

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division Report****Variance Request  
BZZ-3529****Date:** May 17, 2007**Applicant:** Brian Miller (Executive Director, Seward Redesign)**Address of Property:** 2611-2627 Franklin Avenue East**Contact Person and Phone:** Brian Miller, (612) 338-8729**Planning Staff and Phone:** Aaron Hanauer, (612) 673-2494**Date Application Deemed Complete:** April 19, 2007**Public Hearing:** May 17, 2007**Appeal Period Expiration:** May 28, 2007**End of 60 Day Decision Period:** June 19, 2007**Ward: 2      Neighborhood Organization:** Seward**Existing Zoning:** C2 Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District**Proposed Use:** An interior remodel of a building resulting in two new office spaces, three new retail spaces, a new coffee/tea shop, and the expansion of existing restaurant.**Proposed Variances:** A variance to reduce the required number of off-street parking stalls from 85 spaces to 11 spaces, where 24 spaces are grandfathered, to allow for an interior remodel (a variance request of 50 parking spaces). Note: public notices stated 35 grandfathered parking spaces which was a staff error.**Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance:** 525.520 (7)**Background:** The subject parcel, 2611-2627 Franklin Avenue East, contains a multi-tenant, commercial and office building. It was originally built in 1916 (2611-1615 Franklin Avenue East) and an addition was built in 1924 (2617-2627 Franklin Avenue East). The L-shaped subject parcel is 19,158 sq. ft with an 11-spot rear parking lot that is accessible via Pautz Place (Figure 1). The building footprint is 12,010 sq. ft. and the gross floor area of the first two floors is 14,460 sq. ft (when including the basement, which is currently used for storage, the gross floor area is 26,685 sq. ft.).

The subject property currently has two operating tenants: True Thai Restaurant and Jim the Barber. Smiley's Medical Clinic was also a tenant, but they let their lease expire and vacated the space in March

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2007. The departure of the medical clinic has left 10,000 of the 14,460 sq. ft. gross floor area of the first and second floors vacant (as well as 4,567 sq. ft. in the basement). The applicant, Seward Redesign, has proposed remodeling the interior of the building resulting in eight entities. The plan would include having Jim the Barber remain, an expansion of the True Thai Restaurant, and adding two new offices, three new retail operations, and a coffee/tea shop.

**Parking Calculations**

Table 1. Grandfathered Parking Calculation

Tenant	Grandfathered Parking Spaces
1. True Thai Restaurant	23
2. Jim the Barber	4
3. Former Smiley's Clinic	4
4. Vacant Space	4
Gross Grandfathered Parking	35
(subtract) existing on-site parking	11
Total Grandfathered Parking	24

Table 2. Proposed Remodeling Parking Calculation

Tenant	Parking
1. True Thai Restaurant (with expansion)	45
2. Jim the Barber	4
3. Proposed Mona Chai Tea Shop	10
4. Proposed Office (basement)	10
5. Proposed Retail	4
6. Proposed Retail	4
7. Proposed Retail	4
8. Proposed Office	4
Total Required Parking	85
(subtract) existing on-site parking	11
(subtract) grandfathered parking	24
Requested parking variance	50

**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.**

**Parking requirement:** The requested variance is to reduce the required number of off-street parking spaces from 85 spaces to 11 spaces (where 24 are currently grandfathered) to allow for an interior remodel that would have a restaurant expansion, a new coffee/tea store, three new retail spaces, and two new offices in this C2 Zoning District. Strict adherence to the parking regulations in the Zoning Code would prevent this interior remodeling project or likely most other remodeling projects with an off-street parking requirement greater than 35 spaces (24 grandfathered spaces and 11 actual spaces) since there is no room for additional parking on this site. Furthermore, providing the required parking would necessitate demolition of a nearby property. For these reasons, the existing property can not be put to a reasonable use without the variance.

- 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 for which the parking variance is sought are unique to the parcel of land and have not been created by the applicant. At the time the multi-tenant building was built (1916 and 1924), there were no parking requirements in place. In addition, the size of the building footprint in relation to the size of the site constrains construction of additional parking.

- 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.**

Granting the variance will be keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the Minneapolis Plan (TMP). The location of this building, on East Franklin, is recognized in the TMP as a Commercial Corridor. Commercial Corridor are recognized in the Minneapolis Plan as areas with commercial uses that dominate residential areas and serve the neighborhood and other parts of the city.

- 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 of the requested variances would not seriously impact the congestion of area streets for three reasons. First, the subject property is located on a Commercial Corridor. A characteristic of a Commercial Corridor is that it has a daily traffic volume from 10,000 to 20,000 vehicles. Second, on-street parking, bus service, and biking are readily available in this area. Third, this building prior to 1992, when Smiley's Clinic began their lease, had eight tenants, including two

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food and drink establishments. The proposed interior redesign will also have eight tenants with two food and drink establishments (see Figure 2). Granting these variances will also not substantially increase other negative side effects.

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

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 reduce the required number of off-street parking stalls from 85 spaces to 11 spaces, where 24 spaces are grandfathered, to allow for the interior remodel at 2611-2627 Franklin Avenue East in the C2, Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District subject to the following condition:

1. That the Planning Division-CPED review and approve the final site plan, floor plans, and elevation. All drawings will be measured to an architect or engineer's scale.

**Attachments:**

- Zoning map (1 page)
- Statement of proposed use (3 pages)
- Applicant photos (3 pages)
- Area, site, and floor plans (6 pages)
- Figure 1. 2611-2627 Franklin Avenue East Parcel (1 page)
- Figure 2. 1992 floor plan (1 page)
- Figure 3. Aerials (2 pages)
- Support/Opposition (1 page)