



Agenda Item #: 2

Project Title: 2909 Landmark Place - Signage Exception. 10th Alder Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 79617

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Shane Bernau, Wendy Von Below, Christian Harper, Marsha Rummel, and Rafeeq Asad

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of September 20, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a signage exception located at 2909 Landmark Place. Registered and speaking in support was Zane Nichols. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Jeff White.

The new sign marks an updated version of their brand, logo and marking of their 50th anniversary. The current sign sits at the third floor, has a blue face with a blue halo light, where several neighboring signs are also high up on buildings, many of whom have white channel letter faces. A sign with white faces has been removed from this building in recent months. The new sign will be viewed from the West Beltline Highway and the frontage road. The current signage does not face any residential areas. The white channel letters and white light will allow for more visibility. The sign will be a complement to the neighborhood that has like signage and the business itself.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- This proposed elevation is not currently allowed?
- (Secretary) Correct. There is a little more history here, this property was annexed from the Town of Madison. The Town had permitted the original sign; any changes to this sign needs to meet the City's standards. An exception is required because the sign is on a non-qualifying elevation. It is consistent with size requirements.
- Welcome to Madison and our sign code ordinance.
- Is the potential for halo lit letters something you are open to, or would that change the size or character of the sign?
 - It will change the character a little bit and won't have the same illumination. It won't be as bright, but it would be similar to the others signs around. We would like to stick with what is proposed.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The white facing letters. Unfortunately I know the neighboring signs very well, I can see them from miles away given their elevated position on a hill top. I understand the reasoning with exposure to the Beltline and agree with not facing residential. The position on the building is ok. A lot of the precedent images are just glaring on top of buildings, specifically at the effigy mounds at Forest Hill Cemetary, you can see these signs miles away and I don't think that is necessary. I would strongly encourage we ask for halo lit on this project.
- I do agree that the location is a fine location, but I also agree with Shane's comments.

A motion by was made by Bernau, for conditional approval with halo lit channel letters instead of white facing letters. The motion was seconded by Von Below.

Discussion on the motion:

- Signage is different from architecture. We don't want to design projects for people, but now we are designing signs. Is halo lit going to be that much of a difference? And with the rest of the signs already there that are not halo lit, what is one more going to do?
- I get it, I'm still going to be staring at those other white facing signs from miles away in the dark, but you have to start somewhere. I think the halo makes for less light trespassing, and less light generally.
- Halo lit is not a requirement in all areas of the City?
- (Secretary) It is not a requirement, it is part of the design aesthetic.
- I would encourage the Commission to consider visual harmony between signs. This was in the Town of Madison, it could be the beginning of a transition as well.
- Could someone help me understand, how would it fit the existing condition if this passed? And what does it look like different than what was proposed?
- (Secretary) Generally, halo lighting is more of a glow versus a glaring light. The halo lit sign the light is reflected off the building and glows forward.

Action

On a motion by Bernau, seconded by Von Below, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** with the condition that the sign be halo lit channel letters instead of white facing letters.

The motion was passed on a vote of (4-1-1) Bernau, Harper, Rummel, and Von Below voting yes; Asad voting no; and Chair Goodhart non-voting.