

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Site Plan Review
BZZ-2745

Date: December 20, 2005

Applicant: Hirshfield's, Inc.

Address of Property: 4450 & 4420 ½ Lyndale Ave N

Project Name: Hirshfield's Addition

Contact Person and Phone: Mike Anderson, 2 Division St E Ste 201, Buffalo MN 55313, (612) 763-682-1818

Planning Staff and Phone: Tara Beard, (612) 673-2351

Date Application Deemed Complete: November 22, 2005

End of 60-Day Decision Period: January 21, 2006

End of 120-Day Decision Period: Not applicable

Ward: 4 **Neighborhood Organization:** Lind-Bohanon Neighborhood Association

Existing Zoning: I2, Medium Industrial District, MR Mississippi River Critical Area Overlay District

Zoning Plate Number: 2

Lot area: 64,332 square feet

Proposed Use: 7,300 square foot addition to the existing 38,950 square foot office and warehouse building to be used for storage purposes.

Concurrent Review:

- Site Plan Review

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 530 Site Plan Review – Chapter 550 Industrial Uses.

Background: Hirshfield's Inc has submitted a site plan review land use application to add an approximately 7,300 square foot addition to a 2-story (1 floor) warehouse building in North Minneapolis. No variances are required but a Site Plan Review is needed because the addition is over 1,000 square feet and it cannot be reviewed administratively because it would face a public pathway. Landscaping and parking area re-design are a part of the proposal.

The proposed building would contain 46,250 square feet and 17 off-street parking spaces.

At the printing of this report staff has not received any written correspondence from the neighborhood or other stakeholders.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Findings as Required By the Minneapolis Zoning for Site Plan Review

Required Findings for Site Plan Review

- 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 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. 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 and windows:
 - 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.**

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

- **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. At least thirty (30) percent of the first floor building wall that faces a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall be occupied by active uses, or shall be designed with architectural detail or windows, including display windows, that create visual interest.**

Conformance:

- The proposed addition is in the rear of the building; the vast majority of the existing front of the building is within 8 feet of the property line; a small portion of the front encroaches in the public right of way – an encroachment permit is needed to correct this.
- There is landscaping between the existing front of the building and the property line.
- One of the building's principal entrances faces Lyndale Ave N.
- Existing surface parking will be redesigned in the south interior yard.
- Windows are required on 30% the north elevation of the addition because it faces a public pathway – no windows are provided on any part of the addition. Because the addition is set back and is much higher than the grade of the public pathway, staff does not recommend requiring the applicant to meet this requirement. However, staff does recommend encouraging the applicant to consider upgrading the existing chain link fence with a decorative fence to improve the appearance of the addition from the public path.
- Four elevations of the 5-sided polygon shaped addition have blank, uninterrupted walls for more than 25 feet. Staff recommends requiring the applicant to provide windows or architectural detail to break up the addition elevations into smaller identifiable sections.
- New construction will have exterior materials of painted, plain-face concrete block and metal that will match the existing building's materials.
- The addition is proposed as plain-faced block painted to match the existing building. As the north elevation faces a public pathway, Chapter 530.120 prohibits the use of plain face concrete block as an exterior material in that location. Although the existing structure's north elevation

faces the same public pathway and is plain face concrete, the addition is set back somewhat and in a different shape of the existing building. Staff therefore recommends permitting the applicant to use the proposed painted plain-face concrete block on the north elevation of the addition.

- The addition will have a flat roof as does the existing building.

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.

Conformance:

- The existing principal entrance will remain, and connects the building to the adjacent public sidewalk.
- There are no transit shelters on or adjacent to the site.
- The building is not open to the public and the only pedestrian traffic should be across the curb cut along Lyndale Ave N.
- There are no adjacent or nearby residential uses.
- The project proposes using the existing shared curb cut with the property to the south.
- All areas not needed for buildings, access, or trash and recycling, will be landscaped with the exception of the surface parking stalls and drive aisles.

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.

Conformance:

- The lot area (64,332 sq. ft.) less the building footprint (39,030 sq. ft.) yields a net site of 25,302 sq. ft. The Code requires a minimum of 5,060 sq. ft. of landscaping, 11 trees and 51 shrubs. The total landscaping proposed by the applicant is 9,468 sq. ft. This equals 37% of the net site. The proposed project includes 10 trees and 51 shrubs. Staff recommends that the Commission require compliance with the minimum number of trees.
- Although the northeast corner of the parking lot cannot be used for parking, the size of the corner left and its location do not lend itself well to landscaping. A small portion of the surface parking area fronts Lyndale Ave N, although most of that length is curb cut. The remaining portion of frontage for the surface parking consists of an existing power box. No surface parking spaces would be more than 50 feet from the center of an on-site tree.
- All areas not occupied by buildings, parking and loading facilities or driveways will be covered with turf grass, native grasses, or other perennial flowering plants, vines, mulch, shrubs or trees.

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.
- 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.
- 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.

Conformance:

- Drainage on the site will filter to the landscaped area. The applicant is not proposing curbing around the surface parking area.

- Lighting must comply with Chapter 535 and Chapter 541 of the zoning code.
- Headlights will not cause a problem with any nearby residential uses, as there are none.
- The project will not block views of important elements of the city nor create any substantive shadows on adjacent buildings and open spaces.
- The project would not be expected to contribute significantly to ground-level winds.
- The site design and landscape plan allows views from the public sidewalk into the 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: The proposed use is permitted in the I2 District.

Off-Street Parking and Loading: Chapter 541 requires not less than four parking spaces for office use in an I2 District that is 4,000 sq. ft. or smaller. The building has 1,824 sq. ft. of office space. The building, including the proposed addition, would have 44,562 sq. ft. of storage space, requiring an additional 13 spaces at 1 space per 3,000 sq. ft. for the first 30,000 sq. ft. and 1 space per 5,000 sq. ft. for the remaining 14,562 sq. ft. The applicant proposes 17 off-street parking spaces and 17 are required. All parking stalls meet the standard size requirements except for the van accessible spot, which is 8 feet wide with 8 feet of clearance to the east.

Maximum Floor Area: The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) in the I2 District is 2.7. The lot in question is 64,332 sq. ft. and the project has a gross floor area of 39,030 sq. ft., which equals an FAR of 0.6.

Building Height: Building height in the I2 District is limited to 4 stories or 56 feet, whichever is less. The proposed addition will be the same height as the existing building, 1 floor, 22 feet 4 inches high, therefore 2 stories.

Minimum Lot Area: There is no minimum lot area requirement in the I2 District.

Yard Requirements: The I2 District does not require any yard requirements for industrial uses that are not adjacent to residence or office uses or districts. The project will conform to the requirements of the Code.

Specific Development Standards: N/A

Hours of Operation: The proposed use will not be open to the public.

Signs: If the project includes a sign, it will conform to the Code. None are proposed at this time.

Refuse storage: All storage of refuse and recyclable materials will be enclosed inside the building.

Minneapolis Plan: According to other principles and polices outlined in *The Minneapolis Plan*, the following apply to this proposal:

The Minneapolis Plan Chapter 4.4 states: “Minneapolis will continue to provide a wide range of goods and services for city residents, to promote employment opportunities, to encourage the use and adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings, and to maintain and improve compatibility with surrounding areas.” One of the implementation plans of this chapter is to “encourage the economic vitality of the city's commercial districts while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding areas.” The expansion of a successful, local business on a commercial corridor would fulfill this, and the compatibility of the expansion with the existing public path to the north should be considered.

The Minneapolis Plan Chapter 9.18 states that “Minneapolis will establish land use regulations, in order to achieve the highest possible development standards, enhance the environment, promote flexibility in approaches and otherwise carry out the comprehensive plan.” One of the implementation plans of this chapter is to “broaden site plan review to promote development that is compatible with nearby properties, neighborhood character, and natural features, to minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflict, to promote street life and activity, to reinforce public spaces, and to visually enhance development.” This part of the plan further speaks to the importance of considering how the proposed addition would interact with the path.

The Minneapolis Plan Chapter 9.26 states that “Minneapolis will prioritize growth in light industrial land uses to increase the tax base and create jobs for city residents.” One of the implementation plans of this chapter is to “promote light industrial uses as the preferred use of industrial land, but discourage warehouse or distribution uses in areas where truck traffic will negatively impact residential neighborhoods.” The site is not adjacent to or near residential uses and has close freeway access. This is therefore an ideal site to encourage light industrial growth.

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.**

Conformance: Staff has not found any conditions that might require alternative compliance. Although the applicant is not meeting the minimum tree requirement, we are recommending that they be required to do so.

RECOMMENDATION:

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 above findings and **approve** the Site Plan Review at 4420 ½ and 4450 Lyndale Ave N, subject to the following conditions:

1. Not less than 11 trees are located on the final landscaping plan as required by section 530.160 of the zoning code.
2. On the proposed north elevation of the addition, 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.
3. Site improvements required shall be completed by December 20, 2006, unless extended by the zoning administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

Attachments:

1. Statement of use
2. Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations, & Zoning map
3. PDR Comments
4. Photos