

Background: The applicant proposes to convert the Soo Line Building, a 19-story office building, into a mixed-use development that includes 255 dwelling units, and approximately 11,100 square feet of commercial/retail space within the skyway and ground level of the building. The applicant also proposes to construct an approximate 5,300 square foot rooftop addition to the existing structure. The structure was designed in the Renaissance Revival style and was constructed between 1914 and 1915. The building was designated as a local landmark in 1996 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. The proposal to convert the building to residential uses as well as construct the rooftop addition requires site plan review.

The applicant has provided a scope of work document that includes information related to the rehabilitation, restoration, and proposed alterations to the building. Some of this work includes: cleaning and re-pointing the existing masonry, repair and replacement of damaged or deteriorated terra cotta cladding, reconstruction of the rooftop parapet wall, repair of terra cotta coping, repair and restoration of historic window units, replacement of existing non-historic windows with new aluminum window units, and replacement of the street-level storefronts. The proposed rooftop addition includes a pool room with a pool, spa, restrooms, a club room, and a circulation link between the two spaces. The proposed addition is setback from the three primary building facades approximately one structural bay on the east and west sides of the building and approximately 40 feet on the north side of the building, or the primary façade. The exterior of the addition consists of metal cladding which is compatible with material found on the historic building.

The project is scheduled for a Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) public hearing for a Certificate of Appropriateness (C of A) on June 19, 2012. Planning Staff is recommending approval subject to the following conditions of approval:

1. CPED-Planning shall review and approve the final site plan, floor plans, elevations, finishes and materials.
2. All workmanship must be completed in conformance with the Secretary of Interior Standards, see: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>.
3. The Applicant shall obtain all other necessary City approvals prior to the commencement of work.
4. 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.

Staff has not received any official correspondence from the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association (DMNA) or any neighborhood letters/emails prior to the printing of this report. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Planning Commission for consideration.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Findings as Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:

- 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 DESIGN:

- 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, windows, and active functions:
 - 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.
 - 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.**
- g. In multiple tenant buildings, each individual ground level tenant space that faces a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot shall comply with the minimum window requirements of this section.**

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

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- Ground floor active functions: Except for industrial uses in Table 550-1, Principal Industrial Uses in the Industrial Districts, the first floor or ground level of buildings shall be designed to accommodate active functions by ensuring that parking, loading, storage, or mechanical equipment rooms are limited to no more than thirty (30) percent of the linear building frontage along each wall facing a public street, public sidewalk, or public pathway.**
- 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. In addition to compliance with minimum window requirements, principal and accessory parking garages shall comply with provisions requiring active functions on the ground floor. In the downtown districts, the more restrictive parking garage provisions of Chapter 549, Downtown Districts, shall apply.**

The building which is a designated local landmark and also listed on the National Register of Historic Places is existing. The existing building will not be evaluated using the above noted standards; however, the proposed 5,300 square foot rooftop addition to the existing structure will be analyzed.

The development is not subject to required yards along the periphery of the property. The rehabilitation and renovation of the existing structure will result in many interior and exterior improvements including increasing activity at the ground level of the building and restoring window openings in the areas that are currently clad in louvers. The design of the structure maximizes natural surveillance and visibility, and facilitates pedestrian access and circulation around the site. The proposed addition is setback from the three primary building facades approximately one structural bay on the east and west sides of the building and approximately 40 feet on the north side of the building, or the primary façade. The proposed rooftop addition does not impact any of these provisions.

The proposed rooftop addition exceeds the 10% window requirement on the north, east and west elevations of the addition. The windows in the building are vertical in nature and are more or less evenly distributed along the building walls.

As proposed, the existing building complies with the active functions provision as outlined above. In fact, with the rehabilitation of the building, the ground level of the building is becoming more compliant.

The exterior materials and appearance of the rear and side walls of the existing building are similar to and compatible with the front of the building. The materials on the proposed rooftop addition are clad in metal siding which is compatible with elements and materials found on the historic building.

The proposed roof top addition incorporates architectural elements including recesses and projections, windows and entries. There are no blank uninterrupted walls that exceed 25 feet in width along the north, east or west elevations of the addition; however, the south elevation has blank uninterrupted walls that exceed 25 feet in width. Alternative compliance is necessary. Planning Staff would recommend that the

Planning Commission grant alternative compliance and defer to the HPC which will review the elevations for consistency. The principal roof line of the existing building is flat and with the proposed addition to the structure, the roofline will remain flat. In the downtown area, the majority of the buildings have flat roofs.

There is no parking currently provided or proposed for the development.

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.**

There are multiple principal entrances to the building located along both Marquette Avenue and 5th Street South that connect directly to the public sidewalk. The grand entry to the building is proposed off of 5th Street South.

There are no transit shelters incorporated within the development, however, various bus lines run along Marquette Avenue and along other major corridors in close proximity to the subject site. Further, the property is located across the street from a station along the Hiawatha LRT line.

The existing structure has been designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrian traffic and surrounding residential uses. The rooftop addition would not result in an increase.

There is no public alley abutting the site although there is existing access for loading on the abutting site off of 5th Street South.

The building was constructed up to the property lines on this downtown site. The only pervious areas are located in the public right-of-way where the applicant proposes to incorporate trees and planters.

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.**

Buildings with 50,000 square feet or more of gross floor area located in the Downtown districts are exempt from the general landscaping and screening requirements. The streetscape will be improved with trees, planters and decorative paving patterns located near the entrances.

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.**
- **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.**

No parking exists or is proposed on the site. The building is existing.

Staff would not expect that a relatively small, single-story rooftop addition to an existing 19-story building would result in impacts on the blocking of views or result in additional shadowing impacts on adjacent properties or access to light, wind and air in relation to the surrounding area.

The Soo Line Building was designated as a local landmark in 1996 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. The project is scheduled for an HPC public hearing for a Certificate of

Appropriateness on June 19, 2012. Planning Staff is recommending approval subject to conditions of approval.

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 -

With the approval of the site plan review application this development would meet the requirements of the B4-2 (Business Service) District and the DP (Downtown Parking) Overlay District standards.

Parking and Loading:

Minimum automobile parking requirement: In the Downtown Districts, Chapter 541, Off-Street Parking and Loading does not have a minimum off-street parking requirement for residential or commercial uses. No parking is being proposed for the development.

Maximum automobile parking requirement: The maximum automobile parking requirement for residential uses in the B4-2 district is 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit. Therefore the maximum off-street parking requirement based on 255 units would be 383 spaces. The commercial spaces are proposed to be some combination of retail sales and services uses or food and beverages uses. The maximum parking allowed for retail sales and services uses is 1 space per 500 square feet of gross floor area and for food and beverages uses, 1 space per 200 square feet of gross floor area. The applicant is not providing any parking for the development. The development is in compliance with this provision.

Bicycle parking requirement: Residential uses in the Downtown Districts are subject to the requirements of Table 541-3. Multiple-family dwellings with 5 or more units would have a minimum bicycle parking requirement of 1 space per 2 dwelling units. Based on the proposed 255 dwelling units, a total of 128 bicycle parking spaces would be required for the residential component of which, not less than 90% of the required bicycle parking must meet the standards for long-term bicycle parking which are as follows:

- *“Required long-term bicycle parking spaces shall be located in enclosed and secured or supervised areas providing protection from theft, vandalism and weather and shall be accessible to intended users. Required long-term bicycle parking for residential uses shall not be located within dwelling units or within deck or patio areas accessory to dwelling units. With permission of the zoning administrator, long-term bicycle parking spaces for non-residential uses may be located off-site within three hundred (300) feet of the site.”*

The applicant is in compliance with the requirement as a large bicycle storage area is located in the basement of the building that can accommodate more than the minimum of 128 bicycle parking spaces.

In the Downtown Districts, when the gross floor area is less than 500,000 square feet of new or additional gross floor area, 1 secure bicycle parking space shall be provided for every 20 automobile parking spaces provided, but in no case shall fewer than 4 or more than 30 bicycle parking spaces be required. No off-street parking is provided, therefore, the minimum of 4 spaces applies of which not less than 50 percent of the required bicycle parking shall meet the standards for short-term bicycle parking which are as follows:

- *“Required short-term bicycle parking spaces shall be located in a convenient and visible area within fifty (50) feet of a principal entrance and shall permit the locking of the bicycle frame and one (1) wheel to the rack and shall support a bicycle in a stable position without damage to the wheels, frame*

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or components. With the permission of the city engineer, required bicycle parking may be located in the public right-of-way. Public bicycle parking spaces may contribute to compliance with required bicycle parking when located adjacent to the property in question.”

The applicant is proposing to locate 4 bicycle parking spaces to meet the requirement in the public right-of-way.

Loading: The minimum loading requirement for multiple-family dwellings over 250 units is two small loading spaces (10 feet in width by at least 25 feet in length) or one large loading space (12 feet in width by at least 50 feet in length). The proposed retail/commercial/restaurant spaces do not have a loading requirement. The required loading space(s) for the residential component of the project have been grandfathered, as the proposed mixed-use of the site has a less intensive loading requirement than the prior office use.

Dumpster screening: Section 535.80. Refuse storage containers shall be enclosed on all four (4) sides by screening compatible with the principal structure not less than two (2) feet higher than the refuse container or shall be otherwise effectively screened from the street, adjacent residential uses located in a residence or office residence district and adjacent permitted or conditional residential uses. A trash and recycling room is located within the existing structure in the basement level of the building.

Signs: No signs are proposed at this time. Any signage is required to meet the requirements as outlined in Chapter 543 of the Zoning Code. A separate permit will need to be attained through the Zoning Office when signage is requested for the subject site.

Maximum Floor Area: The maximum F.A.R. for all structures in the B4-2 district is the gross floor area of the building which totals 275,224 square feet divided by the area of the lot which is 16,338 square feet. The outcome is 16.8 which is greater than the maximum of 16 that is permitted in the B4-2 district without the application of premiums. The development qualifies for premiums pertaining to mixed-use and historic preservation. According to Table 549-4 in the Zoning Code, with the application of these two premiums per the standards outlined in Section 549.220 of the Zoning Code, each premium increases the allowable FAR by 4.0, or a total of 8. Therefore, the total allowable FAR on the site is 24. The proposed development is in compliance with this provision.

Minimum Lot Area and Lot Width: Parcels with residential uses in the downtown districts must have at least 5,000 sq. ft. of lot area and a lot width greater than 40 feet. The lot has 16,338 square feet of area and is wider than 40 feet.

Dwelling Units per Acre: Based on the lot area of 16,338 square feet or .38 acres and a total of 255 units provided, 671 dwelling units per acre are being provided based on the proposal.

Height: The Downtown Districts have no maximum building height. The size of the building is limited by the maximum FAR (see analysis above).

Yard Requirements: The development has no minimum yard requirements.

Building coverage: Not applicable for this development.

Impervious surface area: Not applicable for this development.

MINNEAPOLIS PLAN:

According to *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, the subject parcel is located within the Downtown Growth Center in an area designated as appropriate for commercial uses. The proposal to rehabilitate, renovate and convert the building to a mixed-use development is consistent with the relevant provisions of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, as follows:

Land Use Policy 1.1 states, “Establish land use regulations to achieve the highest possible development standards, enhance the environment, protect public health, support a vital mix of land uses, and promote flexible approaches to carry out the comprehensive plan.” This policy includes the following applicable implementation step: (1.1.5) “Ensure that land use regulations continue to promote development that is compatible with nearby properties, neighborhood character, and natural features; minimizes pedestrian and vehicular conflict; promotes street life and activity; reinforces public spaces; and visually enhances development.”

Land Use Policy 1.3 states, “Ensure that development plans incorporate appropriate transportation access and facilities, particularly for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit.” This policy includes the following applicable implementation step: (1.3.2) “Ensure the provision of high quality transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access to and within designated land use features.”

Land Use Policy 1.4 states, “Develop and maintain strong and successful commercial and mixed use areas with a wide range of character and functions to serve the needs of current and future users.” This policy includes the following applicable implementation steps: (1.4.1) “Support a variety of commercial districts and corridors of varying size, intensity of development, mix of uses, and market served”; (1.4.2) “Promote standards that help make commercial districts and corridors desirable, viable, and distinctly urban, including: diversity of activity, safety for pedestrians, access to desirable goods and amenities, attractive streetscape elements, density and variety of uses to encourage walking, and architectural elements to add interest at the pedestrian level.”

Land Use Policy 1.5 states, “Promote growth and encourage overall city vitality by directing new commercial and mixed use development to designated corridors and districts. This policy includes the following applicable implementation step: (1.5.1) “Support an appropriate mix of uses within a district or corridor with attention to surrounding uses, community needs and preferences, and availability of public facilities.”

Land Use Policy 1.8 states, “Preserve the stability and diversity of the city's neighborhoods while allowing for increased density in order to attract and retain long-term residents and businesses.” This policy includes the following applicable implementation step: (1.8.1) “Promote a range of housing types and residential densities, with highest density development concentrated in and along appropriate land use features.”

Land Use Policy 1.15 1 of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* states, “Support development of Growth Centers as locations for concentration of jobs and housing, and supporting services. This policy includes the following applicable implementation step: (1.15.3) “Encourage the development of high- to very high-density housing within Growth Centers.”

Housing Policy 3.1 of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* states, “Grow by increasing the supply of housing.” This policy includes the following applicable implementation step: (3.1.1) “Support the development of new medium- and high-density housing in appropriate locations throughout the city.”

Housing Policy 3.2 of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* states, “Support housing density in locations that are well connected by transit, and are close to commercial, cultural and natural amenities.” This policy includes the following applicable implementation step: (3.2.1) “Encourage and support housing development along commercial and community corridors, and in and near growth centers, activity centers, retail centers, transit station areas, and neighborhood commercial nodes.”

Housing Policy 3.6 of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* states, “Foster complete communities by preserving and increasing high quality housing opportunities suitable for all ages and household types.”

The proposal is in conformance with the above noted policies and implementation steps of the Comprehensive Plan.

Conformance with Applicable Development Plans or Objectives Adopted by the City Council

There are two older adopted small area plans for this portion of Downtown West. One is the Downtown 2010 Plan adopted in 1995 by the City Council and the other is the North Nicollet Mall Development Objectives adopted in 2000 by the City Council. Neither plan has current applicability to the proposed development.

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.**

Alternative compliance is requested by the applicant to meet the following standard:

Blank walls: The proposed roof top addition incorporates architectural elements including recesses and projections, windows and entries. There are no blank uninterrupted walls that exceed 25 feet in width along the north, east or west elevations of the addition; however, the south elevation has blank uninterrupted walls that exceed 25 feet in width. Alternative compliance is necessary. Planning Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance and defer to the HPC which will review the elevations for consistency.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the site plan review:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development– Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission **approve** the site plan review application to allow for the conversion of the Soo Line Building into a mixed-use development that includes 255 dwelling units, and approximately 11,100 square feet of commercial/retail space within the skyway and ground level of the building, as well as an approximate 5,300 square foot rooftop addition on the property located at 101 5th Street South (501 Marquette Avenue South):

1. Planning Staff review and approval of the final site, elevation, lighting and landscaping plans.
2. All site improvements shall be completed by June 25, 2013, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.
3. The final plans shall incorporate all applicable HPC conditions of approval.

Attachments:

1. Statement of use and description of the project
2. Findings for the CUP
3. General correspondence
4. Zoning map
5. Plans - site, landscape, floor, elevations, civils
8. Photos
9. PDR notes