

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: March 4, 2009
TITLE: 2501 and 2601 West Beltline Highway – Motion to Reconsider Comprehensive Design Review (Continuation). 14 th Ald. Dist. (10706)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: March 4, 2009	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Bruce Woods; Chair, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, Ron Luskin, Dawn Weber, Mark Smith, Jay Ferm, Ald. Marsha Rummel, Richard Wagner, and John Harrington.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of March 4, 2009, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review located at 2501 and 2601 West Beltline Highway. Appearing on behalf of the project were Bradley Hutter and Michael Lawton, representing Arbor Gate Development; Jeff Femrite, representing Meriter Hospital, Inc.; Ald. Tim Bruer, Mary Beth Growney Selene, Melissa Huggins, Sean Baxter and John Eisenhauer. In initiation of discussion on this item, staff noted that its listing on the agenda was the result of a motion by Rummel, seconded by Harrington at the special meeting of February 25, 2009 to provide a “motion to reconsider final approval of the Meriter Heart and Wellness Center” secondary tenant signage to be placed on the regular agenda for March 4, 2009. In speaking to reconsideration of the item, Rummel cited that the lack of full information on the proposal such as a review and report by Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator with the Commission’s consideration of the item was not available. Tucker provided an overview of the secondary tenant signage with the Commission’s consideration of the item provisions as approved with the original Comprehensive Design Review (CDR) for the project established at the meeting of July 9, 2008. Tucker noted his role to administer the comprehensive design sign plan established with the ordinance as amended; where issues relative to lack of information on where and how much tenant occupancy for individual tenancies within the building to allow for the use of the secondary signage areas were unclear. Further discussion with the Commission questioned what was wrong with the application as approved; Tucker noted the incomplete information on what qualifies as a major tenant to use the secondary sign band. Further discussion noted there were enough issues that needed to be addressed to provide for reconsideration. On a motion by Rummel, seconded by Wagner, the Urban Design Commission voted to reconsider its previous approval of the signage for the Meriter Wellness Center within the secondary sign band of the Arbor Gate development. The motion passed on a vote of (7-2-1) with Smith and Slayton voting no and Luskin abstaining. Continued discussion by the Commission was as follows:

- Voted for reconsideration for discussion purposes but maintain support with previous approval of the signage.
- Don’t want to micromanage what’s major for landlord; agree with Rummel concept relevant to magnet tenant utilizing small square footage but provides synergy for occupancy of building as a candidate for use of the secondary sign band.
- The Commission’s role is to look at sign for lighting design and aesthetics.

As part of continued discussion Tucker provided an explanation as to the break down of existing tenant signage per floor, as well as a review of the previous minutes of July 9, 2008 against the recorded proceedings of the meeting noting the accuracy of the staff report. Ald. Tim Bruer spoke to the need to not allow sign proliferation on the building to eliminate any potential for a “billboard-like appearance.” Ald. Bruer further spoke to the need to enforce an informal policy on restricting the use of the secondary signage band for tenancies that don’t constitute themselves to be major. Continued discussion by the Commission was as follows:

- Before signs are reviewed by the Urban Design Commission there needs to be an agreement with the landlord and tenant on its appropriateness.
- Atty. John Femrite spoke in opposition to motion for reconsideration, representing Meriter, noting that the entire original approval of the CDR contained no discussion relative to square footage as signage on the building, where the signage proposed has been approved between the landlord and tenant, and has followed the procedures of the comprehensive design plan, including obtaining approval of the landlord.
- Ald. Bruer reiterated his concern with signage proliferation and appearance as billboard-like, noting the need to determine criteria for use for secondary sign band in terms of tenant’s space, size and location. He further noted his concern with building owner’s ability to regulate tenant signage based on lease terms without some effective enforcement policy relative to signage by the City as part of its consideration.
- Further discussion on the item noted that the building’s ownership representative, Brad Hutter, had provided a letter of consent in support of the proposed sign.

Further discussion noted that the comprehensive sign plan should remain as passed but needs to provide greater scrutiny on future comprehensive design review consideration in order to get a better handle on what is proposed and accompanying restrictions. Further discussion noted the precedent would be in a wrong way if prior approval was rescinded. Additional comments on the comprehensive design review plan noted review in terms of total number of location of signs shall remain as passed but there needs to be greater scrutiny; it’s up to landlord to determine who gets signage.

ACTION:

On a motion by Rummel, seconded by Wagner, to **RECONSIDER** passed on a motion of (10-0).

On a motion by Slayton, seconded by Weber, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of signage for the Meriter Wellness Center within the secondary sign band as part of the Arbor Gate Development. The motion was passed on a vote of (9-0-1) with Luskin abstaining. Following approval the Commission noted it is the landlord’s role, not UDC to determine who gets signage in each specific location within the secondary sign band as previously limited with the Commission’s original consideration of the comprehensive design review for Arbor Gate.

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 is 4.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 2501 and 2601 West Beltline Highway

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

General Comments:

- Landlord should determine what tenants are eligible for secondary signage, not UDC.
- Signage/tenant why reconsider aesthetics? Number? Maximum 6 secondary.
- Original sign application was fine.