

LEE ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATES

Architects and Planners · A Professional Corporation · AIA

Zoning Hearing Board
City of Bethlehem
10 East Church St.
Bethlehem, PA 18018

June 4, 2025

RE: Variance request
210 West Broad St.

Dear Board members

The purpose of this letter is to discuss the variance request for my property located at 210 West Broad St. This property was purchased by my firm, Lee Architectural Associates in 2012. The existing building is half of an existing twin building. It dates back to circa late 1800's, and has not been added onto, (our half), since my purchase. I believe the only addition was a small rear addition of unknown date.

At the time of purchase, there was an existing sewing shop on the first floor front, and a residential unit in the rear half. The second and third floors were existing residential units. There was an existing 2 bedroom unit on the second/third floor front, and a studio apartment on the second floor rear. Those upper floor units remained. I then submitted plans to convert the entire first floor to commercial use for my offices, and to renovate an existing attic space on the third floor to finish it as a bedroom. These drawings were approved by the City, and the renovations completed.

Now, it is simply my intent to convert it back to what it was when I purchased the building, and have submitted drawings indicating same. However, I am now being told that my existing building, one that I did not expand the footprint, has the following comments, and may need variances for:

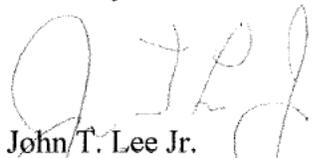
1. The City says they have "no records of residential units on the upper floor..." This is despite the fact that the City reviewed and approved drawings of same. In addition, your City Engineering Department, when I went in to discuss the current project, stated that their records indicated that the building had 3 residential units and 1 commercial, that it was converted back to 2 residential and 1 commercial. Thus, they said that they consider the residential unit to be a continuation of use, and therefore there would be no additional EDU's assessed. It should be noted that my original intent was 2 residential units on the first floor, which Engineering said would cost an additional EDU.

2. Now the City is saying that multi-family of 2 ½ stories or less, which is what this building is, requires a minimum lot area of 2,500 SF per unit, of which we only have 3,375 SF. All we are asking is to convert it back to what it was previously, and for who knows how long before my purchase, 3 residential units and 2 small commercial unit. Again, we are making no exterior changes. In addition, the building was, and has been for as long as anybody can remember, a building with 3 residential units.
3. A 15' side yard is required. Again, this building has remained in its current position and no additions, since it was built over 100 years ago? Why am I now required to ask for a variance when this has been as such since it was built?
4. A 90' lot width is required. Again, this building has remained, in its current position and no additions, since it was built over 100 years ago? Why am I now required to ask for a variance when this has been as such since it was built?
5. There is an existing 6 car parking lot in the rear. The City zoning indicates that they will require 1.75 parking spaces per apartment, and 2 spaces for the commercial use, for a total requirement of 7.25 spaces. Again, we are asking to revert back to its same use as when I bought the building, 3 residential units and a small commercial unit. I agree that a variance is required, and respectfully ask it be granted on the basis of the fact that:
 - A. 1 Studio apartment of 388 SF will need only 1 parking space.
 - B. A 1 - Bedroom apartment of 674 SF will need only 1 parking space.
 - C. It is unlikely that a 388 SF commercial office will require more than 1 space?
 - D. The likely needs are 1 space for each of 2 apartments, plus 2 spaces for the 2 bedroom apartment, plus 1 space for the commercial unit equals 5 parking spaces where the existing lot has 6.

We respectfully ask that the Board look favorably upon this existing historic building. It has been faithfully preserved through the years, has been and for my foreseeable future will remain as it has been for many decades, and should be allowed to be used the way that it has for many more. We ask for support to simply revert the building back to the way it was used for as long as most can remember.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me on my cell, 610-393-1776. Talk to you soon.

Sincerely,



John T. Lee Jr.

Lee Architectural Associates

