

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Variance
BZZ 5239

Date: September 15, 2011

Applicant: VanMadrone Metalworks

Address of Property: 500 36th Street East

Contact Person and Phone: Jeff VanSyoc, (612) 964-4037

Planning Staff and Phone: Shanna Sether, (612) 673-2307

Date Application Deemed Complete: July 28, 2011

End of 60-Day Decision Period: September 25, 2011

End of 120-Day Decision Period: November 24, 2011 (*Staff sent extension letter August 22, 2011*)

Ward: 8 **Neighborhood Organization:** Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization

Existing Zoning: I1 Light Industrial District and IL Industrial Living Overlay District.

Proposed Use: Art studio with metalworking

Variance: of the specific development standards for an artist studio to allow for metalwork

Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance: Chapter 525, Article IX Variances, Specifically Section 525.520(22) “to vary the development standards of Chapter 536, Specific Development Standards...”

Background: The subject property is approximately 1 acre and was originally built as the Purity Bakery Building, was constructed in 1919 and operated as a commercial bakery. Since the bakery left the building, it has been renovated into a mixed use building. Some of the uses include art studios, minor automobile repair, light manufacturing, bicycle repair, offices and 6 residential dwellings.

The applicant is proposing to allow for metalworking accessory to their existing art studio, Van Madrone Metalworks. Van Madrone Metalworks along with other artisans make up “The Minneapolis Metalcraft Alliance,” who uses the knowledge and skills of an artistic blacksmith. Some of the techniques include cutting, welding and hand forging metals. Almost all of the work is produced with hand hammer and anvil.

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The Minneapolis zoning code limits the extent of metalworking for an artist studio to jewelry making through Specific Development Standards:

536.20. Specific development standards. The uses listed below are subject to the following specific development standards, in addition to all other applicable regulations:

Art Studio.

- (1) An art studio may include the design and fabrication of jewelry, ornamental ceramics, pottery and visual arts.
- (2) Metalworking shall be prohibited, except for jewelry making. Except in the C4, B4S and B4C Districts, jewelry making shall be limited to twelve hundred (1,200) square feet and the main entrance shall open to a retail or office component equal to not less than fifteen (15) percent of the floor area of the use.

The zoning code authorizes a variance of the development standards of Chapter 536. Therefore, the applicant has requested a variance to allow for metalworking accessory to an existing art studio.

Staff has received a letter of support from the Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization. Staff will forward additional comments, if any are received, at the Board of Adjustment meeting.

VARIANCES of the specific development standards for an artist studio to allow for metalwork

- 1. Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.**

The circumstances upon which the variance is requested are unique to the parcel of land, based on the existing industrial zoning classification and the existing building having been built for industrial purposes. The applicant is in the building with a motorcycle repair shop, as well. The applicant sought out a building that can accommodate the work associated with “The Minneapolis Metalcraft Alliance.” These circumstances have not been created by the applicant.

- 2. The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.**

Staff believes that the applicant is proposing to use the property in a reasonable manner that will keep with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and comprehensive plan. The zoning code prevents artist studios to include metalworking beyond jewelry making anywhere in the City of Minneapolis. Metalworking is allowable through other uses, such as medium industrial uses. This property has been used as a commercial bakery and currently has a motorcycle repair shop, which has similar safety issues related to metalworking. Allowing this type of fine arts production is a reasonable use of the property, because the building has been outfitted for industrial uses, which has a similar type of fabrication. The intent of prohibiting metalworking for artist studio relates to the impacts of this type of artwork may have on the subject and surrounding properties. The impacts of the proposed use will not be greater than the impacts of

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the previous commercial bakery or some of the current uses, including the of motorcycle repair shop.

- 3. The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.**

Staff believes that the granting of this variance would not negatively alter the essential character or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the area. There are existing residential units in the building, however, they are located in the tower in the southwest corner of the property and the art studio is located at the opposite end. The intent of prohibiting metalworking for artist studio relates to the impacts of this type of artwork may have on subject and surrounding properties. Staff believes that the proposed use will be compatible with other uses in the existing building. Further, staff does not believe that the proposed variance will be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the general public.

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** a variance of the specific development standards for an artist studio to allow for metalwork at 500 East 36th Street in the I1 Light Industrial District and IL Industrial Living Overlay District.

Attachments:

- 1) Written descriptions and findings submitted by the applicant
- 2) Copy of e-mail sent to the Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization and CM Glidden
- 3) Copy of letter from Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization
- 4) Zoning map
- 5) Site plan
- 6) Floor plans
- 7) Photographs