

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

November 17, 2021



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 1050 East Washington Avenue
Project Name: The Arden/Madison Youth Arts Center
Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage
Legistar File ID # [64508](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review of signage for a mixed-use building consisting of commercial space and apartments facing East Washington and The Madison Youth Arts Center facing East Mifflin. It also is part of a larger zoning lot, sharing access with the Lyric building at 1010 East Washington, which is another mixed use building consisting of commercial space and apartments. This zoning lot is located in a Traditional Employment (TE) District, as well as Urban Design District #8, and abuts East Washington Avenue (6 lanes, of 25 mph), North Ingersoll Street (2 lanes, 25 mph), East Mifflin Street (2 lanes, 25 mph), and North Brearly Street (2 lanes, 25 mph).

Pursuant to Section 31.043(4)(b), MGO, the UDC shall apply the following criteria upon review of an application for a Comprehensive Sign Plan:

1. *The Sign Plan shall create visual harmony between the signs, building(s), and building site through unique and exceptional use of materials, design, color, any lighting, and other design elements; and shall result in signs of appropriate scale and character to the uses and building(s) on the zoning lot as well as adjacent buildings, structures and uses.*
2. *Each element of the Sign Plan shall be found to be necessary due to unique or unusual design aspects in the architecture or limitations in the building site or surrounding environment; except that when a request for an Additional Sign Code Approval under Sec. 31.043(3) is included in the Comprehensive Design Review, the sign(s) eligible for approval under Sec. 31.043(3) shall meet the applicable criteria of Sec. 31.043(3), except that sign approvals that come to Comprehensive Design Review from MXC and EC districts pursuant to 31.13(3) and (7) need not meet the criteria of this paragraph.*
3. *The Sign Plan shall not violate any of the stated purposes described in Sec. 31.02(1) and 33.24(2).*
4. *All signs must meet minimum construction requirements under Sec. 31.04(5).*
5. *The Sign Plan shall not approve Advertising beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.11 or Off-Premise Directional Signs beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.115.*
6. *The Sign Plan shall not be approved if any element of the plan:*
 - a. *presents a hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic on public or private property,*
 - b. *obstructs views at points of ingress and egress of adjoining properties,*
 - c. *obstructs or impedes the visibility of existing lawful signs on adjacent property, or*
 - d. *negatively impacts the visual quality of public or private open space.*
7. *The Sign Plan may only encompass signs on private property of the zoning lot or building site in question, and shall not approve any signs in the right of way or on public property.*

Section 33.24(15)(e)10., Signage Criteria for Urban Design District No. 8, indicates the Urban Design Commission shall consider in each case those of the following guidelines and requirements as may be appropriate to signage:

a. Guidelines.

- i. Preferred sign types include building mounted signs, window signs, projecting signs, and awning signs.
- ii. Signs should be simple and easy to read.
- iii. Sign colors should relate to and complement the primary colors of the building facade.
- iv. Sign design and placement should fit the character of the building and not obscure architectural details.
- v. Signage should generally be centered within the prescribed signable area of the building.
- vi. Plastic box signs are highly discouraged.
- vii. Signs displaying illuminated copy should be designed so that when illuminated, the sign appears to have light-colored copy on a dark or non-illuminated background.
- viii. Individually mounted backlit letters are an encouraged form of signage.
- ix. The use of small, well-designed building-mounted light fixtures is a preferred method of illuminating signage.
- x. Freestanding signs should be attractively designed. Signs should be coordinated with adjoining properties and public street signage to avoid visual clutter.

Ground Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance: This zoning lot is allowed up to two ground signs with a combined net area of 96 sq. ft., with a maximum net area of 48 sq. ft. per side, and a maximum height of 10' for monument style signs, based off of the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes. The ordinance also allows for lots with frontage 500' or more, as well as a vehicle entrance on that frontage, to have an additional monument-style ground sign, no larger than eight feet in height, with 32 sq. ft. per side, located at each vehicle entrance. If a ground and projecting signs are displayed on the same a zoning lot, only one (1) of such signs, where permitted may exceed twelve (12) square feet in net area.

Proposed Ground Signage: The applicant is requesting for the zoning lot to have three ground signs, with a combined net area of 158.08 sq. ft. There are two existing monument-styled ground signs on the zoning lot. The multi-tenant ground sign at Lyric was approved with a total net area of 66.5 sq. ft. and an overall height of 8' 5", and the Arden ground sign, which is also a multi-tenant sign, has a total net area of 51.58 sq. ft. and an overall height of 8'. The proposed third ground sign would have a total net area of 40 sq. ft., which would be located in a landscape bed at the intersection of East Washington Avenue and North Ingersoll Street, and have an overall height of 5'.

Staff Comments: While the Lyric parcel and Arden parcel may not appear to be a zoning lot, there is an easement agreement between the two properties sharing alleyway access to their separate underground parking garages, which makes it a single zoning lot. The two existing ground signs on the site identify the name of each building, as well as the commercial tenants located inside. There is not enough space on the Arden ground sign for The Madison Youth Arts Center, nor would it effectively direct visitors to the center. Even though the space shares the parking garage with the Arden, there isn't any direct access between The Arden and The Madison Youth Arts Center. Instead, visitors will have to use the art center's primary entrance on East

Mifflin Street. In order to successfully direct vehicular traffic to the Madison Youth Arts Center entrance, the applicant is proposing a separate ground sign, which would be installed at the corner of East Washington Avenue and North Ingersoll Street. The sign design is similar to the other ground signs on the zoning lot, having a routed face with push through acrylic letters, and would be large enough to direct visitors to the site, yet not compete in size with the other ground signs. The colors used in the sign would match the proposed projecting for the art center on East Mifflin Street. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Staff comments regarding other signage: The wall sign and projecting sign shown for the Madison Youth Arts Center comply with Chapter 31 and do not require additional approvals from UDC. The applicant also notes that the signage for the Arden commercial tenants facing East Washington Avenue will also comply the Sign Ordinance.

Notes:

- It should be noted in the final CDR “Future signage submittals not specifically addressed by this document shall comply with the standards of Chapter 31.”
- Signage on the Lyric site should be documented for the final CDR packet.