

Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division Report

Site Plan Review
BZZ-3131

Date: August 28, 2006

Applicant: Mark Mann LeRoy

Address Of Property: 2700 26th Avenue S.

Project Name: Swanson Meats, Inc.

Contact Person And Phone: Jim Kennedy, 612-462-1751

Planning Staff And Phone: Michael Wee, 612-673-5468

Date Application Deemed Complete: July 28, 2006

End of 60 Day Decision Period: September 26, 2006

Ward: 9 **Neighborhood Organizations:** Longfellow and Seward

Existing Zoning: I1 Light Industrial District

Proposed Use: Rear addition to an existing business

Concurrent Review: Site Plan Review

Appropriate Section(s) of the Zoning Code: Chapter 530 Site Plan Review

Background: The property at 2700 26th Avenue S is located east of Hiawatha Avenue between 26th Street and 28th Street. The area south of 28th Street is Pedestrian Overlay District and an Industrial Living Overlay District (ILOD) just a block south of the subject property. The property abuts a public pathway which is the Midtown Greenway. The building is an existing business in meat re-packaging for local distribution. The proposed addition to the rear of the building is to increase the storage area and for garage use. Materials are currently stored outdoors on the same site where the proposed addition is to be located. This building will be thirty six feet in height with an exterior wall finish matching that of the existing building. The surrounding area is predominantly industrial and there are no residential uses within the next block from the property.

Required Findings for Site Plan Review

- A. The site plan conforms to all applicable standards of Chapter 530, Site Plan Review. (See Section A Below for Evaluation.)**

B. The site plan conforms to all applicable regulations of the zoning ordinance and is consistent with applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable small area plans adopted by the city council. (See Section B Below for Evaluation.)

Section A: Conformance with Chapter 530 of Zoning Code

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND FAÇADE:

- Placement of the building shall reinforce the street wall, maximize natural surveillance and visibility, and facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.
- First floor of the building shall be located not more than eight (8) feet from the front lot line (except in C3S District or where a greater yard is required by the zoning ordinance). If located on corner lot, the building wall abutting each street shall be subject to this requirement.
- The area between the building and the lot line shall include amenities.
- The building shall be oriented so that at least one (1) principal entrance faces the public street. In the case of a corner lot, the principal entrance shall face the front lot line.
- Except in the C3S District, on-site accessory parking facilities shall be located to the rear or interior of the site, within the principal building served, or entirely below grade.
- For new construction, the building walls shall provide architectural detail and shall contain windows as required by Chapter 530 in order to create visual interest and to increase security of adjacent outdoor spaces by maximizing natural surveillance and visibility.
- In larger buildings, architectural elements, including recesses or projections, windows and entries, shall be emphasized to divide the building into smaller identifiable sections.
- Blank, uninterrupted walls that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements, shall not exceed twenty five (25) feet in length.
- Exterior materials shall be durable, including but not limited to masonry, brick, stone, stucco, wood, metal, and glass.
- The exterior materials and appearance of the rear and side walls of any building shall be similar to and compatible with the front of the building.
- The use of plain face concrete block as an exterior material shall be prohibited fronting along a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or adjacent to a residence or office residence district.
- Entrances and windows:
 - Residential uses:

Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and emphasized through the use of architectural features such as porches and roofs or other details that express the importance of the entrance. Multiple entrances shall be encouraged. Twenty (20) percent of the walls on the first floor and ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor above the first that face a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot, shall be windows as follows:

 - a. Windows shall be vertical in proportion.
 - b. Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.
 - Nonresidential uses:

Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and emphasized through the use of architectural features such as roofs or other details that express the importance of the entrance. Multiple entrances shall be encouraged. Thirty (30) percent of the walls on the first floor and ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor above the first that face a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot, shall be windows as follows:

 - a. Windows shall be vertical in proportion.
 - b. Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.
 - c. The bottom of any window used to satisfy the ground floor window requirement may not be more than four (4) feet above the adjacent grade.
 - d. First floor or ground floor windows shall have clear or lightly tinted glass with a visible light transmittance ratio of 0.6 or higher.

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- e. **First floor or ground floor windows shall allow views into and out of the building at eye level. Shelving, mechanical equipment or other similar fixtures shall not block views into and out of the building in the area between four (4) and seven (7) feet above the adjacent grade. However, window area in excess of the minimum required area shall not be required to allow views into and out of the building.**
- f. **Industrial uses in Table 550-1, Principal Industrial Uses in the Industrial Districts, may provide less than thirty (30) percent windows on the walls that face an on-site parking lot, provided the parking lot is not located between the building and a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway.**

Minimum window area shall be measured as indicated in section 530.120 of the zoning code.

- **The form and pitch of roof lines shall be similar to surrounding buildings.**
- **Parking Garages: The exterior design shall ensure that sloped floors do not dominate the appearance of the walls and that vehicles are screened from view. At least thirty (30) percent of the first floor building wall that faces a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall be occupied by active uses, or shall be designed with architectural detail or windows, including display windows, that create visual interest.**

The front of the building currently sits 11.5 feet from its front property line along 26th Avenue South. It provides convenient pedestrian access and circulation to a public sidewalk, but does not seem to meet the window requirements to maximize natural surveillance and visibility.

The property is located in an area where the surrounding parcels are zoned industrial. Residential districts are at least one block away from subject property.

The area between the building and the front lot line does have landscaping features including shrubs and a tree. A couple more trees are located in the space between the curb and the sidewalk. An addition of flower beds and ornamental trees in this area is encouraged to spruce up the visual effect.

The principal entrance to the building is facing 26th Avenue South with a massive canopy as an accent.

Existing parking spaces are provided along the front lot line adjacent to the entrance drive. There are no landscaping elements to screen or buffer this parking area from the street level. Additional 6 spaces are also located along the north property line adjacent to a public pathway. The applicant will comply with code requirement for landscaping. Screening for this parking area will be required.

The proposed addition towards the rear of the building will use materials that match current exterior walls of the primary structure. There are no architectural details but will have windows on the north and west side elevations that face a public pathway. The window placement on the first floor is quite high at 6.5 feet from an adjacent grade line. This placement will require an alternative compliance for window placement. Code requires that the bottom of any window used to satisfy the ground floor window requirements may not be more than 4 feet above the adjacent grade.

There are no blank walls that exceed 25 feet in length for the proposed addition that faces a public right-of-way, except the west elevation that faces an existing industrial building. An alternative compliance to this requirement seems appropriate.

The proposed 30'x 60' two story garage building will have 12 windows and 4 doors as shown on the plan. These doors are designed to accommodate entry of trucks and other heavy equipment. Windows are 5 to 6 feet in height to allow more light for the interior.

The exterior walls of the proposed addition will be concrete to match existing exterior walls of the primary structure. This will be painted as well. The addition will have three sides of exterior wall that are new and one interior wall will be the shared wall with the existing building. Additional columns will be required, though, abutting the existing wall for structural support of the second floor.

There is no principal entrance for this new addition since it will be for a garage and storage. Instead, there is a large door that will accommodate access of larger trucks. Windows are provided on one side of the wall. An alternative compliance will be required for windows and principal entrance.

The bottom sills of proposed windows are at 6.5 feet from the adjacent grade. These windows on the west and north elevations of the building face a public pathway and do not meet the 30% of the wall area for the first floor per Section 530.120. Second floor windows are in compliance at 10% of the wall elevation. However, an alternative compliance is required for their placements and required square footage for the windows on the first floor.

The proposed building will have the same roof line and roof style as the existing building. This is consistent with the surrounding area that is predominantly flat-roofed industrial buildings.

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION:

- **Clear and well-lighted walkways of at least four (4) feet in width shall connect building entrances to the adjacent public sidewalk and to any parking facilities located on the site.**
- **Transit shelters shall be well lighted, weather protected and shall be placed in locations that promote security.**
- **Vehicular access and circulation shall be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrian traffic and surrounding residential uses.**
- **Traffic shall be directed to minimize impact upon residential properties and shall be subject to section 530.150 (b) related to alley access.**
- **Site plans shall minimize the use of impervious surfaces.**

While it is not shown on the site plan, the existing principal entrance has a walkway that connects to the public sidewalk. The proposed addition does not have a principal entrance and will not have a walkway to connect to a public sidewalk. The proposed building is located toward the rear of an existing industrial building that uses its principal entrance along 26th Avenue.

The existing building has exterior lighting installed on its perimeter to promote security. The proposed addition will also provide additional exterior lighting installed in the same manner. There is no transit shelter by the subject property.

Ample parking spaces are provided on site as well as on property at 2727 26th Avenue S, which is just south of the subject property. Parking spaces located in the southwest corner of the property will be removed and used to store two or three delivery trucks during the night. There are no residential uses in the surrounding area and vehicular conflict with pedestrian is remote.

There is no alley access for this property. All traffic from onsite parking access the drive from 26th Avenue S.

The proposed addition will reduce an existing impervious surface, but the runoff resulting from the proposed building will be directed to existing catch basins. Since the area along the north border will be landscaped, a 7 foot wide impervious surface will be removed to accommodate the landscaping requirement.

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING:

- The composition and location of landscaped areas shall complement the scale of the development and its surroundings.
- Not less than twenty (20) percent of the site not occupied by buildings, including all required landscaped yards, shall be landscaped as specified in section 530.160 (a).
- Required screening shall be six (6) feet in height, unless otherwise specified, except in required front yards where such screening shall be three (3) feet in height.
- Except as otherwise provided, required screening shall be at least ninety-five (95) percent opaque throughout the year. Screening shall be satisfied by one or a combination of the following:
 - A decorative fence.
 - A masonry wall.
 - A hedge.
- Parking and loading facilities located along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall comply with section 530.170 (b), including providing landscape yards along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway and abutting or across an alley from a residence or office residence district, or any permitted or conditional residential use.
- The corners of parking lots where rows of parking spaces leave areas unavailable for parking or vehicular circulation shall be landscaped as specified for a required landscaped yard. Such spaces may include architectural features such as benches, kiosks or bicycle parking.
- In parking lots of ten (10) spaces or more, no parking space shall be located more than fifty (50) feet from the center of an on-site deciduous tree. Tree islands located within the interior of a parking lot shall have a minimum width of seven (7) feet in any direction.
- All other areas not governed by sections 530.160 and 530.170 and not occupied by buildings, parking and loading facilities or driveways, shall be covered with turf grass, native grasses or other perennial flowering plants, vines, mulch, shrubs or trees.
- Installation and maintenance of all landscape materials shall comply with the standards outlined in section 530.210.
- The city planning commission may approve the substitution or reduction of landscaped plant materials, landscaped area or other landscaping or screening standards, subject to section 530.80, as provided in section 530.220.

Landscaping in the front yard complements the scale of the development and its surrounding. Though, staff feels that additional trees and shrubs would improve the overall appearance of the surroundings.

The gross floor area of the existing building is 26,169 square feet, including the proposed new addition. Code requires not less than twenty (20) percent of the site not occupied by buildings to be landscaped (Section 530.160). The 20% is equivalent to 5,396 square feet for this property. Applicant is proposing to add 3,010 square feet of landscaped area for a total of 5,550 square feet including existing landscaped areas in the front yard. This total will require 12 trees and 54 shrubs. The code further requires a landscaped yard of at least seven (7) feet wide along property line abutting a public right-of-way (Section 530.170(b)(1)). The applicant will accomplish this by planting 6 additional deciduous trees, 25 additional shrubs and climbing ivies along the north property line abutting a public pathway. Further, staff is recommending additional 3 trees in combination of evergreen hedges or perennials in front of the

parking spaces facing 26th Avenue. Existing fence eight (8) feet in height, made of cyclone wire with barb wires on top, is in place before this land use application was submitted. Staff is recommending that the barb wires be removed and allow climbing ivies to cover the fence over time.

The proposed addition will have its loading door facing the public pathway. The recommended trees, shrubs and ivies along the north property line will serve as a buffer screen to loading facilities that face the public pathway, including the proposed addition.

Sixteen (16) additional parking spaces located across the subject property are on a long-term lease with the property owner of 2727 26th Avenue S. Parking requirements per Section 541.170 of the code are complied with. Two (2) canopy trees will be added in the area between the sidewalk and the front parking to comply with Section 541.170(e).

All existing surfaces not occupied by buildings, parking and loading facilities and driveways are covered with turf grass. A seven foot section of the impervious surface along the north property line will be removed to accommodate planting of trees, shrubs and ivies. Ornamental trees and perennials are highly encouraged on all sides facing public right-of-ways.

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:

- All parking lots and driveways shall be designed with wheel stops or discontinuous curbing to provide on-site retention and filtration of stormwater. Where on-site retention and filtration is not practical, the parking lot shall be defined by six (6) inch by six (6) inch continuous concrete curb.
- Lighting shall comply with the requirements of Chapter 535 and Chapter 541. A lighting diagram may be required.
- Parking and loading facilities and all other areas upon which vehicles may be located shall be screened to avoid headlights shining onto residential properties.
- To the extent practical, site plans shall minimize the blocking of views of important elements of the city.
- To the extent practical, buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize shadowing on public spaces and adjacent properties.
- To the extent practical, buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize the generation of wind currents at ground level.
- Site plans shall include crime prevention design elements as specified in section 530.260 related to:
 - Natural surveillance and visibility
 - Lighting levels
 - Territorial reinforcement and space delineation
 - Natural access control
- To the extent practical, site plans shall include the rehabilitation and integration of locally designated historic structures or structures that have been determined to be eligible to be locally designated. Where rehabilitation is not feasible, the development shall include the reuse of significant features of historic buildings.

Existing parking spaces have curbs. Additional parking that have to be moved to allow landscaping along the north property line will have new curbing. Stormwater from the parking areas and drives is directed to existing catch basins as indicated in the site plan. Public Works Department will make a determination if additional catch basins would be necessary.. Given that storm water runoff from the new building and from the existing building can not drain onto the Midtown Greenway righ-of-way, an on-site filtration is recommended..

Exterior lighting fixtures are proposed on exterior walls of the new addition. These are provided to enhance security in the surroundings and are designed to restrict its illumination within the property.

All proposed lighting must comply with Chapter 535 and Chapter 541 of the zoning code including:

535.590. Lighting. (a) In general. No use or structure shall be operated or occupied as to create light or glare in such an amount or to such a degree or intensity as to constitute a hazardous condition, or as to unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of property by any person of normal sensitivities, or otherwise as to create a public nuisance.

(b) Specific standards. All uses shall comply with the following standards except as otherwise provided in this section:

- (1) Lighting fixtures shall be effectively shielded and arranged so as not to shine directly on any residential property. Lighting fixtures not of a cutoff type shall not exceed two thousand (2,000) lumens (equivalent to a one hundred fifty (150) watt incandescent bulb).**
- (2) No exterior light source located on a nonresidential property shall be visible from any permitted or conditional residential use.**
- (3) Lighting shall not create a sensation of brightness that is substantially greater than ambient lighting conditions as to cause annoyance, discomfort or decreased visual performance or visibility from any permitted or conditional residential use.**
- (4) Lighting shall not directly or indirectly cause illumination or glare in excess of one-half (1/2) footcandle measured at the closest property line of any permitted or conditional residential use, and five (5) footcandles measured at the street curb line or nonresidential property line nearest the light.**
- (5) Lighting shall not create a hazard for vehicular or pedestrian traffic.**
- (6) Lighting of building facades or roofs shall be located, aimed and shielded so that light is directed only onto the facade or roof.**

Additional landscaping and screening are recommended along the north property line. There are no residential property adjacent or across the subject property. Headlights from the loading facility should not shine onto a residential properties nor onto the public pathway.

The proposed addition will not block any important elements of the city. It will not cause significant shadowing on public pathway and adjacent properties. Further, it will not cause to generate wind currents at ground level.

The proposed addition will have window along its west elevation, which is an element to increase natural surveillance and visibility. However, these windows are installed 6.5 feet from grade to the bottom of the window sill, two feet higher than code requirement. The window placement will require an alternative compliance. Another element includes exterior lighting at each corners of the addition, and a more dense screening by use of trees, shrubs and ivies.

The subject property is not a historic resource nor is it eligible for designation.

Section B: Conformance with All Applicable Zoning Code Provisions and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Applicable Small Area Plans Adopted by the City Council

ZONING CODE: Packaging of finished goods, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution are all permitted uses in an I1 Light Industrial District.

Off-Street Parking and Loading: The zoning code requires 27 parking spaces based on Table 541-1 of the zoning code. There are currently 27 spaces including a long term lease of 15 spaces across the 26th Avenue S. The applicant is not proposing additional parking spaces, but they have an option to add 15 more rental spaces on the south parking lot.

Maximum Floor Area: The maximum FAR in the I1 Light Industrial District is 2.7. The lot in question is 53,148 square feet in area. The total gross floor area is 26,169 square feet, including the proposed 3660 square feet addition. A FAR of 0.49 is below what code allows.

Building Height: Building height in the I1 Light Industrial District is limited to 4 stories or 56 feet, whichever is less.

Minimum Lot Area: There are no minimum lot dimension requirements for use located in the industrial districts, except for planned industrial district.

Dwelling Units Per Acre: This is not applicable for this application.

Yard Requirements: There are no minimum yard requirements for uses located in the industrial districts unless they are near residence and office-residence districts or residential structures. There are no residential structures nor are there residential districts in the surrounding area.

Specific Development Standards:

The current use does not require any specific development standards.

Hours of Operation: In the I1 Light Industrial District, uses may be open to the public during the following hours: Sunday through Thursday from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. The current use meets this regulation.

Signs: Signs are subject to 531 and 543 of the Zoning Code. All new signs are required to meet the requirements of Chapter 543 of the zoning code. There are no proposals to add or change existing signs.

Refuse storage: A trash compactor is located to the northeast corner of the existing building. This is currently unscreened and applicant will comply with Section 535.80 of the code. A second refuse storage is also located on the other end of the building for miscellaneous items, and this will be screened as well.

MINNEAPOLIS PLAN:

9.25 Minneapolis will establish industrial districts to provide locations for industrial land uses, while ensuring that new industrial development is compatible with its surroundings.

Implementation Steps: Develop regulations for the industrial districts that promote compatible industrial development and the efficient use of land.

9.26 Minneapolis will prioritize growth in light industrial land uses to increase the tax base and create jobs for city residents.

Implementation Steps: Promote light industrial uses as the preferred use of industrial land but discourage warehouse or distribution uses in areas where truck traffic will negatively impact residential neighborhoods.

9.33 Minneapolis will support the existing economic base by providing adequate land and infrastructure to make city sites attractive to businesses willing to invest in high job density, low impact, light industrial activity.

Implementation Step: Continue to protect a healthy environment that is attractive for private investment and compatible with neighborhoods.

Alternative Compliance. The Planning Commission or zoning administrator may approve alternatives to any site plan review requirement upon finding any of the following:

- **The alternative meets the intent of the site plan chapter and the site plan includes amenities or improvements that address any adverse effects of the alternative. Site amenities may include but are not limited to additional open space, additional landscaping and screening, green roof, decorative pavers, ornamental metal fencing, architectural enhancements, transit facilities, bicycle facilities, preservation of natural resources, restoration of previously damaged natural environment, rehabilitation of existing structures that have been locally designated or have been determined to be eligible to be locally designated as historic structures, and design which is similar in form, scale and materials to existing structures on the site and to surrounding development.**
- **Strict adherence to the requirements is impractical because of site location or conditions and the proposed alternative meets the intent of this chapter.**
- **The proposed alternative is consistent with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council and meets the intent of this chapter.**

The applicant is requesting alternative compliance for the following items: window placement on the first floor of the new addition and blank walls over 25 feet in length without windows. Code requires 292.8 square feet of window glazing and applicant only provided 108 square feet

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of window on the first floor walls. These windows are installed 6.5 feet above the adjacent grade for security reasons. They serve the purpose of providing light into the interior but do not function for occupants to see through outside. Since the proposed addition is going to be used as garage, the request for an alternative compliance is deemed reasonable. Applicant will also provide landscaping along the north property line between the proposed addition and the public pathway. Boston ivies will also be planted along the eight foot tall chain link fence to further screen the proposed addition from the public pathway. Barb wires on top of the existing chain link fence will be removed. Existing seven parking spaces for employees located to the west corner of the property will be removed, and this area will be used to store two to three delivery trucks during off hours. The applicant indicated that these trucks are not stored in this area during business hours.

Strictly requiring these windows at 4 feet from the adjacent grade will not be practical for the applicant's proposed use of the addition as a garage. Besides, dense landscaping and ivies on the fence will block the view of these windows from the public pathway if installed at 4 feet. The request for alternative compliance meets the intent of Chapter 530 of the code.

The south elevation of the proposed building does not provide windows, architectural detail, or recesses or projections, a departure from Section 530.120 requirements that limit blank walls to no more than 25 feet in length. This elevation faces an existing building at about 6 feet setback in between. The interior layout indicates a stair to the second floor is located along this wall. The applicant also thinks that windows on this elevation would not serve any purpose. Staff concurs with the applicant's reasoning and recommends approval for an alternative compliance.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the site plan review application for a two-story addition located at 2700 26th Avenue S; subject to the following conditions:

1. CPED Planning staff review and approval of the final building elevations, site and landscaping plans.
2. Not less than 16 trees and 61 shrubs shall be provided along the fence abutting the public pathway. The Boston ivies over the existing fence will further screen the loading docks from the public pathway. This landscaping area shall be mulched and maintained per Section 530.210. Additional landscaping with three (3) deciduous and/or conifer trees, four (4) evergreen shrubs, and perennials in mulched flower bed is required to screen the front parking area that faces 26th Avenue S. Although landscaping lighting is not required, it is encouraged.
3. No outdoor storage shall be allowed anywhere on the property in compliance with Section 550.210 of the zoning code

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4. All refuse storage containers shall be entirely screened from street and/or public pathway view. Staff will review and approve the materials used. Concrete walls that match with the primary structure walls; and wooden privacy fence for gates are strongly recommended.
5. Applicant shall work with Public Works Department to determine the storm water runoff from the proposed building and shall not drain to the Midtown Greenway right-of-way. On-site filtration is recommended.
6. All site improvements shall be completed by August 28, 2007, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for noncompliance.