

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** December 21, 2011

TITLE: 2501 West Beltline Highway –
Comprehensive Design Review,
Amendment to Existing Sign Package
for “Arbor Gate.” (Egg & I Sign) 14th
Ald. Dist. (23782)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: December 21, 2011

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Marsha Rummel, Todd Barnett, Dawn O’Kroley, Melissa Huggins and Richard Slayton.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 21, 2011, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review amendment to an existing sign package, located at 2501 West Beltline Highway. Appearing on behalf of the project were Eric Marty, representing Grant Signs; and Brad Hutter and Angela Black, both representing Arbor Gate Development, LLC. Marty presented a resubmittal for a blade sign at a 45° angle with triangle raceway pointed towards Beltline visibility. Marty showed a comparison for an alternative blade sign parallel to the road, but they feel it doesn’t create a uniform look as it relates to the existing 45° angled blade sign for “Bonfyre” on the west elevation. He noted that they are asking the Commission to reconsider the original design. Hutter then spoke about the success of this project and how they have worked with the City and tenants on signage. It was his belief that the blade signs were initially approved but were set aside for a future anchor tenant. He further stated that any signage on this building that faces an office space would cause problems with lighting, thus the 45° angle of this blade sign. He stated that the tenants are very supportive of and expected to have some predictability that the signage would look like the comprehensive sign package as proposed and like what has been done with Bonfyre. Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator spoke about the proliferation of non-conforming signage and the iterations of signage that have come through for this project. Now we have a new sign code which treats signs differently. The Bonfyre sign has integration with the building and ties it together. The bike/pedestrian bridge that is coming next year is has the potential to create conflicts with existing signage. City staff came to the conclusion that this has evolved into something positive looking at it from a broader signage perspective.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The Bonfyre had a strong argument because of its sitting down in, but that doesn’t exist on the other end of the building where the Egg & I sign is. The idea of balancing the buildings is not very compelling.
 - It’s not a lot of visibility for a tenant from the Beltline at those speeds. There is still a grade change there and that tenant needs a more visible sign.
- Unlike Bonfyre the Egg & I façade is visible from the Beltline. There is no justification for the blade sign.

- I can't see supporting this.
 - The Secretary stated that City staff supports both options as outlined in the memo by Brad Murphy, Planning Division Director.
 - It's fine, you need a sign, this is much better than the previous design.
 - Once this bridge is in place, for horizontal signage at the ground level, do you anticipate that being obstructed?
 - I don't think they'll be any more obstructed than they already are by the viaducts (Tucker).
 - If this was a typical commercial building you would get a wall sign and a projecting sign (Secretary).
 - If all the letters were the same size would that destroy the logo?
 - I think it would because we replicated what their logo was and their letters are skewed a bit back and forth (Marty).
- This has a Dr. Seuss quality to it.
- In lieu of a vertical sign on the blade did you study a horizontal sign not unlike Bonfyre on the east façade?
 - We did not, there had never been any discussion like that at any previous UDC meetings. There are also established sign areas on that east elevation and if we start adding signs at the bottom level it will cluster things up.
 - Without seeing a photograph that shows the existing sign not being visible I'm hard-pressed to support this. I don't think it complements the architecture.
 - Maybe we need to revisit the acceptable locations of signs on this project.
 - Att. Black spoke about the presumption of the project developers that the signage on one end would be the signage on the other end and commitments have been made to tenants. If we can't get the signage that was promised we'll have bigger issues. I found it confusing and this is what I do for a living, so it's fair for them to assume they would get the signage because the process was not clear.
 - We're having this whole conversation and we haven't seen views of this from the Beltline.
 - We should be supporting this, if both Brad and Matt are in favor we should be supporting this. It's a sign.

ACTION:

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by Rummel, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-1) with Barnett voting no.

A previous motion by Huggins for final approval, seconded by Rummel, Failed on a vote of (2-3) with Huggins and Rummel voting yes, and Barnett, Slayton and O'Kroley voting no.

A motion was made by Huggins, seconded by Rummel, to Redo/Rescind the previous action.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 4 and 6.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 2501 West Beltline Highway

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	4

General Comments:

- Sign need hasn't been documented.