

**232 West Third Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18015**

**Narrative**

Cathedral Church of the Nativity owns two single-family homes located at 230 and 232 W. Third Street in the Central Business District pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Bethlehem. The church is adjacent to the two attached row homes. Currently, 232 W. Third Street is a non-conforming Single-Family Attached Dwelling. The existing unit has been vacant for at least fifteen years and requires full rehabilitation to be habitable.

The church is seeking relief to convert the existing vacant, single-family home at 232 West Third Street into a three-unit multi-family home. This conversion is part of a collaborative project between the church, and non-profit organizations Community Action Lehigh Valley and New Bethany that will turn the vacant, blighted property into three units of affordable housing for a minimum of fifteen years. To date, the project team has secured \$540,000 in grant funding to support the renovation of 230 and 232 West Third Street into affordable housing units. Given the size of the property at 2,957 square feet and the need for varied sizes of units to address the affordable housing crisis in Bethlehem, the church believes that conversion to multi-family is the best way to provide housing to as many residents as possible.

The property is located in the Central Business district and is a non-conforming use as a Single Family Attached Dwelling. If the building were demolished, a multi-family structure would be permitted at this location. However, given the historic nature of this row of townhomes and their location at a key gateway to South Bethlehem, the church would prefer to renovate the existing home into three units instead of demolishing and building new housing. Improvements to the façade of this property as part of the overall project have received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Conservation Commission.

Parking is not a requirement within the Central Business district, but the church plans to provide parking to residents in existing and forthcoming church-owned parking lots to avoid any additional burden placed on neighbors of the home.

**Relief sought for this property is as follows:**

- A Special Exception approval to ZO §1232.07 to convert from one Non-Conforming Use to another Non-Conforming Use [Non-Conforming Single-Family Conversion to a Non-Conforming Three-Family].**
- A Variance from ZO § 1322.03(o)(6) to permit a Residential Conversion of a residence with less than 3,000 square feet of habitable floor area [property has 2,957 square feet of habitable floor area].**