



# City of BETHLEHEM

BUREAU OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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October 7, 2019

Johnson Surveying & Construction Services, Inc.  
45 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Apt. 5  
Easton, PA 18042

RE: (19-005 Site Plan Review) – 19090029 – 305 Van Buren Street – Zoned RT, plan dated May 23, 2019.

Dear Sir/Madam:

The above-referenced plan has been reviewed by the appropriate City offices. Per Zoning Ordinance Section 1322.02(a)(3), Site Plan Review, the Planning Commission may recommend conditions for approval that should be considered by the Zoning Hearing Board . . . because of the considerable impacts that these land uses may have upon the community. The plan review is intended to emphasize layout, traffic and neighborhood compatibility issues, as opposed to engineering details required under any later land development plan process.

Key points to consider are as follows:

1. The proposed development is a 5 unit multifamily dwelling on Lot A and a 2 family dwelling on Lot B with interior garage and exterior driveway parking spaces for every unit.
2. This proposed development lacks many of the design standards stipulated in the Article 1311 standards for the RT Zone.
3. In accordance with 1322.02(d)(2) regarding building arrangement, Lot A's multifamily dwellings should be moved closer to Van Buren Street and the parking shall be relocated to the rear of the structure. In this way, the lot will comply with the off street parking requirements and avoid any variances for excessive off street parking in the front of the lot. A one way traffic pattern can be designed around the larger building.
4. In accordance with 1322.02(d)(3) regarding access, circulation, and parking, provide ingress and egress access in between both structures. The number of vehicles exiting the proposed multifamily dwelling on Lot A (12 spaces) into the 14' wide cartway of Van Buren Street could create a dangerous situation for pedestrians. If sidewalks are constructed along this right of way, as required in the engineering comments below, the great number of access points onto Van Buren, which is an alley, could create conflicts between pedestrians and motorists.
5. Because the number of dwelling units proposed on Lots A and B exceed the maximum permitted, significant variances or waivers must be sought regarding the following related deficiencies: the amount of paving in the front yard, the distance from the paved driveway to the side property line, the separation distance between driveways, the setback of the parking space from the front of the dwelling, and the side yard setback. Removal of one dwelling unit on Lot A will significantly reduce the number of variances requested.
6. Consideration should be given to redesign aspects of the development to more fully comply with these requirements.

General review comments are as follows:

## **ENGINEERING**

1. A utility plan, showing all proposed laterals and mains, shall be provided.
2. In accordance with Ordinance No. 4342, at the time of a request for a building permit or at the execution of the developer's agreement, a sanitary sewer tapping fee of \$2,527 per EDU will need to be paid. The total amount will be determined when a sanitary sewer facilities planning module application is submitted. A cover letter, describing the project, and a utility plan shall be included in the planning module submittal. Please note that building permits cannot be issued until the Planning Module is reviewed and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.
3. Curb and sidewalk will be required along the entire property frontage of Van Buren St.
4. The proposed driveways for Lot B are only 10 feet deep and will not allow for parking a vehicle. The driveways are strongly encouraged be made deeper, if possible, in order to accommodate a vehicle fully within the property boundaries and outside the right-of-way. Off street parking in the 3 foot curb and sidewalk area is prohibited.
5. City standard driveway aprons shall be shown for each proposed driveway. The City requires a minimum of 5' separation between driveways only 2' is proposed.
6. City Right-Of-Way information for Van Buren St shall be shown. Van Buren St has a 20' wide ROW, 14' cartway with 3' on either side from face of curb.
7. City Ward and Block information shall be shown. The property is located in Ward 3 Block 7A.
8. This site plan lacks much of the information necessary for a thorough engineering evaluation and has been reviewed only for general conformance to City of Bethlehem standards to the extent permitted by the limited detail provided. Additional comments will be provided when a more detailed plan is submitted for review.

## **Public Works – Traffic**

1. Comments will be forwarded under separate cover.

## **ZONING**

1. In accordance with Sec. 1322.02(c), amend the proposed uses on the plan to stipulate Multifamily Dwelling for Lot A and Two Family Dwelling for Lot B.
2. The proposed uses are permitted uses; however, the proposal requires dimensional variances and additional relief described below.
3. The applicant has submitted their appeal application and the case is scheduled to be heard at the October 23, 2019 ZHB meeting. Variances requested are listed below.
4. Lot A & B:
  - a. 1302.67 Lot. A parcel of land fronting on a street used or designed to be used by one use or structure or by a related group of uses or structures. The new property line between Lot A and Lot B creates two new lots fronting on Van Buren Street, which is an alley, not a street. This is in violation of the definition of "Lot".
  - b. 1302.05 Alley. A public or private right-of-way having a right-of-way width of twenty (20) feet or less, which affords a means of access to the rear or side of abutting property and is not intended for general traffic circulation. Regardless of whether an alley is given a street name, no new principal building shall have its frontage on an alley.
  - c. 1302.125 Street. Any road, highway, avenue, street, parkway, lane or other way, public or private, set aside and commonly used to serve 3 or more lots primarily for vehicular traffic purposes. An alley shall not be deemed a street.
5. Dimensional Variances, Lot A (Multifamily Dwelling):
  - a. 1306.01(a)(4) Minimum Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit, 2,500 SF required, 2,181 SF proposed.
  - b. 1306.01(a)(4) Minimum Side Yard Setback, 15' required, 10'-2" and 11'-0" proposed.
  - c. 1306.04(a)(4) Maximum Building Coverage, 30% required, 44% proposed.
  - d. 1322.03.11.5.i: For Multi-family Dwellings, all parking spaces and access drives shall be at least 15' from the multifamily dwelling, unless it is a garage space and a driveway extension from the garage. Seven of the 12 parking spaces proposed are less than 3' from the building.
6. Dimensional Variances, Lot B (Two Family Dwelling):

- a. 1306.01(a)(4) Minimum Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit, 3,000 SF required, 2,170 SF proposed.
  - b. 1306.01(a)(4) Minimum Rear Yard Setback, 20' required, 9' proposed.
  - c. 1306.1(a)(4) Maximum Building Coverage, 35% required, 54% proposed.
  - d. 1306.01(a)(4). Minimum Tract Size: 6,000 SF required; 4,340 proposed.
7. 1311.04(b) Surface off-street parking and any garage doors shall be located to the rear or side of principal buildings, as opposed to being newly placed between the front lot line along a street and the front wall of a new principal building.
  8. 1311.04(c) An average of at least one street tree shall be planted for each 30 feet of street length, 181 LF = six street trees required. Street trees are intended to be placed in the public right of way, but any street trees planted with this development will be located on private property and will be required to remain as stipulated in a deed restriction.
  9. 1311.10(i) New porches should be considered on the front of new buildings. The site plan only depicts a concrete pad at front.
  10. 1319.02(g)(a) In a residential district, a driveway located in a front yard shall be setback a minimum of 2.5 feet from a lot line of an abutting dwelling, Lot A's driveways do not have sufficient setback from their side property lines.
  11. 1319.02(m) In any residential district, off-street parking shall only be permitted to occupy a maximum of 50 percent of a required front yard. Lot A's proposed front yard parking is approximately 90 percent of the front yard.

This item will be placed on the October 10, 2019 Planning Commission agenda for review. Please bring a site plan and elevation drawings on boards to the meeting.

Sincerely,



Darlene Heller, AICP  
Director of Planning and Zoning

Cc: M. Dorner  
A. Rohrbach  
C. Peiffer  
T. Wells  
James Byszewski, Van Buren Development, LLC