Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Site Plan Review
BZZ-2158

Date: March 7, 2005

Applicant: Greg Swedlund

Address of Property: 22 East Franklin Avenue

Project Name: Clausen's Servicenter

Contact Person and Phone: Greg Swedlund, (612) 874-1905

Planning Staff and Phone: Hilary Watson, (612) 673-2639

Date Application Deemed Complete: January 26, 2005

End of 60-Day Decision Period: March 27, 2005

End of 120-Day Decision Period: May 26, 2005

Ward: 7 **Neighborhood Organization:** Stevens Square Community Organization

Existing Zoning: C2

Proposed Zoning: Not applicable for this application

Zoning Plate Number: 20

Legal Description: Not applicable for this application

Proposed Use: Minor auto repair facility

Concurrent Review:
Site plan review: for an existing auto repair facility

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.

Background: This item was continued from the February 23, 2005 City Planning Commission meeting at the request of the applicant.

Clausen's Servicenter, a minor auto repair facility, has operated at 22 East Franklin Avenue for the past 67 years. In 2004, the Minneapolis Inspections Department received a complaint that the applicant was parking vehicles on the adjacent property. Upon inspection of the site and further investigation of the

property it was realized that this site had never gone through Site Plan Review. As a result, the applicant, through an enforcement action, was required to submit a site plan review application.

This item has not yet been reviewed by the Preliminary Plan Review committee. The Planning Division did meet with representatives of both the Transportation and Right-of-Way Divisions of Public Works and the Crime Prevention Specialist. Their comments are incorporated within this report.

The applicant met with the Stevens Square Community Organization on December 7, 2004. At the meeting, the applicant presented a site plan that included landscaping at the corner of East Franklin Avenue and 1st Avenue South, along 1st Avenue South and possibly some along East Franklin Avenue. The neighborhood organization did not vote in support or denial of the site plan as they do not believe that the applicant should be forced into going through the site plan review process based on a complaint received by a neighbor.

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. (See Section B Below for Evaluation.)
C. The site plan is consistent with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council. (See Section C Below for Evaluation.)

Section A: Conformance with Chapter 530 of Zoning Code

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND FAÇADE

- **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.**
- **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 façade shall provide architectural detail and shall contain windows at the ground level or first floor.**
- **In larger buildings, architectural elements shall be emphasized.**
- **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 where visible**

from a public street or a residence or office residence district.

- **Entrances and windows:**
- **Residential uses shall be subject to section 530.110 (b) (1).**
- **Nonresidential uses shall be subject to section 530.110 (b) (2).**
- **Parking Garages: The exterior design shall ensure that sloped floors do not dominate the appearance of the façade and that vehicles are screened from view. At least thirty (30) percent of the first floor façade that faces a public street or sidewalk shall be occupied by commercial uses, or shall be designed with architectural detail or windows, including display windows, that create visual interest.**

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – PLANNING DIVISION RESPONSE

- The building associated with this site plan review application is existing. The applicant is not proposing to make any modifications to the exterior of the building.
- The area between the building and the front property lines along both East Franklin Avenue and 1st Avenue South is utilized for parking and drive aisles.

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 530.140 (b).**
- **Areas for snow storage shall be provided unless an acceptable snow removal plan is provided.**
- **Site plans shall minimize the use of impervious surfaces.**

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – PLANNING DIVISION RESPONSE

- The entrance to the building is not connected to the public sidewalk via a walkway as the building is setback from the street and is surrounded by parking spaces and drive aisles.
- The Transportation Division of the Public Works Department has reviewed the site plan provided by the applicant. To be in compliance with the Public Works requirements, the two curb cuts closest to the intersection of East Franklin Avenue and 1st Avenue South and the northerly curb cut on 1st Avenue South should be closed. A new curb cut would be allowed on 1st Avenue South but it would need to be located so it does not interfere with the parking spaces.
- In order to block glare from headlights a fence should be constructed along the north property line. To meet the screening requirements, the fence should be a three-foot high solid fence.
- The applicant has indicated that snow will be stored on the site between the north side of the building and the property line.

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 shall be landscaped as specified in section 530.150 (a).**
- **Where a landscaped yard is required, such requirement shall be landscaped as specified in section 530.150 (b).**
- **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.**
- **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 530.160 (b).**
- **Parking and loading facilities abutting a residence or office residence district or abutting a permitted or conditional residential use shall comply with section 530.160 (c).**
- **The corners of parking lots shall be landscaped as specified for a required landscaped yard. Such spaces may include architectural features such as benches, kiosks, or bicycle parking.**
- **Parking lots containing more than two hundred (200) parking spaces: an additional landscaped area not less than one hundred-fifty (150) square feet shall be provided for each twenty-five (25) parking spaces or fraction thereof, and shall be landscaped as specified for a required landscaped yard.**
- **All parking lots and driveways shall be defined by a six (6) inch by six (6) inch continuous concrete curb positioned two (2) feet from the boundary of the parking lot, except where the parking lot perimeter is designed to provide on-site retention and filtration of stormwater. In such case the use of wheel stops or discontinuous curbing is permissible. The two (2) feet between the face of the curb and any parking lot boundary shall not be landscaped with plant material, but instead shall be covered with mulch or rock, or be paved.**
- **All other areas not governed by sections 530.150, 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 530.220.**
- **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 530.60, as provided in section 530.230.**

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – PLANNING DIVISION RESPONSE

- The applicant has indicated that none of the site is currently landscaped nor does he have any intentions of landscaping the property. The size of the lot is 7,800 square feet and the size of the building is 1,456 square feet. The net site area is 6,344 square feet. To be in compliance with the 20 percent landscaping requirement, approximately 1,270 square feet of landscaping should be installed on the site, including a minimum of 1 tree and 6 shrubs. Note, however, that Chapter 530 requires one tree for every 25 feet of frontage along a street. This would require a total of 7 trees on the site.

Given the size of the site and the parking and drive aisle requirements, installing the landscaping on the site would be impractical. The Right-of-Way Division of the Public Works Department has indicated that the applicant may install landscaping in the right-of-way between the property lines and the public sidewalks. The Planning Division is recommending that the applicant remove the concrete located between the property line and the public sidewalk along both East Franklin Avenue and 1st Avenue South (not including those areas where the curb cuts are located) and install landscaped and curbing on the property line to keep vehicles from driving over the landscaped area. In addition, a decorative fence should be located along the property line in order to help screen the site from the public sidewalk. The Planning Division is recommending that the Commission allow a reduction in the overall landscaping requirement provided that the applicant includes decorative fencing to meet the intent of the ordinance.

- The north property line of the applicant's property abuts a residential property. Therefore, the first 5 feet of the property should be landscaped per the requirements of section 530.150(b), Required landscaped yard. Again, given the size of the site and the parking and drive aisle requirements, installing the required landscaped yard would be impractical. The Planning Division is recommending that in order to even out the topography on the north side of the site and to block glare from headlights that a retaining wall with a three-foot high solid fence on top be constructed along the north property line.

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS

- **Lighting shall comply with the requirements of Chapter 535 and Chapter 541. A lighting diagram may be required.**
- **Parking and loading facilities and all other areas upon which vehicles may be located shall be screened to avoid headlights shining onto residential properties.**
- **Site plans shall minimize the blocking of views of important elements of the city.**
- **Buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize shadowing on public spaces and adjacent properties.**
- **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.**
- **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.**

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – PLANNING DIVISION RESPONSE

- There are lights located on the building and within the parking lot. The applicant is not proposing to make any modifications to the lighting.
- The building is existing and would not block views of important elements within the city.
- This building is existing and would cast no new shadows on surrounding properties.
- This development should not contribute to groundlevel winds.
- The Crime Prevention Specialist has reviewed the site plan provided by the applicant. To be in compliance with the crime prevention through environmental design requirements, the number of curb cuts on the site would be reduced and a fence would be installed along the north property line.

- The site is not historic.

Section B: Conformance with All Applicable Zoning Code Provisions and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

ZONING CODE
With the approval of the site plan review this development will be in compliance with the regulations of the zoning code.

THE MINNEAPOLIS PLAN
The site is designated as general commercial in the comprehensive plan. The site is located one block east of Nicollet Avenue which is a designated Commercial Corridor. According to the principles and polices outlined in *The Minneapolis Plan*, the following apply to this proposal:

- Support efforts that recognize both the increased visibility and importance of corner properties and the role of gateways in enhancing traditional neighborhood character.
- Require the landscaping of parking lots (implementation step for Policy 9.12).
- Protect residential areas from the negative impact of non-residential uses by providing appropriate transitions between different land uses (Policy 9.15).
- Provide appropriate physical transition and separation using green space, setbacks or orientation between residential and non-residential uses.

With the closing of the curb cuts and the installation of landscaping, curbing and fencing this development will be in conformance with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.

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

There are no small area plans adopted by the city for this particular location.

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE
The Planning Commission may approve alternatives to any major 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, 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.**

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – PLANNING DIVISION RESPONSE

- The Planning Division is recommending that the City Planning Commission grant alternative compliance to not install any landscaping on the site if landscaping, curbing and a decorative fence is installed in the area between the property line and the public sidewalk along both East Franklin Avenue South and 1st Avenue South (not including those areas where the curb cuts are located).
- The Planning Division is recommending that the City Planning Commission grant alternative compliance to not install a five-foot landscaped yard along the north property line if a retaining wall with a three-foot high solid fence on top be constructed along the north property line.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 adopt the findings above and **approve** the site plan review application for a minor auto repair facility located at 22 East Franklin Avenue subject to the following conditions:

1. An enclosure shall be constructed around the dumpster as required by section 535.80 of the zoning code.

2. The two curb cuts closest to the intersection of East Franklin Avenue and 1st Avenue South and the northerly curb cut on 1st Avenue South shall be closed.

3. A retaining wall with a three-foot high solid fence on top shall be constructed along the north property line.

4. Landscaping, curbing and a decorative fence shall be installed in the area between the property line and the public sidewalk along both East Franklin Avenue South and 1st Avenue South.

5. Approval of the final site, landscaping, fence and dumpster enclosure plans by the Community Planning and Economic Development Department – Planning Division.

6. All site improvements shall be completed by February 23, 2006, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

7. If estimated site improvement costs exceed $2,000, the applicant shall submit a performance bond in the amount of 125% of the estimated site improvement costs before exterior building permits are issued.

Attachments:

1. Statement of proposed use
2. December 6, 2004, letter to Stevens Square Community Organization
3. December 15, 2004 letter from Stevens Square Community Organization
4. Zoning Map
5. Site plan
6. Photographs of the site and surrounding area