

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: October 26, 2016

TITLE: 950 John Nolen Drive – Comprehensive Design Review/Signage Exception in UDD No. 1 for “Watermark Lofts.” 14th Ald. Dist. (43945)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: October 26, 2016

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, John Harrington, Sheri Carter, Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, Richard Slayton and Dawn O’Kroley.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of October 26, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a Comprehensive Design Review/signage exception in UDD No. 1 for “Watermark Lofts” located at 950 John Nolen Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project were Kristen Eastman, Robb Kahl and Scott Tebon, representing Watermark Lofts.

The number of signable areas has been reduced throughout the property. They have centered the signable areas in the sign band directly above the tenant spaces. To maintain architectural consistency with the building they have also added the requirement that all backer panels must use the same finish. They have taken into consideration the Commission’s suggestion to place the sign under the balconies. They have implemented a design concept of a below canopy sign with a clearance of 8-feet. From a visibility standpoint, what they are proposing is the best option for this property. This keeps the signs above the tenant entry locations and is allowed to be at a height for people visiting the site. The Secretary noted that there was an issue about whether or not the height of the building relative to grade is actually what is represented. At the time the sign band was created underneath the balcony, an exception was not requested.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- This is the problem when we have signage that comes after the building. You’re supposed to think of this when the building is designed, not to come back later and plaster things on the building. I’m still not persuaded of the “stick them on the building” solution.
- Why can’t they use the balcony edge where it was originally proposed?
 - It was originally approved in this gray band, way underneath.
- I’d be willing to go wider with your sign, if it were still under the balcony. It could even come closer to the balcony if you wanted.
- A hanging sign? I don’t have a problem with that.

- You could put “Generations Title” as two words in a larger band there, that would work, but plastering the building is not going to work for me.
- I would like to see if they went to that first band under the balcony, the top of the sign wider and maybe out from the face.
- If we run with that concept, it’s no higher than that middle horizontal band. It’s a compromise.
- We need to see this in a better version.
- I wonder if the sign background could be more of that gray color, if you do want some contrast. If you’re going to make it an element I don’t know if it should be the same color as the building behind it.
- If we are going to put it on the balconies they could potentially put a 3-sided wrap around that’s not a sign band and that would be the only place any tenant would have their signs located so there’s one more level of consistency between bays, but every bay is wrapped the same.

ACTION:

On a motion by O’Kroley, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item to allow the development of sign options consistent with the comments made for further consideration. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0).