-207 WEST BROAD ST

Office Use Only:

DATE SUBMITTED: 08.24.2021

HEARING DATE: 10.13.2021

PLACARD: 09.29.2021

FEE: \$500.00

ZONING CLASSIFICATION: CL

LOT SIZE: 60' X 100' OR 6,000 SF

**APPLICATION FOR APPEAL TO THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM ZONING HEARING BOARD,  
10 EAST CHURCH STREET, BETHLEHEM, PA 18018**

1. Return one (1) original and eight (8) copies of this application and all supporting documentation to the Zoning Officer, along with the filing fee. Include site plans and/or floor plans as necessary.
2. The application is due by 4PM on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month. The hearing will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the next month.
3. If you are submitting MORE THAN 10 exhibits at the hearing, you MUST place them in an indexed binder and submit at one time.

Appeal/Application to the City of Bethlehem Zoning Hearing Board is hereby made by the undersigned for: (check applicable item(s):

- Appeal of the determination of the Zoning Officer
- Appeal from an Enforcement Notice dated \_\_\_\_\_
- Variance from the City of Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance
- Special Exception permitted under the City Zoning Ordinance
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 1**

<b>APPLICANT:</b>	
Name	<u>CHRISTOPHER J. ALTEMUS</u>
Address	<u>206 W Broad St</u> <u>BETHLEHEM, PA 18018</u>
Phone:	<u>[REDACTED]</u>
Email:	<u>[REDACTED]</u>

<b>OWNER</b> (if different from Applicant): Note. If Applicant is NOT the owner, attach written authorization from the owner of the property when this application is filed.
Name <i>SAME</i>
Address
Phone:
Email:
<b>ATTORNEY</b> (if applicable): <i>N/A</i>
Name
Address
Phone:
Email:

**SECTION 2. INFORMATION REGARDING THE REAL ESTATE**

1. Attach a site plan, drawn to scale, of the real estate. Include existing and proposed natural and man-made features. *- N/A*
- ✓2. Attach architectural plans and elevations depicting proposed alterations or new construction.
- ✓3. Attach photographs.
4. If the real estate is presently under Agreement of Sale, attach a copy of the Agreement. *- N/A*
5. If the real estate is presently leased, attached a copy of the present lease. *- N/A*
6. If this real estate has been the object of a prior zoning hearing, attach a copy of the Decision. *- N/A*

**SECTION 3.**

**THE RELIEF SOUGHT:**

If the Applicant seeks a dimensional variance for any setback, lot coverage, distance between certain uses, etc., please state the following: *N/A*

Section of Code	Dimension Required by Code	Dimension Proposed by Applicant	Variance Sought
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

If the Applicant seeks a use or other variance, please state the **specific section(s)** of the Zoning Ordinance applicable and describe the variance sought.

*Section 1305.01 (a). Seeking variance to permit a single dwelling unit within CL District, whereas only multi-family dwellings (3 dwelling units or more) are permitted.*

If the Applicant seeks a Special Exception, please state the **specific section (s)** of Zoning Ordinance applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If the Applicant seeks an appeal from an interpretation of the Zoning Officer, state the remedy sought in accordance with Sec. 1325.11 (b):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_


**NARRATIVE**

A brief statement reflecting why zoning relief is sought and should be granted must be submitted.


**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the information contained in and attached to this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I also certify that I understand that any and all federal, state or local rules and regulations, licenses and approvals shall be obtained if the appeal is granted.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

*8/24/21*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Property owner's Signature

*8/24/21*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**NOTICE: If the Decision of the Zoning Hearing Board is appealed, the appellant is responsible for the cost of the transcript.**



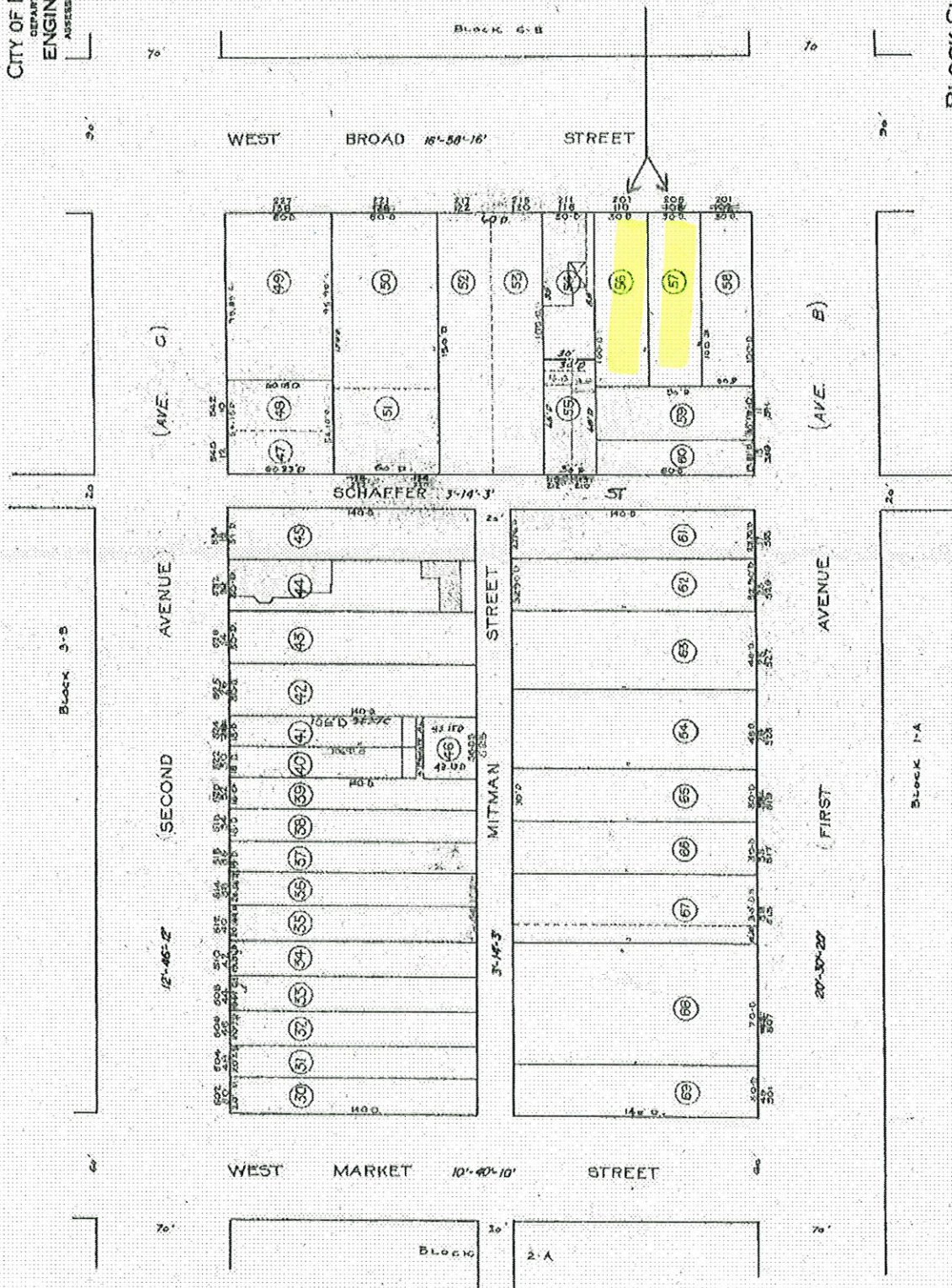
WARD  
II  
BLOCK  
2  
B

CITY OF BETHLEHEM  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENGINEERING  
ASSESSMENT MAP

205-207 WEST BROAD ST  
# 56 + 57

BLOCK SURVEY  
SHOWING  
DEED AND OCCUPATION DISTANCES  
SCALE 1 IN. = 40 FT. DATE 1919  
R. L. FOX, CITY ENGR

205-207-172







Block 6-B

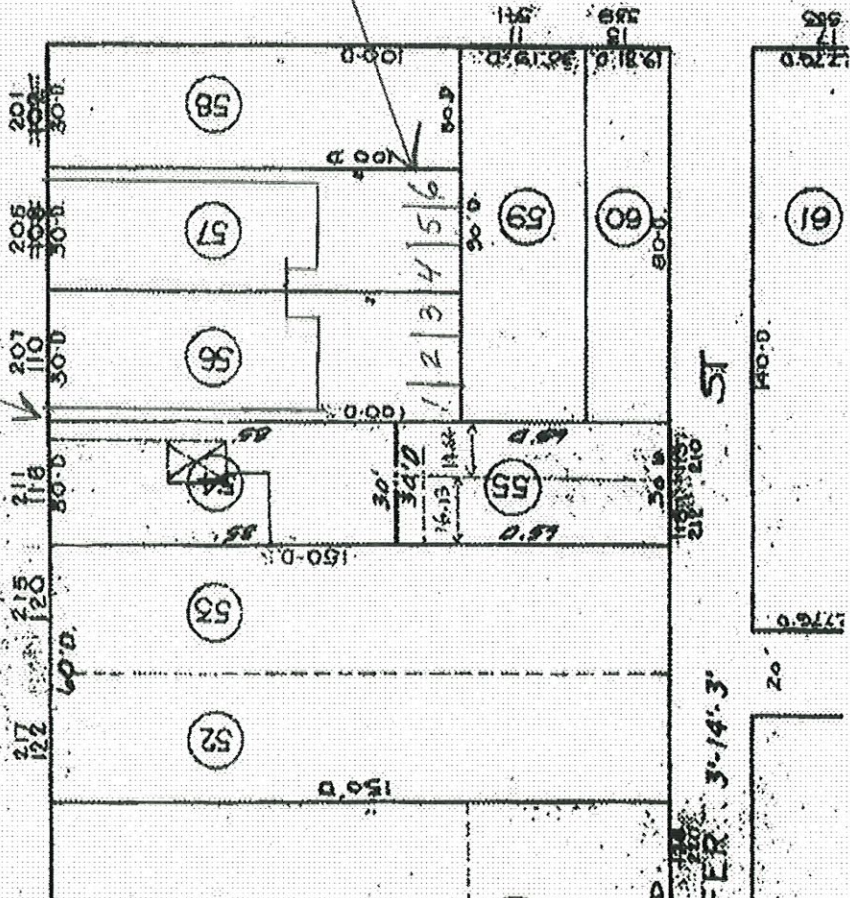
70

DRIVEWAY ENTRANCE

WEST BEARD ST  
D 16'-58'-16'

STREET

PARKING FOR 6



FER 3-14-3

ST

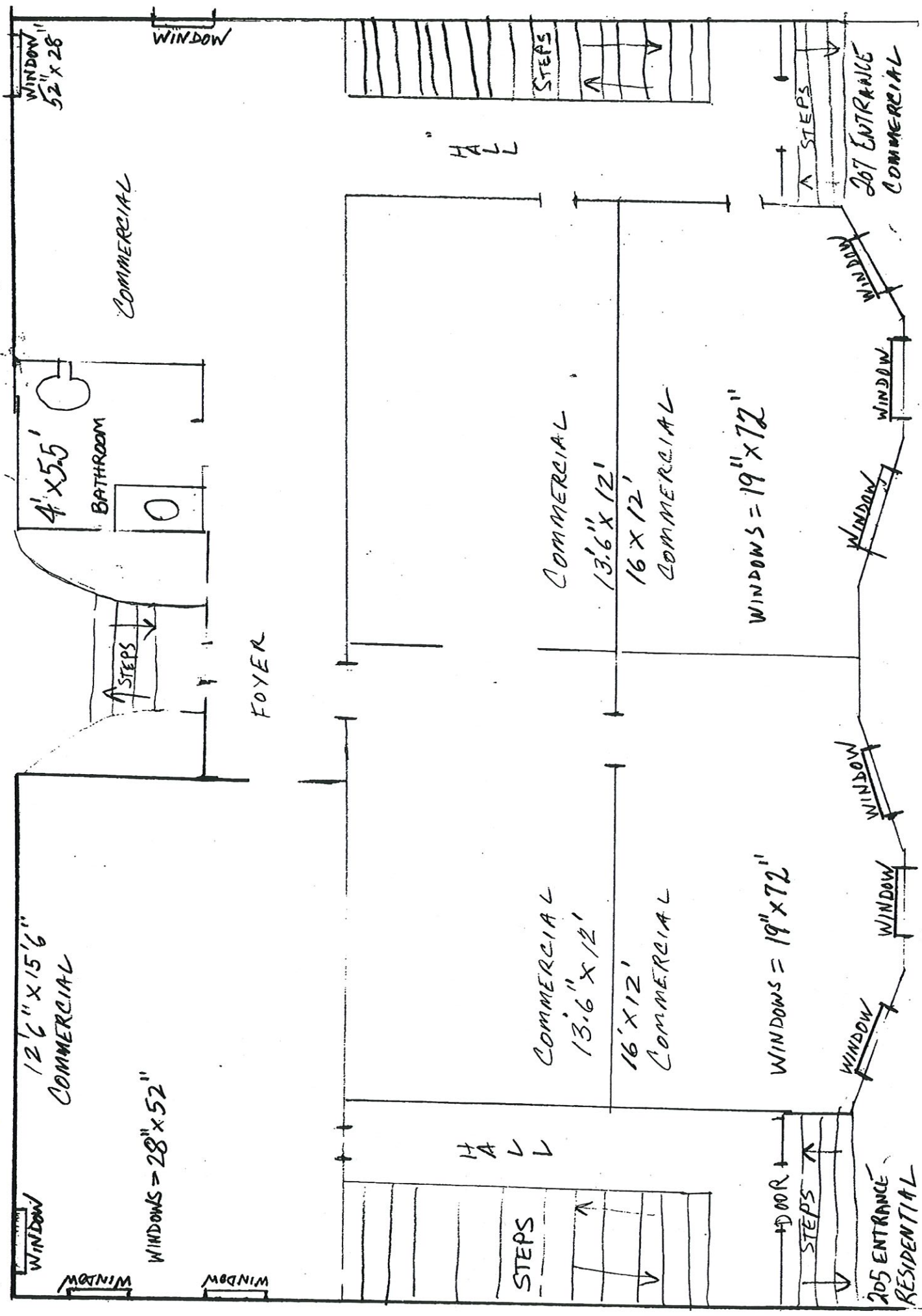
1ST AVE (AVE)

(B)



GROUND LEVEL

PARKING LOT

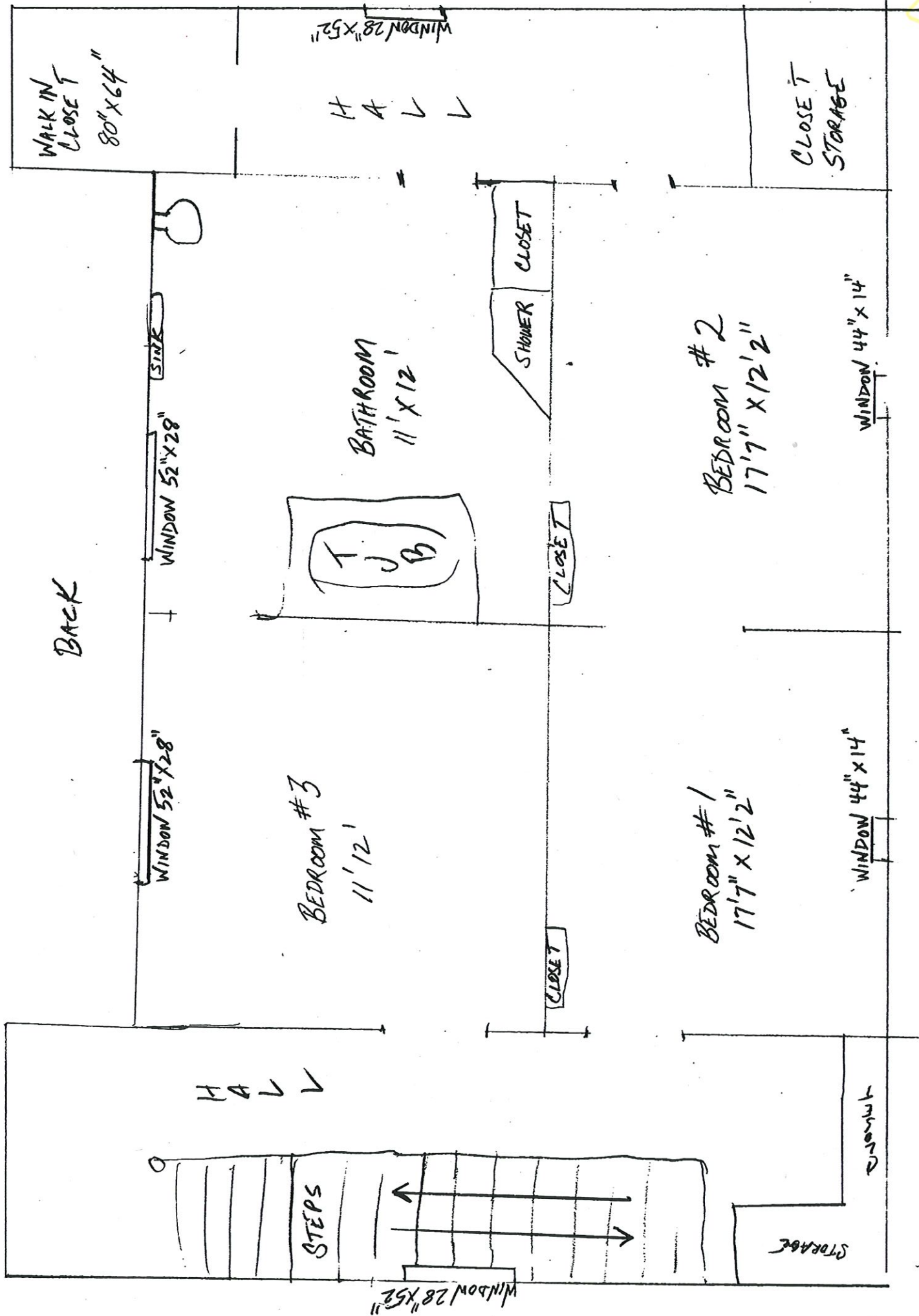


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WEST BROAD ST



2nd Floor



BACK

FRONT

WALK IN CLOSET  
80" X 64"

WINDOW 28" X 52"

HALL

CLOSET STORAGE

SINK

WINDOW 52" X 28"

BATHROOM  
11' X 12'

SHOWER

CLOSET

BEDROOM #2  
17'7" X 12'2"

WINDOW 44" X 14"

T  
J  
B

CLOSET

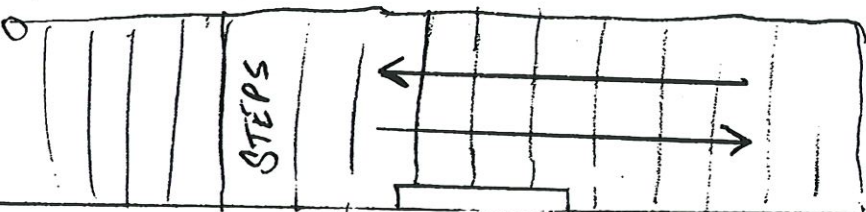
BEDROOM #3  
11' X 12'

BEDROOM #1  
17'7" X 12'2"

WINDOW 44" X 14"

CLOSET

HALL



WINDOW 28" X 52"

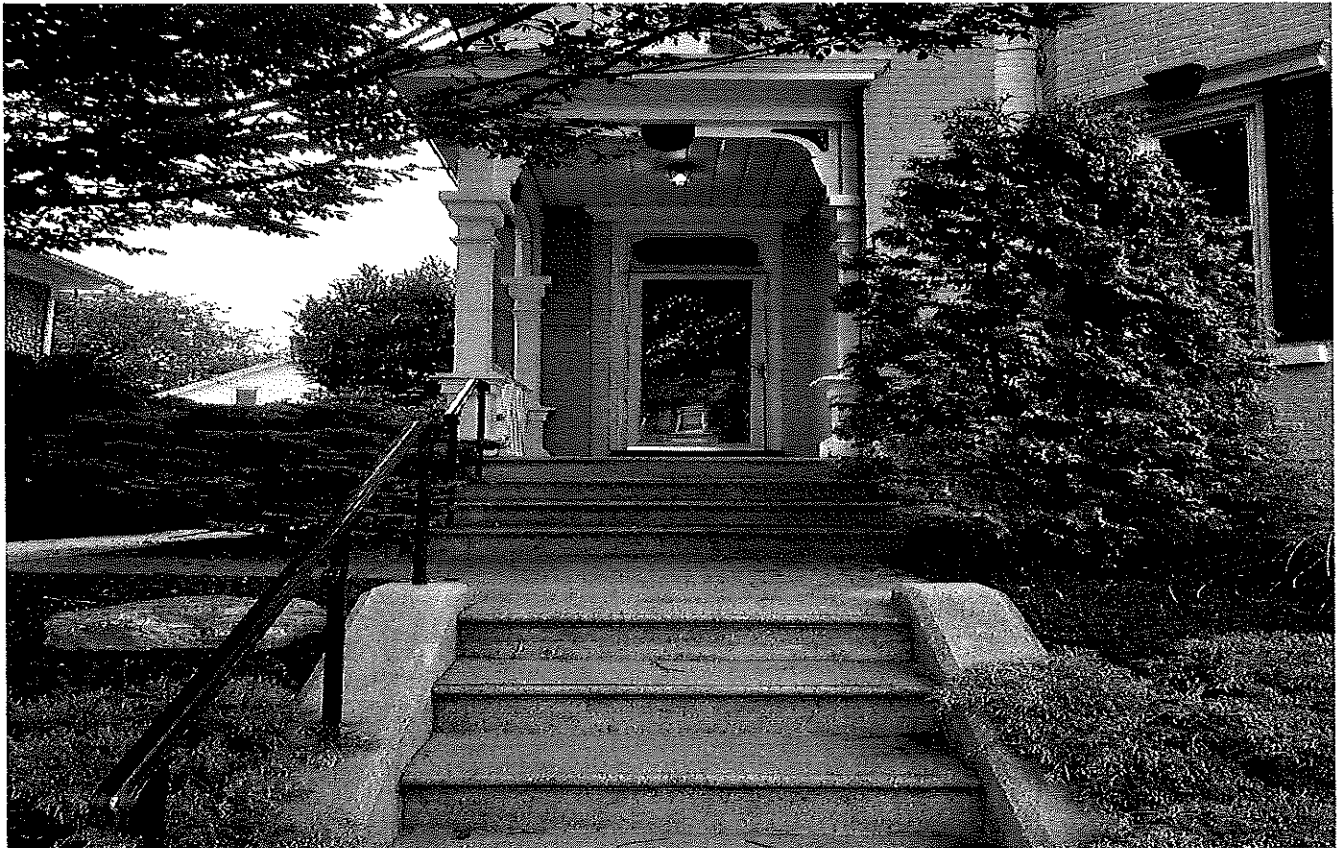
STORAGE

ENTRANCE





205 – 207 West Broad Street  
Bethlehem, Pa 18018



Standing on sidewalk. Private residential entrance. Note the walkway on left that leads back to the parking lot.

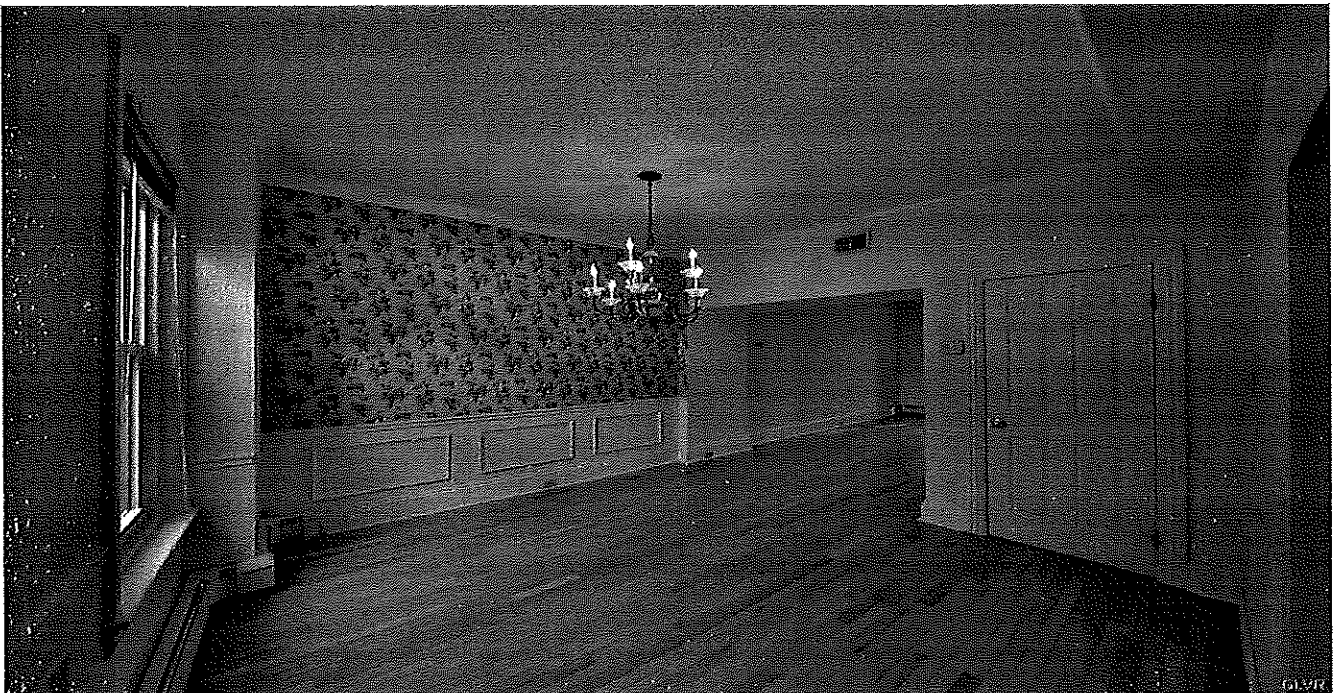


Standing inside private residential entrance. Door at the end of hall leads to commercial space. Steps lead to residential space.

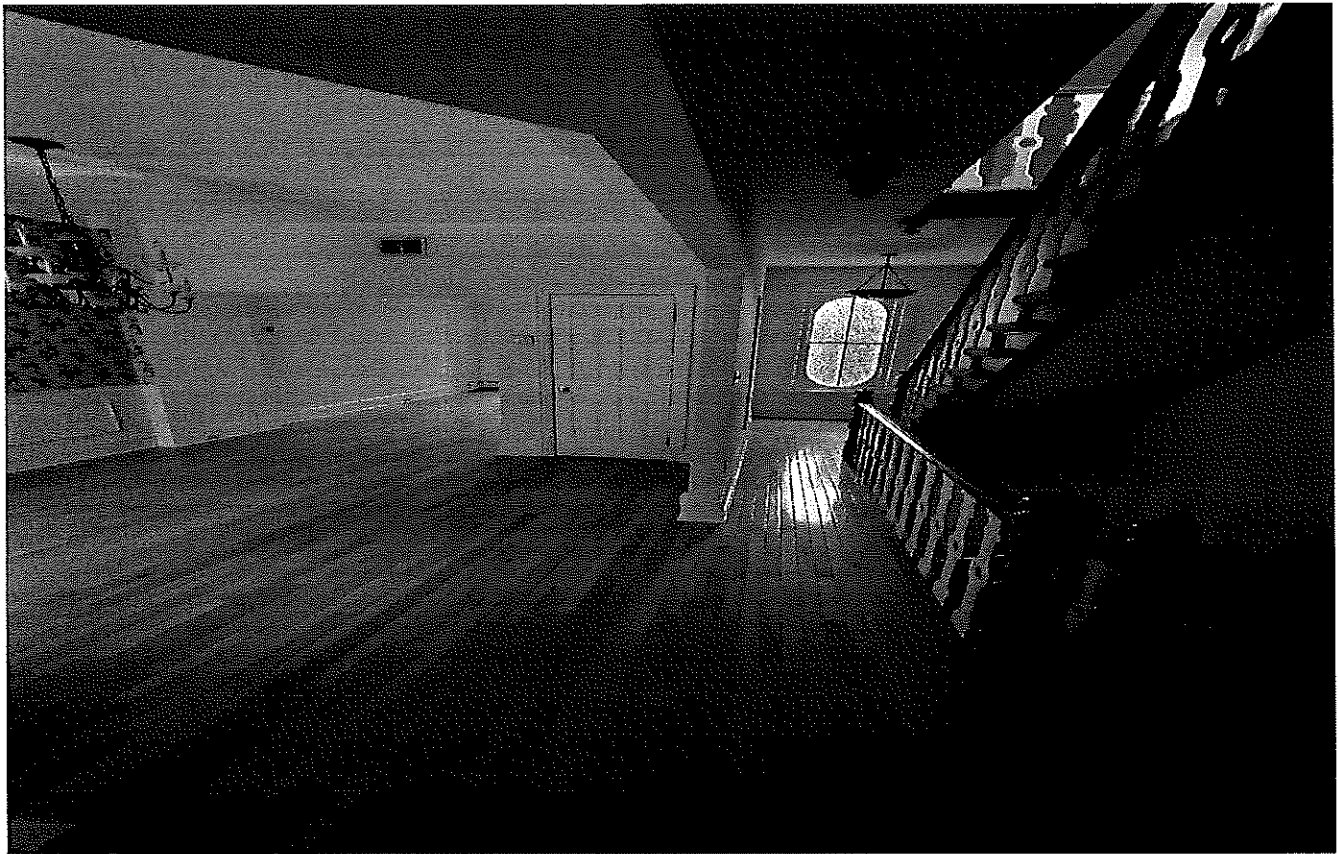




Kitchen looking west. The door in the back leads to a powder room and laundry room.



Dining Room. NOTE: Dental Crown molding, Chair rail and shadow boxes. Window on left looks south onto parking lot. The door is a closet. The opening leads into the living room.



Standing at entrance to kitchen looking out. Dining room on immediate left. The opening from the dining room leads to the living room. Steps from ground private entrance are on the left. Steps to third floor also on left. Dental Crown moldings, Chair Rail and Shadow Boxes continued into residence



Standing in dining room looking through opening into living room.





Steps leading to third floor. Kitchen in the background.



Standing at top of steps on third floor. 2 doors on the right are closet/storage. The back door on left leads into bedroom #1. The first door on the left leads into bedroom #3.

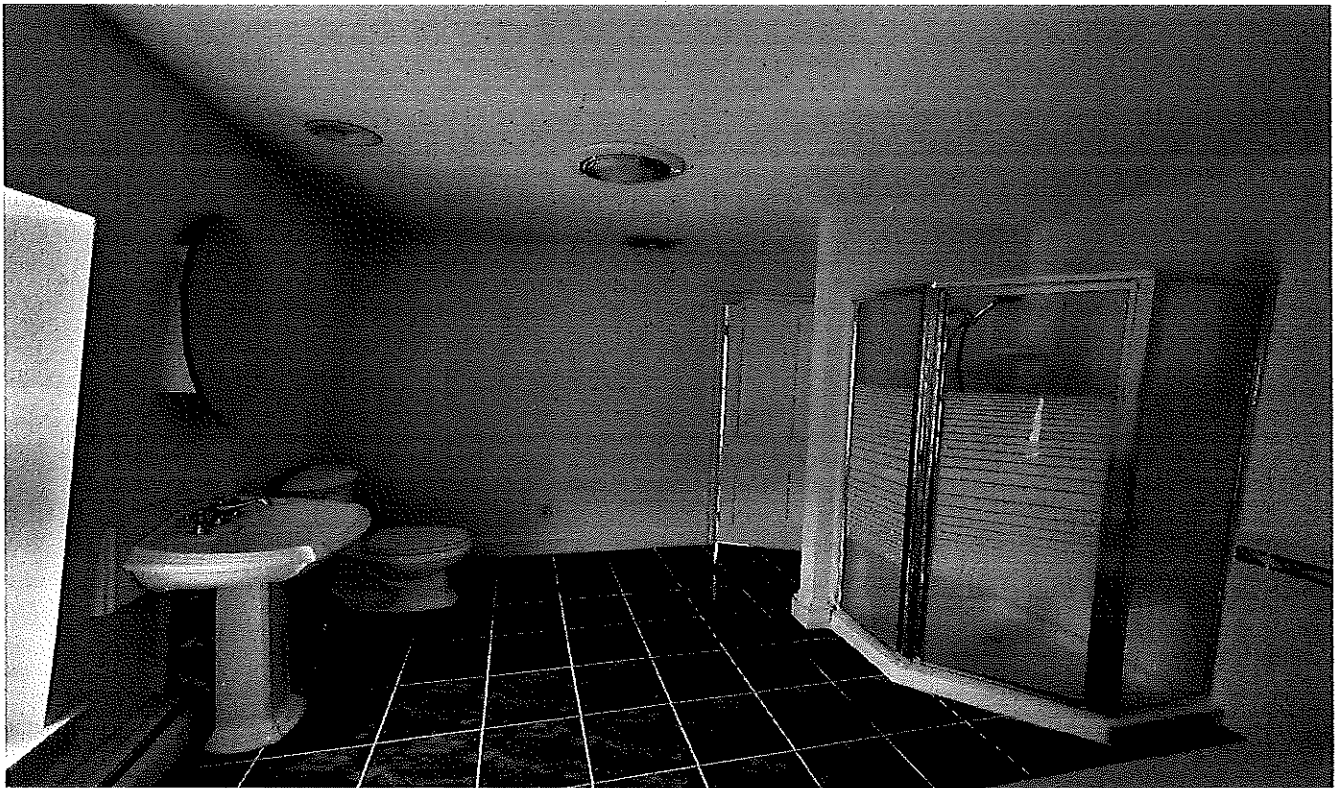


Bedroom #1. Double doors lead to bedroom #2. The door in the background leads to the walk in closet. The window on the right faces W Broad Street.



Bedroom # 2. Double doors lead back into bedroom #1. Window on left faces W Broad Street.





Bathroom. Door in background leads into walk in closet. Window on right faces south and parking lot.



Bathroom. Standing in walk in closet. Open door is bedroom #3.



Walk in closet. Door on right is additional closet. Window on right faces west into driveway.



Standing in bathroom. Bedroom #3. Window on Right faces back parking lot. Door on left is a closet. Open door leads back to the steps coming from second floor.





Driveway in on left. The parking lot is on the right.



Back of building. Entrance in the middle is for the commercial area. The apartment uses the walkway on the right side to access residential private entrance.

## NARRATIVE FOR 205 – 207 WEST BROAD STREET

### BACKGROUND

In December 1995 my father, Joseph Altemus, purchased the property 205-207 W Broad Street (2 addresses 1 building – see picture attached) with the intention of living in a portion of the building and having his business offices in another portion of the building. After consultation with various entities (including the city) my father hired Plantique and Pirelli Construction to rehab the property inside and out. Pirelli Construction was referred because they had experience and previously renovated the Sayre Mansion. Plantique was referred because they are known to be among the best around and they had the resources to bring in subcontractors as needed. Since the property is located in the Historic District my father was also required to attend several H.A.R.B. meetings to get the projects approved.

The work was initiated and completed in 1996 with the business on the entire first floor and half of the second floor. His apartment was on the other half of the second floor and the entire third floor. He lived there until 2010 when knee replacements and back surgeries forced him to a ranch style home. The apartment has been vacant since.

The business was located in the building from 1996 until May 2020. It was sold in January 2020 and the new operators decided to relocate to an office with less space and lower rent. The Commercial space has been vacant since May 2020.

I inherited the building in October 2019. I have had it listed for sale since September 2020. Since listing I have had several potential buyers and offers. Many have met with the city to inquire as to the buildings potential uses only to be discouraged by the uncertainty of making such requests as the one before you. The offers I did receive were either incredibly low or contingent upon the city making an exception for the buyers desired use. None of which were accepted. This inability to sell and buyer feedback has enabled me to recognize that I must appeal to the Board to be able to minimally use the building as it is configured now.

I currently have another potential buyer who has interest in buying the building if it can be used as it is currently configured. My Realtor has advised me they retained an attorney, are approved financially and are awaiting the outcome of this meeting to determine if they tender an offer.

### ISSUES

We are respectfully seeking a variance to permit a single dwelling within the CL District, whereas only multi-family dwellings (Three dwelling units or more) are permitted; Ref. Section 1305.01(a).

Craig Pfeiffer from zoning has advised that the CL zoning district does permit mixed uses but limits residential use to multi family or three or more dwelling units. The buildings current configuration only has one dwelling unit.

Further Mr Pfeiffer has indicated that the city has no proof of the dwelling establishment.

With that said our first request is for the city to recognize the work that was done in 1996. Mr Pfeiffer personally toured the entire building and should be able to attest to the worn floors and dated nature of the finishes. There was no work done in that building anytime since 1996. To do the construction required to create that residential unit, 1.5 blocks from main street, in the historic district, without the city seeing or knowing about it would be extremely difficult. Especially during the period that the entire outside was torn out and replaced with the design that it is today. City inspectors were at the building numerous times throughout this period. I can recall the permits plastered in the front window because that was the office I worked in. I feel that if we are employing logical thinking, there is no reasonable property owner *who intends to live in the building*, that would renovate an antique structure without adhering to construction standards and inspections as this would endanger their life and devalue the building via shoddy workmanship. That is not the case here evidenced by the photos attached.



I am not looking to build, create or modify anything. I simply inherited a building as it is and want to sell it so a buyer can use it as it is. My father insists all the permits were pulled and the city was consulted because otherwise, he would have used the nicest 2 rooms in the house and the entire first floor for himself. He spent significant amounts of money to hire reputable contractors and get the work done right because he initially intended to live there long term. Mr Pfeiffer acknowledged that sometimes the city records are not perfect. Perhaps that is the case here? Unfortunately, my father could not locate any records to support this as they would be 26 years old and he purged significant amounts of documents when he sold his business in January 2020. However, it should be noted that the city knew to send all of his tax notices and water bills to his residence at 205 W Broad Street. Lehigh County also has record of the mixed use (specifically residence) in the property tax records (attached). It would seem that all of the usual things happened after establishing his residence except for the city retaining the records that actually establish and recognize the physical residence. How can this be? Perhaps because it was never inspected for a rental license because it was owner occupied and never rented to anyone? I do not know how that stuff works and was only witness to everything, but I know the city was aware he lived there. It is for these reasons I feel the residential unit should be recognized and recognized as being established in 1996 when all of the other work on the building was completed. I am confident it would adhere to the city construction standards and would welcome any investigation or site visit to support the same.

Additionally, we are respectfully requesting a variance to only have one dwelling unit in the CL zone when the regulations require a minimum of 3 dwelling units. The building's current configuration is not only compliant and functional, but it adheres to the city's rules and regulations in the CL zone. The commercial unit is located on the street. Both the residential and Commercial unit are separated by a double brick fire wall and they each have their own private entrance. There is also ample off street parking for minimally 6 cars.

By the board allowing this, it could preserve the historic character that was maintained throughout the building by preventing it from being chopped up into "3 or more dwelling units". It will attract a higher caliber of tenant who would exhibit pride in ownership and could also afford to patron the downtown business' and restaurants within walking distance. Approving these requests will benefit everyone in the immediate community.

I would like to make note that building is becoming a significant physical and financial burden to me. The building was broken into on June 18, 2021, Bethlehem Police incident #2021-00025577. I have had to make additional molding repairs and replace doors and locks accordingly. Myself, my neighbor (Attorney Matz) whos surveillance camera caught the intruder, and my Realtor Anthony Ramos whos key holder was stolen were subpoenaed to court over this matter. The police caught the intruder later the next day with a (stolen) loaded fire arm and several loaded magazines ready to go among other things. I have also had to regularly maintain the property outside (unlike my "neighbor" at 143 W Broad), pay the insurance (double because it's vacant) , pay the utilities and taxes for over a year; all without a current job. I understand that this is not your concern but I desperately need to sell this property and cannot do it unless I am granted relief in this matter.

Finally I would like to note that since the property has been placed on the market I have lost buyers due to the unknown with regard to the city's allowed uses and variances. Conversations with the city seemed to have spooked buyers causing them to lose interest. I now recognize that most buyers don't want to buy a building, and then hope they can get a variance to use it as it is, or as they envisioned. Without being granted the ability to minimally use (sell) the building as it is configured there is little to no prospect in selling it at all and this would penalize me unfairly. Keep in mind the property has been listed for a year and the real estate market has been white hot during this period.

I feel that I have respectfully laid out a reasonable request and would appreciate any consideration you could provide in this matter. I simply want to sell this building and move along.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Christopher J Altemus

Property Owner 205 – 207 W Broad Street

Search Result Print View - Public

Street View





## Property Overview

2021

**Owner Name** ALTEMUS CHRISTOPHER J  
**Owner Address** 206 W BROAD ST  
BETHLEHEM PA 18018-5571

**Property Address** 205 W BROAD ST  
BETHLEHEM PA 18018

**Parcel Viewer** [View in Parcel Viewer](#)

**Low Number** 0205

**High Number** 0207

**Unit/Lot**

**Sub Division**

**Tax Authority** CITY OF BETHLEHEM

**School District** BETHLEHEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Parcel Id** 642748720896 1

**Old Parcel Id** 03 11 G11NW2C 017 005

**Tile** 476202D

**Acres/Dimension** 60 X 100

**Lot Sq Ft** 0

**Utilities** PUBLIC WATER/SEWER

**Class** COMMERCIAL

**Land Use** 3 ST OR MORE CONVERTED OFFICE - OFFICE/APT ABOVE

**Living Units** 1

**Zoning** CL

**Homestead Act 72** You may apply if it is your permanent primary residence.

**Preferential Land Act** NO

**Agricultural Easement** NO

**Assessment Base Year** 2013

	Exempt Land	0
	Exempt Building	0
<b>Total Assessment</b>	Taxable Land	42,000
	Taxable Building	233,600
	Total	275,600
	Taxable Total	275,600

	Mills	Taxes
<b>Taxes</b>		
	County	3.780000 \$ 1,041.77
	School	18.780000 \$ 5,175.77

	2021
	Municipality 6.050000 \$ 1,667.38
	Total \$ 7,884.92
<b>Bill Number</b>	031100282
<b>LC PropertyAddress</b>	205 W BROAD ST BETHLEHEM PA 18018

**Basic Commercial Profile**

	2021
<b>Type of Building</b>	
<b>Floor Area</b>	0
<b>Number of Stories</b>	0
<b>Year Built</b>	
<b>Type of Heating/Cooling</b>	
<b>Elevator</b>	NO
<b>Sprinklers</b>	NO
<b>Basement Area</b>	0
<b>Assessment Base Year</b>	2013
<b>Additional Information</b>	PAVING, , , , , , , ,



**Basic Residential Profile**

	2021
Type of Residence	3 ST OR MORE CONVERTED OF
Number of Stories	3 STORY
Type of Construction	BRICK & FRAME
Type of Basement	FULL
Type of Heating/Cooling	CENTRAL AIR
Type of Garage	NONE
Number of Full Bathrooms	2
Number of Half Bathrooms	1
Fireplaces	0
Square Feet	4566
Year Built	1860
Pool	NO POOL
Implement Buildings	NO IMPLEMENT BLDG

**Residential Profile Data With No Influence on Assessment Value**

	2021
Total Rooms	16
Number of Bedrooms	0
Family Rooms	0



**Sales History**

Sale Date	Owner Name	Document Id	Sale Price
11/2019	ALTEMUS CHRISTOPHER J	2019034735	\$ 1
10/1995	ALTEMUS JOSEPH P	1553/0254	\$ 205,000
10/0000	205-207 ASSOCIATES	1355/0802	\$ 1,995
09/1978	BOZIC DENNY & DAVID A HAIR	1254/0842	\$ 22,000

**Footprint****Footprint**