



CPED STAFF REPORT
Prepared for the Board of Adjustment

BOA Agenda Item #11
September 11, 2014
BZZ-6747

LAND USE APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location: 2304 Snelling Avenue
Project Name: The Cooperage Signage
Prepared By: Shanna Sether, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-2307
Applicant: Seward Redesign
Project Contact: Brian H. Miller
Request: To allow for a new projecting sign.
Required Applications:

Variance	To allow for a new projecting sign located on a non-primary building wall on an existing multiple-family dwelling.
Variance	To increase the maximum area of a wall sign from 0 square feet to approximately 20 square feet to allow for a new projecting sign on an existing multiple-family dwelling.

SITE DATA

Existing Zoning	I2 Medium Industrial District IL Industrial Living Overlay District PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District
Lot Area	27,040 square feet / .62 acres
Ward(s)	2
Neighborhood(s)	Seward Neighborhood Group
Designated Future Land Use	Transitional Industrial
Land Use Features	Activity Center north of the block, beginning at 22 nd Street E Industrial Employment District south of the block, beginning at 24 th Street E
Small Area Plan(s)	Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan

Date Application Deemed Complete	August 20, 2014	Date Extension Letter Sent	Not applicable
End of 60-Day Decision Period	October 19, 2014	End of 120-Day Decision Period	Not applicable

BACKGROUND

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE. The subject property is The Cooperage, a four-story, 60-unit multiple-family dwelling intended for senior housing. The building is near completion.

SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD. The surrounding properties include Touchstone Supportive Housing and Wellness Center, a mixed-use building to the south that was recently constructed to allow for 40 assisted living units, a medical clinic and offices. Additionally there are industrial and commercial uses in the vicinity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION. The applicant is proposing to add a new 2 foot by 10 foot, LED-illuminated, projecting sign to identify the building on the west side of the building facing the Hiawatha bicycle and pedestrian path. The sign copy would state "The Cooperage - 2304" and would be 27 feet 3 inches from grade to the top of the sign. The proposed sign does not face a public street and therefore is not located on a primary building wall. The applicant has requested a variance to allow for the sign above the west entrance to the building and bicycle storage area, on a non-primary building wall. Sign area is allocated per primary building wall; because the sign is not located on a primary building wall, the maximum area is 0 square feet. Therefore, the applicant is seeking a second variance to increase the maximum area of the proposed wall sign from 0 square feet to 20 square feet.

RELATED APPROVALS.

Planning Case #	Application	Description	Action
BZZ-5794	Conditional use permit, variances and site plan review.	New 60-unit, multiple-family for senior housing	The City Planning Commission approved the project on <u>October 29, 2012</u> .

PUBLIC COMMENTS. Staff has not received any public comments at the time of preparing the staff report. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Board of Adjustment for consideration.

ANALYSIS

VARIANCE

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a variance to allow a new projecting sign on a non-primary building wall and a variance to increase the maximum sign area from 0 square feet to 20 square feet, based on the following findings:

- I. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

Both variances: Staff finds that practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance due to the location of the building on Snelling Avenue and adjacent to a public pathway, but not a public street. The building has frontage on Snelling Avenue. This block is one-block in length and has a very low traffic level and limited visibility. The applicants were encouraged to provide a public entrance

facing the Hiawatha bicycle and pedestrian path to gain land use approvals for the construction of the building. The applicants are seeking a building identification sign that is 2 feet wide and 10 feet tall to direct occupants of the building to the principal entrance and bicycle storage facility entrance facing the public pathway. The proposed sign would also be visible from the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit and Highway 55. Staff finds that this circumstance has not been created by the applicant.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

Both variances: The applicant is seeking variances to allow for a new projecting sign, 20 square feet in area, facing the Hiawatha bicycle and pedestrian path. The zoning code regulations governing on-premise signs were established to allow effective signage appropriate to the planned character of each zoning district, to promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion, to minimize adverse effects on nearby property and to protect the public health safety and welfare. Staff finds that the proposed sign is appropriate to the planned character of the property and will allow for effective signage without leading to visual clutter. The proposed sign is intended to identify the residential use and the bicycle entrance to the mixed-use building. Staff finds that the proposed sign is consistent with the purpose and intent of the zoning code and City policies.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

Both variances: The proposed signage will not alter the essential character or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of property in the vicinity. The applicant is proposing to locate a new LED-illuminated projecting sign to identify the building, 20 square feet in area, 27 feet 3 inches in height, facing a public pathway. The surrounding properties include Touchstone Supportive Housing and Wellness Center, a mixed-use building to the south that was recently constructed to allow for 40 assisted living units, a medical clinic and offices. Additionally there are industrial and commercial uses in the vicinity. Staff finds that the proposed sign is appropriate to the planned character of the property and will allow for effective signage without leading to visual clutter. The proposed sign is intended to identify the building and not the individual commercial tenants in the building. Staff finds that the proposed sign is consistent with the purpose and intent of the zoning code and City policies. The sign will not face directly onto any residential properties; therefore staff finds that the proposed sign will not be detrimental to public health, safety, comfort or general welfare.

In addition to the variance standards contained in Chapter 525 and this article, the Board of Adjustment shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors when determining sign variances or conditional use permits:

1. *The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.*

Both variances: The applicant is seeking a variance for one LED-illuminated projecting sign to be located on a non-primary building wall, approximately 27 feet in height and 20 square feet in area. The zoning code regulations governing on-premise signs were established to allow effective signage appropriate to the planned character of each zoning district, to promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion, to minimize adverse effects on nearby property and to

protect the public health safety and welfare. Staff finds that the proposed sign is appropriate to the planned character of the property and will allow for effective signage without leading to visual clutter. The proposed sign is intended to identify the building and not the individual commercial tenants in the building. Staff finds that the proposed sign is consistent with the purpose and intent of the zoning code and City policies.

2. *The sign adjustment will allow a sign that relates in size shape, materials, color, illumination and character to the function and architectural character of the building or property on which the sign will be located.*

Both variances: Staff finds that the sign will relate in size, shape, material, color, illumination and character of the buildings and the property. The sign will be aluminum and internally illuminated with LED. Staff finds that the sign will be professionally installed with quality materials, provided the LED is controlled in a manner that does not result in unreasonably intense illumination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the Variance:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Board of Adjustment adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to allow for a new projecting sign located on a non-primary building wall located at 2304 Snelling Avenue in the I2 Medium Industrial District, IL Industrial Living Overlay District and PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of the sign permit by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the Variance:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Board of Adjustment adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance increase the maximum sign area from 0 square feet to 20 square feet to allow for a new projecting sign located on a non-primary building wall located at 2304 Snelling Avenue in the I2 Medium Industrial District, IL Industrial Living Overlay District and PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of the sign permit by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.

ATTACHMENTS

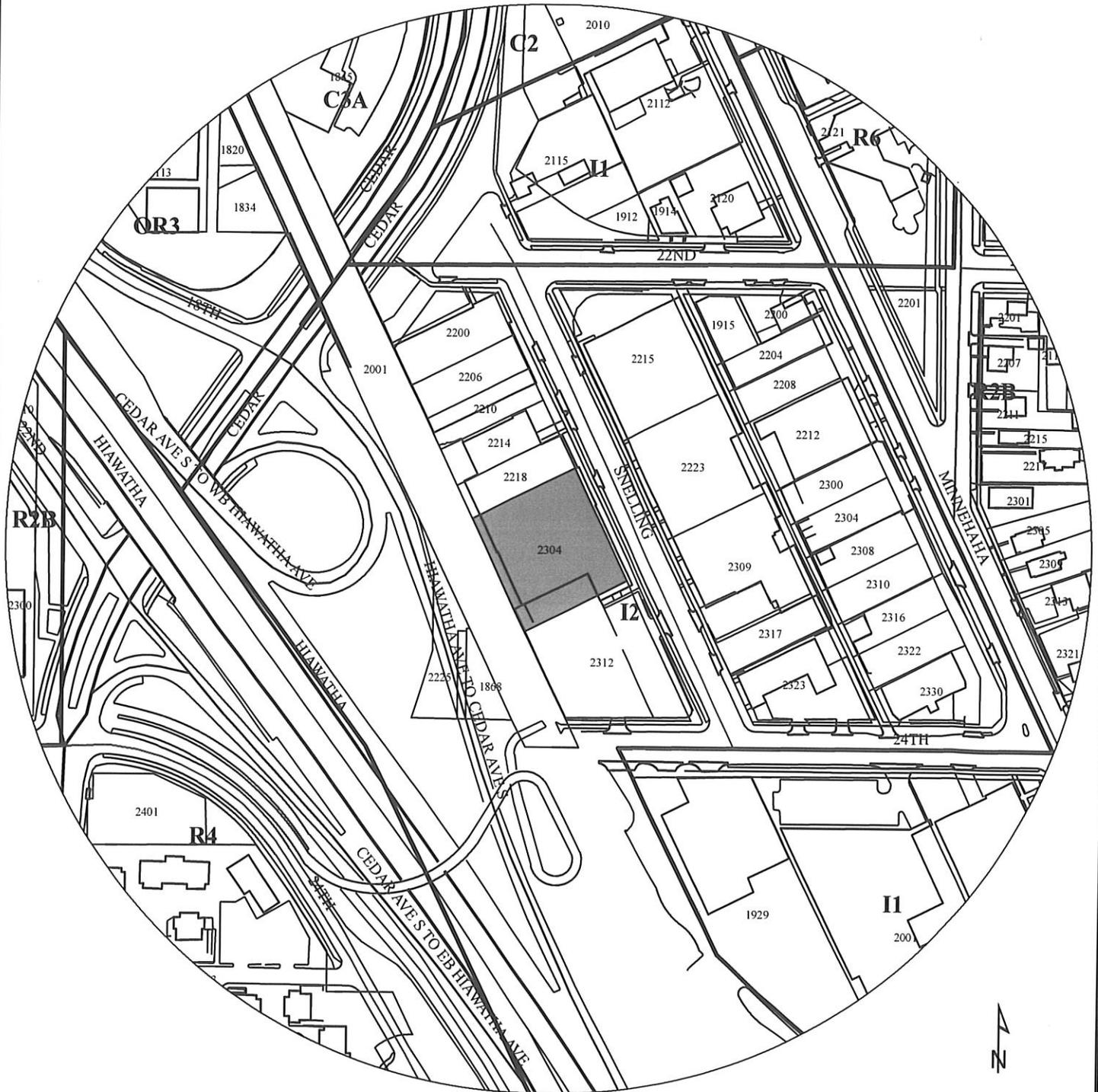
1. Written description and findings submitted by applicant
2. Zoning map
3. Site plan
4. Sign Plans
5. Building elevations
6. Photos

The Cooprage

2nd

NAME OF APPLICANT

WARD



PROPERTY ADDRESS
2304 Snelling Avenue

FILE NUMBER
BZZ-6747

The Cooperage Senior Housing
Seward Commons Phase II
2304 Snelling Avenue

SIGN VARIANCES REQUESTED AND REQUIRED FINDINGS

Sign Variances Requested

- I. Variance to allow a projecting sign on a non-primary building wall, facing west towards the Hiawatha Pedestrian/Bike path, the LRT line and Hiawatha Avenue.
- II. Variance to increase the maximum area of a projecting sign from 0 square feet to 20 square feet on a non-primary building wall, facing west towards the Hiawatha Pedestrian/Bike path, the LRT line and Hiawatha Avenue.

Required Findings

1. **Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.**

The unique circumstances of this property are both its location and its nature as a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). The location at 2304 Snelling Avenue is difficult to get to from Hiawatha Avenue/Highway 55, the main highway that connects to I-94 on the north and Highway 62 to the south. Snelling Avenue is also only a block long at this location and neither of the intersecting streets—22nd and 24th Streets—are through streets in this area. A sign on the west side of the building would allow drivers on Hiawatha Avenue and LRT riders, whether they be senior residents, family members, suppliers, etc. to locate the building and take the appropriate exit. Without a sign visible from Hiawatha Avenue, people will have difficulty in finding the building.

Another circumstance unique to The Cooperage Senior Housing is its proximity to other forms of transit. The Cooperage is situated adjacent to the Hiawatha Pedestrian/Bike path that runs along the Hiawatha LRT line. Based on the priorities set by the Seward Neighborhood Group and the community, the west building entrance from the Ped/Bike path is designed to be equal in importance to the Snelling Avenue entrance, with the same signage planned at both entrances. A sign on the west-facing side of the building would improve the visibility of the building and enable pedestrians and bike riders to orient themselves and locate the building from a distance, which can be vitally important to a population of senior residents.

These unique circumstances were not created by the owners of the property, and are not based on economic considerations.

- 2. The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.**

We believe that the addition of signage on the building wall facing west towards the Hiawatha Ped/Bike path, the LRT line and Hiawatha Avenue is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan by allowing signage along a public pathway and transit corridor to orient people to the location of a residential building. It is not advertising. It is the only signage on the building face and will not create sign clutter.

- 3. The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.**

The proposed variances will not alter the essential character of the location or be injurious to other properties. In contrast, the sign will enhance the character of the location by improving the building's façade and visibility. As part of the Seward Commons Redevelopment, this previously industrial site is being transformed into a vibrant, people-centered and transit-oriented site where appropriate signage will be necessary. The proposed sign will enhance the health, safety and welfare of the general public and the residents of The Cooperage Senior Housing by improving the visibility and aesthetic appearance of this residential building and the adjacent Ped/Bike path. The sign will not face directly onto another property.

- 4. The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.**

There is no risk of sign clutter in this area. This is the only signage on this façade of the building. The adjacent building, Touchstone Mental Health, does not have an entrance or sign on their west-facing wall. The zoning classifications for the property are Industrial 2, Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District, and Industrial Living Overlay District. The proposed sign is consistent with the PO and IL zoning districts which were created near the Franklin LRT Station to encourage the redevelopment of industrial sites into pedestrian-friendly living districts.

- 5. The sign adjustment will allow a sign that relates in size, shape, materials, color, illumination and character to the function and architectural character of the building or property on which the sign will be located.**

The proposed sign was designed to complement the architectural character of The Cooperage Senior Housing. It is a simple LED illuminated sign reading "THE COOPERAGE 2304". The sign is rectangular in shape, and 10 feet high by 2 feet wide by 16 inches deep. The proposed sign is exactly the same as the sign that will be on the Snelling Avenue side.



August 11, 2014

Ben Walen, Co-President
Seward Neighborhood Group
2323 East Franklin Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Councilmember Abdi Warsame
Minneapolis City Hall
350 S. 5th St., Room 307
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Seward Commons Phase II: The Cooperage Senior Housing

Dear Mr. Walen and Councilmember Warsame:

As you know, Seward Redesign is partnering with CommonBond Communities to develop The Cooperage Senior Housing at 2304 Snelling Avenue as Phase II of the Seward Commons Redevelopment. The Cooperage is a 60 unit apartment building for low-income seniors that will be open for occupancy on October 1, 2014.

As part of the planning for Seward Commons, the SNG Development Committee asked that both the Snelling Avenue side and the PedBike path side of the development be treated as the front of the property. Consequently, when we designed The Cooperage, we included a prominent entrance from the bike path to the building, with a large covered and secure area for bike storage.

As part of the treatment of that façade of the building, we also wanted people on the PedBike path, the LRT line and on Hiawatha Avenue to recognize when they were approaching The Cooperage if it was their intended destination. We thought that the best way to create that visibility was to half signage on the building façade facing Hiawatha and the PedBike path that mirrored the signage on Snelling Avenue.

Unfortunately, the City sign ordinance in the zoning code evidently treats this façade of the building as the "rear" and states that we "cannot have signage on a non-primary building wall." Consequently, we are applying for a variance from the City of Minneapolis' Sign Ordinance to allow for a sign on the building wall that faces the Hiawatha and the BikePedestrian Path adjacent to the LRT line.

Based on the priorities set by SNG and the community, The Cooperage and the overall Seward Commons Redevelopment is designed as a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). In keeping with the TOD design, we are treating the building entrance from the Bike/Ped Path as equal in importance to the Snelling Avenue entrance, with the same signage at both entrances.

We understand that SNG will provide time to discuss The Cooperage Sign Variance Application with the community at the next Development Committee Meeting on August 12, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at Matthews Park. Please let me know if you have any questions or



PERFORMANCE
DRIVEN DESIGN,
LLC

220 3rd Ave. N., Ste. 402 Minneapolis, MN 55401 (612) 338-2023
info@dddb.com

PERMIT AND CONSTRUCTION SET

DATE: 6-24-2013
NOTE: THIS SET INCLUDES ALL PERMITS AND CONSTRUCTION SETS
EXCEPT FOR THE PERMIT AND CONSTRUCTION SETS

CLIENT
Common Bond Communities
Saint Paul, MN

and
REDESIGN, Inc.
Minneapolis, MN

THIS DRAWING AND ANY OTHER DRAWINGS
HEREON SHALL BE USED ONLY FOR THE PROJECT
IDENTIFIED HEREIN.

NO.	DATE	REVISION
1	6-24-2013	PERMIT AND CONSTRUCTION SET
2	6-24-2013	REVISION PERMIT
3	6-24-2013	PLANNING COMMISSION SUBMITTAL
4	6-24-2013	PPP SUBMITTAL
5	6-24-2013	PPP AND CITY SUBMITTAL

NO. DATE REVISION

DESIGNER: *K. D. B. B.*

PROJECT NAME: Seward Senior Housing

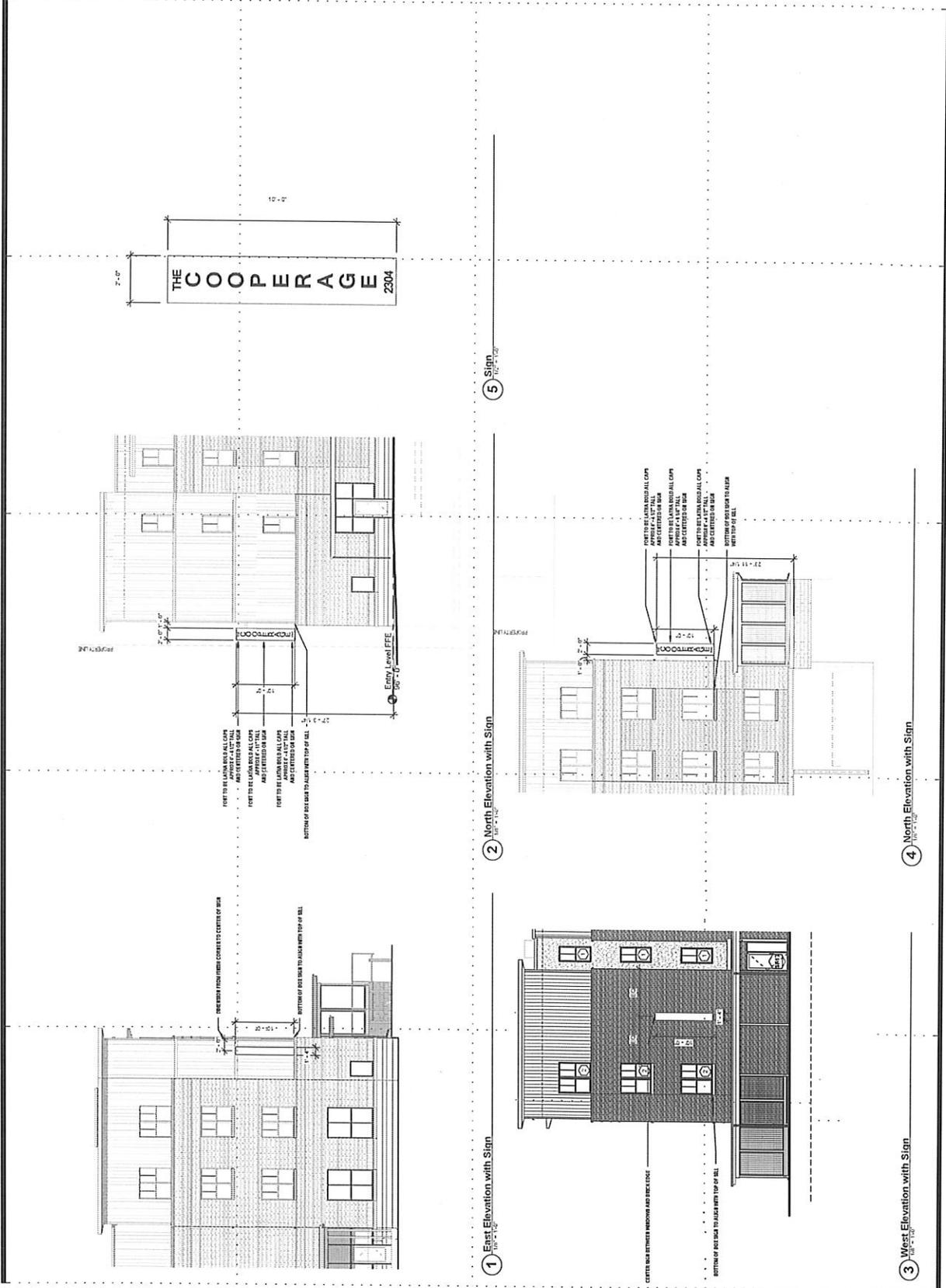
DATE: 6/24/13

PROJECT NO.: 1304

COMMENTS: SEE THE IBC, ALL RELATED PERMITS.

2304 Snelling Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55404
DRAWING TITLE:
EXTERIOR BUILDING
SIGN

SCALE: SEE
DRAWN BY: AWP
CHECKED BY: DMB
DATE: 6/24/13
DRAWING NO: **A7.31**



5 Sign
1/2" = 1'-0"

2 North Elevation with Sign
1/8" = 1'-0"

1 East Elevation with Sign
1/8" = 1'-0"

4 North Elevation with Sign
1/8" = 1'-0"

3 West Elevation with Sign
1/8" = 1'-0"



