

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division Report**

Variance Request  
BZZ-2270

**Date:** April 21, 2005

**Applicant:** Designer Sign Systems Inc.

**Address of Property:** 400 Stinson Boulevard Northeast

**Date Application Deemed Complete:** March 28, 2005

**End of 60 Day Decision Period:** May 27, 2005

**Appeal Period Expiration:** May 2, 2005

**Contact Person and Phone:** Designer Sign Systems Inc, 763-784-5858

**Planning Staff and Phone:** Molly McCartney, 612-673-5811

**Ward: 1      Neighborhood Organization:** Northeast Park

**Existing Zoning:** I2, Medium Industrial District

**Proposed Use:** Installation of a new sign.

**Proposed Variance:** A variance to increase the maximum height from the ground of a sign from 24 ft. to 35 ft. on a property located at 400 Stinson Boulevard Northeast in the I2, Medium Industrial District.

**Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance:** 525.520 (21)

**Background:** The subject site is the Stinson Technology Campus, which holds offices and warehouse space, and the site is approximately 2 acres (82,537 sq. ft.). The applicant is proposing to install a wall sign that is 35 ft. from the ground on the east elevation of the southern end of the building for space leased by Fairview Health Services. The proposed sign will be the Fairview Health Services logo and made of stainless steel. The location of the proposed sign is between the second and third floors. The sign measures 26.29 in. by 154.74 in. and is 339 sq. ft. in size. There is a sign, similar in size, located between the second and third floors on the north side of the east elevation for Qwest offices, which did receive a variance (BZZ-415) for the height from the ground in January 2002. In addition, Qwest had occupied the current Fairview site and also had a similar sign in the same location as the requested variance.

**Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:**

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed by the official controls and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

Strict adherence to the zoning code requires that a wall sign be no more than 25 ft. from the ground. The applicant states that the area between the first and second floor is a typical location for a sign; however, there is an awning that will block the view of the sign. The applicant also states the sign is more than 35 ft. from the ground because of the excessive height of the floors in the warehouse. According to City records, the warehouse structure was built in 1919. Without the requested variance, a sign could only be located at 24 ft. off the ground.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land and have not been created by the applicant. Because of the height of the stories and an obstructing awning, a sign can not be located between the second and third stories without a variance. The construction of the structure and elevated floors is not a situation created by the applicant.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

The granting of the variance will be keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the character of the surrounding area. Previously there was a Qwest sign in this location and there is currently a Qwest sign, similar in size and height from the ground, located at the north end of this building. The proposed sign is similar to the Qwest sign in material and size.

- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

Granting the variance would likely have no impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the proposed structure be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.

**Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for a sign adjustment:**

- 1. The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.**

**CPED Planning Division Report**  
BZZ-2270

Staff believes that the proposed wall sign is in scale with the building and the area. The sign will be consistent with other requirements of the I2 zoning district. The sign will be located 10 ft. higher than the permitted height. The increased height is appropriate for the Stinson Parkway and the scale of the building it is proposed on. The applicant states that a sign had been located here previously.

- 2. The sign adjustment will allow a sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or that is more consistent with the architecture and design of the site.**

Staff believes that the proposed wall sign is in scale with the building. The sign will be of a comparable design of another sign on the building and is consistent with the design of the building. The proposed sign will be the Fairview Health Services logo and made of stainless steel.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the Board of Adjustment adopt the findings above and **approve** the variance to increase the maximum height from the ground of a for a wall sign from 24 feet to 35 feet on a property located at 400 Stinson Boulevard Northeast in the I2, Medium Industrial District.