

Department of Housing, Economic Development & Commerce
Division of City Planning



Determination of Significance at Applicant's Request

DATE: December 30, 2019

TO: David Sarnowski, Applicant

FROM: Maggie O'Neill, Historic Preservation Specialist *mon*

SUBJECT: 319 5th Street; Block 11208, Lot 13; Historically Block 353 Lot 29
DS19-162

After assessing the building at 319 5th Street; Block 11208, Lot 13; Historically Block 353 Lot 29, it is clear the building possesses significant historic and architectural integrity and should not be demolished, in accordance with the provisions set forth in §105-7, entitled *Building Demolition*, and with §345-44(B)(11) entitled *R-5 Low Rise Residential, Mixed Use Zone* of the Jersey City Municipal Code.

The buildings on the south side of 3rd Street between Coles Street and Monmouth are mentioned as a particular subject in the *Phase One New Jersey Historical Sites Inventory Survey of the City of Jersey City Inventory* (1985) as a contributing asset to the Italian Village neighborhood. The block is described as “3 and 4 story single family and tenement buildings; most of which below (east) of Brunswick were built before 1887 ... The south side of the street is most noteworthy, particularly between Monmouth and Coles.” The Italian Village neighborhood, particularly this block, is eligible for local, state, and national Register designation under Criteria A (*patterns of an area's development*) and C (*A building form, architectural style, engineering technique, or artistic values, based on a stage of physical development, or the use of a material or method of construction that shaped the historic identity of an area*).

The tax assessor's field card from 1938 lists the building as being built *about* 1880 and the *Phase One New Jersey Historical Sites Inventory Survey of the City of Jersey City Inventory* (1985) states the date of construction on this block to be *prior to* 1887. However due to cartographic evidence, I would estimate the date of construction to be about a decade earlier; *circa* 1870.

The building is located in the R-5 zone. Per §345-44(B)(11), “any building that can be dated back to 1890 shall not be demolished without written consent from the Historic Preservation Officer.” This building appears in roughly its current configuration on the 1873 *Combined Atlas of the State of New Jersey and the County of Hudson* (Plate E), or the 1887 *Atlas of Jersey City* (Plate J) by Fowler, and the 1928 *Plat Book of Jersey City* (Plate 6) published by Bromley in 1928, all of which supports the estimated construction date of *circa* 1870.

The wood sided, semi-detached, wood frame vernacular Greek Revival rowhouse was originally sided with wood siding and wood shingles (in the rear) atop a brick foundation. Post 1938, the wood siding on the front of the house was removed and replaced with the existing shingles. Stylistically, the shingles date to *circa* 1950, and therefore, due to their age, construction method, and depiction of a specific architectural detail, the shingles themselves have gained their own historic significance. The building maintains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association. The window fenestration, door openings, and roofline remains unaltered. Though the building has had some modern updates, specifically the alteration of the front entryway stairs to remove the parapet wall and replace it with a modern railing, it has not adversely affected the character of the building.

There is a one-story, three bay accessory structure in the rear yard which is accessible through the alley. The tax assessor's field card from 1938 states this structure is a garage, No current photos of the rear structure were submitted, however the structure appears to be relatively unchanged from the image on the 1938 Tax Card and retains its simplified vernacular Art Deco details and brick façade.

Although the building is not an example of high style Greek Revival architecture; it is an example of a vernacular style dwelling typical of the visual and cultural characteristics of the Italian Village neighborhood. Because of building's presence in the neighborhood and contributing visual character to the register-eligible Italian Village neighborhood, its demolition would negatively impact the historic and cultural character of Jersey City and the surrounding area.

CC: Tanya Marione, Director Division of City Planning
Raymond Meyer, Construction Official
Nick Taylor, Zoning Officer
HPC
File