

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division
Certificate of Appropriateness
BZH-27486

Date: October 23, 2012

Applicant: Shea, Inc. on behalf of Lund's

Address of Property: 1206 Harmon Place

Project Name: 1206 Harmon Place Revised Master Sign Plan

Contact Person and Phone: Peter Moe, 612-339-2257

Planning Staff and Phone: Chris Vrchota, 612-673-5467

Date Application Deemed Complete: September 24, 2012

Publication Date: October 16, 2012

Public Hearing: October 23, 2012

Appeal Period Expiration: November 2, 2012

Ward: 7

Neighborhood Organization: Citizens for a Loring Park Community

Concurrent Review: N/A

Attachments:
Materials Submitted by CPED – A1

Materials Submitted by Applicant – B1-B-3
11x17 color renderings, Pages 1-10

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CLASSIFICATION:	
Historic District	Harmon Place Historic District- Contributing Resource
Period of Significance	1907-1930
Criteria of significance	Broad patterns of economic history (automotive industry in Minneapolis); Architecture
Date of local designation	2001
Applicable Design Guidelines	Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines, Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings, Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Lund's Wine & Spirits
Historic Name	Sturr-Bullard Motor Company Building
Current Address	1208 Harmon Place
Historic Address	1206 Harmon Place
Original Construction Date	1914
Original Contractor	James Leck & Co.
Original Architect	Joseph McCoy
Historic Use	Commercial
Current Use	Commercial
Proposed Use	Commercial

BACKGROUND:

The Sturr-Bullard Motor Company Building is a two-story brick commercial building designed by Joseph McCoy and built in 1914 at 1208 Harmon Place. After the Sturr-Bullard Company relocated to 65 South 13th Street, Torbert McGregor Inc., which sold Star Cars and Durants, occupied the building during the 1920s. Nash and Ford vehicles were then sold here during the 1930s and 1940s. The flat-roofed building has a dark brown brick façade and common brick on the side and rear elevations. The façade historically had large display windows with a brick pier and cast iron column and grouped double-hung windows on the second floor, which were surmounted by subtle bands of brick that accentuate the metal cornice and simple brick parapet.

The building recently underwent substantial renovations, approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness (BZH-26827) in 2011. The scope of work included the removal of approximately 1/3 of the rear of the building due to substantial structural issues caused by bad soil conditions under the building. The windows and storefronts have also been replaced, and a new façade was installed on the rear elevation of the building. The site currently houses a Lund's Wine & Spirits store on the main level, with currently unfilled tenant space on the 2nd story. (See photos on Appendix B-12 – B-13.)

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL:

A master sign plan for the building was approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness (BZH-27298) in May, 2012. The Applicant is proposing to replace the previously approved canopy sign on the front of the building with a projecting sign, install a wall sign and a projecting sign at the 2nd floor tenant entry on the front of the building, move the canopy sign for Lund's Wine & Spirits on the back of the building, install a new canopy sign at the back of the building for the 2nd story tenant, and install a free-standing directional monument sign at the rear of the lot near the alley. For the 2nd floor tenant signage, the Applicant is requesting approval of the number, location, size and general design, with final designs to be determined when the tenant space is leased. (See plans and elevations in the 11x17 color renderings provided by the Applicant at the end of Appendix B.)

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment had been received by the time of publication.

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Preservation Code:

The Planning Division of the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department has analyzed the application based on the findings required by the Minneapolis Preservation Ordinance. Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) *The alteration is compatible with and continues to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the landmark or historic district was designated.***

According to *The Harmon Place Historic District Final Report*, prepared by Landscape Research, the Harmon Place Historic District is locally significant for its depiction of auto-related commercial development and automotive architecture during the period 1907-1930.

The signs on the front (south) elevation would meet this finding. The proposed projecting sign for Lunds would match those on the Lunds grocery store at 1201 Hennepin Avenue and would replace the existing canopy sign. The projecting sign measures 2'-4" x 10', totaling 23.3 square feet. (See plans on pages 3 and 8 of the 11x17 drawings.) A small 4.5' x 1' sign reading "Wine and Spirits" would be hung from the bottom of the canopy. The total area of the two signs would be 27.8 square feet, which would be a .8 square foot increase over the existing canopy mounted sign. For the 2nd floor tenant entry on the front elevation, the Applicant is proposing a 1'-5" x 13'-5" (18.9 square feet) wall sign and a 3'x4' (12 square feet) projecting sign.

At the rear of the building, the Applicant is proposing to relocate the existing Lunds sign on the canopy and install a new 3'x6' (18 square feet) canopy sign for the 2nd story tenant. This new sign would be smaller than the existing Lunds sign and would not be visible from the right-of-way. Staff is recommending that the Lunds sign be centered above the storefront below to create more visual symmetry on the building.

The number, design and size of the signs proposed to be placed on both the front and rear of the building is in character with the criteria and period of significance for the district. The signs would not detract from the criteria or period of significance for the district.

The proposed detached directional sign at the north end of the property does not meet this finding. This style of sign is not commonly found in Minneapolis even today, and is more commonly associated with a suburban office-park pattern of development. Installation of this type of sign, even a relatively small one (2'x4' totaling 8 square feet) would not be in keeping with the criteria or period of significance for the Harmon Place Historic District.

(2) *The alteration is compatible with and supports the interior and/or exterior designation in which the property was designated.*

The majority of the alterations are compatible with and support the designation of the property. The overall impact of the signs on the district as a whole will be negligible. It is unlikely that the installation of any signage would have any significant impact on the association of the district with the automotive industry in Minneapolis.

(3) *The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued integrity of the landmark or historic district for which the district was designated.*

Both the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations and the National Register of Historic Places identify integrity as the authenticity of historic properties and recognize seven aspects that define a property's integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Based upon the evidence provided below, the alterations as proposed have the potential to impact the integrity of the property.

Location: The Applicant is not proposing to change the location of the structure, thus the project will not impair the landmark's integrity of location.

Design: The proposed signs will not have a significant impact on the integrity of design. Installation of the signs will not result in any additional design modifications to the building.

Setting: The proposed freestanding directional sign would have an impact on the integrity of setting. As previously mentioned, this style of sign is rarely found in Minneapolis, and is more commonly found in large office park developments. This type of sign would not be in keeping with the character (setting) of the historic district.

Materials: The installation of the signs would not have an impact on any significant or character defining materials.

Workmanship: The signs would not require the removal or alteration of any distinct decorative or character defining elements on the building. The proposed signs would not have an impact on the integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The primary factor behind the proposal to install the directional sign is to direct pedestrians moving between the backs of the buildings at 1206 Harmon Place and 1201 Hennepin Avenue, as well as another building owned by Lunds at 8 South 13th Street. While there is some logic in wanting to direct customers between tenants in commonly owned buildings, this type of sign is not something that would have been found in the Harmon Place Historic District during the period of significance. Furthermore, it will increase the tendency for the rear of the buildings and the parking lots/alley to act more like the front of the building, diminishing the importance of the actual street-facing building facades. This sign would have a negative impact on the integrity of feeling for both the building and the district.

Association: The project would not impair the property's integrity of association.

- (4) *The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.***

The *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* are the relevant design guidelines for this application. (Commissioners can find the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* in section 6 of their Preservation Resource Binders.) The *Harmon Place Historic District Design Guidelines* defer to the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* for design guidance for signage. The *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* allow for signs that do not meet the guidelines to be approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness, taking into consideration "special situations including building condition, building orientation, historic precedence and exceptional design proposals."

The *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* prohibit canopy signs. However, canopy signs have been approved in the past when they are in keeping with the size and scale of the building and the placement is reasonable.

The signs proposed for the front and rear elevations of the building are in keeping with the size and scale of the building and the placement is reasonable. While the number of signs exceeds the maximum established in the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* (two signs per street-facing entrance or 1st floor tenant, whichever is less), the amount of signage proposed is not out of character or overwhelming for the building.

The proposed freestanding directional sign meets the size and illumination standards for a sign accessory to a parking lot (see section 4.k of the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings*). However, signs accessory to parking lots are generally used to display information such as hours, cost, and indications that the lot is reserved for use by a specific business or businesses. As previously detailed, staff does not find the proposed sign to be appropriate for the site or district.

- (5) *The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.***

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation below are most applicable to the proposed project.

Standard #2 states: "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a

property shall be avoided.” The installation/modifications of the signs on the building would not have an impact on any historic materials or features.

As previously mentioned, the freestanding sign at the rear of the lot would have an impact on spaces that characterize the building. The property owner is attempting to treat the subject property and other properties they own on the block as one cohesive development, with customers flowing between them in the alley as a centralized parking location. However, all of these buildings were historically individually owned and operated. Treating the rear of the buildings as the principal entrances, and treating all of them as one unified development, devalues the historic street-facing storefronts, which is not compatible with the historic character of the district. The proposed freestanding sign would not be in keeping with this standard.

- (6) *The certificate of appropriateness conforms to all applicable regulations of this preservation ordinance and is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.***

As conditioned, the project would comply with policy 8.1.1 of The Minneapolis Plan, which states: “Protect historic resources from modifications that are not sensitive to their historic significance.” This is contingent on the freestanding directional sign being eliminated.

Before approving a certificate of appropriateness, and based upon the evidence presented in each application submitted, the commission shall make findings that alterations are proposed in a manner that demonstrates that the applicant has made adequate consideration of the following documents and regulations:

- (7) *Adequate consideration of the description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.***

The Applicant submitted a statement outlining how they feel the proposed work meets the applicable findings and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (see Appendix B-7-B-8).

- (8) *Where applicable, Adequate consideration of Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.***

The site plan was reviewed and approved by the City Planning Commission on June 27, 2011. The proposed signs are within the allowed size and height requirements for this zoning district.

- (9) *The typology of treatments delineated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the associated guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, reconstructing, and restoring historic buildings.***

The Applicant submitted a statement saying that they believed the proposal was in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, though provided little detail as to how, outside of attaching the projecting signs through the mortar joints of the brick to avoid damaging the masonry surface. (See Appendix B-7). As outlined in Finding #5 above, staff does not believe that all of the proposed work is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Before approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves alterations to a property within an historic district, the commission shall make findings based upon, but not limited to, the following:

(10) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the historic district based on the period of significance for which the district was designated.

As proposed, most but not all of the signs would be compatible with and ensure the continued significance and integrity of all contributing resources in the Harmon Place Historic District. The signs proposed to be placed on the building would meet this finding. The proposed monument sign is out of character with the character of this historic district. Installing a sign that would more commonly be found in a modern office park would have a negative impact on the integrity of the Harmon Place Historic District.

(11) Granting the certificate of appropriateness will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.

The spirit and intent of the City of Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Regulations is to preserve historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and cultural landscapes of the community while permitting appropriate changes to be made to these properties. The intent of the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* is to allow for sensitive, appropriately sized and designed signage for historic buildings. The signs proposed for placement on both the front and rear of the building meet the spirit and intent of the ordinance and would not alter the character of the historic district. The freestanding sign proposed for the rear of the lot would negatively alter the essential character of the district, for reasons identified repeatedly in this report.

(12) The certificate of appropriateness will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the historic district and will not impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by regulations in the preservation ordinance.

The rehabilitation of the historic building and occupancy by new tenants should have a net positive impact on the significance and integrity of the district. Investment in this property may help spur further reinvestment in the district, furthering the preservation of the remaining resources. The installation of an out-of-character sign on the rear of the lot

would have an impact on the character and integrity of the district, however. As conditioned, the project would meet this finding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness for modifications to the master sign plan for the building located at 1206 Harmon Place subject to the following condition(s):

1. The projecting sign for Lunds on the front (south) elevation is approved.
2. The size and location of the signs on the front (south) and rear (north) elevations for the 2nd floor tenant are approved. Final design of the signage for the 2nd floor tenant space shall be subject to approval by CPED-Planning staff through a Certificate of No Change.
3. The proposed freestanding directional sign is not approved.
4. The relocated Lunds sign on the rear of the building shall be centered above the storefront window.
5. No other signs are approved.
6. All workmanship must be completed in conformance with the Secretary of Interior Standards, see: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>
7. The Applicant shall obtain all other necessary City approvals prior to the commencement of work.
8. The Certificate of Appropriateness approvals shall expire if not acted upon within two years of approval, unless extended by the Planning Director in writing prior to the two-year anniversary date of the approvals.

Attachment A: Submitted by CPED staff

Attachment B: Materials submitted by Applicant