

How would this situation play out in the north side Historic District?

The Bethlehem Gadfly 319-327 S. New, Development, Southside February 21, 2021

 Latest in a series of posts on 319-327 S. New St. 

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Gadfly,

I've been reading the commentary provided by Kim Carrell-Smith concerning development in general and in the Conservation District in South Bethlehem. As always, Kim's analyses are spot on in my opinion and on point with the amazing research she completes. In fact it agrees with everything I've felt and learned as a former city administrator.

The other thing that should be reviewed when considering demolition of the existing structures is whether any of them were recognized by both the City and Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission as contributing resources for the creation of this district. If so, and I suspect they may have been (I just can't recall since it has been about twenty years since I helped to craft the Conservation District Ordinance as a city administrator), then the erosion of the base line through this proposed demolition should be of grave concern.

Finally, one has to wonder how this situation would play out in the Bethlehem Historic District on the City's north side. Is there less concern because it's just the south side? Old attitudes towards the "other side of the tracks and river" may still be at play, and I firmly believe that it is time to draw a line in the sand when it comes to development anywhere in Bethlehem, and specifically on the south side.

Development in any city is organic to a city's progress forward, but that development must respect the existing built environment, be appropriate, and not destroy the charm that gives a community its essence to begin with.

Dana