

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: June 8, 2011

TITLE: 237 Langdon Street – Comprehensive Design Review. 8th Ald. Dist. (22558)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: June 8, 2011

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Marsha Rummel, Mark Smith, Dawn O’Kroley, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, John Harrington, R. Richard Wagner, Melissa Huggins, Jay Handy and Henry Lufler, Jr.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of June 8, 2011, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review located at 237 Langdon Street. Appearing on behalf of the project was Mary Beth Growney Selene, representing Ryan Signs. Barnett noted that the project was before the Commission due to the backlighting and height. He was concerned this would set a precedent. Growney Selene spoke to why the sign needs to be backlit when there are no other signs of this type in this area. She responded it will make the sign look very classy at night. She said there are no other lit signs in this neighborhood because lighting without Comprehensive Design is not approved in an R6 District. The lighting itself will probably be less invasive than any building lighting. The lighting would be white with red lettering. O’Kroley thought this was out of character for the historic and residential context of the neighborhood, and if it is already not a trend for this area she doesn’t support starting that. Growney Selene responded that they have spoken to Landmarks staff and was told by Amy Scanlon that she would administratively approve the sign. Smith asked for the wattage and photometrics. Growney Selene showed a sample of what the sign would look like with a 2-inch projection off the wall. Barnett stated that the Commission’s assumption would be the sign needs to be lit because the wall is not being lit; he thinks the motion could be made to approve the lighting as long as there is no uplighting. Barnett did agree that this seems out of context. Both Smith and Barnett could not think of any fraternity or sorority that uses backlit signage. Smith compared it to backlighting house numbers in a residential neighborhood. Slayton asked if lighting on the face was preferred or no lighting at all. Smith was inclined to not light it at all because these houses are lit almost 24/7; he would prefer that to be their “calling card” from the street or sidewalk. O’Kroley asked if the door was recessed, which it is.

A motion was made by O’Kroley to relocate the signage to the alcove which would allow the applicant to light the alcove and have the signage in a lit area, and allow the relocation of the numbered signage for the building. She does not think lit signage is appropriate for this location. Barnett thought putting the sign inside the alcove would prevent visitors from seeing it from the east or west. He also thought the sign was 3-4” too tall and out of scale. The motion failed for lack of a second.

ACTION:

On a motion by Smith, seconded by Barnett, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-2-1) with Lufler and O’Kroley voting no and Huggins abstaining. The motion provided for no backlighting. An earlier motion by O’Kroley to relocate the sign to an alcove, failed for lack of a second.

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 and 6.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 237 Langdon Street

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

General Comments:

- A bit large for space.
- Backlit a no-go on Langdon.
- No illumination makes it better.