

## AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** April 9, 2008

TITLE: 717 John Nolen Drive – Street Graphics  
Variance. 14<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (09654)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

DATED: April 9, 2008

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Bruce Woods, Marsha Rummel, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, John Harrington, Bonnie Cosgrove, Richard Wagner and Jay Ferm.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of April 9, 2008, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Street Graphics Variance located at 717 John Nolen Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project were Aaron Williams, Christopher Thiel and John Lichtenheld, all representing Schreiber/Anderson. Williams provided details of a dual component ground sign requiring variances to be granted from the provisions for Urban Design District No. 1 by the Commission. The ground sign structure is located within 2-feet of the public right-of-way where provisions of Urban Design District No. 1 require a 20-foot setback for a sign that exceeds 20 square feet in size. The combined elements of the ground sign exceed 20 square feet, thus requiring a 20-foot setback where only a 2-foot setback is provided. Williams noted that at a 2-foot setback from the property line where 30-feet of distance remains between the sign and the outermost improved lane of John Nolen Drive. The second variance provides for consideration of the square footage of a base and top component of a non-traditional ground sign in excess of 30 square feet in area allowed under the provisions of Urban Design District No. 1. The face of the ground sign identifies the professional disciplines associated with Schreiber/Anderson & Associates, noted as "Landscape Architects, Engineers, Planners." The base structure will feature these graphics within a signable area of 2'-4" X 7'. Since the base structure does not provide for a display of a message in two opposite opposing faces and displays them at a 90-degree orientation to each face, each face counts separately toward the total square footage per sign allowed for a ground sign. The second element provides that atop the base of the ground sign graphic is a logo cube featuring the identification "SAA" for Schreiber/Anderson & Associates, also on two 90 degree oriented faces at a size of 2'-6" x 4', also requiring measurement as individual faces providing for a ground sign with four separate faces that must be counted toward the total square footage of the graphics contained within the ground sign structure at the combined total square footage of ground sign graphics requires a 42 square foot variance above the 40 allowed under the provisions of the Urban Design District. Williams emphasized the sight line distances and view quarters of the sign from various positions along John Nolen Drive. Following the presentation the Commission noted the sign's/sign's unique orientation to the property's John Nolen Drive frontage, with a general consensus that the adjacent right-of-way's unique orientation, as well as the positioning and design of the sign were an appropriate basis for consideration of the variance. Discussion by the Commission emphasized the following:

- Agree with visibility issue for sign as a basis for sign need.
- Design issue resolved but uncomfortable with the setback issue.

- Not crazy about setback, a 10-foot setback would be OK but not a 20-foot setback variance.
- The listing of disciplines on both sides of the base component is too busy, support a 10-foot setback.
- Angle of sign dictates that both sides will not be visible at the same time.
- The sign is more than 20-feet from the edge of the existing walkway in the public right-of-way, therefore no problem with actual setback.
- Don't want to set a precedent; move sign.

Speaking in support of the project were John Lichtenheld and Christopher Thiel. Lichtenheld noted that the property line is usually 6-12" from the sidewalk, but in this case the property line is pushed back meeting a normal distance (20-feet) but utilizing right-of-way.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by Harrington, seconded by Rummel, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-2-3) with Barnett and Slayton voting no. The motion for final approval noted that the physical situation between the location of the ground sign and the actual improved public right-of-way provides for an equivalent setback of 20-feet as would be required under the provisions of Urban Design District No. 1, which utilizes unimproved public right-of-way functionally maintaining the required physical setback.

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 5, 6, 6 and 6.5.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 717 John Nolen Drive**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	-	-	-	-	6.5	-	-	6.5
	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	5
	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	6
	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	6

General Comments:

- OK with change.
- Nice sign but too close to right-of-way.
- Precedent is the concern (20' setback variance).
- Nice sign, in this setting the setback variance is appropriate.