

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: March 7, 2018

TITLE: 2025 Zeier Road – Comprehensive Design
Review for a Monument Sign for “Ross
Dress for Less.” 17th Ald. Dist. (49797)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: March 7, 2018

ID NUMBER:

Members present: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Michael Rosenblum, John Harrington, Cliff Goodhart, Tom DeChant, Lois Braun-Oddo and Amanda Hall.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of March 7, 2018, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**

Appearing on behalf of the project was Ross Gallentine, representing Ramco Gershenson, Inc. The request is to add a new tenant sign (Ross Dress for Less) to the old, non-conforming pylon sign. They are proposing to upgrade the sign to add brick, split faced block and increase the square footage of the sign to bring it up to date. Staff has recommended they keep the same sign area, keep the same EIFS and make the existing signs smaller in order to fit in the new “Ross Dress for Less” sign. They felt it would be nice to upgrade and reskin the sign to match the existing building materials. A second option is to take off the “East Town Plaza” at the top, which brings the sign down from 22-feet to 19-feet (still non-conforming).

Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator spoke to the project, noting that the site needs a Comprehensive Design Review for the ground sign. This is a very large lot where the maximum two ground signs would not be possible. The request effectively would make what is a non-conforming sign to be expanded. Staff does think the sign looks much nicer but are concerned about the presence of negotiation. He would prefer the applicant do a monument style sign that would comply (a base that is no wider than 1/3 of the sign area that it supports). Any new sign would require a Comprehensive Design Review.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Did you look at redesigning this as a monument sign?
 - I have problems with the existing leases on height, which is why we offered to take off the top.
- I appreciate the nuance of the argument on this, but East Towne to me is that whole sprawl. That you could identify part of it as a place seems beyond me. I don’t think keeping “East Town Plaza” is good to hang onto one way or the other. I don’t have a problem if it lowers itself. In my mind it becomes a permitted sign rather than a conforming sign. If we approve it we’re not really changing the nature of what is conforming, we’re making an exception in this case to permit this sign, which still is not conforming with the standards but is now permitted for this specific site, would that be correct?

- (Tucker) No, I think the CDR will change its status.
- It changes the status of this sign, but not the status of the standards that are there for what is a conforming sign.
 - (Tucker) There's a bit of a precedential nature of approving signs like this.
- We always have the precedential issue before us.
- (Tucker) When there are non-compliant signs included in CDRs, we've put conditions in that required new signs to come back to the Commission, but those were typically signs that existed and weren't proposed to be altered, and this is fundamentally an alteration to the sign. The project is the change to this one sign. If you can find within the standards of Comprehensive Design Review, you could apply that condition in addition to making those findings to move forward.
- You've got one set that shows 6-feet between pylons and another that has 8.
 - 8'10.5" is the correct measurement.
- I do agree that "East Town" coming off is nice and I also think it helps to not cover up the architectural detail. I'd like to see if you could get that down below (the coping).
 - Yes I have that flexibility.
- How long is the lease for Marshall's?
 - I don't know off the top of my head.
- Since they control a certain extent on where their sign is placed, how long with their existing leases, if you just leave it like that and put 7 identifying signs in this EIFS, how long is that going to be there for?
 - Ross is a 10-year with two or three 5-year options, Burlington will be redoing their front so they've extended their lease. Party City just moved so that's a brand new lease. Babies R Us, we don't own that. Marshall's will be there for awhile.
- How many of the signs there are non-conforming now?
 - (Tucker) The only one that's close, and it's different, is the Shopko sign which is a multi-tenant for the strip mall built there. The real question in front of you is an additional ground sign on the same zoning lot.
- I'm OK with it, I like the flat top version versus the "East Town Plaza" because I think everybody already knows where they are. I think based on the location I think the monument sign really wouldn't be as easily seen coming from East Washington Avenue because of the building that's closer to the road. People do travel faster along here when they really shouldn't. It would be better for everybody to see where they're going rather than slamming on the brakes.
- Instead of having this cornice go all the way across, you could reduce the sign by 3-feet and your sign is essentially the same. Two side pillars with a box in between. I think putting separate signs in there is way too busy.
- This is just a hodgepodge. There's not enough space between the store names. If you could give them more breathing room.
 - We have divider bars that don't show well in that rendering.
- (Tucker) We did note in our staff report that the internal illumination method of the signs wasn't compliant with the Code. The night view should look dark with the light copy.

ACTION:

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Hall, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion passed on a vote of (7-0).

CONDITIONS:

1. The motion for approval requires any new sign to come before the Commission for approval of a Comprehensive Design Review. This motion does not set a precedent for automatic approvals on this site.
2. UDC staff to review prior to permitting - Option C with the following modifications:
 - Reduce sign height, remove east town sign topper and cornice detail
 - Provide (7) sign panels as shown with dividers
 - Provide updated details re: internally illuminated sign – night view should look dark with light copy.