

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: TEXT AMENDMENT OPTIONS FOR CHANGES TO CAMPUSTOWN SERVICE CENTER (CSC) ZONING DISTRICT 50% CLAY BRICK BUILDING FACADE MATERIAL STANDARD

BACKGROUND:

At the May 10, 2022 meeting, City Council discussed a request from a property owner to initiate a Zoning Text Amendment regarding the placement of clay brick on new buildings in Campustown. The property owner, F F & F of Ames, LLC, has submitted a Minor Site Development Plan application for a two-story bar and restaurant to be constructed at 2516 Lincoln Way. The project proposes to have a zero-lot line condition along its east property line. The applicant has submitted a letter describing their issues with construction of a zero lot line building and use of clay brick without securing construction easements or changing construction methods (Attachment A).

City Council directed staff at the May 10 meeting to initiate a zoning text amendment to modify the 50% clay brick per façade requirement for zero lot line buildings along with direction to staff to consider design concerns about visibility of and quality of materials on facades that do not have brick. City Council's comments during the discussion focused on where clay brick would be required, prominence and visibility of facades, and the appearance of alternate building materials that could be used to replace the brick. **Due to City Council's concerns about changes to the clay brick requirement, staff moved forward with the text amendment process, but now presents specific options to consider before finalizing a draft ordinance for June 14.**

Campustown buildings have a diverse range of exterior building materials. Older historical buildings utilized primarily brick. Modern buildings used masonry block, concrete, and brick as primary materials for exterior facades. There are other siding materials present on some buildings, such as metal panels, EIFS, and siding. The City has modified its building requirements for the CSC zoning district over time in response to the aesthetics of projects that have been built over the past 20 years.

The use of the "clay brick" terminology was an evolution of the building material standard away from generically referring to "masonry." Prior to 2017, the City did not specify that each façade must contain clay brick, just that clay brick must be the primary material on a building. To clarify the intent that the majority of each building façade contain clay brick, the standard was changed to the current language requiring 50% clay brick on each façade.

The proposed amendment would apply to all properties in Campustown. Future redevelopment projects would likely also have zero lot conditions, meaning this is not a unique situation. A new building in Campustown could present a zero-lot line situation in many future redevelopment projects in the CSC district, as lots are smaller and the City's intent of the district is to create a dense urban environment. Zoning standards such as the required minimum floor area ratio (FAR) along with a 25-foot minimum height encourages buildings to be built up to the property lines.

As part of the initiated text amendment process, staff presented three options to the Planning & Zoning Commission for changes to the Zoning Ordinance. The three options are also listed below for City Council consideration. Ordinance language is in italics with new language underlined. Attachment C is a reference picture of different brick and masonry products used for facades along Stanton Avenue to provide context to the discussion.

TEXT AMENDMENT OPTIONS:

Option 1: Require Zero Lot Line buildings to have a 50 percent (total square footage) clay brick standard for the whole building, rather than each façade.

This is the simplest change and would allow some design flexibility regarding where the brick may go. Depending on a proposed design you could have one or more façades that do not contain any clay brick. To address City Council's comments regarding visibility, this option can include guidelines for priority placement of clay brick on the front façade and other highly visible locations.

If Option 1 is approved, any building materials would be allowed on 50 percent of the building. This is currently the allowance for each façade as well. The most commonly used material seems to be concrete masonry units, or CMU blocks, but it could be EIFS, metal panels, or cement board siding. Vinyl siding products have not been used recently on new buildings in Campustown, but are not precluded by standards. Guidelines regarding prioritizing front facades and highly visible facades would also be included.

Option 2: Require Zero Lot Line buildings to have 50 percent (total square footage) clay brick standard for the whole building, and require a new building material standard regarding aesthetics and colors for the non-clay brick required areas.

This option would allow a non-clay brick façade only when the building is placed at a zero lot line setback, but add a material requirement that is at a standard above plain unfinished concrete masonry units.

If Council is concerned about the look of the non-brick surfaces that are visible to the public, then Option 2 would allow for the clay brick requirement to be calculated

for the total façade area of the building and require surfaces that are not clay brick to have a complementary texture, color, and quality approved administratively. In most cases this would likely require an integral-colored concrete block and potentially a textured concrete block finish. Guidelines regarding prioritizing front facades and highly visible facades will also be included.

Option 3: Zero lot line buildings material exception for alternative brick materials in lieu of Clay Brick.

This choice would create an exception to the clay-brick material requirement and allow for a substitute high-quality material that can replicate brick in appearance. There are several building material products that exist that replicate brick in size and coloring that would not have been present in the market at the time the clay brick requirement was created. Traditional concrete bricks do not have the same appearance as clay brick in texture and coloring.

Staff could create a standard that allows a developer some options for materials that are required to be brick in appearance in addition to maintaining that each visible façade must provide 50 percent to be “brick” in appearance. **A brick appearance would include specifying dimensions and coloring that approximates traditional clay brick. This option provides flexibility and addresses design concerns overall by still having brick like materials on all facades, however the specific products used to meet this standard would be decided on a case-by-case basis.**

Staff’s concern with use of a substitute materials is the consistency of the products chosen for a project. Meaning a standard concrete brick would not meet expectations due to its texture and coloring. A specialty product would likely be needed to replicate color and texture of clay brick. Staff would need to review manufacturers specifications and materials boards to determine if the substitute material achieves the aesthetic and durability goals that are the basis of the standard.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning and Zoning Commission met on May 18, 2022, to consider the proposed text amendment. The Commission discussed the building trends in Campustown and the strong desire to maintain the historic brick aesthetic of Campustown. The Commission discussed the tradeoffs of the three options and potential outcomes of a change. The Commission voted 6-0 in favor of Option 2, which would require a zero-side lot line building to have clay brick on 50% of the total visible façade area along with color or texture treatment of the remaining areas.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve the proposed Option 1 as the basis for a text amendment for an exception for Zero Lot Line buildings to meet a more than 50 percent clay brick requirement for the whole building rather than each façade.
2. The City Council can approve the proposed Option 2 text amendment for an exception for Zero Lot Line buildings to meet a more than 50 percent clay brick standard for the whole building and require a new building material standard for aesthetic and color for non-clay brick building materials
3. The City Council can approve the proposed Option 3 text to allow a material exception for alternative brick materials in lieu of Clay Brick.
4. The City Council can approve alternative language to the proposed text amendment.
5. The City Council can decide, after reviewing the proposed options, not to proceed with changing the clay brick requirement in the CSC.

CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The requested zoning text amendment change relates to a development condition of building at a zero-side lot line. The developer does not believe they can set the building back to allow construction of clay brick clad wall and still have a viable project. They believe they can deliver a better project by using the same amount of brick overall but placing it on the higher profile facades of the building.

Staff believes one of the principle identifying traits of Campustown is the predominance of brick as building material. Clay brick is a time-tested material for aesthetic quality and durability. The options presented by staff offer varying methods of trying to ensure the intended character of design is maintained with additional flexibility in materials. The applicant would benefit from any of the options presented by staff and has indicated to staff that any of the three options would work for their situation.

Staff believes with an emphasis on concerns about aesthetics that extend beyond just placement of clay brick, Option 2 meets the intent of the request but also adds some additional design review requirements that may help blend sidewalls of a building into the surrounding through color treatments.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #2 and direct staff to proceed with a draft ordinance for a text amendment.

Attachment A



architecture specialty millwork virtual vision project management

118 E. 26th Street Suite 300 Mpls, MN 55404 P:612-879-8225 F:612-879-8152 www.tanek.com

May 4, 2022

RE: Brothers Bar & Grill – 2516 Lincoln Way

Dear Mr. Diekmann;

We are requesting an alternative proposal to meet the clay brick standard for the project as it relates to the east property line, per our earlier conference phone discussion.

To meet a number of criteria the building provides a rear easement and a non-interior design area to the west which will be a patio. Along the north, south and west faces we can construct a wall assembly that includes appropriate ratios of clay brick.

We have a zero lot line along the street frontage and the east, in part to meet a floor area ratio.

The east façade due to immediate proximity to the neighboring property is only technically feasible to be constructed as what would be considered a “single wythe masonry wall”. This can be done with concrete masonry units that can be assembled from the interior side of the building. We would be unable to construct a wall assembly of multiple layers for the technical aspects of not being able to get to the exterior finish side, or the requirement of having to scaffold upon another neighboring building.

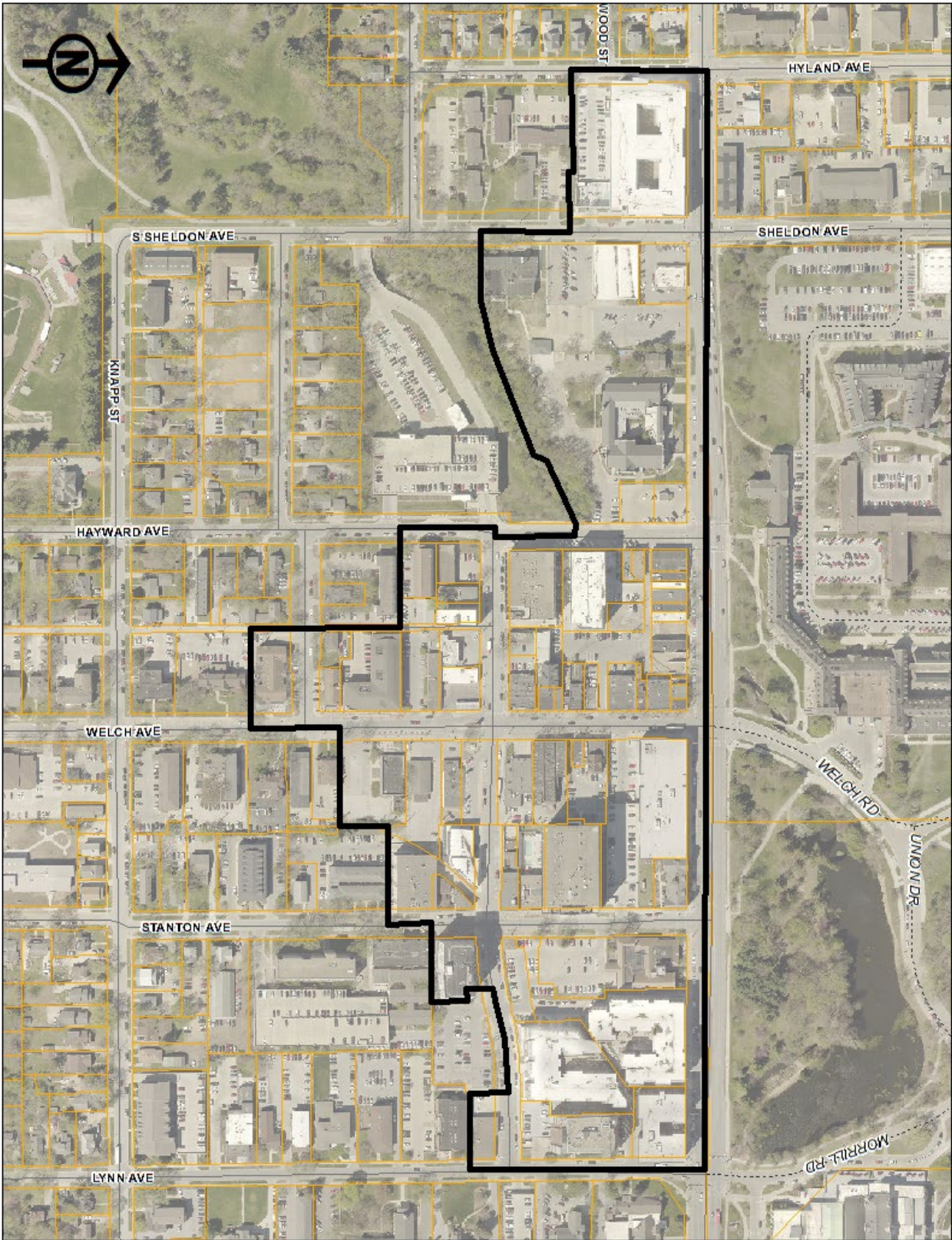
Our proposal is to meet the overall required clay brick ratio by adding the brick ratio of the east façade upon the west façade of the building.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathaniel Shea". The signature is fluid and cursive, starting with a sharp upward stroke and ending with a long, sweeping horizontal line that tapers off to the right.

Nathaniel Shea, A.I.A.
Principal
Tanek, Inc.
Direct: 612-998-8200
nshea@tanek.com

ATTACHMENT B: Campustown Service Center (CSC) Zoning Boundary



Attachment C



Textured CMU Block

Clay Brick

Smooth Faced Grey CMU Block

Integrally Colored CMU Block

Textured CMU Block