

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development

Site Plan Review

BZZ-5999

Date: May 6, 2013

Applicant: Glennelmer, LLC, Attn: Jorg Pierach, 240 9th Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55401, (612) 746-4610

Address of Property: 240 9th Avenue North

Project Name: Fast Horse, Inc.

Contact Person and Phone: Salmela Architects, Attn: Malini Srivastava, 4935 Yuma Court North, Plymouth, MN 55446, (218) 724-7517

CPED Staff and Phone: Becca Farrar, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-3594

Date Application Deemed Complete: April 4, 2013

End of 60-Day Decision Period: June 3, 2013

End of 120-Day Decision Period: Not applicable for this application.

Ward: 5

Neighborhood Organization: North Loop Neighborhood Association

Existing Zoning: B4N (Downtown Neighborhood) District and DP (Downtown Parking) Overlay District

Proposed Zoning: Not applicable for this application.

Zoning Plate Number: 13

Lot area: 3,127 square feet or approximately .07 acres

Legal Description: Not applicable for this application.

Proposed Use: A two-story addition to an existing two-story office building.

Concurrent Review:

- Salmela Architects, on behalf of Glennelmer, LLC, has submitted a site plan review application to allow for a two-story, 4,682 square foot addition to an existing two-story, 29-foot tall, 4,355 square foot office structure located on the property at 240 9th Avenue North. The property is zoned B4N (Downtown Neighborhood) District and is located in the DP (Downtown Parking) Overlay District.

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 530 Site Plan Review.

Background: The applicant proposes to construct a two-story 4,682 square foot addition to an existing two-story 29-foot tall, 4,355 square foot office building on the property located at 240 9th Avenue North. Should the proposed addition be approved and constructed, the building would total approximately 9,037

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square feet with a 2,485 square foot roof top terrace. The subject property is only 3,127 square feet in size, is zoned B4N (Downtown Neighborhood) District and is located in the DP (Downtown Parking) Overlay District. The DP Overlay District was established to preserve significant buildings and to protect the unique character of downtown and the mixed-use downtown neighborhoods by restricting the establishment or expansion of surface parking lots. The building footprint occupies nearly the entire lot; no parking is accommodated on the property. Site plan review is the only land use application required in order to construct the proposed expansion.

The building is currently occupied by a growing public relations/marketing firm. The existing interior concrete stair that connects the main level, existing mezzanine and second level will remain. A new central stair will connect the second level to the third, fourth and roof levels. The roof top terrace would be used for work spaces as well as for events and gatherings. An elevator would be added to the front of the structure along 9th Avenue North to improve accessibility to all floors of the building including the rooftop terrace and two exterior open egress stairs are also proposed that bookend the proposed elevator in order to fulfill building code exiting requirements.

The applicant proposes to overhaul the existing ventilation and air conditioning system within the building as well as add a new sprinkler system. Operable windows are proposed in a manner that would create a stack effect with the proposed skylight at the stair roof penthouse; resulting in a naturally ventilated and cooled building during warmer weather. Due to the placement of the building and the proximity to existing property lines, the operable windows/openings would be protected openings with rated glass/frames or deluge sprinklers for compliance.

The existing corrugated siding and insulation that currently clad the exterior of the structure would be removed and re-clad with two types of corrugated metal siding. The two new stairways on the south façade of the building facing 9th Avenue North would be screened with galvanized steel. The existing brick on the façade facing 9th Avenue North would be repaired and preserved. The applicant proposes that the exterior of the elevator tower be painted CMU or concrete in a checkerboard pattern. Plain face CMU would not be permitted, painted or unpainted.

The applicant further proposes to landscape the abutting 4 foot strip on the east side of the building. Additional planting would be located in the planters on the rooftop terrace, which would have a recycled paver system. The applicant is proposing to use various sustainable practices and green technology in an effort to attain LEED certification once the project is complete.

Staff has not received official correspondence from the North Loop Neighborhood Association. No neighborhood letters/emails were received prior to the printing of this report. Any correspondence received prior to the public hearing 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.

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

- **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 development is not subject to any required yards. The existing building is currently located approximately 15 feet from the property line along 9th Avenue North. The proposed modifications to the front elevation facing 9th Avenue North that include two egress stairways and an addition that accommodates an elevator somewhat bring the building closer to compliance with the intent of the provision requiring that the first floor of the building be constructed within 8 feet of the front lot line. It is an existing condition therefore, no alternative compliance would be necessary.

The principal entrance to the structure is located on the south elevation of the building facing 9th Avenue North. The applicant proposes to relocate the principal entrance to the west elevation of the building in order to accommodate the egress stairwells and elevator addition. Alternative compliance is necessary. While contrary to past staff recommendations, given the site constraints and building code requirements to provide accessibility and egress as a result of the proposed addition, CPED Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance. An entrance canopy has been incorporated into the west elevation of the building in order to emphasize the relocated principal entrance. The design of the site somewhat maximizes natural surveillance and visibility, and facilitates pedestrian access. The area between the building and the public streets would have planters with various plantings to help soften the appearance of the property.

The south elevation of the building along 9th Avenue North is subject to the 30% window requirement. The existing building incorporates windows that exceed the 30% window requirement as the majority of the first floor of the façade is composed of windows. While the majority of the central windows would be removed to accommodate the elevator addition, the openings adjacent to the proposed elevator would be retained with new windows installed. The proposal would exceed the 30% window requirement as approximately 54% are provided. With the proposed additions to the front elevation, the windows on this elevation are more or less evenly distributed as practically as possible and vertical in proportion.

Windows between 2 and 10 feet are required in order to provide natural surveillance and visibility by having active uses located along public streets. The proposal is meeting the intent of this requirement by integrating active uses within all levels of the building. The proposed development does not, however, meet the 10% window requirement on each floor above the first floor that faces the public street and

public sidewalk due to the metal screening that is proposed. Planning Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance. If the metal screen were to be removed from the façade on the south elevation of the building, the elevation would actually comply with the window provision. On the second level the applicant proposes to create larger window openings than those that exist in order to match the windows on the main level. Additional openings are also being provided on the upper proposed floors adjacent to the elevators.

There are blank, uninterrupted walls greater than 25 feet in length that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements on the north, south, east and west elevations of the building. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance. If the metal screen were to be removed from the façade on the south elevation of the building, the elevation actually would comply with the blank wall provision. The placement of the building on the lot restricts the unrated window openings that can be provided along both the north and east elevations. The west elevation of the structure in the two new upper floors while not compliant between the window openings meets the intent of the provision.

The development complies with the active functions provision as noted above.

The exterior materials would be compatible on all sides of the proposed building. The existing corrugated siding and insulation that currently clad the exterior of the structure would be removed and re-clad with two types of corrugated metal siding. The two new stairways on the south façade of the building facing 9th Avenue North would be screened with galvanized steel. The existing brick on the façade facing 9th Avenue North would be repaired and preserved. The applicant proposes that the exterior of the elevator tower be painted CMU or concrete in a checkerboard pattern. Plain face CMU would not be permitted, painted or unpainted. The proposed building form and flat roof would be considered compatible with other buildings in the area.

No off-street parking exists or is 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.**

The principal entry would be relocated to the west side of the building but would be connected directly to the public sidewalk along 9th Avenue North via a 4-foot wide walkway.

There are no transit shelters within the development, however the site is located within close proximity to several bus lines and within a ½ mile of the Hiawatha LRT stop at Target Field.

The proposed development has been designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrian traffic and surrounding residential uses. No curb cuts would be proposed to the site and no-off street parking is

provided on the premises.

There is no public alley adjacent to the site or located on this block.

Currently, the entire site is impervious. As proposed, the applicant is not proposing to incorporate any ground level plantings but would be improving the overall site impermeability by providing pervious material in the front yard abutting the public sidewalk totaling approximately 669 square feet.

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 subject structure would total 9,037 square feet of gross floor area should the addition as proposed be approved. The site is therefore subject to the general landscaping and screening requirements. The site is approximately 3,127 square feet in size with the building occupying a footprint of 2,442 square feet. A total of 137 square feet of landscaping would be necessary to meet the 20% requirement. The applicant does not propose to include any on-site ground-level landscaping on the property; alternative compliance is necessary. However, the applicant intends to provide a pervious area in front of the building adjacent to 9th Avenue North totaling 669 square feet as well as landscaped planters in this location. The 4-foot wide strip of property totaling approximately 180 square feet that is of unknown ownership is proposed to be landscaped and maintained by the property owner and the applicant further intends to provide landscaped planters totaling 72 square

feet on the rooftop terrace. Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance.

The Zoning Code requires that there be at least 1 tree and 2 shrubs planted on the site. The applicant does not propose to include any ground level plantings on-site. Alternative compliance is necessary. As previously mention the applicant intends to provide a pervious area in front of the building adjacent to 9th Avenue North as well as landscaped planters in this location. The 4-foot wide strip of property totaling approximately 180 square feet that is of unknown ownership is proposed to be landscaped and maintained by the property owner and the applicant further intends to provide landscaped planters totaling 72 square feet on the rooftop terrace. Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance.

There is no surface parking proposed as part of the development.

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 on-site parking is existing or is being proposed as part of the project. The water drainage on site has been designed so as not to drain onto any adjacent lots.

Staff would expect the proposal to have some impacts on views as the proposed structure, which would be 4 stories tall should the addition be approved and constructed, is taller than the existing two-story building located on the premises. However, other buildings on the block range from 2-6 stories, thus having relatively comparable height. The proposed structure would also be expected to have some minor shadowing impacts on adjacent properties but not on any significant public spaces. The proposed structure would also be expected to have some minimal impacts on light, wind and air in relation to the surrounding area as well.

The site appears to incorporate the applicable CPTED principles. The active uses proposed within the ground level of the building provide natural surveillance, there are windows on all sides of the building that allow people to observe adjacent public spaces and the principal entrance is connected to the public sidewalk. Staff has no additional comments or concerns at this time regarding site safety. A detailed lighting plan will be required with the final plan submission.

There are no historic structures or structures eligible for designation on the subject site.

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 B4N (Downtown Neighborhood) 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 office uses. No on-site parking is existing or proposed; the development is in compliance with this provision.

Maximum automobile parking requirement: The maximum automobile parking requirement for office uses is 1 space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. Based on the proposed square footage of the building which would total 9,037 square feet, the maximum parking requirement would be 10 off-street parking spaces. No on-site parking is existing or proposed; the development is in compliance with this provision.

Bicycle parking requirement: 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 spaces are 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 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: There is no loading requirement for the development.

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 area is located along the west elevation of the building and would be screened with a steel panel fence in compliance with the requirements.

Signs: The applicant is proposing two new wall-mounted signs on the premises; however no details regarding the sign design or location are provided except the proposed height and overall size (one would be 16 square feet in size at a height of 12 feet and the other would be approximately 10 square feet at a

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height of 4 feet, 8 inches). There is only one primary building wall facing 9th Avenue North that could accommodate signage without a variance. In the B4N district 2.5 square feet of signage per 1 foot of building primary building wall is allowed with a maximum height of 28 feet. The primary building wall is approximately 50 feet in length; allowing for 125 square feet of signage. As proposed, both signs would meet the square footage and height allotment permitted in the B4N district; however, final approval would depend on the location of the signage which has not yet been finalized but must be located on the primary building wall as previously noted.

All proposed 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 for all signage installed on the premises.

Lighting: A detailed lighting plan identifying all exterior lighting and fixture types shall be submitted for review and approval. All lighting will need to be downcast and shielded to avoid undue glare. All lighting shall comply with Chapter 535.

Minimum Floor Area: The minimum floor area in the B4N district is 2.0. With the construction of the proposed building addition, the gross floor area of the building would be 9,037 square feet and the area of the lot is 3,127 square feet. The outcome is 2.89 which is greater than the minimum of 2.0 that is permitted in the B4N District.

Maximum Floor Area: There is no maximum floor area in the B4N district. Not applicable for this development.

Minimum Lot Area and Lot Width: Not applicable for this development.

Dwelling Units per Acre: Not applicable for this development.

Height: The maximum height of buildings in the B4N district is 10 stories or 140 feet in height, whichever is less. With the proposed addition, the building would total 4 floors with a mezzanine and new stair tower taller than 14 feet that would technically result in a 6-story structure or approximately 77 feet, 4 inches tall which meets the requirement.

Yard Requirements: Not applicable for this development.

Building coverage: Not applicable for this development.

Impervious surface area: Not applicable for this development.

MINNEAPOLIS PLAN:

This site is located a half block off of Washington Avenue North in downtown Minneapolis. Washington Avenue North is a designated Commercial Corridor and downtown Minneapolis is a designated Grown Center in *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*. The future land use map in *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* designates the site a mixed-use. According to the policies outlined in *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, the following apply to this proposal:

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

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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 1.4 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 1.15 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: (1.15.2) “Support the intensification of jobs in Growth Centers through employment generating development.”

Economic Development Policy 4.1 states, “Support private sector growth to maintain a healthy, diverse economy.”

Economic Development Policy 4.2 states, “Promote business start-ups, retention and expansion to bolster the existing economic base.”

The proposal to expand an existing office building in the North Loop Neighborhood 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

The subject site is located outside of the area covered by the *Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan* and the *Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District*; however, the site is referenced in the *North Loop Small Area Plan* which was adopted by the City Council in April of 2010. The *North Loop Small Area Plan* is considered a supplement to the *Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan* which was adopted by the City Council in 2003 and builds upon the policy direction of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the *North Loop Small Area Plan* is to encapsulate the remainder of the North Loop neighborhood that has not been the beneficiary of small area planning in the past. The land use proposed on the property is consistent with the guidance for this property which is located in the Warehouse West district as the plan states the following: “Development in this district should continue to protect and preserve the historic warehouse structures with an emphasis on adaptive re-use. New development should be geared toward the removal of surface parking lots and other underdeveloped sites and continue the eclectic mix of commercial, residential, and industrial uses.” The development intensity that has been identified as appropriate for this site is District B described as follow “appropriate building types include housing, commercial, and industrial structures of two to ten stories.

This type is generally consistent with the bulk and height of historic warehouse structures in the neighborhood.” The expansion of the existing office building is consistent with the policy direction outlined in the *North Loop Small Area Plan*.

There are also two older adopted small area plans for this portion of the North Loop. One is the Downtown 2010 Plan adopted in 1995 by the City Council and the other is the Northside Jobs Park Design Guidelines adopted in 1997 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 standards:

Principal entrance: The principal entrance to the structure is located on the south elevation of the building facing 9th Avenue North. The applicant proposes to relocate the principal entrance to the west elevation of the building in order to accommodate the egress stairwells and elevator addition. Alternative compliance is necessary. While contrary to the majority of staff recommendations, given the site constraints and building code requirements to provide accessibility and egress as a result of the proposed addition, CPED Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance.

10% window requirement: The proposed development does not, however, meet the 10% window requirement on each floor above the first floor that faces the public street and public sidewalk due to the metal screening that is proposed. Planning Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance. If the metal screen were to be removed from the façade on the south elevation of the building, the elevation would actually comply with the window provision. On the second level the applicant proposes to create larger window openings than those that exist in order to match the windows on the main level. Additional openings are also being provided on the upper proposed floors adjacent to the elevators.

Blank walls: There are blank, uninterrupted walls greater than 25 feet in length that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements on the north, south, east and west elevations of the building. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance. If the metal screen were to be removed from the façade on the south elevation of the building, the elevation actually would comply with the blank wall provision. The placement of the building on the lot restricts the unrated window openings that can be provided along both the north and east elevations. The west

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elevation of the structure in the two new upper floors while not compliant between the window openings meets the intent of the provision.

□ 20% landscape requirement: 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 subject structure would total 9,037 square feet of gross floor area should the addition as proposed be approved. The site is therefore subject to the general landscaping and screening requirements. The site is approximately 3,127 square feet in size with the building occupying a footprint of 2,442 square feet. A total of 137 square feet of landscaping would be necessary to meet the 20% requirement. The applicant does not propose to include any on-site ground-level landscaping on the property; alternative compliance is necessary. However, the applicant intends to provide a pervious area in front of the building adjacent to 9th Avenue North as well as landscaped planters in this location. The 4-foot wide strip of property totaling approximately 180 square feet that is of unknown ownership is proposed to be landscaped and maintained by the property owner and the applicant further intends to provide landscaped planters totaling 72 square feet on the rooftop terrace. Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance.

□ Landscaping quantities: The Zoning Code requires that there be at least 1 tree and 2 shrubs planted on the site. The applicant does not propose to include any ground level plantings on-site. Alternative compliance is necessary. As previously mention the applicant intends to provide a pervious area in front of the building adjacent to 9th Avenue North as well as landscaped planters in this location. The 4-foot wide strip of property totaling approximately 180 square feet that is of unknown ownership is proposed to be landscaped and maintained by the property owner and the applicant further intends to provide landscaped planters totaling 72 square feet on the rooftop terrace. Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission **approve** the site plan review application to allow a two-story, 4,682 square foot addition to an existing two-story, 29-foot tall, 4,355 square foot office structure on the property located at 240 9th Avenue North subject to the following conditions of approval:

1. CPED Staff review and approval of the final site, elevation, lighting and landscaping plans.
2. All site improvements shall be completed by May 20, 2015, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.
3. A minimum 4-foot wide walkway shall be provided that connects the principal entrance to the public sidewalk along 9th Avenue North.
4. Plain face CMU shall not be permitted as an exterior material on the building.
5. Details of all plantings within the proposed on-site landscape planters shall be provided as part of the final submittal.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZZ-5999

Attachments:

1. Statement of use and description of the project
2. General correspondence – Ward 5 and North Loop Neighborhood Association
3. Zoning map
4. Plans - site, landscape, floor, elevations, color elevations, civils, renderings
5. Photos