
M I N U T E S

BOARD: HISTORIC CONSERVATION COMMISSION, CITY OF BETHLEHEM

MEMBERS PRESENT: CRAIG EVANS (VICE CHAIR), ROGER HUDAK, GARY LADER (CHAIR), KENNETH LOUSH, MICHAEL SIMONSON

MEMBERS ABSENT: SETH CORNISH, CHARLES PATRICK, DESIREE STRASSER

STAFF PRESENT: LAURA COLLINS, JEFFREY LONG, CRAIG PEIFFER

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

VISITORS PRESENT: STEVEN ANTALICS, ROSA CARIDAS-HOF, TODD CHAMBERS, VICKI DOULÉ, GREGG FEINBERG, LOU FROMM, MARIO GALANTE, KASSIE HILGERT, KEVIN JANIS, LEE RILEY, BILL SCHEIRER, ORVILLE TROUT, CHRISTINE USSLER, WILLIAM WOODRUFF

MEETING DATE: JULY 18, 2022

The regular meeting of the Historic Conservation Commission (HCC) was held on July 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: 25 West Third Street
Property Owner: Kassie Hilgert, ArtsQuest
Applicant: Todd Chambers, MKSD Architects

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: Six interconnected buildings along Northampton Street, between West Second Street and West Third Street, comprise the existing Banana Factory Arts & Education Center. For ease of reference, names of the six buildings within the COA Application are retained for this building description and assessment.

Building A (The House) is the oldest existing building within the complex and is located at the southwest corner of the current project site. This structure was constructed ca. 1885 and retains select original defining features: detached, 2½-story, 3-bay, brick masonry, single-family dwelling with rear framed appendages. The brick façade has been stuccoed over and original windows have been replaced with inappropriately divided double-hung windows; however, the decorative entrance door, door surround and covered stoop remain intact, as does the bay window along the east façade. The building was converted to commercial use in the 1990s, with an art gallery at the entry level while the upper level serves as mechanical and storage space.

Building B (Infill) is the newest building component of the overall complex and dates from ca. 2000. This single-story masonry structure with flat roof wraps around the oldest building on the north and east facades as a connector to other structures at the site. Windows along the west façade provide natural light to spaces facing the parking lot while a covered entrance along the east façade accommodates a service entrance.

Building C (Theodoreis) is a 3-story, 5-bay masonry building with a low hip roof and stepped parapet that fronts Northampton Street. Constructed ca. 1936 (when the Demetrious Theodoreis Wholesale Bananas Company was first located on this property) it was once a free-standing structure but now connects to the oldest building via the contemporary infill to the south and is adjacent to a mid-1950s addition to the north. The building has undergone some alterations, primarily when renovated by ArtsQuest for its current use as an arts and education center but retains much of its original integrity. Although windows and doors have been replaced and the central raised parapet was reconstructed using non-matching brick, the delineated façade with vertical pilasters, cast decorative elements as well as the stepped and corbeled parapet remain. Most distinctive is the structural terra cotta wall along the south façade (and presumably north façade later

covered by the adjacent structure). Also referred to as hollow structural tiles, this type of construction is often associated with utilitarian structures dating from 1900 until ca. 1940. Few similar structural terra cotta buildings in South Bethlehem remain so this building serves as a unique representative of a specific construction technique. The upper portion of the western (rear) façade (facing adjacent parking lot) has a painted mural in simple black lettering on white background identifying this as “THE FOWLER Arts and Education CENTER”.

Building D (Banana Expansion) is a 3-story, 4-bay masonry building with flat roof and flat parapet that served as an addition to the north of the original “Banana Warehouse” structure. The Demetrious Theodoreis Wholesale Bananas Company purchased the lot for this building in 1953 and the resulting structure facing Northampton Street appeared soon thereafter. Historical images confirm the 3-story brick structure originally included glass block windows and simple details typical of 1950s utilitarian architecture. The exterior has since lost its historical integrity with a white stuccoed exterior finish and aluminum storefront windows. Located in the upper parapet portion of the western and eastern facades (facing both Northampton Street and the parking lot) are illuminated three-dimensional, yellow, all-capital letters in a stylized font that identify this as the complex of structures currently known as the “BANANA FACTORY”.

The ca. 1860 Lehigh Valley Hotel was demolished in 1960 to make way for further expansion of the Demetrious Theodoreis Wholesale Bananas Company with construction of Building E (Garage). The resulting 1-story brick masonry structure with flat roof and flat parapet was conceived as a utilitarian garage that serviced deliveries to the produce company. Original garage doors have been replaced over time, along with new window and door configurations. The west façade is decorated with a series of large-scale tile mosaics that continue onto a nearby portion of the west façade of the adjacent “Banana Expansion” building; according to the Banana Factory’s website, these mosaics resulted from the Banana Works Projects (public arts collaboration involving professional artists and local young adults) during the period 1998-2011.

Building F (Auto Parts Store) is a 1-story brick masonry building with flat roof and stepped parapet that fronts West Third Street. It was once a free-standing structure that served as a Plymouth automobile dealership but now connects to the oldest structure via the contemporary infill. The structure dates from ca. 1925 and is considered Classical Revival in style, with terra cotta detailing at the cornice, gabled entry (with scroll brackets and lighting consoles) and parapet coping. Surviving original architectural details also include an arched transom with fanlight over the central entry doors and large storefront windows flanking either side of the entrance.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to construct a new cultural center at the site of the current Banana Factory Arts Center.

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) 3.** -- Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
- **Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (SIS) 4.** -- Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- **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) 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** -- 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.
- **Historic Conservation District ‘Design Guidelines’ concerning demolition** -- HCC will not recommend approval for demolition unless:
 - o proposed demolition involves a non-significant building, a non-significant addition or a (non-significant) portion of the building, provided that the demolition will not adversely affect those parts of the site or adjacent properties that are significant
 - o Applicant has demonstrated that they have exhausted all other options and they will suffer undue economic hardship
- **Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines concerning New Construction** -- Alterations, adaptive reuse and new additions are sometimes needed to ensure the continued use of a building. An alteration or adaptive reuse involves returning a building to a useful condition while saving those parts that represent its historical, architectural or cultural significance. It is important that alternations and adaptive reuses do not radically alter, obscure or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features, or finishes. If considered, new additions should be clearly differentiated but compatible in size, scale and proportion; shape and massing; reflect prevailing streetscapes; rhythm and patterns; windows and door openings; materials, textures and architectural details
- **Historic Conservation Commission ‘Guidelines for Storefronts’**

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: Applicant first appeared before HCC on September 17, 2018, as “discussion only” agenda item seeking feedback (i.e.: no motion) about initial concept for redeveloping existing site. Applicant’s original design involved four-phase work plan, initiating with demolition of Building A “The House” and adjacent Building B “Contemporary Infill” structures along with site clearing in preparation for construction of large-scale, 4-story, detached structure approx. 70-feet high along entire western edge of project site (location of current parking lot and side plaza) with smaller-scale infill construction to connect new structure with existing Building F “Auto Parts Store” to serve as lobby for new facility before demolishing Building C “Banana Warehouse”, Building D “Banana Expansion” and Building E “Banana Garage” structures, to make way for plaza and limited parking. HCC commentary from that meeting can be summarized as follows:

- do not demolish but rather incorporate contributing structure Building A (The House) into revised design proposal
- do not demolish but rather incorporate contributing structure Building C (Banana Warehouse) into revised design proposal; exposed structural terra cotta exterior walls should be rehabilitated
- continue to retain contributing structure Building F (Auto Parts Store) as part of design proposal
- re-consider 4-story, 70-foot height of new construction to respect lower scale of existing streetscape
- new construction should reflect industrial nature of project site; proposed metal panel siding is inappropriate, so new façade materials should be influenced by existing structures
- new construction should be discernable from historic buildings but also respect existing scale, rhythm, connections with existing buildings and public sidewalk

Applicant returned three months later on December 17, 2018, with revised design concept that responded to select concerns expressed by HCC, including: reduced height of new main structure to three floor levels at 46-feet high; entry-level walls of precast concrete panels and upper-level walls with brick face finish; large aluminum window systems that align vertically in structural bays (some with painted metal panel inserts); connector between new construction and existing structures as aluminum curtain wall system that also serves as double-height lobby accessed from both plazas; retain Building F (Auto Parts Store) and integrate Building C (Banana Warehouse) into overall design concept. Following lengthy discussion with Applicant and subsequent public commentary supporting and also criticizing design proposal, HCC

unanimously tabled decision to approve proposal to demolish portions of existing buildings and construct new community cultural arts center until Applicant revised design proposal to address concerns, including:

- reservations over loss of Building A “The House” as contributing structure to Historic Conservation District
- elaboration on proposed façade improvements to Building C “Theodoredis”
- outdoor murals to be completed on weather-resistant panels mounted to building façade
- consider spandrel glass as alternative to proposed metal panels within voids of select windows
- mechanical penthouse on new structure should adhere to current proposal: penthouse screen max. 9-foot tall and set back from main façade approx. 10-feet from façade
- consider cast sills for windows of main new structure in deference to similar detail at Building C “Theodoredis” and to help delineate new window openings
- provide details for 1-story addition to east of Building F “Auto Parts Store”
- resolve scale and provide details of proposed outdoor plazas

Applicant returned to HCC one month later on January 28, 2019, with no substantive changes to previous design approach but with more detailed drawings and clarifications to various HCC concerns. Following lengthy discussion and no public commentary, HCC adopted proposal [vote: 5-3] that City Council issue COA for proposed work as presented (with modifications) described as follows:

- demolish Building A “The House”, demolish Building B “Infill”, retain and rehabilitate Building C “Theodoredis”, demolish Building D “Banana Expansion”, demolish Building E “Garage”, retain and rehabilitate Building F “Auto Parts Store”
- new main building along western edge of site includes: three floor levels and flat roof, with base of precast concrete panels at 15-feet high, two brick-face upper floor levels at 14-feet high each and topped by 3-feet high parapet clad with precast concrete; 9-feet high rooftop equipment penthouse recessed approx. 10-feet back and obscured from below by painted metal screen; large-format aluminum window systems with vertical and horizontal divisions painted black that punctuate two upper floor levels and align vertically in traditional structural bays and include cast window sills; full-height windows at entry level of west façade align vertically with windows in upper level; precast concrete facade to receive murals painted on weather-resistant panels
- new connector linking new main structure with existing Building F “Auto Parts Store” and with existing Building C “Theodoredis” serves as double-height lobby access from both plazas and includes exterior cladding in aluminum curtain wall system with black painted divisions
- Building F “Auto Parts Store” remains “Multi-Functional Gallery”; **note:** Applicant agreed to return to HCC with more information concerning rehabilitation of surviving architectural details for subsequent review; Building F “Auto Parts Store” also receives 1-story addition along its eastern façade that steps back from West Third Street but matches its height
- Building C “Theodoredis” is integrated into redevelopment project; main improvements include cleaning and re-pointing various masonry details

Applicant agreed to cooperate with Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission concerning existing mosaics on various façades. Applicant also agreed to return to HCC for subsequent reviews of such items as exterior signage and lighting as well as details associated with designs of “2nd Street Plaza” and “3rd Street Plaza”.

Rather than address remaining issues identified within current Certificate of Appropriateness, Applicant now returns to HCC with reconceived design proposal that envisions demolition of all existing structures in order to construct new, semi-detached, 5-story, steel-frame structure with flat roof and mix of brick and metal-panel siding that stretches entire width of site facing West Third Street and connects to new, semi-detached, 1-story, brick masonry, ancillary structure with flat roof facing Northampton Street. Main structure measures approx. 200-feet wide x 130-feet deep x 80-feet high while secondary structure measures approx. 90-feet wide x 40-feet deep x 19.5-feet high. Immediately to rear (north) of both structures is plaza with green space, entrance into main structure and service entrance for secondary structure while northern half of site is dedicated to parking. Justification for new design approach that necessitates demolition all existing structures (including those previously agreed by Applicant to retain and integrate into overall project scope) is budget driven. Various supplemental information accompanies current COA Application in support

of contention that project expenses can be reduced approx. \$7MM by demolishing all existing buildings and by constructing “straightforward and efficient multiple-story building”. Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation do not offer guidance on demolition because they assume all contributing historic structures will be rehabilitated rather than demolished; however, previously mentioned Conservation District Design Guidelines allow HCC to recommend approval for demolition if “Applicant has demonstrated that they have exhausted all other options and they will suffer undue economic hardship.” Based upon supplemental information concerning economics of new design approach compared with previous development solution, discussion of proposal to demolish all existing structures, including three buildings that date from Historic Conservation District period of interpretation, is warranted.

Discussion: Todd Chambers and Kassie Hilgert represented proposal to construct new cultural center at site of current Banana Factory Arts Center. Mr. Lader requested discussion between HCC and Applicant at conclusion of Historic Officer’s summary of proposed demolition before continuing with assessment of new design proposal. Applicant introduced discussion by acknowledging unusual course leading to current proposal that contradicts previous discussions and select conditions of standing Certificate of Appropriateness; continued by describing new proposal as having potential to profoundly impact South Bethlehem and beyond with vision for all new facility as expanded cultural center. Applicant read prepared statement into meeting minutes, with focus on issues of community equity with new proposal -- see Attachment. Applicant called attention to supporting documents to current COA Application, including summary of architectural studies completed by various architectural teams over previous seven years that all conclude best design solution for current site is new facility; continued by noting summaries of associated cost estimates resulting from each study that assesses alternatives and satisfies requirement that Applicant “demonstrates they have exhausted all options and will suffer undue economic hardship” if held to conditions of current COA. Applicant continued by identifying adjacent sites as non-contributing to Historic Conservation District (with exception of Lehigh Pizza structure) that do not adhere to applicable design guidelines: tank farm, high-rise commercial building, hotel, gas station and proposed commercial building directly across West Third Street. Applicant continued that previous COA already allows for demolition of four existing structures, so current COA Application requests approval to demolish two remaining structures; continued by acknowledging all structures are currently in use but exhibit significant deferred maintenance, so funds needed for associated repairs can be better spent on new programming to benefit overall community as further proof that Applicant “demonstrates they have exhausted all options and will suffer undue economic hardship”. Mr. Lader encouraged HCC discussion of proposed demolition, noting personal opinion that COA Application represents completely new proposal and questioned if terms of standing COA apply to current discussion. Mr. Simonson responded that HCC previously approved four existing structures for demolition (subsequently approved by Bethlehem City Council) and considers current discussion only relevant to two remaining existing structures. Mr. Evans requested that Historic Officer continue with assessment of new design proposal before discussing merits of current approach.

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: Should HCC approve request to demolish all existing structures, Applicant is tasked with replacing lost buildings with new construction that satisfies SIS as well as relevant design guidelines. New structures should be clearly differentiated but compatible in size, scale and shape as well as massing and proportion of existing contributing structures while reflecting prevailing streetscapes. Current design proposal would fill voids left by demolished structures, which is appropriate. It also seems to reflect prevailing setbacks along both streets (depiction of adjacent built context would help to discern), which is also appropriate. However, guidelines continue by noting “new construction should reflect the dominant cornice and roof heights of adjacent buildings and proportions of building elements to one another and the streetscape” and continue “In South Bethlehem, where two- and three-story buildings are the norm, buildings that digress from these standards by any great degree seriously impact the Historic Conservation District. If large-scale construction is considered, particular attention will be given to ... the effect of the proposed building on the streetscape and the (District) as a whole.” Current design proposal digresses from dominant cornice heights of nearby contributing structures which are two, two- and one-half and three stories tall, by rising five stories and more than 80-feet at highest dimension. It must be noted that nearby 6-story, mixed-use structure at corner of West Third Street and South New Street was completed in 2018 and is not considered as contributing to Historic Conservation District. Upper-most floor level recesses 6-feet from main façade along West Third Street, which helps to mitigate overall building height; however, minimum 12-foot setback is typically necessary to avoid perception of upper floor from street level below. Similar to HCC initial feedback

provided to Applicant during very first discussion and based upon relevant design guidelines, current proposal for five-story structure at 80-feet high is inappropriate for immediate streetscape and more generally for overall Historical Conservation District. Appropriate design solutions would be limited to three stories ... conceivably with additional fourth floor level if significantly set back from front façade to avoid perception from street below. Rather than referencing nearby mixed-use structures with commercial entry levels and two floors of residential units above (as depicted on pages 4-8 of supplemental computer-generated illustrations) Applicant should be more influenced by existing, larger-scale industrial buildings currently proposed for demolition ... same buildings that offered inspiration for “Banana Factory” name.

Relevant design guidelines also note that façades of new construction should have “similar proportions of solids (walls or siding) to voids (storefronts, windows and door openings) of neighboring buildings.” Punched openings of current design proposal along West Third Street are contemporary in style but appropriately reflect similar proportions of solids to voids of neighboring structures and also appropriately align vertically ... at least on front (south) façade. Similar to previous commentary, Applicant is encouraged to consider windows similar to existing, larger-scale industrial buildings currently proposed for demolition. Proposed storefronts require further development and are discussed in more detail below. Proposed aluminum curtainwall system at southeast corner of main (south) façade that also wraps around entire side (east) façade warrants discussion. HCC previously determined limited use of curtainwall systems for connectors between dominant building elements as appropriate; however, large expanses of curtainwall within building façades are considered inappropriate by HCC due to incompatibility with historic materials, features and finishes of contributing structures within Historical Conservation District. Similarly, proposed rooftop terrace at east end of new building with expressed steel structure and arched canopy recalls similar terrace at ArtsQuest Center located further east in South Bethlehem; however, that structure is outside boundaries of Historic Conservation District and was not required to adhere to relevant design guidelines while current design is inappropriate due to visible perception from street level below.

Design guidelines continue by referencing such important issues as materials, textures and architectural details. Though conceived as one structure, overall building mass shifts in materiality from dark brown brick to dark metal panels as front façade stands proud slightly at upper floor levels along East Third Street. According to relevant design guidelines, brick is appropriate façade material; however, metal panel system was already determined by HCC as inappropriate during initial discussion with Applicant. Applicant was requested at that time to consider façade systems that “reflect industrial nature of project site; new materials should be influenced by existing structures”. Relevant design guidelines note that “traditional materials common in the Historic Conservation District, such as brick, wood, stone and terra-cotta are recommended”. As previously stated, proposed rhythm and patterns of punched windows are contemporary in style; design guidelines also note windows should be functionally similar (such as double-hung ... or in this case ... hopper and casement metal windows of existing industrial structures) and have similar muntin or grid patterns along with expressed sills and lintels as neighborhood’s historic buildings, so current windows are inappropriate. Relevant design guidelines also depict design components of appropriate storefronts, including apron at sidewalk level, glazed entrance doors flanked by display windows and with transoms above as well as overall sign band and cornice across full width of façade to delineate commercial entry level from upper floors.

If proposed 5-story and 1-story structures are deemed appropriate by HCC following discussion with Applicant, subsequent reviews should address in more detail such items as proposed window and door types, windowsills and lintels, cornice profiles, handrails, various façade materials along with visible exterior illumination. Applicant should be aware that tinted, colored and reflective glazing is inappropriate. Applicant should also reference relevant ‘Guidelines for Storefronts’ before finalizing components and details of proposed storefronts and sign bands; similarly, ‘Guidelines for Signage’ offer suggestions for appropriate building signage concepts.

Discussion: Mr. Lader questioned Applicant’s proposal to dedicate entire rear (northern) half of project site to parking rather than using (at least partially) for proposed new construction by taking advantage of valuable but unbuilt real estate without demolishing contributing structures and also reducing overall height of proposed project. Applicant noted that rear portion of property is currently treated more as road (cut-through traffic to adjacent street), so new design intentionally closes off parking lot as improved safety measure. Mr. Lader inquired if new structure could be constructed in that location instead. Applicant responded with preference for new facility that faces West Third Street while also stressing need for on-site

parking ... especially for in-house artists and clients; continued that taller and more compact footprint of proposed structure allows maximum parking as well as space for drop-off and pickup associated with children's programming and larger events. Mr. Lader expressed appreciation for Applicant's analysis of historic structures at nearby city blocks (scale, rhythm and pattern, etc.) but noted disappointment that similar study was not conducted on historic buildings at actual site now proposed by Applicant for demolition and explained that current design erases significant elements of Applicant's own history. Applicant countered that proposal anticipates future needs, with new building focused on serving people rather than deferred maintenance of older buildings that will attract regional and national artists and events. Mr. Lader stressed that comments do not question reputation and needs of ArtsQuest; however, HCC is responsible to greater community that expresses desire for preservation of historic building fabric, including contributing buildings already determined by HCC at project site to be significant for South Bethlehem as well as for ArtsQuest. Applicant countered that historic preservation has proven successful for tourism in North Bethlehem while South Bethlehem is considered city's arts district, so current design proposal is intended as western entrance to South Bethlehem; continued that architecture of proposed new structure reflects industrial history of South Bethlehem while functions inside focus on equity (workshops, classes, camps, etc.) that all come at expense ... in comparison to ArtsQuest's profit-generating venue in eastern section of South Bethlehem ... so proposed new building allows for most responsible use of those funds by directing money to support programming rather than addressing on-going deferred maintenance of existing structures. Mr. Lader inquired about status of adjacent industrial (tank farm) site; Applicant explained uncertainty about future of adjacent site. Mr. Hudak acknowledged Bethlehem's mayor in attendance; encouraged mayor to address fate of adjacent industrial site as concern not only for ArtsQuest but also for South Bethlehem community. Mr. Hudak continued by expressing personal appreciation of proposed new project and claimed, "this project looks like it always belonged there." Mr. Lader cautioned Applicant about comments concerning nearby structures, noting several were completed prior to creation of Historic Conservation District and cannot be considered as precedent; continued that motion in support of project proposed directly across West Third Street was unanimously denied by HCC only to have City Council subsequently overrule that recommendation. Mr. Evans explained HCC strives for delicate balance of supporting positive community projects while also preserving historic character of Historic Conservation District ... with overall goal of preserving buildings that satisfy definition of contributing structures; continued by admitting HCC occasionally makes mistakes (strikes) but has general impression of proven track record of well-targeted recommendations that comply with commissioned tasks. Mr. Evans expressed personal opinion that terms and conditions of existing Certificate of Appropriateness (issued in early 2019) remain applicable due to previous discussions with Applicant and resulting conclusions about need to retain contributing structures; continued that original project seems to have languished so resulting conclusion that expenses have increased should not be surprising, noting that project economics might be different had Applicant continued with initial vision that garnered majority HCC support. Mr. Simonson noted recent project proposal assessed by HCC that revised terms of original COA for high-rise project that was approx. nine years old, so he understands current proposal as amendment to Applicant's initial COA. Mr. Simonson continued by inquiring Applicant about increased square footage of new proposal in comparison to original project defined within previous COA; Applicant confirmed need for new as well as for larger spaces that originally proposed, noting current wait list for artist studios and expanded classrooms while expressing desire to direct funding to those needs rather than addressing significant deferred maintenance expenses on structures that do not service current (much less future) needs. Mr. Simonson requested confirmation of overall building height; Applicant confirmed overall building height is 80-feet at highest dimension, with floor level recessed back approx. 6-feet from walls below. Mr. Simonson requested clarification about estimated savings to demolish remaining two structures in comparison with retaining and integrating them into overall project; Applicant called attention to study that concludes approx. \$7.2MM is saved if all structures are demolished and replaced with one compact and taller structure. Mr. Simonson continued by inquiring if Applicant intends to reuse salvaged historic details of demolished structures; Mr. Long noted Secretary of Interior Standard (SIS 3.) discourages adding elements from other historic properties to avoid false sense of historical development. Applicant responded with potential for cooperating with architectural salvage firm to rescue historic details. Mr. Loush agreed with Mr. Evans that current Certificate of Appropriateness represents compromise previously reached between HCC and Applicant after much deliberation; would regret loss of additional contributing structures that are now requested by Applicant for demolition. Mr. Loush continued by requesting clarification about estimated \$7.2MM savings, noting that estimate relates to

new construction that replaces all existing structures rather than scenario that retains and integrates two contributing structures into overall design scheme and is also difficult to discern (noting such line items as “miscellaneous metal”, etc.); Applicant confirmed steel line item is associated with new construction and need to support new connectors to existing structures. Applicant continued by calling attention to page 5 of supporting document that explains price escalation of \$4.3MM of original vision over last 3.5 years. Mr. Lader explained personal difficulty in accepting Applicant’s current desire to demolish all existing structures, considering they continue to be used by Applicant ... noting typical requests for demolish assessed by HCC relate to non-contributing structures or contributing structures that are long abandoned, deemed unsafe and practically falling down. Applicant referred HCC to provided study completed in 2016 that explored retaining and renovating existing structures as well as 2018 study that considered potential expansion into nearby industrial structures; however, both studies concluded replacement of existing structures with new construction is most economical solution ... thereby satisfying burden that “Applicant has demonstrated they have exhausted all other options and will suffer undue economic hardship.” Mr. Lader concluded by confirming that no one questions level of community support for ArtsQuest or benefits provided by ArtsQuest to local community; continued that HCC not only considers isolated individual contributing buildings but also size and scale of historic structures (how they fit within community) to help inform identify of overall Historic Conservation District, so resulting motion should also reflect those considerations.

Public Commentary:

William Woodruff, ArtsQuest Visual Arts Board member and immediate Past Chair: appreciated various comments; noted importance of new proposal in response to dramatic changes resulting from COVID-19 and recounted that previous project and resulting COA preceded on-going pandemic; as board member, can attest that ArtsQuest critically reviewed previous designs, so new proposal represents bold and forward-thinking approach but with acknowledgement of what currently exists; noted financial repercussions of retaining existing buildings while also noting 35 artists will be displaced during demolition and new construction, resulting in lost revenue stream; also noted that recent grants and secured funding are testaments of support by local and regional agencies for current vision, so funds should be wisely spent by not retaining and rehabilitating existing structures but for all new design proposal that will seem timeless upon completion and serve as important anchor for local community.

Lee Riley, ArtsQuest Visual Arts Board member and current Vice Chair: on-going pandemic has manifested in significant post-traumatic stress issues for healthcare workers and emphasized positive results from arts programming that supports stress management; new design will open up classrooms to help keep participants and local community healthy; emphasized need for art therapy outside hospital setting as more positive and successful approach while new center would gather even larger collection of artists to retain and improve creative synergy of facility.

Rosa Caridas-Hof, ArtsQuest Visual Arts Board member and Community School Coordinator: explained South Bethlehem appreciates mix of arts and diversity at Banana Factory; stressed need to expand offerings of creative activities for school pupils and university students, noting preference to send pupils and students there rather than bringing instructors into classrooms; noted personal roles as mother, instructor and employee that all benefit from Banana Factory; also noted ArtsQuest’s mission to address community equity and sustainability, so burden of retaining existing structures would be disservice to that mission

Steven Antalics: noted personal history of returning to Bethlehem 20 years ago after being away for long period of time; still sees “his” Bethlehem of 70 years ago while also appreciating current Bethlehem; noted North Bethlehem looks quite similar to personal memory while South Bethlehem (especially Third Street and Fourth Street) are quite different, with most memorable structures now lost; questioned reason for that difference, noting preservation did not exist in form of historic district in South Bethlehem as long as North Bethlehem and result is slow but sure disappearance of built history; commended Applicant in satisfaction of relating to needs and desires of various boards and artists but contrasted that with HCC’s responsibilities to respect and protect historic fabricate of Historic Conservation District; suggested that ArtsQuest should not use economic hardship as sole reason for justifying requested demolition; challenged HCC to accept commission’s priority to preserve South Bethlehem and thereby reject current request for demolition.

Kevin Janis, ArtsQuest Levitt Pavilion Board member: moved to North Bethlehem in 2015; credits ArtsQuest for “falling in love with Bethlehem”; suggested current design approach respects historic preservation but with nod to future; personal goal to see completion of proposed project so daughters can attend summer art camp there; contended that terra-cotta walls of existing building are not worth

rehabilitating while remaining buildings are “eyesore for the community”; admitted that preservation is important but economic viability is even more important; proposed facility would expand offerings of artists while encouraging other young families to participate with additional programming afforded by new building.

Gregg Feinberg, ArtsQuest Board of Trustees members, former board chair and current co-chair of capital campaign: noted previous experience as project manager of ArtsQuest facility so personally and professional familiar with issues of sustainability and affordability; noted business partner is grandson of Theodoridis who established original warehouse and distribution center for fruits and vegetables, with current generation claiming current property “has no historic value but is just old”; challenged HCC to consider distinction between “historic” and “what is old”; claimed that new design attempts to incorporate history of entire South Bethlehem, as reflected in proposed façade of steel panels; demolition of existing structures results in more affordable design solution; also noted personal desire to purchase adjacent “tank farm” but was met with resistance; contended that proposed design enhanced western entrance into South Bethlehem and argued that requirement for ArtsQuest to address on-going maintenance of existing buildings does not satisfy definition of historic preservation.

Vicki Doulé, ArtsQuest Board of Trustees members and Chair (since 2020): agreed that original proposal from almost four years ago addressed ArtsQuest needs at that time but noted ArtsQuest never shut doors and worked within various limitations to continue bringing arts to local community during on-going pandemic; lessons learned proved initial approach is no longer affordable and experiences gained help to inform new approach that also addresses sustainability but offering and expanding access to diverse community; concluded by challenging HCC that vote to “deny requested demolition is vote to deny accessible arts to all”.

Mario Galante, ArtsQuest Levitt Pavilion Board member and Chair: as educator, always questions how best to use buildings to help kids, with need for enriching environment; argued that ArtsQuest successfully did that in past with existing buildings but new project will better serve community with design specifically intended for use as cultural center rather than burdened by buildings that originally served industrial use.

Lou Fromm, ArtsQuest Performing Arts Board member: express personal observation that respecting history is not about respecting things and how they look but rather respecting people and experiences; requested HCC to consider that ArtsQuest can best address needs of community with all new facility.

Orville Trout, ArtsQuest Board of Trustees member and Vice Chair: expressed appreciation of discussion between Applicant and HCC as well as personal comments; respects HCC responsibility as steward of historic structures but also encouraged HCC to foster positive growth and children of community by supporting new design proposal that is forward thinking, noting current growth of geographic area and need to offer more for children through arts and education; understands HCC mission but challenged that mission should evolve over time; also noted new design proposal respond to relevant design guidelines.

Christine Ussler, nearby business owner and former Historic Officer for South Bethlehem: admitted that HCC faces difficult decision and is not envious of that position; cannot offer immediate or obvious answers to current proposal but noted living in local community 35+ years and hearing many positive comments about ArtsQuest as well as HCC during that time; noted current involvement on Pennsylvania Preservation Board as reviewer of applications seeking nomination to National Register of Historic Places, explaining four different criteria (not solely based upon aesthetics of historic property in question) and cautioned against reducing existing structures into “historic” vs. “just old” categories; agreed with comment that North Bethlehem is different from South Bethlehem and has profited more from that difference while South Bethlehem seems “rougher” so inclination is to demolish older buildings more often in comparison to North Bethlehem; also noted proposed design of cultural center is inherently larger in scale than typical/existing structures in South Bethlehem, so relevant design guidelines could be ignored and new structure might not necessarily relate to existing context ... noting nearby Bank of America Building (29 East Third Street; constructed ca. 1925) has scale and architectural details that would not satisfy current guidelines.

Bill Scheirer: suggested that provided data demonstrating Applicant’s undue economic hardship should be independently vetted; sympathizes with need for expanded facility and acknowledged many positive things ArtsQuest currently does for greater community; rather than demolishing contributing structures, suggested that Applicant should look elsewhere for more appropriate location for new construction or place new building over existing parking area at western section of site; also suggested that two existing historic structures along West Third Street (house and former auto shops) evoke previous era that was simpler but also more difficult and should be preserved while remaining structures at side and rear of property, while

perhaps historic, have little redeeming value and could be demolished to make room for new structure in place of resulting void.

Motion: The Commission upon motion by Mr. Simonson and seconded by Mr. Hudak failed to adopt the proposal that City Council issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as presented and described as follows:

1. The proposal to construct a new cultural center at the site of the current Banana Factory Arts Center was presented by Todd Chambers and Kassie Hilgert.
2. The proposed new cultural center includes the following details:
 - a. demolish all existing structures at current site
 - b. construct new, semi-detached, 5-story, steel-frame structure with flat roof as well as mix of brick and metal-panel siding stretching along entire width of site facing West Third Street and connected to new, semi-detached, 1-story, brick masonry, ancillary structure with flat roof facing Northampton Street
 - c. main structure measures approx. 200-feet wide x 130-feet deep x 80-feet high while secondary structure measures approx. 90-feet wide x 40-feet deep x 19.5-feet high
 - d. immediately to rear (north) of both structures is plaza with green space, entrance into main structure and service entrance for secondary structure while northern half of site is dedicated to parking
3. Mr. Simonson stated that the previously approved Certificate of Appropriateness permitted demolition of four of the six structures, and he moved for demolition of Building C (Theodore's) and Building F (Auto Parts Store). Mr. Simonson noted that preservation takes on many characteristics and preserving the arts is one of them, and if current buildings are expanded to their limits and the Applicant requires additional space money could be well spent on a new building rather than trying to save the existing buildings. Mr. Simonson also recommended reserving discussion about scale, massing, and building details of proposed new construction for a subsequent HCC meeting. Mr. Hudak voted yea in support of the motion. Mr. Evans voted nay because he supports the existing Certificate of Appropriateness and believes more could be developed by the Applicant out of that. Mr. Lader voted nay because he feels there are other opportunities that have not been explored; even if demolishing contributing buildings, there are ways to preserve historic façades and integrate them into the overall design. Mr. Lader also expressed concern that approving demolition of contributing buildings sets poor precedent for other Applicants who also wish to demolish contributing buildings "simply because it does not fit their financial model". Mr. Loush voted nay because HCC is passionate about preserving historic buildings, noting there are probably other things that could be done to make that happen at the current site and also make it more financially palatable for ArtsQuest. In summary, the motion for the proposed work failed to garner majority support; therefore, the proposal to construct a new cultural center at the site of the current Banana Factory Arts Center at 25 West Third Street was DENIED.

The Secretary of Interior's Standards (SIS) for Rehabilitation do not reference demolition because they anticipate retaining and rehabilitating historic structures; similarly, relevant Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines provide: "The complete or partial demolition of buildings within the 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 the construction of an addition, increasing the size and potential use, or adaptive reuse." The Historic Conservation Commission encourages that all attempts to reuse a historic building be exhausted prior to considering demolition. The Historic Conservation Commission will not recommend approval for demolition unless: (1) The proposed demolition involves a non-significant addition or portion of the building, provided that the demolition will not adversely affect those portions of a building that are significant; (2) The proposed demolition involves a non-significant building, provided that the demolition will not adversely affect those parts of the site or adjacent properties that are significant; or (3) The applicant has demonstrated that they

have exhausted all other options and they will suffer undue economic hardship. The Applicant presented documentation concerning other design options they considered and also concerning the undue economic hardship they would suffer if forced to preserve existing structures; however, Commission members voting against demolition did not find the Applicant's presentation sufficient to justify demolition. As was raised during the July 18, 2022, meeting by Commission members recommending against the motion, appropriate design solutions that could potentially result in a recommendation by the Historic Conservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness involve respecting terms and conditions within the Certificate of Appropriateness that was previously adopted by the Commission on January 28, 2019 -- see Attachment.

Agenda Item #2

Property Location: 125 East Third Street

Property Owner: Southside 125, LLC

Applicant: Christine Ussler, Artefact, Inc.

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is an attached, three-story, mixed-use masonry building with a flat roof that dates from ca. 1910. Brick pilasters support a decorative upper cornice with ornamental end brackets. The structure is Classical Revival in style, with primary façade materials of light brown brick and cast stone. The original storefront was altered during the late-20th century with beige face brick while the area above (extending to the second-floor windowsills) recently received unfinished T1-11 vertical plywood siding. Aluminum-framed double entrance doors centered within the storefront are flanked on one side by a display window and on the other side by a recessed paneled entrance door leading to residential units above.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to renovate the lower façade.

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

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: During HCC meeting on November 15, 2021, Applicant received unanimous support of motion that City Council issue Certificate of Appropriateness to replace existing inappropriate windows at both upper floor levels with more appropriate casement windows to satisfy egress requirements. New casement windows are aluminum-clad with exterior applied muntins as simulated divided lites along with heavy central mullions to fill gaps between pairs of replacements. Second floor level also receives painted medium-density overlay (MDO) panels with trim infill above casements that imply original decorative transom. Applicant now returns to HCC with additional proposals to rehabilitate entry-level front façade along with request to consider proposed new handrail assembly at rear façade.

Current proposal to remove inappropriate vertical plywood sheathing as well as inappropriate beige face brick at entry-level façade is appropriate. Proposal to enlarge existing display window and integrate transom above is appropriate. Similarly, proposal to modify existing double entrance doors as single door with sidelite, both with transoms above, is also appropriate. Provided drawing indicates proposed glazed lower panel at sidelite; however, appropriate apron should match material at remaining façade. Applicant also proposes to modify return wall between front display window and recessed entrance as "angled, if possible" and to have display window and transom above that correspond with front window. Proposals are appropriate; however, Applicant should clarify what is intended by phrase "if possible". Proposed return wall on east side of recess to be sheathed in painted wood or composite beaded board; both options are appropriate. Proposed dark bronze anodized aluminum framing elements for replacement storefront assembly is also appropriate. Recessed access to residential units above will remain and be made full height, if possible; however, existing door to be replaced with appropriate full-lite smooth fiberglass door in dark brown factory-applied finish. Similar to previous comment, proposal for side returns sheathed in painted wood or composite beaded board is appropriate. Applicant should be aware that all appropriate glazing is not tinted, colored or reflective.

COA Application continues that full or partial removal of plywood and brick sheathing depends upon revealed conditions and budget constraints. Selective removal of plywood and face brick is encouraged so

that Applicant can determine existing conditions before finalizing proposed façade treatments above and below storefront windows ... noting potential new sign band and intermediate cornice supported by decorative brackets satisfy relevant design guidelines and should be explored further. Subsequent COA Applications should include product submittals and details for proposed storefront assembly along with typical details for new sign band, proposed intermediate cornice with support brackets as well as concepts for new exterior lighting and building signage.

COA Application concludes with proposal to replace existing handrail of pressure-treated components at second floor level of rear façade with code-compliant metal handrail assembly. New handrail measures 36-inches high x 188-inches wide and is composed of 1 5/8-inch tube steel for four posts as well as for upper and lower horizontal rails, with webbing between posts composed of smaller vertical pickets. Proposed handrail assembly is appropriate, considering it represents significant improvement over existing handrail and is to be installed at less visible rear façade; required height of new handrail should be clarified with zoning and/or codes officials within City's planning department. **Note:** HCC is not tasked with determining paint color schemes within Historic Conservation District; however, HCC has requested that similar previous handrail assemblies at upper floor levels be painted gray in color to blend with sky beyond.

Discussion: Christine Ussler represented proposal to renovate the lower portion of front façade. Applicant noted existing plywood sheathing is boxed out, so current conditions are difficult to discern; also offered hand sketch (as originally provided by Historic Officer) depicting potential intermediate cornice and decorative support brackets. Mr. Lader inquired if Applicant already conducted selective demolition to better understand conditions beneath. Applicant explained limited investigations were initially completed but proved inconclusive; continued that current request is for permission to remove non-contributing façade elements (plywood sheathing and beige face brick) in order to investigate façade beneath and then return to HCC with details about preferred rehabilitation approach. Applicant also noted current proposal to reconfigure recessed storefront as one door with sidelite along with angled connector to main storefront due to existing slope at entrance. Applicant continued by describing proposal to replace existing handrail at rear façade (second floor level) with code-compliant metal railing. Mr. Simonson noted that building code requires top of handrail to measure 42-inches, rather than current 36-inches; continued by requesting clarification about mounting details of associated vertical posts. Applicant called attention to provided detail sketch indicating metal plates attached to existing roof. Mr. Simonson inquired if new handrail also necessitates gate; Applicant confirmed no gate is needed for segment of replacement handrail while existing handrail with decorative details and gate at adjacent property will remain. Mr. Evans inquired about provisions to manage trash at rear, noting on-going refuse problems at rear of many properties along this block; Applicant confirmed current involvement is with property owner to coordinate façade improvements and not with building tenants, so unable to comment on intended provisions to manage trash.

Public Commentary: none

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

1. The proposal to renovate the lower façade was presented by Christine Ussler.
2. Appropriate façade renovations include the following details:
 - a. carefully remove vertical plywood sheathing as well as beige face brick at entry-level façade to investigate condition of original façade beneath; **note:** HCC encourages selective removal of plywood and face brick so Applicant can determine existing conditions before submitting subsequent COA Application with proposed façade treatments above and below storefront windows
 - b. enlarge existing display window and integrate transom above
 - c. modify existing double entrance doors as single door with sidelite, both with transoms above; apron material beneath sidelite matches apron at remaining façade
 - d. if possible, modify return wall between front display window and recessed entrance as angled (to be finalized during selective demolition), with display window and transom above that correspond with front window; return wall on east side of recess to be sheathed in painted wood or composite beaded board

- e. new storefront assembly to be fabricated from dark bronze anodized aluminum; all glazing is not tinted, colored or reflective
 - f. recessed access to upper-level residential units remains but made full height, if possible; existing door to be replaced with full-lite, smooth, fiberglass door in dark brown factory-applied finish; side returns to be sheathed in painted wood or composite beaded board
 - g. subsequent COA Applications to include details and product submittals for potential new sign band and intermediate cornice with support brackets as well as concepts for new exterior lighting and building signage
3. Appropriate details of the replacement handrail at the second-floor level of the rear façade include: handrail assembly measures 42-inches high x 188-inches wide and is composed of 1-5/8-inch tube steel for four vertical posts as well as for upper and lower horizontal rails, with webbing between posts of smaller vertical pickets; **note:** HCC recommends painting upper-level handrail assemblies light gray in color to blend with the sky beyond.

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

Agenda Item #3:

Property Location: 210-212 East Third Street

Property Owner: 210 East Third Street, LLC

Applicant: Christine Ussler, Artefact, Inc.

Building Description, Period, Style, and Defining Features: This structure is a two-story, three-bay, detached brick masonry building with a flat roof. The building portion facing East Third Street was originally constructed ca. 1900 as an appliance and hardware store but later served as a tavern under various ownership. The upper floor level has 1-over-1 double-hung windows while the original entry-level storefront has been altered to include a central recessed entrance flanked on either side by modified windows openings ... each with side-by-side sliding windows. During the mid- 20th century, the storefront received a cladding of Formstone (regionally referred to by the brand name 'Permastone'), a type of pigmented stucco shaped to imitate the appearance of stone masonry. The east façade was clad in vinyl siding sometime during the late 20th century. Masonry and wood frame rear additions connect this structure to the two-story brick masonry residential building facing Mechanic Street. Many architectural features have been lost over time so it can no longer be identified by a defining style.

Proposed Alterations: The Applicant proposes to renovate the existing front façade and a portion of the side façade.

Guideline Citations:

- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SIS) 5.** -- see Agenda Item #1
- **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.** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Bethlehem Ordinance 1714.03 Purposes of Historic Conservation District** -- see Agenda Item 1
- **Historic Conservation Commission 'Guidelines for Storefronts'**

Evaluation, Effect on Historic Conservation District, Recommendations: Applicant initially appeared before HCC on October 18, 2021, with request to paint existing Formstone cladding at front (north) façade as well as vinyl siding at side (east) façade in dark red color, to modify existing windows at entry-level front façade and to infill recessed entry flush with front façade before installing new storefront entrance door. At that time, HCC noted various concerns about Applicant's proposal and unanimously tabled decision to determine appropriateness of proposed work. Applicant subsequently appeared before HCC on January 5, 2022, with proposals to replace vinyl siding at side (east) façade with brick veneer, to replace recessed entrance with storefront entrance door and transom, to restore glass storefront and to replace three double-

hung windows and add faux shutters at upper floor level. HCC noted lack of required scale drawings and specifications of proposed products before unanimously agreeing to table decision for determining appropriateness of proposed work. Applicant was encouraged to cooperate with licensed design professional (architect, engineer, etc.) experienced with historic structures before returning for subsequent review of proposals that respond to expressed concerns.

Current COA Application reflects involvement of qualified design professional by including required scale drawings while also addressing need for accessible front entrance. Proposal to remove existing Formstone at front façade before repairing and repointing historic brick beneath is appropriate; Applicant agrees to return to HCC if condition of original brick is very poor or seriously damaged by removal process with proposed alternative.

Applicant also proposes additional appropriate improvements to front façade, including:

- remove infill below entry-level windows to reveal original frames and sills; if frames and sills no longer exist, install new to match original
- install new insulated glass within original entry-level window openings and apply etched film over interior glass surfaces to address privacy concerns of restrooms behind; **note:** HCC previously accepted spandrel glass in limited applications as appropriate within Historic Conservation District, so discussion is warranted
- install new full-lite entrance door with etched film at existing recessed entry; Applicant should identify material of proposed door (preferably with associated specifications) and justify reason for etched film over glass surface
- repair existing transom above entry door or create new if no longer exists and install etched glass
- repair and paint three existing double-hung windows at upper floor level, including frames and sills as well as install energy-efficient exterior storm windows; **notes:** horizontal divisions of new storm windows should align with dividing rail of existing windows; Applicant describes 2-over-2 double-hung windows but existing double-hung windows have 1-over-1 configuration
- repair and paint all existing window and door heads as well as upper cornice
- install new concrete ramp and landing to create ADA-compliant entry access along with steel posts, bottom rail and traditional profiled handrail painted black in color; **note:** Applicant should provide details of proposed handrail assembly

Similar to previous COA Application, Applicant proposes to remove inappropriate vinyl siding at east (side) façade as well as north facing wall segment of middle portion of building and install thin brick over appropriate substrate; thin brick to match or blend with existing historic brick. Proposal is appropriate, pending clarification about historic brick as well as submitted samples of proposed thin bricks and associated mortar joints. Applicant might consider exterior stucco application as alternative to thin bricks to avoid multiple brick surfaces along various building facades.

COA Application concludes with proposal to install 60-inch-high brick wall at northwest corner of existing structure that terminates into adjacent building as screen to shield public view of dumpster behind and to enclose side yard; overall width of wall is not indicated but proportionally measures approx. 20-feet. Proposed brick type and mortar joints to be “determined after ... front façade work [is] completed” but would “match or blend with historic brick as closely as possible”. Relevant design guidelines “encourage use of new materials sympathetic to historic properties in streetscape ... of similar or complementary color, size, texture, scale, craftsmanship and applicability to function performed. Traditional materials such as brick, wood, stone, terra-cotta and wrought iron are recommended.” Thus, concept of proposed brick wall is appropriate. Entrance gate near far west portion of wall is depicted; however, COA Application notes associated specifications will be submitted to HCC for future consideration. Proposed 60-inch height of brick wall should be clarified with zoning and/or codes officials within City’s planning department; design of wall should also be further developed to include such items as lower foundation brick course, intermediate posts to provide structural integrity and delineate wall surface while cast stone cap or metal flashing detail would prevent unwanted rainwater penetration.

Applicant should be aware that all appropriate glazing is not tinted, colored or reflective. Subsequent COA Applications should include product submittals and details for proposed thin-brick veneers and mortars, various components of new screen wall and associated entrance gate as well as concepts for new exterior lighting and building signage.

Discussion: Christine Ussler represented proposal to renovate existing front façade and portion of side façade. Applicant noted that current tenant is religious organization, so no new signage is proposed. Applicant also explained that tenant restrooms located at storefront windows are (hopefully) temporary solution, so proposed film applied to inside surfaces of windows can be easily removed when floorplan is revised to relocate restrooms; continued by noting request for similar film on inside surface of glass door to offer privacy for current tenant that can be easily removed for different future tenant. Mr. Lader expressed appreciation to Applicant for cooperating with experienced design professional, as reflected by various supplements that now satisfy COA Application requirements. Mr. Lader continued by inquiring about potential intermediate cornice above entry level (similar to previous agenda item); Applicant would welcome that detail as means of delineating front façade and is curious if removal of Formstone might reveal remnants of former cornice. Mr. Evans inquired about removal of vinyl siding at select façade locations; Applicant appreciated Historic Officer's suggestion of stucco as affordable alternative to thin-brick veneer and agreed to bring Owner's preferred solution to future HCC meeting for consideration. Mr. Evans continued by inquiring if side and rear walls (currently with vinyl siding) originally had window openings, with potential to reestablish; Applicant noted those façade segments potentially included windows at one time but current use of adjacent parking lot (with parking aimed directly at building façade) precludes need/ability to integrate window replacements in associated façades. Applicant then called attention to proposed ramp as most efficient means of addressing ADA-compliant (handicap) access. Mr. Simonson appreciated concept of proposed ramp but expressed concern that ramp might extend too far into public right-of-way; Applicant noted sidewalk at this portion of city block is deep and initial measurements indicate room for proposed ramp but agreed to clarify with Bethlehem zoning officer. Applicant agreed to return to HCC with more details about proposed ramp and associated handrail for future consideration. Applicant also clarified that proposed brick wall at adjacent side yard is incorrectly depicted on provided drawings, noting wall terminates before touching adjacent building and includes typical details (support piers, cap, etc.). Mr. Simonson suggested that height of proposed wall is limited to 42-inches (as front-facing fence) but encouraged Applicant to clarify with Bethlehem zoning officer (might be considered side-yard fence) or request variance, if intended height is indeed 60-inches.

Public Commentary: Bill Sheirer noted personal history of being generally supportive of projects within Historic Conservation District proposed by Christine Ussler.

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

1. The proposal to renovate the existing front façade and a portion of the side façade was presented by Christine Ussler.
2. Appropriate renovations to the front façade include:
 - a. careful removal of existing Formstone at front façade before repairing and repointing historic brick beneath; **note:** Applicant agreed to return to HCC if condition of original brick is very poor or seriously damaged by removal process with proposed alternative
 - b. remove infill below entry-level windows to reveal original frames and sills; if frames and sills no longer exist, install new to match original
 - c. install new insulated glass within original entry-level window openings and apply etched film over interior glass surfaces to address privacy concerns of restrooms behind
 - d. install new, full-lite, smooth, fiberglass entrance door with etched film over interior glass surface at existing recessed entry
 - e. repair existing transom above entry door (or create new if transom no longer exists) and install etched glass
 - f. repair and paint three existing double-hung windows at upper floor level, including frames and sills as well as install energy-efficient exterior storm windows; **notes:** horizontal divisions of new storm windows should align with dividing rails of existing windows and all glazing is not tinted, colored or reflective
 - g. repair and paint all existing window and door heads as well as upper cornice

- h. install new concrete ramp and landing to create ADA-compliant entry access; Applicant agreed to submit subsequent COA Application with scale drawings of new ramp and details of associated handrail assembly

Note: Subsequent COA Application to include details and product submittals of potential intermediate cornice as well as concepts for new exterior lighting and building signage

3. Appropriate renovations to the side façades include careful removal of existing vinyl siding at the east (side) façade as well as the north facing wall segment of the middle portion of the building and install thin brick veneer over an appropriate substrate; thin brick to match or blend with existing historic brick, with stucco as an appropriate alternative; **note:** Applicant agreed to submit product samples of proposed thin brick veneer and associated mortar joints or of proposed stucco as part of subsequent COA Application for HCC consideration.
4. The Applicant agreed to submit a subsequent COA Application that includes scale drawings of a new brick wall with entrance gate that encloses the side yard and includes intermediate supporting piers and a cap detail; height of the new wall should be clarified with zoning and/or codes officials within City's planning department.

The motion for the proposed work was unanimously approved.

General Business:

Minutes from HCC meeting on June 27, 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