

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division**  
Certificate of Appropriateness  
BZH-27298

**Date:** May 15, 2012

**Applicant:** Shea, Inc. on behalf of Lund's

**Address of Property:** 1206 Harmon Place

**Project Name:** Lund's Wine & Spirits Signage

**Contact Person and Phone:** Greg Houck, 612-339-2257

**Planning Staff and Phone:** Chris Vrchota, 612-673-5467

**Date Application Deemed Complete:** April 13, 2012

**Publication Date:** May 8, 2012

**Public Hearing:** May 15, 2012

**Appeal Period Expiration:** May 25, 2012

**Ward:** 7

**Neighborhood Organization:** Citizens for a Loring Park Community

**Concurrent Review:** N/A

**Attachments:**  
Materials Submitted by CPED – A1  
Materials Submitted by Applicant – B1-B-14

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<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	
Historic District	Harmon Place Historic District- Contributing Resource
Period of Significance	1907-1930
Criteria of significance	Broad patterns of economic history (automotive industry in Minneapolis); Architecture
Date of local designation	2001
Applicable Design Guidelines	Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines, Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings, Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties

<b>PROPERTY INFORMATION</b>	
Current name	Lund's Wine & Spirits
Historic Name	Sturr-Bullard Motor Company Building
Current Address	1208 Harmon Place
Historic Address	1206 Harmon Place
Original Construction Date	1914
Original Contractor	James Leck & Co.
Original Architect	Joseph McCoy
Historic Use	Commercial
Current Use	Commercial
Proposed Use	Commercial

**BACKGROUND:**

The Sturr-Bullard Motor Company Building is a two-story brick commercial building designed by Joseph McCoy and built in 1914 at 1208 Harmon Place. After the Sturr-Bullard Company relocated to 65 South 13th Street, Torbert McGregor Inc., which sold Star Cars and Durants, occupied the building during the 1920s. Nash and Ford vehicles were then sold here during the 1930s and 1940s. The flat-roofed building has a dark brown brick façade and common brick on the side and rear elevations. The façade historically had large display windows with a brick pier and cast iron column and grouped double-hung windows on the second floor, which were surmounted by subtle bands of brick that accentuate the metal cornice and simple brick parapet.

The building is currently undergoing renovations approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness in 2011. The scope of work includes the removal of approximately 1/3 of the rear of the building due to substantial structural issues caused by bad soil conditions under the building. The windows and storefronts are also being replaced, and a new façade is being installed on the rear elevation of the building. The site is being converted for use as a Lund's Wine & Spirits store and office tenant space. (See photos on Appendix B-9 – B-10.)

**SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:**

The Applicant is proposing to install two internally illuminated canopy signs on the building; one on the front elevation facing Harmon Place and one on the rear elevation facing a rain garden, seating area, the alley and adjacent parking lots. Canopy signs are prohibited by the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings*, and thus require a Certificate of Appropriateness. (See plans and elevations on Appendix B-11-B-14.)

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment had been received by the time of publication.

***Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:***

*The Planning Division of the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department has analyzed the application based on the findings required by the Minneapolis Preservation Ordinance. Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:*

- (1) The alteration is compatible with and continues to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the landmark or historic district was designated.***

According to *The Harmon Place Historic District Final Report*, prepared by Landscape Research, the Harmon Place Historic District is locally significant for its depiction of auto-related commercial development and automotive architecture during the period 1907-1930.

The sign on the front (south) elevation would meet this finding. The proposed sign measures 4.22 feet by 6.14 feet, totaling 25.97 square feet. (See plans on Appendix B-11.) While it is a canopy sign, the scale and size of the sign are in character with the building. The sign would not detract from the criteria of significance for the district. Installation of the sign on the canopy rather than the building would mean no further alterations would need to be made directly to the building.

The proposed sign on the new rear (north) façade does not meet this finding. The proposed sign measures 8.46 feet high by 14.10 feet long, totaling 113.70 square feet. (See plans on Appendix B-12.) While the Applicant has provided photos showing that large signs were found in the district during the period of significance, these signs were located on the front facades of the building, with the intent of gaining attention from the street. Such a large sign (if any signs at all) would not have been located on the rear of a building.

- (2) The alteration is compatible with and supports the interior and/or exterior designation in which the property was designated.***

The alterations are compatible with and support the designation of the property. The overall impact of the signs on the district as a whole will be negligible. It is unlikely that the installation of two signs would have any significant impact on the association of the district with the automotive industry in Minneapolis.

- (3) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued integrity of the landmark or historic district for which the district was designated.***

Both the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations and the National Register of Historic Places identify integrity as the authenticity of historic properties and recognize seven aspects that define a property's integrity: location, design, setting, materials,

workmanship, feeling and association. Based upon the evidence provided below, the alterations as proposed have the potential to impact the integrity of the property.

*Location:* The Applicant is not proposing to change the location of the structure, thus the project will not impair the landmark's integrity of location.

*Design:* The proposed signs will not have a significant impact on the integrity of design. Installation of the signs will not result in any additional design modifications to the building.

*Setting:* The large sign on the rear façade would have an impact on the integrity of setting. The rear façade of the building faces a new seating area approved through the previous Certificate of Appropriateness, which is meant to be accessory space to the subject building. Beyond that are the alley, a historic feature of the block, the rear facades of other buildings and surface parking lots. The new façade being constructed makes the rear of the building look and function more like a front elevation. The proposed sign is clearly intended to address not just the immediate rear seating area, but the parking lots and possibly even Hennepin Avenue beyond. This could serve to make the rear of the building essentially function as the front elevation, leaving the true front, which faces Harmon Place, as an afterthought. It does not seem reasonable or historically appropriate for the rear elevation to have a sign that is over 4x larger than the sign on the front elevation. The traditional, historic front façade and entry of the building should be treated as such, even if it no longer functions that way.

*Materials:* The installation of the signs would not have an impact on any significant or character defining materials. The use of canopy signs would prevent any further damage to or alteration of historic materials on the building.

*Workmanship:* The signs would not require the removal or alteration of any distinct decorative or character defining elements on the building. The proposed signs would not have an impact on the integrity of workmanship.

*Feeling:* It is likely that much of the traffic to the store will come from the adjacent Lund's grocery store and the parking lot across the alley to the north of the site. As previously mentioned, the installation of an exceptionally large sign on the rear of the building would in essence make this façade feel even more like the "front" of the building. While the rear entry may be the more used entrance, the front entrance along Harmon Place should still be treated as the primary entrance. There is no evidence that such a large sign would have been placed on the rear of a building in the district during the period of significance. This large sign would have a negative impact in the integrity of feeling for both the building and the district.

*Association:* The project will not impair the property's integrity of association.

- (4) *The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as***

***evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.***

The *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* are the relevant design guidelines for this application. (Commissioners can find the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* in section 6 of their Preservation Resource Binders.) The *Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines* defer to the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* for design guidance for signage. The *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* allow for signs that do not meet the guidelines to be approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness, taking into consideration “special situations including building condition, building orientation, historic precedence and exceptional design proposals.”

The *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* prohibit canopy signs. However, canopy signs have been approved in the past when they are in keeping with the size and scale of the building and the placement is reasonable.

The sign proposed for the front of the building is in keeping with the size and scale of the building and the placement is reasonable. The canopy is over the front entrance to the store, and the proposed sign would be attached to the front and top of the canopy, placing the sign in front of the transoms above the entry. The sign would identify the location of the entrance, and the location on the canopy would eliminate the need to make any additional alterations to the building face to attach the sign. The sign is below the maximum size and height (32 square feet and 14 feet) that would be allowed for a wall sign and is appropriately scaled for the façade.

The sign proposed for the rear of the building is not appropriately sized for the building, especially for this location. Such a large sign would not have been found on the back of a building in this district during the period of significance. It does not seem appropriate or sensitive to the building or the district for the sign on the rear of the building to be over 4x as large as the sign on the front of the building. Staff is recommending that any signage on the rear of the building be no larger than the sign on the front of the building.

- (5) ***The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.***

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation below are most applicable to the proposed project.

Standard #1 states: “A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.” As previously mentioned, the large sign on the rear of the building would give the impression that the rear of the building is the principle façade. This would

change the historic spatial relationship between the building, neighboring buildings and the street.

Standard #2 states: "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided." The installation of the signs themselves would not have an impact on any historic materials or features. Installing the signs on the awnings would prevent any further alterations from being needed. As previously mentioned, the large sign at the rear of the building would have an impact on spaces that characterize the building, i.e. treating the rear of the building as the principle façade, rather than the front of the building.

Standard #9 states: "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment." The new work would not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. However, the large sign on the rear elevation would not be compatible with the massing, size or scale of the building or the environment of the Harmon Place Historic District.

- (6) *The certificate of appropriateness conforms to all applicable regulations of this preservation ordinance and is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.***

As conditioned, the project would comply with policy 8.1.1 of The Minneapolis Plan, which states: "Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance." This is contingent on the sign at the rear of the building being substantially reduced in size.

***Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings that alterations are proposed in a manner that demonstrates that the applicant has made adequate consideration of the following documents and regulations:***

- (7) *Adequate consideration of the description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.***

The Applicant submitted statements outlining how they feel the proposed work meets the applicable findings and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see Appendix B-5 – B-6).

- (8) *Where applicable, Adequate consideration of Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.***

The site plan was reviewed and approved by the City Planning Commission on June 27, 2011. The proposed signs are within the allowed size and height requirements for this zoning district.

**(9) *The typology of treatments delineated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the associated guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, reconstructing, and restoring historic buildings.***

The Applicant submitted a statement saying that they believed the proposal was in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, though provided little detail as to how. (See Appendix B-5). As outlined in Finding #5 above, staff does not believe that all of the proposed work is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

***Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves alterations to a property within an historic district, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:***

**(10) *The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the historic district based on the period of significance for which the district was designated.***

As proposed, the signs would not be compatible with and ensure the continued significance and integrity of all contributing resources in the Harmon Place Historic District. While the sign on the front elevation is appropriately scaled and located, the proposed sign on the rear of the building is not. Allowing the rear elevation of buildings to be altered to function as the principle façade of the building would have a negative impact on the integrity of the Harmon Place Historic District.

**(11) *Granting the certificate of appropriateness will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.***

The spirit and intent of the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations is to preserve historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and cultural landscapes of the community while permitting appropriate changes to be made to these properties. The intent of the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* is to allow for sensitive, appropriately sized and designed signage for historic buildings. The exceptionally large sign proposed for the rear of the building is not in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and would negatively alter the essential character of the district. As conditioned, with the sign on the rear of the building being no larger than the sign on the front elevation, the project would meet this finding.

**(12) *The certificate of appropriateness will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the historic district and will not impede the normal***

***and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by regulations in the preservation ordinance.***

The ongoing rehabilitation of the original historic building should have a net positive impact on the significance and integrity of the district. Re-investment in this property and bringing a strong commercial tenant to this busy intersection may help spur further reinvestment in the district, furthering the preservation of the remaining resources. The installation of an out-of-character sign on the rear of the building would have an impact on the integrity of the district, however. As conditioned, the project would meet this finding.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness for two canopy signs and for signage exceeding the size and height permitted in the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* on the building located at 1206 Harmon Place subject to the following condition(s):

1. The design of the signs on the front (south) and rear (north) elevations is approved.
2. The size of the sign on the rear (north) elevation is not approved. The area of the sign on the rear (north) elevation shall be no larger than the area of the sign on the front (south) elevation. Neither sign shall exceed 32 square feet in size.
3. CPED-Planning shall review and approve the final plans.
4. No other signs are approved.
5. All workmanship must be completed in conformance with the Secretary of Interior Standards, see: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>
6. The Applicant shall obtain all other necessary City approvals prior to the commencement of work.
7. The Certificate of Appropriateness approvals shall expire if not acted upon within one year of approval, unless extended by the Planning Director in writing prior to the one-year anniversary date of the approvals.

**Attachment A: Submitted by CPED staff**

## **Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant**