

(reserved for recording information)

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS RESOLUTION ZBA #2024-001

A RESOLUTION BY THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA, APPROVING A VARIANCE REQUEST AT 1500
INDUSTRIAL DRIVE

WHEREAS, Cardinal Glass Industries (the “Applicant”) is the owner of a parcel of land located at 1500 Industrial Dr. in the City of Northfield; and

WHEREAS, the above-referenced property is legally described on Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference (the “Property”); and

WHEREAS, Northfield City Code, Chapter 34, Section 3.2, Table 3.2-9: Minimum Dimensional Standards for the I1 District, of the Land Development Code (“LDC”), sets the front yard setback at 20 feet; and

WHEREAS, the Applicant desires to and has requested a variance to construct an addition that encroaches 10 feet into the 20-foot front yard setback; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes, section 462.357, and Northfield City Code, section 8.5.15, establish the procedures and criteria for consideration by the Zoning Board of Appeals of a requested variance to the LDC and shall be subject to the Type 6 review procedure as established in Northfield City Code, section 8.4.9, Type 6 Review Procedure (Quasi-Judicial Decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 462.357, subd. 6, and Northfield City Code, section 8.5.16, the Zoning Board of Appeals may only grant applications for variances where practical difficulties in complying with the LDC exist and each of the following criteria are satisfied:

- (a) The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of this LDC;
- (b) The variance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;
- (c) The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by this LDC;
- (d) The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner; and
- (e) The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Board of Appeals held a public hearing, following required public notice thereof, on November 21, 2024, and has reviewed the requested variance and has considered the required statutory variance criteria identified in the Staff report and proposed findings with respect to such criteria.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA, that the Northfield Zoning Board of Appeals has duly considered the required criteria contained in state law and the LDC as applicable to the above-requested variance regarding the property legally described in Exhibit A, and hereby adopts the findings of fact contained in the staff report regarding the same, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit B.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the requested variance is hereby approved and granted, based upon the above-referenced adopted findings, to allow an addition to encroach 10 feet into the 20-foot front yard setback subject to the following condition:

- No part of the proposed addition, including the footings, eaves, mechanical equipment, or other building elements may encroach on the existing 10-foot utility easement located in the front yard.

PASSED by the Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of Northfield this 21st day of November, 2024.

Chair

Member

VOTE: ___ BUCKHEIT ___ HEISLER ___ KUHLMANN ___ MENARD
 ___ NOWAK ___ SCHROEER ___ STAGER

EXHIBIT A

PROPERTY LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Lot 1, Block 1, Cardinal Northfield, the City of Northfield, Rice County, Minnesota

EXHIBIT B

FINDINGS OF FACT

Findings of Fact:

Northfield Land Development Code Table 3.2-9: Minimum Dimensional Standards for the I1 District sets the minimum front yard setback for buildings in the I1-B Zoning District at 20 feet. The applicant requests a variance to encroach 10 feet in the 20-foot front setback to construct an addition. Analysis of the variance request is addressed below.

Criterion (a) The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the LDC.

Finding:

The project is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the LDC. The applicant proposes to construct an addition to expand the manufacturing capacity of the property. The variance would allow for the continued industrial use of the property, which is the purpose of the I1-B Zoning District. The variance would maintain the functional, attractive character of the existing use, and would not unduly affect the development or use of nearby property.

Purpose statement of the I1-B District: Industrial District:

- (1) The I1 district should generally apply to those areas designated as "District" on the Framework map of the comprehensive plan.
- (2) The purpose of the Industrial (I1) district is to provide an area to accommodate manufacturing uses, general businesses, offices, service and repair businesses, warehousing and office showroom uses in a functional, attractive manner that does not unduly affect the development or use of nearby property. Limited and incidental retailing shall be allowed in this district. The portion of the district that abuts the Cannon River shall be developed in a manner that enhances, restores, augments and maintains the ecology and beauty of this natural corridor.
- (3) Amendments to the Official Zoning Map to expand the I1 district shall be limited to areas immediately adjacent to an area currently zoned I1. Expansion into areas not currently abutting the I1 district shall be prohibited.

The Land Development Code was adopted to protect and promote the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the city. More specifically, the purpose of these regulations is to:

- 1.1.1 Maintain and enhance the community's distinct small town character.
- 1.1.2 Preserve and protect the area's natural, historic, and cultural resources while providing for improved methods of integrating these resources in the community.
- 1.1.3 Encourage growth in infill locations as the desired location of development with expansion on the edge of the city a secondary priority.

- 1.1.4 Create residential community areas with strong neighborhood qualities including pedestrian-friendly streets, community gathering spaces, and basic commercial needs within walking distance.
- 1.1.5 Encourage the development of neighborhoods that incorporate a variety of housing types to serve the needs of a diverse population.
- 1.1.6 Allow for places with a mixture of uses that are distinctive and contribute to the city's overall vitality.
- 1.1.7 Provide standards and guidelines for continuing strategic growth and sustainable development.
- 1.1.8 Provide for the expansion and diversification of the economic base to assure a strong economy.
- 1.1.9 Promote an ethic of sustainability in all activities to ensure that proposed development and redevelopment will, at a minimum, conserve energy and natural resources.
- 1.1.10 Improve and promote connectivity to better serve residents and to improve the function of the overall street network.
- 1.1.11 Ensure that proposed development is of human scale, primarily pedestrian-oriented to the extent appropriate, and designed to create exceptional streetscapes and pedestrian spaces.
- 1.1.12 Minimize vehicle traffic by providing for a mixture of land uses, pedestrian-oriented development, compact community form, safe and effective multi-modal traffic circulation (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular), and adequate on- and off-street parking facilities.
- 1.1.13 Protect the rural character of certain areas of the community as identified in the comprehensive plan.
- 1.1.14 Encourage vibrancy in the downtown core and fringe areas.
- 1.1.15 Ensure compatibility between different types of development and land uses.
- 1.1.16 Create a comprehensive and stable pattern of land uses upon which to plan transportation, water supply, sewerage, energy, and other public facilities and utilities.

The proposal is not in conflict with any LDC goals and it meets the following purposes:

- 1.1.3 Encourage growth in infill locations as the desired location of development with expansion on the edge of the city a secondary priority.
- 1.1.8 Provide for the expansion and diversification of the economic base to assure a strong economy.

1.1.9 Promote an ethic of sustainability in all activities to ensure that proposed development and redevelopment will, at a minimum, conserve energy and natural resources.

Criterion (b) The variance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan will be consulted for any development proposal based on the following steps. If a proposal is not consistent with the recommendations of any one of these steps, the proponent should re-evaluate and make adjustments (or provide justification for deviation) if the proposal is not aligned with the following three aspects:

1. Intent: Development proposals will reflect the spirit and values expressed in the 12 principles (statements of intent) (pages 4.9 to 4.13).

2. Location: Development proposals will be consistent with the Conservation and Development Map (page 4.18) and location descriptions (pages 4.14 to 4.15).

3. Character: Development proposals will be consistent with the Framework Map (page 4.19) and recommendations and context descriptions (pages 4.15 to 4.17).

Finding:

The variance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Intent: Development proposals will reflect the spirit and values expressed in the 12 principles (statements of intent) (pages 4.9 to 4.13).

1. The small town character will be enhanced.

The variance will not alter the small-town character of the neighborhood. The addition will be sited on the corner of Industrial Dr. and Armstrong Rd. all adjacent parcels are zoned industrial. The location is not visible from residential areas.

2. The natural environment will be protected, enhanced and better integrated in the community.

The expansion on-site allows for continued use of the property, limiting the need for additional greenfield development. The area for proposed expansion is principally comprised of impervious surface and turf lawn, both of which have limited ecological value.

3. The preference for accommodating future growth is in infill locations, then redevelopment/ land intensification opportunities, and then on the edge of existing developed areas.

This is an existing developed lot. The variance will allow for the continued use of the property.

4. New and redeveloped residential communities (areas) will have strong neighborhood qualities.

N/A

5. Environmentally-sensitive and sustainable practices will be integrated into new developments and redeveloped areas.

N/A

6. Places with a mix of uses that are distinctive and contribute to increasing the city's overall vitality are preferred.

N/A

7. Neighborhood-serving commercial will be small scale and integrated with the residential context.

N/A

8. A wider range of housing choices will be encouraged - in the community as well as in neighborhoods.

N/A

9. Rural character of certain areas of the community will be protected.

N/A

10. Streets will create an attractive public realm and be exceptional places for people.

N/A

11. Places will be better connected, in part to improve the function of the street network and also to better serve neighborhoods.

N/A

12. Opportunities will be created to walk and bike throughout the community.

N/A

Location: Development proposals will be consistent with the Conservation and Development Map (page 4.18) and location descriptions (pages 4.14 to 4.15).

The project is located in what the Conservation and Development Map denotes as: *Developed Land in City.*

Allowing an encroachment into the front yard setback will allow for the continued industrial use of the property.

Character: Development proposals will be consistent with the Framework Map (page 4.19) and recommendations and context descriptions (pages 4.15 to 4.17).

The project is located in: District - Districts are generally special-use areas found within the city. The districts within Northfield are typically of a single use; in this case, composed of large business or industrial structures. Districts are located along collectors and arterial roadways.

The variance is consistent with and does not alter the overall character of the property and surrounding uses.

Criterion (c) Property Owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the LDC.

Finding:

The requested variance will result in a reasonable use of the property. The applicants currently use the property and with the variance granted, the applicants would continue this use, which is a reasonable use for an industrial property.

Criterion (d) The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.

Finding:

The plight of the landowner is due to past requirements to accommodate a minimum number of required parking stalls, regulations about building placement and setbacks, and the grades of the site dictating the placement of stormwater retention ponds. These factors combine to limit the feasibility of placing the expansion at another location on the site. Additionally, requirements from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) dictate the need for additional space to safely accommodate the new equipment.

Criterion (e) The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

Finding:

Granting the variance will not alter the essential character of the locality. The current use of the property is industrial, which will continue with the variance. The property is an industrial use, surrounded by other industrial uses, and agricultural uses. There would be minimal, if any change, to the neighborhood character with the continued use.