

A Polk Street Garage rendering

The Bethlehem Gadfly Parking, Serious Issues August 28, 2019

(111th in a series of posts on parking)

Lookie here:

Nicole Radzievich, "Bethlehem agency authorizes design of 585-spot garage." November 20, 2014.

Yes, a 2014 newspaper article.

Rendering of the proposed Polk Street Garage:



What Gadfly did not realize and/or fully appreciate was that the Polk Street Garage has a history going back several years when it was under

control of the Bethlehem Redevelopment Authority before being transferred to the Parking Authority.

A “history” by Tony Hanna for the Mayor: [Polk Street Parking Garage Timeline and Background](#)

And it was designed then and run through City approvals.

That design should basically be the design now.

And it’s got some things Gadfly was looking for.

From the Gadfly mail bag:

“The rendering of the garage facade shows the retail/mixed-use building in front of the South facade running along East Third Street. It shows a multi-story building running in front of the garage. The assumption is the garage design is not going to be very different than the design completed by the RDA that received City Planning Commission approval.”

“The garage is set back from the street, providing for a space to build a building that could conceivably hide the garage facade and provide for street front retail, office, and perhaps residential in the new multi-story building. ‘Ground-floor retail’ implies that the retail would just be on the ground floor of the garage — similar to South New Street. Polk Street is more along the lines of Speck and other good planners and developers.”

“The PSPG design and development doesn’t get more sustainable and more ‘new urbanism’ friendly. It’s being built on a brownfield, and the stormwater management system was especially designed to minimize stormwater impacts on the site and the community. A comprehensive

traffic study was completed, and the garage was designed accordingly. Finally, the East Third Street side of the parking facility will have a 'liner mixed-use' building built to 'hide' the garage facade on the south side of the structure, keeping the streetscape lively and active. Jeff Speck would be proud."

On the street level of the New Street Garage is the Police substation and the Southside Arts District office. These storefronts always seem "dead" to Gadfly — not really contributing to streetscape. Nothing really to see there if you are a walker. He hopes we get something more "lively and active" for 3rd Street. He can't get out of his head Missy's idea of a piano out in the open on the sidewalk by the college!

And Gadfly is glad to read in the 2014 article that the garage entrances are planned for Filmore and on 2nd St., not on 3rd Street. Gadfly doesn't like the New Street Garage entrance on New St. — but maybe there was no other option.

But Gadfly still thinks that the BPA should open up a conversation on the design and specifically address issues of aesthetics, walkability, and the recent letter from the Environmental Advisory Council. And Gadfly still thinks about Missy Harnett's idea of a piano on the street by the college!

It looks like good ideas were incorporated into the design. It would be good to see them, hear about them.

Thank you, followers, for filling Gadfly in.