

Sycamore Township  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
8540 Kenwood Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45236

June 20, 2011



K4places.com

RE: **Combined Containerboard**  
**7741 School Road**  
Application for PUD1 Approval

### **Staff & Planning Commission Members;**

Thank you for taking the time to review our submittal for a PUD1 for the proposed expansion and remodel of Combined Containerboard at 7741 School Road.

Combined Containerboard Inc. (CCI) has been a conscientious member of the community for 23 years and has strived to be a good neighbor in a community of mixed uses. Combined Containerboard has proposed a renovation to their property on School Road that will add an 11,800 square foot shipping addition to the east side of the building and reconfigure their shipping, receiving, car parking and traffic areas. While this renovation will help them meet their production demands and more efficiently move materials through their plant, it also will be a tremendous improvement to the existing shipping dock configuration which often clogs School Road with maneuvering trucks and will also remove an existing gravel lot on the east side of the building that has been the source of dust on windy days.

### **Existing Conditions;**

Combined Containerboard's plant is located on the south side of School Road. The property is bound by railroad tracks to the west. The south boundary borders a large industrial yard operated by Duke. The eastern boundary adjoins another property owned by CCI on which no work is proposed. Beyond the eastern property owned by CCI is a park facility operated and maintained by Sycamore Township. On the north side of School Rd is a residential neighborhood and a small retail convenience store and an unoccupied building owned by the Township. Stewart Elementary School is located 0.2 miles west of CCI at the intersection of School Road and Conrey Road.

**Vehicular access** is currently provided on three sides of the site for a combination of semi truck traffic and car parking and circulation. Existing vehicular access is provided to the west side of the building to access several loading docks where raw materials are received. CCI currently stores trailers on this side of the building as well. The north side of the building is currently home to 15 shipping docks that directly adjoin School Road. As a result, as trucks maneuver into and out of the dock, they often tie up traffic on School Road. Trucks cued and waiting for an open dock often stand either on the west side of the existing plant, or in a space across School Road from the plant or in an existing gravel lot on the east side of the plant. The gravel lot on the east side is used primarily for trailer parking and storage. This gravel lot has been the subject of dust complaints in the past and will be removed as part of this renovation.

**Car parking** is provided on the northeast side of the building adjacent to the shipping docks near the main pedestrian entrance to the building. Car parking also wraps from this area around the corner and runs along the east side of the building. The facility currently has 48 parking stalls. The renovated site will contain 50 parking spaces.

In addition to vehicular access, the plant has an existing **rail spur** that enters the southwest corner of the facility. No work is proposed in this area.

The **existing building** is a single story and consists of 160,211 square feet of space. The majority of the space is manufacturing, storage and shipping. A small area, approximately 2,900s.f. in the northeast corner of the existing facility is used as front office. Existing loading docks are located on the southwest side and north side of the building. The east side of the manufacturing building consists of highbay roll-paper storage.

### **Proposed Changes to the Premises;**

Combined Containerboard proposes to **add a new 11,800 square foot shipping dock on the east side** of the existing plant directly adjacent to the existing highbay roll-paper storage area. This new dock will consist of 16 new dock doors and will replace the existing 15 dock doors on the north side of the building. The addition will displace several dozen parking spaces along the east side of the building that will be relocated to the north and west side of the building.

**The existing gravel parking lot on the east side of the building will be removed.** This area will become paved truck maneuvering and trailer storage space. This alleviates a standing source of neighbor complaints. The new lot will be bordered by the required streetscape and boundary buffers. This area will also become home to an above ground storm water detention basin.

**The continuous open curb cut along the north boundary that serves the current dock will be closed and a new landscape area will be installed along the property line.** This landscape area will contain the required streetscape buffer. The area between the new landscape area and the existing building (formerly where the trailers were parked at the dock) will become car parking stalls.

### **Size/Area Involved;**

The entire site is 12.9 acres. The work proposed along the north side of the site (new parking and landscape) encompasses roughly 0.6ac. The work on the east side which includes the new building expansion, truck maneuvering and trailer storage and storm detention is approximately 3.5ac.

### **Proposed Use / Change of Use;**

The property is currently zoned appropriately for its industrial use. The site accommodates a manufacturing facility and related car and truck traffic. None of the work proposed constitutes a change from the existing use.

### **Character of the Development;**

The site is currently developed as an industrial property. The existing building is clad in industrial style finishes; predominately metal panel with some brick and block. The site currently has little in the lines of landscaping and is highly visible from the street. Additionally, the facility routinely has trailers parked at the front dock that come all the way out to the road. The existing building and expansion will remain industrial in nature but the proposed plan removes the unattractive dock from the front of the building and provides a considerable amount of landscaping along the entire frontage of the property. This plan makes significant improvements to the character of the property.

## **Surrounding Land Uses;**

CCI is located amongst several different uses including a small retail convenience store and a residential neighborhood to the north, another small industrial property and a public park to the east, an industrial use operated by Duke Energy to the south and commercial and residential uses to the west. Also to the west, approximately 0.2 miles is Stewart Elementary School. The uses to the west are separated by an existing rail road track and are well screened by natural wooded areas along the rail line. The use to the south is well screened by existing vegetation on the CCI site. The park is well screened by a large wooded area on the industrial property between CCI and the park. The residential neighbors to the north are the primary group affected by the CCI property.

## **Specific Changes that have made the Current Site Unsuitable;**

The impetus for CCI to renovate their facility is to create a more efficient production environment and to meet increased production demand. From a site design standpoint, this is a matter of how and where raw material enters the facility, and finished product leave the facility. The fundamental function of the site is not proposed to change. However, through the redesign of the facility, CCI has realized several site design opportunities to make their facility more attractive and safer for the neighborhood in addition to creating the functionality they need.

## **Effect on the Community;**

Combined Containerboard has been operating on this site for over 20 years. Aside from recent complaints about dust resulting from their eastern gravel truck lot, CCI has operated without incident. The proposed use of the site has not changed, however the new work proposed in this plan will make for a much more attractive and safer facility for the neighborhood.

1. Beautification & Safety: The proposed plan removes the open continuous curb cut from the north boundary along School Rd. This is currently used for loading dock truck access. Trucks often block traffic on School Road as they maneuver. Aside from being a nuisance, this is also a potential safety issue as trucks back up from School Rd into the docks. Also, children attending Stewart Elementary that live in the houses nearby walk by the CCI facility before and after school. Moving the truck dock movements onto the site and away from the street reduces the risk of a pedestrian being injured by a maneuvering truck. In place of the open curb cut will be car parking and a new landscaped streetscape buffer along School Road.
2. Removal of an Existing Nuisance: The proposed plan redevelops the portion of the site containing the gravel parking lot. The new lot will be completely paved, alleviating dust concerns for the residential neighbors to the north.

While Combined Containerboard has initiated this project to fulfill a need within their business, the proposed plan takes advantage of several opportunities to make a more attractive and safer neighborhood for Sycamore Township.

Thank you again for taking the time to review this submittal. Feel free to contact our office with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely;

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