

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division Report

Variance Request
BZZ-3931

Date: February 21, 2008

Applicant: Jerry Anderson, on behalf of Pinnacle Services

Address of Property: 724 Central Avenue Northeast

Contact Person and Phone: Jerry Anderson, 612-670-0358

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

Date Application Deemed Complete: January 22, 2008

Publication Date: February 15, 2008

Hearing Date: February 21, 2008

Appeal Period Expiration: March 3, 2008

End of 60 Day Decision Period: March 22, 2008

Ward: 3 **Neighborhood Organization:** Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association

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

Proposed Use: Establish new office use in existing warehouse space

Proposed Variances:

- A variance to decrease the required parking from 33 spaces to 30 spaces,
- A variance to reduce a portion of a drive aisle from 22 ft. to 16 ft., and
- A variance to reduce the required landscape area along a public sidewalk from 7 ft. to 3 ft. 2 in. in width along 8th Street SE

to renovate a warehouse building for offices at 724 Central Avenue Northeast in the I1 Light Industrial District and IL Industrial Living Overlay District.

Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance: 525.520 (7)(14)(25)

Background: The subject property is a two-story warehouse building along Central Avenue Northeast built in 1914. The proposed variances are to allow for the conversion of the warehouse into office space for one business, called Pinnacle Services. Currently located in St. Louis Park, Pinnacle Services

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provide services to people with disabilities and older adults. This space would be used as office headquarters for the business.

The required off-street parking requirement for office space of this size is 33 spaces. The proposed plans show 16 spaces in the building and 14 spaces in a parking lot to the rear. The building's basement is accessible from rear, and it appears to have historically been built for indoor vehicular parking, including a rear vehicular door. The applicant is applying for a variance to reduce the required off-street parking from 33 to 30 spaces, a ten percent reduction.

The interior parking spaces as well as the outdoor lot has a portion of the drive aisle that does not meet the required minimum 22 ft. width. The proposed site plan and survey shows that there have been easements granted to this site as well as the site to the south for vehicular access as there is no public alley on the block. The drive aisle will be reduced in the interior parking to 20 ft., 6 in. and the parking lot in the rear, the drive aisle is reduced to 16 ft. for the first 50 ft. of the rear parking lot.

Due to the layout of the rear parking lot, a portion of the lot along the public sidewalk at 8th Street Southeast is subject to landscaping requirement of 7 ft. The proposed site plan shows a 3 ft., 2 in. landscaping space. The applicant has expressed interest in shrubs or potential green wall in the landscaping area as well.

In addition to renovating the building for the new use, the applicant and the business are involved in additional design and redevelopment activities. The applicant has indicated that the project is seeking LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. CPED - Business Development staff has also been assisting the business in locating in Minneapolis.

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.**

A variance to decrease the required parking from 33 spaces to 30 spaces:

Due to the size of the existing building, the site can not accommodate the required off-street parking. It is reasonable to expect that this building could be used for office space due to its location in the I1 District and IL Overlay District which allows office uses.

A variance to reduce a portion of a drive aisle from 22 ft. to 16 ft.:

Due to the configuration of the subject lot and interior space, the site can not accommodate parking that meets both the minimum parking space dimensions and the minimum drive aisle width. It is reasonable to expect that the site could accommodate parking in the rear as well as parking in the interior, due to the original design.

A variance to reduce the required landscape area along a public sidewalk from 7 ft. to 3 ft. 2 in. in width along 8th Street SE:

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Due to the required off-street parking spaces, the site can not accommodate the required landscaping along the public sidewalk on 8th Street Southeast while accommodating the required off-street parking. By decreasing the number of parking spaces or parking space dimension, the site could accommodate the landscaping. However, becoming more compliant in landscaping would require noncompliance in other regulations.

- 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.**

A variance to decrease the required parking from 33 spaces to 30 spaces:

The circumstances are unique to the property due to the size and age of the property. While the site can accommodate 30 spaces, the site lacks the space for all the parking. There is no alley and an easement is currently in place for vehicles to access the site to the south. Due to the age of the building and the configuration of the property, the property did not have off-street parking requirements. These circumstances have not be created by the applicant.

A variance to reduce a portion of a drive aisle from 22 ft. to 16 ft.:

The circumstances are unique to the property due to the size and configuration of the property. There is no alley and an easement is currently in place for vehicles to access the site to the south which limits the parking lot configuration. These circumstances have not be created by the applicant.

A variance to reduce the required landscape area along a public sidewalk from 7 ft. to 3 ft. 2 in. in width along 8th Street SE:

The circumstances are unique to the property due to the size and configuration of the property. Due to the required off-street parking spaces, the site can not accommodate the required landscaping along the public sidewalk on 8th Street Southeast while accommodating the require off-street parking. These circumstances have not be 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.**

A variance to decrease the required parking from 33 spaces to 30 spaces:

Granting the variance will be keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance. A reduction in three (3) spaces will not alter the character of the area or be injurious to other properties. The proposed plan attempts to maximum parking by using interior as well as exterior parking spaces.

A variance to reduce a portion of a drive aisle from 22 ft. to 16 ft.:

Granting the variance will be keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance provided that compact parking dimensions are used to increase the drive aisle in the rear parking lot. Compact spaces may be 8 ft. by 15 ft. (as opposed to standard space dimensions of 8 ft 6 in. by 18 ft.). By

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utilizing the compact parking space size, the drive aisle that is proposed to be 16 ft. could be increased to 19 ft. This would ensure a greater drive aisle for maneuvering and access.

A variance to reduce the required landscape area along a public sidewalk from 7 ft. to 3 ft. 2 in. in width along 8th Street SE

Granting the variance will be keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance provided that compact parking dimensions are used to increase the landscaping area along the sidewalk. Compact spaces may be 8 ft. by 15 ft. (as opposed to standard space dimensions of 8 ft 6 in. by 18 ft.) (**541.330**). By utilizing the compact parking space size, the landscaping area could be increased by 3 ft. 6 in. to 6 ft. 8in. Increasing the green space on the property along the public sidewalk would add to the character of the area as well as provide an area for stormwater runoff.

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.**

A variance to decrease the required parking from 33 spaces to 30 spaces, a variance to reduce a portion of a drive aisle from 22 ft. to 16 ft., and a variance to reduce the required landscape area along a public sidewalk from 7 ft. to 3 ft. 2 in. in width along 8th Street SE

The variances will have little impact on congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the parking variance be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety. Vehicles are not allowed to maneuver in the right of way, so the parking lot should allow for vehicles to maneuvering on-site to exit the parking lot.

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 following variances:

- A variance to decrease the required parking from 33 spaces to 30 spaces,
- A variance to reduce a portion of a drive aisle from 22 ft. to **19 ft.**, and
- A variance to reduce the required landscape area along a public sidewalk from 7 ft. to **6 ft. 8 in.** in width along 8th Street SE

to renovate a warehouse building for offices at 724 Central Avenue Northeast in the I1 Light Industrial District and IL Industrial Living Overlay District, subject to the following conditions:

1. That seven (7) parking spaces at the northeast portion of the rear parking lot have compact parking space dimensions of 8 ft. by 15 ft.,
2. Vehicle shall not maneuver in the right of way, and
3. CPED-Planning review and approve final site plans, floor plans and elevations.