

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

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FILE NAME: 901 Nicollet Mall/Young Quinlan Building (BZH 25412)

CATEGORY/DISTRICT: Landmark

CLASSIFICATION: Certificate of Appropriateness

APPLICANT: Shea, Inc.

DATE OF APPLICATION: April 21, 2008

PUBLICATION DATE: May 13, 2008

DATE OF HEARING: May 20, 2008

APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION : May 30, 2008

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Aaron Hanauer

REQUEST: Certificate of Appropriateness to allow for a sign package that does not meet the Minneapolis HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings.

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**A. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND:**

The Young Quinlan (YQ) Building, built in 1926, is located at the southeast corner of Ninth Street South at the Nicollet Mall. The YQ Building is a local landmark with interior and exterior designation. It is significant for its association with the early concept of high quality modern merchandising in Minneapolis. The Young Quinlan Department store was the first ready-to-wear shop in Minneapolis, and was originally opened in 1894 at 513 Nicollet Avenue.

The Young Quinlan Building has an impressive and ornate exterior appearance. The building is five stories above ground and 2 ½ stories below ground. All four sides of the building are finished in the same manner with tan brick. The first story is constructed of Kasota stone and has round and square arch display windows. Balustraded second story window have side lights and are framed in an alterative pattern of carved pillars and ionic pilasters. Between the second and third floors are silver flag poles that project approximately 9 feet from the building. The third through fifth stories have multi-paned windows with Kasota frames. The top story is accented by stone moldings above and beneath the windows.

The Young Quinlan Building has had four, 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail establishments over the last few years. Currently, the building has a Starbucks Coffee shop, Haskell's Wine Store, the new JB Hudson Jewelry location, and the Target commercial furniture store will be taking over the former Crate and Barrel location in the upcoming months.

**B. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

The applicant, Shea Inc, is applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness and Historic Variance on behalf of JB Hudson Jewelry to allow for a sign package that does not meet three Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings (see Section D for details) and two zoning code provisions. The scope of this application is to review the three ways that the sign package does not meet the Heritage Preservation Design Guidelines. The two items that do not meet the zoning code are addressed in the historic variance application (BZH 25397).

In determining whether to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for a sign or awning proposal, the 2003 HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings document states that the HPC will consider special situations including building condition, building orientation, historic precedence and exceptional design proposals.

### **C. PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The applicant, Shea Architectural Firm, is proposing a sign package for a new tenant, JB Hudson Jewelers (see Appendix A4 for rendering). JB Hudson Jewelry extends 149 of the 215 linear feet of the YQ Building along 9<sup>th</sup> Street, and 43 of the 157 linear feet of the YQ Building along Nicollet Mall. The proposal includes adding 10 awnings, an awning valance, 9 banners, and 5 wall signs. None of these signs are proposed to be illuminated. The total square footage of signage is proposed to be 459 square feet; 357 square feet of signage along 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 102 square feet along Nicollet Mall. The color of the signs is a shade similar to lime green (Pantone 576C).

Of the 10 awnings proposed, eight awnings would be located along 9<sup>th</sup> Street South and two along Nicollet Mall. They would be built to a height of 12 feet and would read “jb hudson jewelry.” The square footage of the lettering, which is what is considered when calculating signage square footage, is 2.2 square feet per awning (total of 22 square feet). The awning valance also displays the words “jb hudson jewelry on three sides. The square footage of the lettering on the valance, like the awnings is 2.2 square feet, therefore adds 6.6 square feet of additional signage. The total square footage of awning signage is 28.6 feet.

The nine proposed banners would be built to a height of 40 feet and project 9 feet. There would be six banners along 9<sup>th</sup> Street South, one at the corner of the building, and two banners along Nicollet Mall. The banner would display a “jb” logo and the words “jb hudson jewelry” at the bottom on both sides. The square footage of the logo and lettering is 48 square feet per banner, for a total of 432 square feet.

The five proposed wall signs complete the sign package for JB Hudson Jewelers. These signs are proposed to be bronze plates and read “jb hudson jewelry.” Four of these signs are less than one square foot; another sign is proposed to be 9 square feet and placed at the corner of the building, where a sign has typically been for this building. The total square footage of wall signs is 12 square feet. These signs will reuse the existing holes in the masonry, thus preserving the integrity of the masonry.

Note: The JB Hudson awnings, placards, and one banner are currently installed. They were installed without CPED approval or approval of a sign permit application (see Appendix C4).

### **D. ZONING CODE AND PRESERVATION ANALYSIS**

New signs proposed for historic landmarks and districts are required to comply with the City of Minneapolis zoning code as well as the Heritage Preservation Commission Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. When there is a conflict between the zoning code and the HPC Guidelines, the more restrictive provision applies.

The Young Quinlan Building, located at 901 Nicollet Mall, is zoned B4-2 and is in the Nicollet Mall Overlay District. The purpose of the Nicollet Mall Overlay District is to, “Preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of the Nicollet Mall area and to provide a street level activity by creating a pleasant and unique pedestrian environment.” In addition, the Nicollet Mall Overlay District encourages awnings and canopies in order to provide protection for pedestrians and to emphasize individual uses and entrances.

When analyzing the proposed sign package for JB Hudson, it does not meet two zoning code requirements and three Heritage Preservation Sign Guidelines (see Table 1).

Notes:

1. The color of the signs, which is a lime green (official color Pantone 576C) was considered not to be a day-glo color, which is not allowed for landmarks or buildings within a historic district.
2. For the zoning code and heritage preservation review, the Zoning Administrator determined that the banners were considered projecting signs.

The following is a matrix that describes how the square footage of the proposed sign package will be in compliance with the zoning code as well the five ways that the proposed sign package did not meet the Zoning Code and/or HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. The applicant is applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following items that did not meet the HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings:

1. The number of signs allowed for a landmark
2. Allowed square footage for awning signs
3. Size of a projecting sign

**Table 1: Sign Package Analysis**

Particular	Zoning Code Allowance	HPC Guidelines	Proposed	Analysis
Total sign square footage: 9 <sup>th</sup> Street	753 square feet	Not addressed in general sign guidelines. Details are in specific sign requirements.	366 square feet	Building would be in compliance with Zoning Code if approved
Total sign square footage: Nicollet Mall	550 square feet	Not addressed in general sign guidelines. Details are in specific sign requirements.	102 square feet	Building would be in compliance with Zoning Code if approved
Number of signs	No limit with size allocation	Two signs per street frontage	18 signs proposed on 9 <sup>th</sup> Street South and 7 are proposed on Nicollet Mall	Requires COA: Does not meet HPC requirements
Allowed square footage for awning signs.	120 square feet	6 square feet	28.6 square feet	Requires COA: Does not meet HPC requirements
Projecting sign size (banners)	48 square feet	12 square feet	48 square feet	Requires COA: Does not meet HPC requirements
Projecting sign height (banners)	12 feet (Nicollet Mall Overlay District)	14 feet	40 feet	Requires Historic Variance: Does not meet Zoning Code and HPC requirements
Projecting sign extension (banners)	4 feet	4 feet	9 feet	Requires Historic Variance: Does not meet Zoning Code and HPC requirements

**E. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS ANALYSIS:**

As mentioned in Section B of this report, the HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings states that in determining whether to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for a

sign or awning proposal, the HPC will consider special situations including building condition, building orientation, historic precedence and exceptional design proposals.

CPED recognizes that the proposal has been sensitive to the historic exterior character of the Young Quinlan Building in at least four ways. First, the proposal uses existing flag poles rather than proposing to drill additional holes into masonry or mortar joints. Second, the flag poles that have been part of the building since 1929 are proposed to be used for signage (see Appendix B). The flag poles have been used in the past for United States flags and for other building tenants (see Appendix B1 and C1). Third, the signs do not cover up building architectural details. Fourth, the quality of design and materials used is of exceptional quality. The bronze plates, the canvas awnings and awning valance are made of high quality materials and do not detract from the historic character of the building.

In addition to the sign package being sensitive to the exterior of this landmark, CPED recognizes two additional points of importance. First, the location of the Young Quinlan Building along Nicollet Mall and within the Nicollet Mall Overlay District as a unique circumstance. The Nicollet Mall Overlay District promotes buildings sign and banners, and allows for a greater amount of signage than the base zoning district (B4-2). Granting of the Certificate of Appropriateness will not set a detrimental precedent in allowing signs that do not meet the HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings. Second, an agreement was reached between the property owner and the Heritage Preservation Commission in 1988 in which it was agreed that adding awnings and banners would be considered nonpermanent changes (see Appendix E). This agreement preceded the 2003 HPC Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings.

#### **F. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

CPED notified property owners within 350 ft. of the historic variance request. A letter was received from the Downtown Council, who reviews sign permit applications along Nicollet Mall, and wrote a letter in support of the proposed sign package for JB Hudson Jewelry (see Appendix C).

#### **G. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:**

**Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings (adopted June 17, 2003)**

#### ***Introduction to the Guidelines:***

The *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* are established to allow for effective signage that is appropriate to the character of the city's historic districts and landmarks, and preserves the integrity of historic structures. Property owners and their architects should carefully review the design guidelines before proceeding with a project or applying for a sign or awning permit for any historic property to determine if the plans are consistent with the design guidelines.

The Planning Department staff and Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) will evaluate sign or awning proposals for consistency with the design guidelines. Staff are available to review the plans with applicants at all stages of a project. Once plans are complete, an application for a *Certificate of No Change* or *Certificate of Appropriateness* must be submitted. Applicants should allow ample time for staff review and assistance.

A *Certificate of No Change* may be issued by staff for sign and awning proposals that conform to the design guidelines. A Certificate of No Change may be approved within several business days once the application is complete.

A *Certificate of Appropriateness* is required for sign or awning proposals that do not conform to the design guidelines. Approval generally takes one month and requires review by the HPC at its regular monthly public hearing. In determining whether to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign or awning proposal, the HPC will consider special situations including building condition, building orientation, historic precedence and exceptional design proposals.

After receiving the signed copy of the approved *Certificate of No Change* or *Certificate of Appropriateness*, the applicant may take the approved application and stamped plans to the Inspections Department to receive a permit, if required.

*NOTE:* All signs and awnings also must comply with the requirements of Chapter 543 of the City's zoning code as well as other applicable regulations. If a provision of these design guidelines conflicts with a provision of the zoning code or with any other regulation, the more restrictive provision will apply. For example, the zoning code sign regulations for many residential uses are more restrictive than the HPC design guidelines. In such a case, the zoning regulations will govern. Therefore, property owners and their architects should carefully review the zoning code sign regulations before proceeding with a project or applying for a sign or awning permit to determine if the plans are consistent with the applicable zoning regulations.

For more information about the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings*, contact the Minneapolis Planning Department at 612-673-2597.

### **Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings:**

#### **1. *In General:***

- a. *Sign message:* All signs, except window signs, real estate signs, project information signs, auxiliary signs, temporary signs and portable signs, are limited to the name and address of the establishment.
- b. *Historic signs:* Maintenance or restoration of existing historic signs is encouraged and should not be counted in number of allowable signs.
- c. *Number of signs:* Each principal building entrance that faces a public street, or each ground floor principal use, whichever is less, is allowed two signs. A corner lot with a principal entrance on each street is allowed two signs per street frontage. The two signs may be a combination of one wall sign, one projecting sign, one ground sign, one banner, and awning signage. However, a property may not have both a projecting sign and a ground sign. Only one of the signs should be illuminated, except that banners and awning signs should never be illuminated. Awning signs are limited to ground floor awnings and are subject to the specific guidelines for awnings and awning signs. Parking lot signs are subject to the specific guidelines for signs accessory to parking lots.
- d. *Location of building signs:* Wherever possible, signs should be placed in traditional sign locations including the storefront sign band area. Signs should not obscure or damage architectural features including windows, doors, pilasters, columns and historic signs. Building signs should be located only on the primary façade of the building adjacent to the street and should be no higher than fourteen (14) feet, except as otherwise provided in the specific guidelines for wall signs.
- e. *Color:* Sign colors and materials should be compatible with the colors of the building and its surroundings. Day-glo, light reflecting or fluorescent colors or materials are not allowed.

- f. *Installation:* Sign installation should have a minimal impact on the building and to the extent practical allow the building to be returned to its original condition if the sign is removed. Existing signboards and sign frames should be reused to limit drilling new holes into masonry. Wall signs should be attached to the building through the mortar joints. Projecting signs should be attached to a permanent mounting plate. Awnings should be attached to window or door frames and should never damage masonry.
- g. *Illumination:* Signs may be illuminated externally, internally, or by neon. Plastic face covers should not be placed on illuminated signs. All illuminated building signs should connect to a permanent mounting plate located near the entrance. Electrical conduit should be installed through the permanent mounting plate. Not more than one brick should be damaged by the installation of the permanent mounting plate. Electrical conduit and any lighting fixture should be attached to the sign and not the building wall.

**2. Sign Types Allowed:**

- a. Wall signs.
- b. Projecting signs.
- c. Banners.
- d. Ground signs.
- e. Awning signs.
- f. Window signs.
- g. Marquee signs, on theaters only.
- h. Project information signs.
- i. Real estate signs.
- j. Temporary signs.
- k. Auxiliary signs.
  - l. Portable signs.

**3. Sign Types Not Allowed:**

- a. Off-premise advertising signs and billboards.
- b. Roof signs, unless present during the period of significance.
- c. Backlighted signs, backlighted awnings and backlighted awning signs.
- d. Balloon signs.
- e. Individual letters or elements applied to the surface of a building.
- f. Pole signs, unless present during period of significance, or a project information sign, real estate sign, auxiliary sign or sign accessory to a parking lot.
- g. Canopy signs and service area canopy signs.
- h. Signs placed on or painted on a motor vehicle or trailer and parked with the primary purpose of providing signage.
- i. Signs placed or maintained on natural features.
- j. Audible signs.
- k. Signs with moving or swinging parts or elements.
- l. Any sign relating to sexually oriented uses and prohibited by the regulations governing such uses in Chapter 549, Downtown Districts.
- m. Searchlights and strobe lights.
- n. Signs attached to skyway bridges and intended to be read from the public right-of-way.
- o. Animated signs.
- p. Flashing signs.
- q. Changeable copy signs, except on a theater marquee or ground sign.

#### 4. *Guidelines for Specific Types of Signs:*

##### a. *Wall Signs:*

- i. Location. Wall signs should be located between the first and second floor and should not be higher than fourteen (14) feet, except where the historic sign band is higher. Wall signs should not conceal architectural features or obstruct openings.
- ii. Size. Wall signs should be no more than two (2) feet high and thirty-two (32) square feet in area and should not extend outward from the building more than eight (8) inches.
- iii. Materials. Wall signs may be constructed of wood, metal, painted fiberglass or painted plastic.
- iv. Installation. Wall signs should be attached to the building through the mortar joints. If illuminated, a wall sign should be placed adjacent to or over a permanent mounting plate for electrification. Electrical conduit and lighting fixtures should be attached to the top of the wall sign, and should not be attached to the building. Wall signs should not be painted directly on the surface of the building, except as part of the maintenance or restoration of an existing historic sign.

##### b. *Projecting Signs:*

- i. Location. Projecting signs should be located near a building entrance and should not be higher than fourteen (14) feet. Projecting signs should not conceal architectural features or obstruct openings, and should not be suspended from the soffit.
- ii. Size. Projecting signs should be no more than twelve (12) square feet in area and should not project more than four (4) feet from the building. The thickness of a projecting sign should not exceed eight (8) inches.
- iii. Materials. Projecting signs may be constructed of wood, metal, painted fiberglass or painted plastic.
- iv. Installation. Projecting signs should always use a single permanent mounting plate.

##### c. *Ground Signs:*

- i. Location. Ground signs should not obscure the significant architectural detail of adjacent buildings.
- ii. Size. Ground signs should be no more than thirty-two (32) square feet in area and should not be higher than eight (8) feet.
- iii. Materials. Ground signs should be constructed of materials similar to those found on the existing building or compatible with the existing building. Acceptable materials include brick, stone, stucco, metal or wood.

##### d. *Banners:*

- i. Location. A banner should follow the location guidelines for a wall sign or a projecting sign.
- ii. Size. A banner should follow the size guidelines for a wall sign or a projecting sign.
- ii. Materials. A banner should be constructed of coated or uncoated fabric.
- iv. Installation. A banner should follow the installation guidelines for a wall sign or a projecting sign.
- v. Illumination. A banner should not be illuminated.

##### e. *Awnings and Awning Signs:*

- i. Location. Awnings should fit within the window or door opening.
- ii. Number of awnings. The number of awnings may not exceed the number of window or door openings.
- iii. Number of awning signs. Awning signs are limited to ground floor awnings. There should be no more than one sign per awning. Awning signs should be no more than six (6) square feet in area.

Where there are multiple awning signs on a building, all signs should be located in the same or similar position on the awnings.

- iv. Materials. Awnings should be constructed of coated or uncoated cloth fabric.
- v. Installation. Awning hardware should be attached to the window or door frame and should never damage masonry. Awnings should not be attached to or cover any part of the building wall.
- vi. Illumination. Awnings and awning signs should not be illuminated.
- vii. Awning shape. Awnings should project downward and outward from the openings in straight lines unless they are reflecting the curved shape of the opening. The projection of an awning should be less than its height. An awning drop or skirt should not exceed twelve (12) inches.

f. *Window signs:*

The number, size and location of window signs are not regulated by the HPC. A window sign may not include a backlighted sign, flashing sign, or any other sign type not allowed.

g. *Project information signs:*

- i. Location. If attached to a building, a project information sign should be a window sign.
- ii. Size. Freestanding project information signs should be no more than thirty-two (32) square feet in area and eight (8) feet in height.
- iii. Number. One project information sign is allowed per street frontage and will not be counted toward the number of signs allowed.
- iv. Illumination. Project information signs should not be illuminated.

h. *Real estate signs:*

- i. Location. If attached to a building, a real estate sign should be a window sign.
- ii. Size. Freestanding real estate signs should be no more than thirty-two (32) square feet in area and eight (8) feet in height.
- iii. Number. One real estate sign is allowed per street frontage and will not be counted toward the number of signs allowed.
- iv. Illumination. Real estate signs should not be illuminated.

i. *Temporary signs:*

Temporary signs are limited to window signs and portable signs.

j. *Auxiliary signs:*

- i. Location. If attached to a building other than a parking attendant building, an auxiliary sign should be a window sign.
- ii. Size. Freestanding auxiliary signs should be no more than four (4) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height.
- iii. Number. One freestanding auxiliary sign is allowed per street frontage or per parking lot street entrance and will not be counted toward the number of signs allowed.
- iv. Illumination. Auxiliary signs should not be illuminated.

k. *Signs accessory to parking lots.*

- i. Location. If attached to a building other than a parking attendant building, a parking lot sign should be a window sign.
- ii. Size. Freestanding accessory parking lot signs should be no more than eight (8) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height. Commercial parking lot signs should be no more than fifteen (15) square feet in area and twelve (12) feet in height.
- iii. Number. One freestanding parking lot sign is allowed per street entrance.
- iv. Illumination. Parking lot signs should not be illuminated.

1. *Portable signs.*

The number, size and location of portable signs are not regulated by the HPC. A portable sign may not include a backlighted sign, flashing sign, or any other sign type not allowed.

m. Signs for multiple tenant buildings:

*An application for approval of a master sign plan for a multiple tenant building may be submitted to the HPC for review and approval. Following approval by the HPC, staff will issue a Certificate of No Change for signs that are consistent with the approved plan.*

**H. FINDINGS:**

1. The Young Quinlan Building located at 901 Nicollet Mall is a City of Minneapolis landmark.
2. The proposed sign package for JB Hudson does not meet the three of the 2003 Heritage Preservation Commission Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings: 1. The number of signs allowed for a landmark 2. The allowed square footage for awning signs 3. Size of a projecting sign.
3. The proposed sign package is compatible with the preservation of the property and with the other properties in the area including Nicollet Mall.
4. The proposed sign package is sensitive to the exterior of the Young Quinlan Building and will not drill holes in to the masonry or mortar for the proposed sign package.
5. The proposed sign package is of high quality design.
6. The location of the Young Quinlan Building along Nicollet Mall and within the Nicollet Mall Overlay District as a unique circumstance. The Nicollet Mall Overlay District promotes building signs and banners, and allows for a greater amount of signage than the building's base zoning district.

**I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the HPC adopt staff findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness to allow for 18 signs along 9<sup>th</sup> Street South and 7 signs along Nicollet Mall (25 signs total), 28.6 square footage of awning signs, and to allow for projecting signs to be 48 square feet in size with the condition that CPED-Planning review and approve the final sign permit application.

**J. APPENDIX**

Appendix A: Application

Appendix B: Historic Photos

Appendix C: Staff Photos

Appendix D: Nicollet Mall Advisory Board Letter

Appendix E: Letter of Agreement Prior to Designation