

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division Report

Variance Request
BZZ-2372

Date: June 16, 2005

Applicant: Bob Ganser, on behalf of Day Block Holdings

Address of Property: 1101 Washington Avenue South

Date Application Deemed Complete: May 20, 2005

End of 60 Day Decision Period: July 19, 2005

Appeal Period Expiration: June 27, 2005

Contact Person and Phone: Bob Ganser, 612-872-2398

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

Ward: 2 Neighborhood Organization: Downtown East Neighborhood

Existing Zoning: I1, Light Industrial District

Proposed Use: Retail and office building

Proposed Variance: A variance to reduce the required off-street parking requirement from 36 spaces to 16 spaces for a retail and office building located at 1101 Washington Avenue South in the I1, Light Industrial District.

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

Background: The subject property is a corner lot that is approximately 10,890 sq. ft. and consists of a three-story building built in 1883. The building current tenant is Frank's Plumbing. The applicant is renovating the existing retail and storage space into two retail spaces on the first floor and office space on the second and third floor. The parking requirement for the proposed uses is 36 spaces because of the change in uses. Each retail space requires four parking spaces and the office use requires 28 spaces. The applicant is seeking a parking variance from 36 spaces to 16 spaces.

The requested variance requires that for parking to be reduced more than 20 percent, the building must serve "pedestrian or transit-oriented trade or occupancy, or is located near an off-street parking facility that is available to the customers, occupants, employees and guests of the use." The subject site is at the edge of Downtown and four blocks east of area zoned for Downtown Districts, but is not in a Pedestrian Overlay District. The subject site is approximately one-half mile from the Metrodome Light Rail Station and is at the northwest edge of the Downtown Bus Zone, which allows for reduced fares through

downtown. There are bus stops along Washington Avenue South with midday service. There is also a number of parking ramps and surface lots near the subject site.

The parking lot on the subject site is be subject to parking lot design and maintenance requirements of the Zoning Code and the parking lot needs to receive Public Work approval prior to issuance of building permits.

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.**

The applicant is seeking a variance to reduce the required number of off-street parking spaces from 36 spaces to 16 spaces. Due to the size of the property, the parking lot on the site accommodates 16 parking spaces. Strict adherence to the parking code regulations in the Zoning Code would prevent any use with an off-street parking requirement greater than 16 spaces.

- 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 variance is sought are unique to the parcel of land and have not been created by the applicant. The subject building was built in 1883, prior to the adoption of the Minneapolis Zoning Code in 1924 and prior to off-street parking regulations added in 1963. While the site can accommodate 16 parking spaces on site, the size of the property is not large enough to provide all the required parking. The age of the building and size of the property **is** are not circumstances 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.**

Granting the variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood and will not be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the area. The proposed renovation of the subject property and subsequent parking variance will add to the commercial character of the surrounding area. The parking variance will not have significant impacts to the enjoyment of other properties in the vicinity because of surrounding parking lots and alternative modes of transportation to and from the site. The subject site is located on the outer edge of Downtown, is along the Downtown Bus Zone and has midday bus service from Route 19. The subject site is also located approximately one half-mile from the Metrodome Light Rail Station. To increase opportunities for customers and employees to use alternate modes of transportation

to arrive at the site and thereby to reduce the impact of parking congestion, staff recommends that the applicant install bicycle racks to accommodate at least four bicycles.

- 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 the variance would not likely increase congestion in the area or increase the danger of fire safety, nor would the proposed parking reduction variance be detrimental to welfare or public safety. There are multiple public parking surface lots and ramps near this site, as well as access to public transportation via the Hiawatha LRT and buses. The applicant states that in addition to public transportation, the site is accessible by bicycle and pedestrian connections, including the Mississippi River Parkway, downtown bike lanes, Washington Avenue bus routes, and Light Rail.

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 variance to reduce the required off-street parking requirement from 36 spaces to 16 spaces for a retail and office building located at 1101 Washington Avenue South in the I1, Light Industrial District, subject to the following conditions:

1. That the Planning Division review and approve building permits for interior renovation;
2. That the site plan receive Public Works approval prior to issuance of building permits; and
3. Bicycle racks shall be provided to accommodate no fewer than four (4) bicycles. The bicycle parking may be located in the public right-of-way with permission of the city engineer.