

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: April 5, 2006
TITLE: 5103 Commercial Avenue – Comprehensive Design Review of Signage for a Ground Sign. 3 rd Ald. Dist. (03184)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: April 5, 2006	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Paul Wagner, Chair; Ald. Noel Radomski, Lisa Geer, Cathleen Feland, Jack Williams, Bruce Woods, Michael Barrett, Todd Barnett, Robert March and Lou Host-Jablonski.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of April 5, 2006, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review of Signage for a ground sign located at 5103 Commercial Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project was Reverend John W. Grant. Prior to the presentation, staff noted to the Commission that the existing ground sign on the site was the subject of the approval of a variance application to increase its size from the normally 32 square feet allowed under the provisions of the Street Graphics Ordinance, to 40 square feet as currently exists on the site. It is proposed to construct a new ground sign in an alternative location. The new sign is 9.7' tall, 46.8 square feet of a combined graphic and electronic reader board (LED) on a brick base located approximately 9'-4½" from the property line along the westerly side of the main driveway access to the church property. The existing sign is located on the easterly side of the main access drive. The necessity to provide for the relocation and increased size of the new ground sign is based on it exceeding the 32 square feet size limitation under the requirements of the Street Graphics Control Ordinance and the lack of a 32 square foot setback with the 9'-4½" setback as proposed. Reverend John Grant and Roy Grant appeared and presented details on the signage proposal before the Commission, emphasizing its need based on the isolative nature of the church's parcel due to surrounding highway right-of-way, the prevailing speed limit of 55 miles per hour on the adjacent Commercial Avenue (County Trunk T), combined with the significant setback from the centerline of the highway of the church's property along with visibility issue due to existing landscaping and berming. Rev. Grant also cited the need to provide for the electronic reader board utilizing an LED lighting source to provide for the need to convey messages for the many different functions within the Calvary Gospel Church facility that includes a licensed daycare, preschool, a grade school, Spanish speaking church services, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program. Following the presentation, the Commission expressed concerns on the following:

- It was noted that defining the sign by solid angle rather than size based on distance and setback is appropriate in the physical circumstances relevant to the church's property and situation; therefore supports approval.
- Disagrees with the above opinion; the vantage point from the highway versus property, portrays this as a "billboard" and is precedent setting if approved.
- The area is rapidly developing and feels that currently posted high vehicular speeds will be reduced as development occurs.

- Consideration should be made to place the reader board up high with the church sign below if approval is considered.
- Issue with the number of lines and letter height in regards to producing over-sized graphics such as displaying a single word and/or graphic across the whole field of the electronic reader board.
- Problem with the relationship with the brick base to the sign. Reduce the overall mass by placing the sign on two brick pairs separated to reduce the overall mass.
- The old sign is much more attractive and could be repaired and be more complementary to the building.
- The identification versus the advertising quality proposal is the issue and a precedent if sets.

ACTION:

On a motion by Geer, seconded by March, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (9-0). The motion provided for approval of a modified proposal for the ground sign including the electronic reader board/LED graphic and church sign at a total of 40.5 square feet with a split double column support base with the sides of the cabinets for both the church sign and electronic reader board to line up and both to be proportionate in size. In addition, any line on the reader board should not exceed the height of the upper case "C" of the Calgary portion of the static portion of the ground sign graphic. In addition, the reader board shall be no more than 50% of the overall graphic.

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, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5 and 6.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 5301 Commercial Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	4
	-	-	-	-	5	-	5	5
	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	5
	-	-	-	-	6	-	6	6
	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	5
	5	5	-	5	-	-	-	5
	-	-	-	-	5	-	4	5
	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	5

General Comments:

- This proposal is edging towards a highway-oriented billboard, not simply an identification sign. There is not a compelling reason to grant this variance.
- Change back base to 2 brick piers. LED letters no larger than 10-inches.
- This area won't be 55 mph for long; a larger sign would work against future quality design.
- Not unique enough of situation for precedent.