

BUREAU OF INSPECTIONS

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Agenda

Code Board of Appeals
Thursday, May 26, 2022 @ 3:30pm

Town Hall
10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018

1. 517 Seneca St, Bethlehem, PA seeking relief from:
Section IBC 903, which would require a sprinkler system due to the renovation and change of use.
Section 405 of the IEBC, in that the existing fire escape has approximately 8 3/8" high risers and the code allows for 8" max for either rise or min 8" run. The existing fire escape has approximately 9" treads. The appeal is to request that the stairs be deemed approved for the use as the primary means of egress.

Applicant must be present for appeal to be heard.



10 EAST CHURCH STREET, BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA 18018



PHILLIPS & DONOVAN ARCHITECTS, LLC
formerly George J. Donovan AIA & Associates

Mr. Mike Simonson
City of Bethlehem
10 East Church St.
Bethlehem, PA 18018

May 9, 2022

RE: 517 Seneca St.
Code Appeal

Dear Mr. Simonson,

The purpose of this letter is to provide the reasoning behind our Code Appeal request, and provide the reasons why we feel this appeal should be granted.

The existing Building is a 3-story building of approximately 1,200 square feet in footprint. The existing construction is comprised of framed exterior walls with brick exterior. The roof is a pyramid shaped shingle roof with a flat section at the top. This top section, and the side flat roof, are an EPDM roof membrane. This building is type 5B, typical residential style construction.

It is interesting to note that this building has the existing fire escape stairs as the main entry/exit for each unit. As such, since the entry door exiting the apartment to the exterior was at the same level of exit discharge, only one means of egress is required for each floor of this building. The interior stair will not be a required means of egress as it is not required.

The existing building does not have any sprinkler system installed, nor will the existing water service accommodate a sprinkler system. However, according to IBC, Section 903.2.8, any 'R-2' Occupancy will require a sprinkler system. However, subsequent section 907 indicates that a Manual Fire Alarm system is not required due to the fact that it does not meet any of the 3 criteria listed, See the previous paragraph regarding the existing fire escape. However, an Automatic Fire Alarm system is required for these apartments, and shall be interconnected.

The owners of this project respectfully request Code Appeals on the following 2 issues:

1. We request an appeal of IBC section 903, which would require a sprinkler system due to this renovation and change of use.
2. We request an appeal of IEBC 2015, section 405, in that the existing fire escape has approx. 8 3/8" high risers and the code allows only 8" max. for either rise or min. 8" for the run. Our fire escape stair has approx. 9" treads. We request an appeal to allow these risers to remain and the stair be deemed approved for use as the primary means of egress.

This existing property was in a zoning district that allowed for multi-family dwelling, and was used for decades as a 3-unit apartment building prior to Ms. Yanocek's residency. She converted it back to a single family home due to raising her 3 children. She simply asks to convert it back to a 3-unit apartment building. Please also note that she sought, and subsequently received a zoning variance for a 3-unit apartment building.

George J. Donovan LEED AP, Principal Emeritus

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210 W. Broad Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018, Phone: 610-317-0221, Fax: 610-317-0227

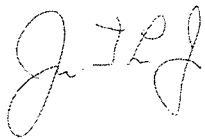
H. Joseph Phillips AIA, LEED AP, Principal

As compensatory measures, we offer to complete the following items which are above and beyond those required by Code.

1. Per IBC section 907.2.7, a Manual Fire Alarm system is not required for this building. However, we propose to install a Manual Fire Alarm system at all exits.

Along with this letter, we have provided a floor plan that outlines the locations of the compensatory features noted above. On behalf of the owner, we respectfully request that the Code Appeals Board carefully consider the fact that together, these compensatory features will ably make up for the loss of a sprinkler system in maintaining the safety of the residents of these apartments. If there is anything else, please advise directly via email, or you may call my cell at 610-393-1776. Thank you, and I look forward to any additional comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Lee Jr.", written in a cursive style.

John T. Lee Jr.
Phillips & Donovan Architects, L.L.C.
210 West Broad Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

22-11 /Code Appeal Letter

