

# The HCC discusses the proposal for 319-327 S. New

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [319-327 S. New, Development, Southside](#) February 20, 2021

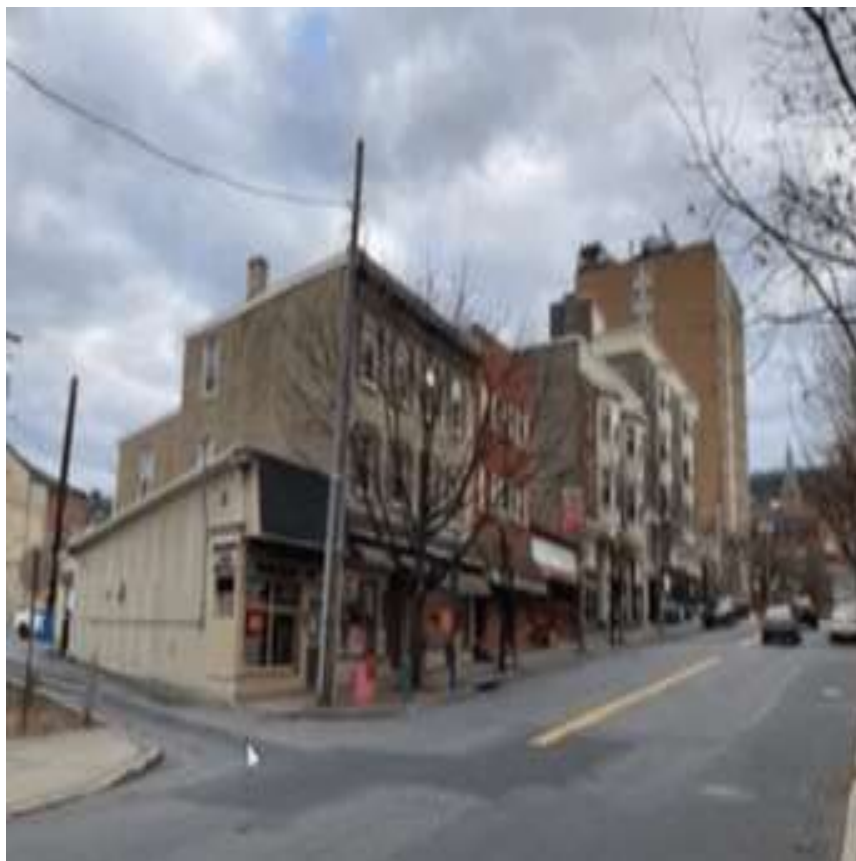
🌿 *Latest in a series of posts on 319-327 S. New St.* 🌿

*“It’s way too high.”  
Roger Hudak*

ref: **Another developer thinking big . . . er, tall**

Apropos of what **Kim Carrell-Smith** has us thinking about, let’s begin to examine the recent proposal for a 12-story building at 319-327 S. New St. on the Southside.

Gadfly was mistaken when he posted about this last time. Then he said the whole block from the Subway on down to the Greenway was involved.





Not so. Only the 4 buildings, 5 addresses marked here: 319-327 S. New St.



It is proposed that these 4 buildings, 5 addresses will be replaced by the 12-story rendering below.



This proposal was discussed at the **Historical Conservation Commission** on January 25. HCC members are Gary Lader, Craig Evans, Seth Cornish, Roger Hudak, Mike Simonson, Beth Starbuck, Jeff Long.

The scale of the proposal was a significant issue.

No vote was taken.

Get oriented to the proposed project, and Gadfly will return a time or two and go into more detail about the meeting.

*selections from Ed Courier, "Board gets new leadership." Bethlehem Press, February 16, 2021.*

Gary Lader and were unanimously elected president and vice president respectively at the Bethlehem Historic Conservation Commission's first meeting of 2021 on Jan. 25. New member Mike Simonson replaced Phil Roeder, who retired in December 2020.



Lader and Evans presided over an agenda that included discussion of proposed demolition of a row of vintage buildings that comprise 319, 321, 323, 325, and 327 S. New St. to make way for a 12-story mixed use apartment building.

The team representing the ambitious project included developers Rafael Palomino and Jeffrey Quinn, architect Jordan G. Clark and Anthony Scarcia Jr. from Allied Building Corporation. They sought consent from

the board to tear down all four buildings and replace them with a structure with a 6,500-square-foot ground floor. As the new building's height increases, the structure would span the existing alley at E. Graham Place to increase the footprint of each story to approximately 8,000 square feet. The support columns and upper stories would include a strip of land at 317 S. New St. which abuts the South Bethlehem Greenway.



The single story wood frame building at 319 dates from circa 1900. The painted brick Italianate building at 321-323 is three stories, with residential over retail. It dates from 1885 and rear additions were built during the 20th century. Its neighbor is a heavily altered 3-story vacant stuccoed building also built around 1885. A single story retail building at 327 and its rear addition are circa 1900. According to historic officer Jeff Long, defining architectural details for this building and two others have been lost over the years. He recommended retaining the existing building at 321-323, as it contains original architectural details.

Long argued the proposed 12-story structure “is inappropriate for the immediate streetscape and more generally, for the overall historic conservation district.”

The applicants produced an engineering report that pointed out various code violations and structural deficiencies found in the row of buildings, in an effort to support demolition.

When asked, Quinn said they could look at saving the façade of the building at 321-323 S. New St., but emphasized that, “everything inside the building is a public safety hazard and finished its useful life.”

According to Quinn, the design and materials for the new construction would reflect the historic nature of the surrounding district.

“The building is attractive,” said Craig Evans. But its 12-story height was a problem for him.

“It’s way too high,” exclaimed Roger Hudak.

Seth Cornish noted the structures on the Southside were predominantly two to four stories high, “with some notable exceptions.” He said this rhythm was key to the district’s identity and he was not willing to approve anything over five stories.

With his restaurant business background, Palomino described his vision for a food court on the first floor of the project.



The applicants explained that post-COVID technology for occupants would be built into the project to make it safer. There was an affordable housing component, as well.

When Lader called for public comment, Downtown Manager Missy Hartney spoke in favor of adding the “beautiful looking building” to the “heart of the downtown.”

The board agreed to table the proposal, with the applicants to return with a revised design. Ken Loush recused himself from this one agenda item.

**The Bethlehem Gadfly**