
M I N U T E S

BOARD: HISTORIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CITY OF BETHLEHEM

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: CHARLES PATRICK, KENNETH LOUSH

STAFF PRESENT: JEFFREY LONG

PRESS PRESENT: ED COURRIER (BETHLEHEM PRESS), LINDSAY WEBER (MORNING CALL)

VISITORS PRESENT: CONNOR ALEXANDER, JOSEPH BUBBA, KIM CARRELL-SMITH, TODD CHAMBERS, ANN FELKER, ERIC FREY, ROSEMARY FREY, ANN HUNSICKER, TINA KENSEKIS, ESTHER LEE, DELIA MARRERO, ADRIENNE MCNEIL, SETH MOGLEN, QUARTEZ MOORE, CONNOR MORIARITY, ANN MORRISSEY, JESSICA MORRISSEY, ROSEMARIE REBIMBAS, TINA SARGENT, BILL SCHEIRER, ANNA SMITH, AL WURTH

MEETING DATE: APRIL 18, 2022

The regular meeting of the Historic Conservation Commission (HCC) was held on April 18, 2022, at the City of Bethlehem Rotunda, Bethlehem City Hall, 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: 333 West Fourth Street
Property Owner: New Bethany Ministries
Applicant: Tina Sargent

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a 2-bay, 2 1/2 story, attached, painted brick commercial and residential building. It has a gable roof, projecting oriel bay window at the upper floor level, and rear property access via a baker's alley shared with the adjacent building. The structure dates from the late 19th century. T1-11 vertical plywood sheathing covers many defining architectural features; however, similar structures nearby are Federal Revival in style.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to remove and replace asphalt shingles on both sides of gable roof, both dormers and front bay window with GAF Slateline shingles in antique slate color.

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.

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to remove existing asphalt shingles, edge metal and flashings at main roof (front and rear), at roofs and cheeks (sides) of front and rear dormers as well as at roof of front oriel bay and replace with GAF

Slateline asphalt shingles in 'Antique Gray' color. Proposal to replace existing asphalt shingles is appropriate, pending clarifications about following details:

- all valleys (ex.: junctions at dormers with main roof) 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
- clarify phrase "install new hip caps" under Section 5.4 within accompanying work proposal

Discussion: Tina Sargent represented proposal to remove and replace asphalt shingles on both sides of gable roof, both dormers and front bay window with GAF Slateline shingles in antique slate color. Applicant noted lack of roofing firm representative makes clarification of specific details challenging; however, assumes term "hip caps" refers to metal roof ridges. Mr. Evans agreed that "roof cap" typically refers to metal trim along ridges (peak of main gable roof, peak of dormers, etc.) but noted relevant design guidelines identify integrated asphalt shingle details at all peaks as appropriate, rather than metal caps. Mr. Simonson requested clarification about intentions for gutters; Applicant confirmed existing gutters to be salvaged and re-hung upon completion of replacement roof sheathing.

Public Commentary: none

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

1. Proposal to remove and replace asphalt shingles on both sides of gable roof, both dormers and front bay window with GAF Slateline shingles in antique slate color was presented by Tina Sargent.
2. Appropriate replacement roofing includes following details:
 - a. GAF Slateline (non-architectural) asphalt shingles in 'Antique Slate' color; front and back of main gable roof, cheeks and roofs of both gable dormers as well as roof of front oriel bay receive new sheathing
 - b. new ridge vent detail installed under roof-cap shingles for proper ventilation to ensure product longevity
 - c. new aluminum flashing/counter flashing installed at party wall with adjacent (taller) structure; exposed aluminum receives factory-applied finish or is painted after installation to match color of painted stucco wall
 - d. all valleys are open and lined with copper flashing, rather than woven closed with asphalt shingles
 - e. new metal drip edges installed and painted to match adjacent trim

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #2

Property Location: 5 East Third Street

Property Owner: Pintzuk Brown Realty

Applicant: Rosemarie Rebimbas

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a semi-detached 1-story commercial building with a flat roof and multiple storefronts. Architecturally defining features include a highly decorative glazed terra cotta parapet, a stucco sign band and classical pilasters separating each storefront. The building dates from ca. 1920 and is Classical Revival in style. The storefronts were renovated in the 1990s in the Classical style by incorporating large-scale pre-cast masonry units at the sidewalk level, bronze framed glass storefronts and an Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS) with stucco applied to upper portions of the façade.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to replace existing projecting sign made of same material and size: aluminum with vinyl graphics, non-illuminated, 3'-0" x 4'-0".

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’**

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to replace existing double-sided blade sign with new sign to reflect updated corporate logo. Replacement sign is printed vinyl on rigid backer set inside ¼-inch thick and 3-inch-wide studded brushed aluminum frame surround, with two eye hooks for installing onto existing decorative metal scroll bracket. New sign retains dimensions of existing sign (48-inches tall x 36-inches wide), with underside of sign at 10-feet above public right-of-way. New sign includes stylized cursive lettering, with word “Versatile” approximately centered within overall sign followed on next line by word “Strands”. Final line includes word “SALON” in smaller, slender, sans-serif, all upper-case lettering. At right above lettering is stylized depiction of rose and cutting shears. Signage background is black in color, rose graphic is dark pink in color while remaining details and lettering are bright white in color.

Proposal to replace existing projecting blade sign with new sign of same material and size is appropriate, with following revisions:

- revise bright white color of various design elements to ivory or warm white to comply with more period-appropriate signage within Historic Conservation District
- omit aluminum frame and extend black background color to edges of sign; integrate off-set pinstripe detail in complementary color (warm white or ivory) around sign perimeter for more appropriate signage design within Historic Conservation District
- HCC encourages use of serif fonts (ex.: for word “SALON”) unless lettering is integral to design of corporate logo

Discussion: Rosemary Rebimbas represented proposal to replace existing projecting sign made of same material and size: aluminum with vinyl graphics, non-illuminated, 3’-0” x 4’-0”. Applicant confirmed acceptance of suggestions for new blade sign offered by Historic Officer. Mr. Lader noted that new logo seems “squished” and might be challenging to read by passers-by; continued by suggesting that Applicant could cooperate with sign company to spread out logo design to improve legibility. Mr. Simonson noted loss of surrounding frame (as originally proposed) allows for more spacing between lettering. Mr. Simonson continued by requesting confirmation that existing decorative scroll bracket will be reused; Applicant confirmed intent to hang new sign from existing decorative scroll bracket.

Public Commentary: none

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Cornish 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 as follows:

1. Proposal to replace existing projecting sign made of same material and size: aluminum with vinyl graphics, non-illuminated, 3’-0” x 4’-0” was presented by Rosemary Rebimbas.
2. Appropriate new signage includes following details:
 - a. double-sided blade sign is printed vinyl on rigid backer, with two eye hooks for hanging from existing decorative metal scroll bracket
 - b. non-illuminated sign is 48-inches tall x 36-inches wide, with underside of sign at 10-feet above public right-of-way
 - c. includes stylized cursive lettering, with word “Versatile” centered within overall sign followed on next line by word “Strands”; final line includes word “SALON” in smaller, slender, sans-serif, all upper-case lettering; at right above lettering is stylized depiction of rose and cutting shears
 - d. signage background is black in color, rose graphic is dark pink or red in color while remaining details and lettering are warm white or ivory in color; sign includes off-set pinstripe detail in complementary color around sign perimeter

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #3

Property Location: 21-23 East Third Street

Property Owner: Ann Hunsicker

Applicant: MKSD Architects, Todd Chambers

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is an attached, 2-story, 5-bay commercial building with stucco over masonry construction. The building dates from circa 1920; however, the original storefront was significantly modified during the mid- to late 20th century and has a recessed entry with entrance door/shop window storefront combination flanked on either side with display windows. The building has an upper parapet with low sloping roof, a heavy upper projecting cornice with decorative brackets and a simpler intermediate cornice with no supporting brackets above the sign band. Various façade modifications prevent assignment of a specific architectural style.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to remove cement board and restore brick façade on 1st floor and install new storefront with black finish and simulated divided lite (SDL) muntins; to paint stucco, install aluminum-clad wood windows with black finish and SDL muntins on 2nd floor; to replace awnings with black fabric; to install one wall sign and one projecting sign.

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.** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Secretary**
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Storefronts'**
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Signage' (including Awnings)**

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to remove existing exterior cement board panels at entry-level façade to expose brick masonry walls beneath and then restore brick façade by repointing and sealing. Historical image of front façade at lower right of Drawing Sheet Page 13 confirms existence of brick façade at entry level; however, date of brick type is difficult to discern and probably served as mid-20th century infill when original glass storefront was removed. Applicant should explore condition of brick façade by selectively removing cement board panels ... noting potential inconsistencies in brick and/or mortar joints that (perhaps?) necessitated current façade system. Installation of cement board panels potentially caused damage to brick façade as well. If condition of brick façade is acceptable, gently cleaning and then repairing brick masonry units (replacing in-kind, as needed) along with repointing with lime-based mortar to match existing joints is appropriate; however, sealing masonry façades causes damage over time in violation of SIS 7 and is considered inappropriate within Historic Conservation District.

COA Application also indicates intent to replace existing front display windows and recessed storefront assembly with new aluminum storefronts in black color with Simulated Divided Lite (SDL) muntins; current entrance configuration will be revised to accommodate two separate tenants. Proposed Kawneer EnCORE Framing system (or comparable) for new storefronts is appropriate, with following clarifications: minimum required frame widths are used to avoid more contemporary bulkier aesthetic (current depiction includes bulky top and bottom rails), frames are flush with outside wall surfaces (currently depicted as recessed within existing openings) and front glazing installed as near as possible to front façade (not centered or further recessed). Relevant design guidelines note that "HCC will not recommend ... Colonial picture windows" so proposed SDLs are inappropriate and should be omitted. Applicant should also reference relevant Guidelines for Storefronts (available via City's website) to include apron detail at sidewalk level and to raise height of doors to allow for one transom of uniform height above. Although HCC does not assess paint colors, factory-applied metallic finish in aluminum or bronze color is more appropriate than proposed black color. Applicant should also be aware that tinted, colored and reflective glazing is inappropriate.

COA Application continues with proposals to renovate remaining façade, including painting of intermediate sign band and stucco at upper level in Sherwin Williams #7019 Gauntlet Gray. As previously stated, HCC

does not assess paint colors; however, Applicant is encouraged to paint intermediate and upper cornices in complementary color (perhaps warm white or ivory) in deference to appropriate color schemes throughout Historic Conservation District. Proposed renovations also include removal of five existing upper-level windows and replace with Pella Lifestyle Series (or comparable) aluminum-clad wood double-hung windows in black color with SDL. Double-hung replacements are appropriate if new windows are custom-sized to fit existing openings rather than standard window sizes that require additional trim or moldings to accommodate differing dimensions. Relevant design guidelines note “[new] windows ... should have similar muntin or grid patterns as the neighborhood’s historic buildings.” Accounting of nearby structures does not reveal any double-hung windows with lite divisions similar to proposed 8-over-8 divided lite configuration. Aside from windows within adjacent structure with 2-over-2 divide lites, existing double-hung windows within existing streetscape have no divided lites; thus, window replacements should be revised to 1-over-1 lite configuration. As previously stated, tinted, colored and reflective glazing is inappropriate. Relevant design guidelines continue that “HCC does not review ... installation of accessory elements including ... flower boxes” so submitted details for proposed flower boxes are informative but cannot be assessed by HCC.

COA Application also describes intent to replace existing awnings over windows at both floor levels with new Sunbrella (or comparable) canvas in black color; new awnings include no design graphics. Proposed awnings are canvas, match shapes of tops of windows, open on both sides and do not include internal illumination, which are all appropriate details. Existing awnings have front flap valance while proposed replacements omit valance detail; however, relevant design guidelines do require front flaps.

COA Application concludes with proposals for three types of new signage: illuminated channel letters installed within sign band, double-sided blade sign installed at far left of sign band and window graphics installed on left entrance door.

Proposed main signage within sign band is composed of individual channel letters that spell out word “Toastique” in serif letters measuring 14-inches tall x 82-inches wide; each channel letter is 3-inches deep, with aluminum returns painted white and white acrylic translucent faces with internal illumination. At left of lettering is corporate logo of stylized toast outline within diamond frame measuring 14-inches tall x 14-inches wide; similar to lettering, logo is 3-inches deep, with aluminum returns painted white and acrylic face with internal illumination, white translucent background, and translucent logo in gold metallic. 4 ½-inch tall aluminum raceway painted black provides electrical service for internal illumination; raceway extends 3-inches from sign band, with 3-inch-deep channel letters affixed to front of raceway. Relevant design guidelines define appropriate signage within Historic Conservation District as lettering and graphics applied to rigid backer installed within sign band or individual metal letters mounted to building; internal illumination is inappropriate within Historic Conservation District while no conduits, raceways, or junction boxes for new fixtures should be visible on building exteriors. HCC also discourages deep channel letters and encourages warm white or ivory color as appropriate alternative to bright white. Based on relevant design guidelines, proposed signage is inappropriate. Logo and flat serif lettering and logo graphic should be applied to rigid backer with off-set pinstripe detail in complementary color around sign perimeter; appropriate illumination could involve gooseneck fixtures with low-wattage bulbs (max. 3500K if LED).

Proposed blade signage at far left of sign band is 30-inch round sign fabricated from 2-inch-thick aluminum and hung from contemporary aluminum wall bracket with two support arms and outer frame off-set 2 inches from sign. Bracket components and sign background are painted black in color while corporate toast logo in center of sign is metallic gold in color; upper slogan “GOURMET TOAST” in sans-serif, all upper-case lettering in white color is within upper round portion of sign and set off by two white circles from slogan “& JUICE BAR” in same sans-serif, all upper-case lettering in white color within lower round portion of sign. Relevant design guidelines note appropriate double-sided blade sign should be hung down from decorative iron scroll bracket that extends out over public right-of-way rather than proposed inappropriate contemporary wall bracket; several structures nearby also offer examples of appropriate scroll brackets. Appropriate rigid sign should be reduced to maximum 1-inch thickness and include off-set pinstripe detail in complementary color around sign perimeter. HCC also encourages warm white or ivory as appropriate alternative to bright white color while serif lettering is also preferred. Relevant design guidelines continue by noting “wall-mounted lights with low-wattage bulbs directed towards signage” is appropriate, so two spot wall sconces with 3000K LED bulbs proposed to illuminate blade sign are appropriate.

Vinyl graphics measuring 16-inches tall x 24-inches wide to be installed within upper third of storefront entrance door and include corporate logo, company name "Toastique" and slogan "GOURMET TOAST & JUICE BAR". As previously stated, HCC prefers serif lettering and warm white or ivory over bright white; however, HCC has accepted bright white color for door signage to attract visibility, so proposed signage is appropriate pending confirmation that all graphics will be installed on inside surface of door glazing.

Discussion: Ann Hunsicker and Todd Chambers represented proposal to remove cement board and restore brick façade on 1st floor and install new storefront with black finish and simulated divided lite (SDL) muntins; to paint stucco, install aluminum-clad wood windows with black finish and SDL muntins on 2nd floor; to replace awnings with black fabric; to install one wall sign and one projecting sign. Applicant summarized recent exploratory investigations at entry-level façade, noting current stucco finish was applied to underlying brick façade ... not onto cement board, as originally assumed; continued with revised proposal to apply brick veneer to stucco façade. Mr. Lader requested further clarification; Applicant explained current stucco finish was applied directly onto façade using metal lath and cannot be removed without significant damage to brick surface beneath; submitted sample board of proposed veneer product: Glen-Gery Shrewsbury Modular thin-brick veneer in variegated dark red-brown color. Mr. Evans inquired if proposed veneer will adequately adhere to existing stucco substrate; Applicant affirmed product should properly adhere. Mr. Lader explained appropriate display windows should include expressed headers and sills; Applicant responded that proposed brick veneer can also be installed to imply such details. Mr. Lader continued that display windows could have different detail beneath to mimic apron of appropriate storefronts or Applicant should consider cast masonry sills; Applicant expressed preference for implied apron. Mr. Evans noted that provided façade drawing of recessed storefront includes taller metal detail at bottom junction with sidewalk and suggested that detail could be increased in height to mimic appropriate apron; Applicant was amendable to suggestion, noting potential to increase height dimension of lowest rail element to 10-inches rather than separate apron detail. Mr. Evans continued by inquiring if proposed glazing is insulated; Applicant confirmed all proposed window types are insulated. Mr. Evans continued by inquiring if insulation value is achieved by sandwiched glass, with space in between filled with argon gas, noting such glazing often exhibits inappropriate blue tint; Applicant confirmed Pella window replacements are argon filled but uncertain about insulation of proposed storefronts. Mr. Evans requested Applicant to specify clear glass for all new window types within associated project specifications.

Applicant confirmed each proposed entrance door measures 7-foot tall x 3-foot wide but could consider increasing height dimension, with transom above no longer divided horizontally for more appropriate design solution. Applicant agreed to use minimal profiles for storefront assembly to avoid bulkier, contemporary aesthetic; also agreed to set glazing close to front of storefront assembly. Applicant requested HCC to consider current design proposal for divided lites within storefront assembly and display windows. Mr. Simonson noted typical storefronts along Third Street do not include intermediate divisions; Mr. Cornish explained relevant design guidelines describe appropriate storefronts and display windows with no divided lites. Applicant called attention to provided historical image with multiple lite divisions in display window; Mr. Lader noted previous display window with "Colonial" divided lites was most likely installed after era of Historic Conservation District (1890-1950), so HCC anticipates design with more typical details for district. Applicant responded that current proposal reflects "desire to be the nicest building on the block". Mr. Lader also noted proposed awnings are appropriate but expressed concern that proposed entrance doors appear too short for existing conditions; encouraged Applicant to further develop entry-level façade based upon HCC comments. Mr. Lader continued by inquiring about height of ceiling inside recessed storefront entrance; Applicant confirmed interior ceiling height corresponds with height of exterior soffit above recessed entrance and agreed to further explore design of storefront.

Applicant confirmed willingness to consider two-tone paint scheme for front façade to set off intermediate and upper cornices; might also consider alternative finish color (but still dark tone) for metal components of storefront assembly and various windows. Applicant confirmed that proposed windows for upper-level façade will be custom sized to fit existing openings; continued by expressing preference for multiple divided lites, as currently proposed.

Mr. Hudak noted proposed blade sign is located very close blade sign of neighboring tenant (Domino's Pizza) and might block view for passersby; Applicant confirmed intent to install new blade sign slightly lower than sign at neighboring building to avoid visual conflict. Mr. Lader explained HCC anticipates lettering within sign band with dimensions much thinner than currently proposed, either applied onto sign backer or

as individual letters pin-mounted to surface within sign band. Mr. Lader continued by requesting clarification about intended internal illumination, noting relevant design guidelines consider such features inappropriate; Applicant confirmed initial vision included internal illumination for proposed signage but understands need to reconsider for more appropriate solution. Mr. Evans noted guidelines do not allow for visible raceways; Applicant noted no need for raceway if signage is no longer internally illuminated. Mr. Evans explained that HCC has recently considered back-lit lettering (resulting in “halo effect”) as appropriate alternative to internal illumination. Mr. Hudak inquired if future neighboring tenant within same building would have similar signage; Applicant confirmed that future neighboring tenant would share similar signage details ultimately determined appropriate for current tenant.

Mr. Lader noted that Applicant was provided with ample information to improve important design details and suggested COA Application should be tabled. Applicant agreed that several critical details must be reconsidered before appropriateness can be determined but requested HCC to consider motion in support of proposed brick veneer at entry-level façade to help avoid delay in on-going construction schedule.

Public Commentary: none

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

1. Proposal to remove cement board and restore brick façade on 1st floor and install new storefront with black finish and simulated divided lite (SDL) muntins; to paint stucco, install aluminum-clad wood windows with black finish and SDL muntins on 2nd floor; to replace awnings with black fabric; to install one wall sign and one projecting sign was presented by Ann Hunsicker and Todd Chambers.
2. Appropriate façade renovations include following details:
 - a. Glen-Gery Shrewsbury Modular thin-brick (or comparable) veneer masonry units in variegated dark red-brown color installed directly onto the existing entry-level stucco façade, with assurance from the Applicant that the existing façade can adequately support the new veneer; **note:** Applicant agreed to submit relevant details (including mortar style and type, headers and sills at display windows, apron beneath display windows, junction with sign band, etc.) via City of Bethlehem for review by HCC Chair, Historic Officer and Chief Building Inspector prior to fabrication and installation
 - b. replace existing awnings over windows at both floor levels with new Sunbrella (or comparable) canvas fabric in black color and no front flap valances; new awnings include no design graphics, are open on both sides and do not include internal illumination

Note: Applicant agreed to submit subsequent Certificate of Appropriateness Application with additional façade renovation proposals in response to HCC commentary concerning appropriate entry-level display windows and storefront assembly, upper-level double-hung windows, signage and exterior lighting.

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #4

Property Locations: 106, 110-112, 116, 118, 122-124 and 126 East Fourth Street, two “through-block” site parcels situated along East Morton Street as well as 119 and 119.5 East Morton Street

Property Owner: Morton Street Properties LLC, Praxis Real Estate LLC

Applicant: Lehigh SH Development I LLC

Building Descriptions, Periods, Styles, and Defining Features: The structure at 106 East Fourth Street [see provided Photo #10] is a detached, 2-story residential building with vinyl siding and brick veneer over wood-frame construction. Dating from the mid- to late 20th century, it has low sloping gable roof and a single-story front porch with wooden posts and simple wooden handrail. The porch pent roof stretches across the entire front façade and offers shelter above two 6-panel entrance doors ... one leading directly into the entry-level residential unit and one leading up to the upper-level residential unit. 1-over-1 double

hung windows include exterior storm windows; however, entry-level windows do not align with upper-level windows. The structure cannot be assigned a specific architectural style.

The detached structure at 110-112 East Fourth Street [see provided Photos #11 and #13] is composed of conjoined, mirrored, residential, brick masonry buildings. Each 2 ½-story twin structure has a steeply pitched gable roof and cross gable with large wall dormer, an ornamental chimney, a 2-story protruding front bay with 9-over-1 double-hung windows, a projecting upper ornamental cornice as well as a front porch with wooden detailing accessed by stone steps. This building was constructed ca. 1890 and is Queen Anne in style. At the rear of the property is a large, 1 ½-story, detached, wood-framed former carriage house. With street address 111-113 East Morton Street [see provided Photo #3; **note:** street view not provided], the original structure also included garage bays for each twin residential building facing East Fourth Street. The large hip roof includes various roof dormers and a central cupola for natural ventilation. Painted wooden shingles clad the upper floor level and retain the original kick detail at the transition to more contemporary siding at the entry level. Constructed ca. 1900, this structure has been reconfigured over time to accommodate residential units; however, the original design and select details of the former carriage house remain discernable.

The structure at 116 East Fourth Street [no photo provided] is a detached, 2 ½-story, 3-bay residential brick masonry building. Constructed ca. 1890, it has a gable roof, a cross gable with dormer along with 1-over-1 double hung windows and is Federal Revival in style. The shallow, single-story front porch with wooden detailing was added ca. 1920 and is Colonial Revival in style. At the rear of the property is a large, 2-story structure of indeterminate construction with a shallow gable roof. With street address 115-117 East Morton Street [see provided Photo #4; **note:** street view not provided], it currently includes multiple residential units but might retain elements of an earlier garage structure associated with the main house, as evidenced by stone masonry piers and walls in the façade. Contemporary siding clads the upper floor level while the entry level façade has exposed stone masonry and areas sheathed in textured stucco. Two 6-panel entrance doors lead directly into the entry-level residential units from the street facade. The structure includes 1-over-1 double hung windows of various sizes; however, entry-level windows do not align with upper-level windows. The structure includes a single-story garage addition of block masonry construction to the east and cannot be assigned a specific architectural style.

The structure at 118 East Fourth Street [see provided Photos #9 and #14] is a detached, 2 ½-story, residential brick masonry building. It has a steep gable roof, a 2-story protruding front bay with 1-over-1 double-hung windows, segmental brick arches above upper-level windows, a projecting upper ornamental cornice as well as a single-story front porch with wooden detailing accessed by wooden steps. This building was constructed ca. 1910 and is Colonial Revival in style with Queen Anne influences.

The structure at 122-124 East Fourth Street [no photo provided] is composed of conjoined, mirrored, residential, brick masonry buildings with contemporary siding and masonry veneer. Each 2 ½-story twin structure has a steeply pitched gable roof and large cross-gable wall dormer, an ornamental chimney, an upper-level protruding front bay and projecting upper ornamental cornice. They share a common front porch with more contemporary iron detailing that is accessed by stone steps. Original paneled and glazed entrance doors lead directly into the entry-level residential units. The structure also includes 1-over-1 double hung windows of various sizes and attic windows with multi-lite upper sash. This building was constructed ca. 1910 and is Colonial Revival in style. At the rear of the property but set back somewhat from the public right-of-way is a 1-story, 2-bay, detached garage structure. With street address 119 East Morton Street [no photo provided], the painted block masonry structure has a low-pitch gable roof and two contemporary paneled pull-up garage doors. Constructed in the mid- to late 20th century, the structure cannot be assigned a specific architectural style. Contrary to the COA Application, there is no structure located at 119.5 East Morton Street.

The structure at 126 East Fourth Street [see provided Photos #7 and #16] is a detached, 2 ½-story, residential, masonry building with stucco façade. Constructed ca. 1920, it has a gable roof, a cross-gable dormer, a 2-story protruding front bay along with 1-over-1 double hung windows of differing time periods and is Colonial Revival in style. The double-story front porch with heavy piers, more contemporary iron details and upper-level terrace supported by simple brackets is a mid- to late 20th century addition and is accessed by stone steps.

It should be noted that contiguous properties beginning with 110 East Fourth Street and concluding with 126 East Fourth Street all share a common stone masonry retaining wall with brick piers that delineate

access points to respective front porches. Constructed sometime during the early 20th century, this stone wall architecturally unifies the overall streetscape and should also be considered a defining feature.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to demolish a series of single-family detached dwellings in order to construct a new infill development.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 1.** -- A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
- **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.** -- 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** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines concerning New Construction** -- including but not limited to the following: Size, Scale, Proportion; Rhythm and Patterns; Window and Door Openings; Materials and Textures; Architectural Details; Shape and Massing; Streetscapes.
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Storefronts'** -- see Agenda Item #3

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: COA Application indicates intent to demolish existing structures located at 106, 110-112, 116, 118, 122-124 and 126 East Fourth Street along with existing structures located at 111-113, 115-117 and 119 East Morton Street and replace with new commercial and residential building with lower-level parking garage accessed from East Fourth Street. Accompanying drawing sheets depict proposed replacement as multi-story, mixed-use building measuring approximately 204-feet wide at north façade (facing East Fourth Street), approximately 131-feet wide at south façade (facing East Morton Street) and approximately 177.5-feet deep (full depth of city block) at its greatest dimension. Envisioned structure is organized around interior courtyard approximately 33-feet deep (identified in provided drawings as "outdoor amenities deck"), rises 7 stories tall and measures approximately 83-feet high at north façade (facing East Fourth Street). Due to north-south pitch of site, lowest floor level is fully below grade at south façade (facing East Morton Street), which rises another 7 stories and measures approximately 83-feet high. Current design proposal does not envision rooftop mechanical penthouses. Proposed entry level at East Fourth Street includes access to parking garage that accommodates approximately 65 cars along with various rooms for utilities as well as space for trash and recycling. Proposed entry level at East Morton Street includes retail space, leasing office and various amenities for tenants. Upper floor levels include mix of residential configurations: studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and four-bedroom units. Provided drawings also indicate potential roof deck for use by tenants.

Existing structures at 110-112, 116, 118, 122-124 and 126 East Fourth Street contribute to Historic Conservation District due to respective dates of construction during district's period of significance (ca. 1890 – 1950). Existing stone retaining wall common to these properties was constructed during same period and contributes to district as well. Similarly, existing carriage house at 111-113 East Morton also

contributes to district due to construction date. Comprehensive assessment of rear additions to various structures along East Fourth Street was not possible; however, extensions completed after district's period of significance would be considered non-contributing. Further investigations of existing residential structure at 115-117 East Morton Street are needed to identify potential portions of earlier structure before determining if building contributes to district. Existing garage at 119 East Morton Street and existing residential building at 106 East Fourth Street were both constructed after district's period of significance and are considered non-contributing. Secretary of Interior's Standards (SIS) for Rehabilitation do not reference demolition because they anticipate retaining and rehabilitating historic structures; similarly, relevant Design Guidelines note: "complete or partial demolition of buildings within Historic Conservation District is considered a drastic action since it alters the character of the streetscape, surrounding buildings and the demolition site. Once buildings that contribute to the Historic Conservation District and history of the community are destroyed, they cannot be replaced. Potential alternatives to demolition include construction of an addition, increasing the size and potential use, or adaptive reuse." Those same guidelines continue: "HCC encourages that all attempts to reuse historic building[s] be exhausted prior to considering demolition. ... HCC will not recommend approval for demolition unless: proposed demolition involves a non-significant addition ... a non-significant building [or] ... applicant has demonstrated that they have exhausted all other options and they will suffer undue economic hardship." Based upon guiding standards and relevant design guidelines, current development project is inappropriate due to proposed demolition of nine (potentially ten) contributing structures and lack of supporting documentation that all options to retain and rehabilitate contributing structures are exhausted. Appropriate design solution could involve demolition of three non-significant structures and any non-significant additions to various contributing historic properties (if done sympathetically) but should retain and integrate all contributing structures as well as stone retaining wall along East Fourth Street into overall design concept.

Discussion: Joseph Bubba and Kevin Serfass represented proposal to demolish series of single-family detached dwellings in order to construct new infill development. Applicant explained opinion that buildings proposed for demolition have no real significance, noting relevant design guidelines require lack of significance as justification for approving demolition; continued by noting that city's own preservation plan does not specifically call out this block of structures as contributing to overall Historic Conservation District (in comparison with certain other blocks and specific buildings within study) but only makes reference to general collection of basic housing stock for Bethlehem Steel employees along East Morton Street and East Fourth Street. Applicant explained that structures proposed for demolition are dilapidated, often include inappropriate rear additions to accommodate student housing needs and have outlived their economic viability; continued by noting each structure needs unique improvements to address building code requirements and to provide various infrastructure for properly serving students' needs. Applicant called attention to relevant design guidelines that justify demolition in circumstances of economic hardship, presenting HCC with Affidavit signed by current owner (see Attachment) in support of case that needed rehabilitation of various structures would be cost prohibitive. Applicant continued by describing existing building conditions and claiming that useful lifespans of historic structures have been exceeded; also referenced "new products" (contemporary housing stock) nearby that already provide modern amenities and observe all current building codes as well as life safety issues in comparison to existing older structures that do not ... resulting in "exclusionary housing" that is inefficient (lower insulation values, lack of LED lighting, etc.) and financially burdens property owner. Applicant noted that ages of buildings make it impractical to property revitalize them to compete with new development and still have any return on investment, noting cost of meaningful investment far exceeds potential value. Applicant agreed that existing structures can be cosmetically improved; however, structural failure can be expected within 5-10-25 years. Applicant concluded by explaining that proposed development project serves as transition between nearby large Lehigh University structure to smaller-scale residential blocks deeper within Historic Conservation District.

Mr. Evans noted COA Application mistakenly identifies Lehigh County as location of structures proposed for demolition (should be corrected to Northampton County). Mr. Evans continued that purchase dates of various properties (2006, 2011, 2015) allowed current owner considerable time to conduct deferred maintenance and to complete needed upgrades to address building code issues and infrastructure improvements; continued that property owner is responsible for his own claims of neglect, devaluation and resulting economic hardship ... potentially leading to demolition by neglect, which is considered inappropriate within Historic Conservation District. Mr. Evans objected to Applicant's comments about

insignificance of properties by denigrating steelworker housing as substandard, noting such housing is integral component of Historic Conservation District and greater South Bethlehem. Mr. Evans concluded by recalling previous HCC evaluations of select properties (ex.: front porches) that encouraged previous and/or current owners to appropriately maintain existing historic structures. Mr. Simonson inquired if all structures are currently occupied; Applicant confirmed that all structures are inhabited. Mr. Lader inquired if all properties currently serve as student housing; Applicant was uncertain if all current inhabitants are students. Mr. Lader continued by noting personal difficulty in discerning that demolition of existing structures (most of them contributing to Historic Conservation District) and replacing with larger development project is better solution to lack of on-going maintenance. Applicant confirmed development team is not (yet) owner of various properties, as confirmed by provided Affidavit; continued that developer cannot take responsible for lack of proper maintenance by previous/current property owners.

Public Commentary:

Esther Lee: represented South Bethlehem Historical Society; read prepared statement into minutes (see Attachment), noting Society recently voted unanimously to oppose proposed demolition of existing historic structures and replace with “cookie-cutter 312-bedroom student tower”; explained that resulting design does not meet relevant design guidelines ... especially rear of building facing East Fourth Street would offer street views directly into building’s garage ... and reflects no attempt to blend new construction with other existing buildings along East Fourth Street or to improve aesthetic of overall neighborhood.

Esther Lee: offered personal statement as long-term resident of South Bethlehem; lives in 100-year old house that remains standing and still contributes to neighborhood; current proposal to demolish historic buildings would result in loss of family homes; most are visually not in such poor condition and look sturdy; noted Bethlehem’s need for affordable housing; uncertain if/when any buildings currently proposed for demolition have already been condemned, noting if not they continue to support city’s tax base; requested HCC to seriously consider opposing proposed demolition.

Ann Felker: President of Bethlehem Area Public Library Board; read prepared statement into minutes (see Attachment), noting Board recently passed resolution in opposition to proposed development project; explained current statistics reveal reduction in library visits, with fewer families resulting from increased student housing nearby; opposition to proposed development immediately adjacent to existing library structure based upon potential for negative impact on library property (will exacerbate existing problems) and more student housing will only impede current community efforts; inserted personal comment that “destruction of entire city block of human-sized structures with proposed behemoth is offensive to me”.

Adrienne McNeil: Lehigh University Assistant Vice President for Community and Public Affairs noted her presence was not to express LU’s support for or opposition to proposed development project but rather to publicly clarify that LU does not actively cooperate with developers (including current Applicant) for providing student body housing.

Tina Kinseki: raised in South Bethlehem; noted previous Applicants represented entrepreneurs with commercial businesses located within Historic Conservation District and must follow applicable design guidelines, so developers should also be held to same restrictions; expressed concern that developers are slowly but surely destroying district’s historic building fabric.

Anna Smith: resident of South Bethlehem; noted current home is over 100 years old and described personal time, money and efforts to actively rehabilitate historic structure; referenced series of recent development projects and encouraged HCC to only approve “best forms of development”; noted if current developer team walks away from proposed project, others might be interested in purchasing existing historic structures to appropriately develop that block; noted that regulated (student) housing requires annual building inspections, so existing properties should already satisfy relevant building codes; noted that high rents charged to students should result in financial incentive for current property owner to properly maintain and rehabilitate existing structures; suggested that other parties could be identified who are interested in retaining existing streetscape by properly maintaining existing structures; concluded by suggestion that proper rehabilitation of historic structures would serve to honor and recognize people in past and present who lived and worked in South Bethlehem.

Kim Carrell-Smith: Assistant Professor (retired) at Lehigh University and South Bethlehem resident; as professor, often integrated South Bethlehem issues into course curricula and is very familiar with relevant ordinances as well as applicable design guidelines; noted that proposed development is one in recent

series of destructive projects that would seriously impact immediate city block as well as entire Historic Conservation District, explaining that proposed development would represent significant destruction of historic fabric of large city block along major east-west pedestrian and vehicular thoroughfare through South Bethlehem; removal not only of contributing structures but also mature shade trees would result in negative economic and environmental situation; noted that proposed development project violates many applicable city ordinances and design guidelines; explained that Applicant's justification for proposed development is faulty, noting Lehigh University needs no additional student housing; concluded by explaining current COA Application represents "extensive and unprecedented proposal for demolition" of historic structures.

Connor Moriarty: South Bethlehem business owner, with location on East Third Street; noted reason for business location is because of inhabitants of neighborhood and quality of existing historic streetscapes; continued that those things can never be replaced once they are lost; noted that proposed demolition and resulting development project would redefine that block as well as overall Historic Conservation District, representing slow but sure loss of subsequent historic structures by similar future development projects.

Bill Sheirer: noted personal concern for Historic Conservation District; explained that history offers sense of place; Applicant's claim of economic hardship sounds more like bad business decision; described development proposal as "perhaps most dramatic example of current choices facing South Bethlehem: historical character and accompanying quality of life vs. concept that more is better ... no matter how banal more is"; noted that loss of historic structures would destroy fabric of that block, with replacement perceived as "large-scale alien force erupting from middle of South Bethlehem that could serve as example for future similar (inappropriate) development proposals that eventually devour all of South Bethlehem".

Connor Alexander: Lehigh University student; noted many students feel Southside Commons (recently completed, five-story residential development located outside Historic Conservation District and marketed as off-campus student living) is out of place for neighborhood due to large scale; continued that adding even more out-of-scale apartments within district is wrong; as student, expressed personal appreciation for traditional (historic) structures that fit scale and "vibe" of neighborhood that surrounds LU campus.

Quartez Moore: resident of South Bethlehem; expressed personal opposition to proposed demolition of historic structures and resulting new development, noting need to retain and restore existing historic structures "that are loved and appreciated by members of (South Bethlehem) community".

Seth Moglen: Associate Professor at Lehigh University and South Bethlehem resident; lives in house also built "merely by steel workers more than 100 years ago" and apologized to attendees for similar comments made by Applicant; acknowledged that HCC is composed of volunteers and pleaded with them to "do what they are commissioned to do"; expressed appreciation for smart development but cannot describe developer's presentation as "smart", noting Applicant's attempt to claim economic hardship for properties they do not even own; suggested that Applicant's presentation portends unwillingness to comply with relevant guidelines; concluded by stating if current COA Application for demolition is approved, HCC should fold due to lack of adherence to city ordinance that created Historic Conservation District.

Albert "Al" Wurth: Associate Professor at Lehigh University; could easily echo previous statements; suggested that proposed development project does not depend upon current block of historic structures to succeed and could easily be constructed outside boundaries of Historic Conservation District; expressed personal appreciation for this specific city block: existing mature shade trees, human scale and architectural details of individual buildings, etc.; questioned why proposed development project must replace this specific block of historic structures and assumes if HCC approves proposed demolition and resulting development then series of inappropriate development projects throughout Historic Conservation District would soon follow; noted existing historic structures have many fine architectural details that are attractive to certain potential new owners with appreciation for preserving what remains of historic district.

Eric Frey: South Bethlehem resident; explained he is required to paint, repair slate roof and maintain his own property according to applicable guidelines and noted current block of historic structures with common owner does not seem to be held to same standards (lack of sidewalk maintenance, snow is never cleared, South Bethlehem ambassadors help to maintain); suggested that City of Bethlehem should be held responsible for on-going maintenance issues; questioned Applicant's logic that proposed development project would serve as transition from Lehigh University campus to residential neighborhoods, asking where would transition stop ... perhaps at Lehigh River?

Applicant requested opportunity to respond to public comments: if everything said by public is true, questioned why provisions for demolition are identified within design guidelines and claimed satisfaction of those provisions due to statement provided by current property owner about undue economic hardship; noted owner has received no other offers to purchase various properties, with intent to either rehabilitate or demolish and redevelop; explained if any block within Historic Conservation District deserves to be demolished this specific block is ideal candidate, claiming block is not integral part of overall historic neighborhood fabric; clarified that intended development project envisions not only student housing but also residential units for working professionals and families. Mr. Lader explained similar applications for demolition of contributing structures included substantial architectural/engineering studies with accompanying cost estimates that compare rehabilitation vs. redevelopment expenses in support of undue economic hardship claim but such details are lacking with provided Affidavit. Mr. Cornish recounted personal history as HCC member of consistently voting against proposals to demolish contributing structures and cannot support current demolition request.

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Cornish and seconded by Mr. Evans adopted the proposal that City Council DENY a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as presented and described as follows:

1. Proposal to demolish series of detached dwellings in order to construct new infill development at 106, 110-112, 116, 118, 122-124, 126 East Fourth Street, two “through-block” site parcels situated along East Morton Street as well as 119 and 119.5 East Morton Street was presented by Joseph Bubba and Kevin Serfass.
2. Motion to DENY recommendation to issue Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed demolition was unanimously approved; therefore, proposal to demolish series of detached dwellings in order to construct new infill development at 106, 110-112, 116, 118, 122-124, 126 East Fourth Street, two “through-block” site parcels situated along East Morton Street as well as 119 and 119.5 East Morton Street was DENIED. Those voting to deny recommendation to issue Certificate of Appropriateness determined proposal failed to comply with Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District and Historic Conservation Commission Design Guidelines concerning Demolition as well as following Secretary of Interior’s Standards (SIS) for Rehabilitation:
 - SIS 1. -- A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
 - 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.
 - SIS 5. -- Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
 - 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.
 - 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.

Discussion Item:

Mr. Simonson noted HCC consideration of draft “Over Counter Approvals” for select items (masonry chimneys, roofing, windows) is postponed until subsequent meeting to allow more opportunity for discussion.

General Business:

Minutes from HCC meeting on March 21, 2022, were unanimously approved by those attending that meeting, and with abstention by those not previously in attendance.

There was no further business; HCC meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



BY:

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