

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: December 3, 2014

TITLE: 829 East Washington Avenue –
Comprehensive Design Review in UDD
No. 8. 6th Ald. Dist. (36207)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: December 3, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Melissa Huggins, Cliff Goodhart, Dawn O’Kroley, Richard Slayton, John Harrington and Lauren Cnare.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 3, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review in UDD No. 8. Appearing on behalf of the project were Dan Yoder and Matt Tills, representing PAMAF, LLC. This location contains one occupancy permit but three separate businesses. Yoder presented a code-compliant sign package and explained the hardship of needing signs for three businesses. The 7-foot blade sign they are proposing is allowed by code. The tenant signs are proposed to be eight (8) square feet. Some ambient lighting is proposed for nighttime. These signs will help identify the building quickly and easily along this busy vehicle corridor. All three businesses are under the umbrella of “Robinia,” share one kitchen and share the courtyard space.

- I’m not real keen on the subtitles.
- I see one restaurant here and you’re advertising four rooms: the dining room, the bar, the wine bar and the courtyard. They share toilet rooms, ownership, probably staff. The signs are really tasteful and well-designed, but there’s an awful lot of them. I don’t know why you need a sign that says “courtyard” and then a blade sign on top of it. Maybe there’s a way to consolidate that.
 - We can go 2-feet into the public right-of-way and we’re already four inches in the public right-of-way. To consolidate three aspects of this business onto one single sign, you won’t be able to read it, and it won’t be aesthetically pleasing.
- I’m not convinced there are three tenants though.
 - There are three individual identities within this space. This is a unique situation that Matt Tucker (Zoning Administrator), Al Martin and Matt Tills all worked on. I don’t know that there are any other similar situations in Madison.
- They would have to have three separate entrances to get three separate signs.
 - It’s unusual property physically, and this is a unique composition because it’s very long with not a lot of street frontage. Our challenge was to have it not be confusing. It’s important to have a very clear entrance into the space. We’ve exhausted every solution in terms of code-compliance to come up with an effective sign package. These signs are only 8 square feet.
- There’s a lot of restaurants that don’t have subtitles.

- Those are ineffective because you're not telling people what you're offering.
- I have some sympathy for the site given where it's located and what's around it, but could they put signage on the glass?
 - Not really because they have interior mullions. And we're regulated to 30% window covering.
- Can you not use what you see behind the windows to know what's going on inside?
 - I look at it as you're driving down East Washington Avenue, and I'm not looking in storefronts. So you're saying rather than identifying a business we should look in the window?
- I'm not saying that.
- I don't think it helps us to discuss philosophies of advertising or branding, that's not really what we're charged with, we're charged with approving a design. I don't know if anyone here would approve the design as submitted.
- I'm concerned that we're permitting three signs for one establishment.
- But it's based on the finding that the standards are addressed.

ACTION:

On a motion by Cnare, seconded by Harrington, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-1) with Goodhart voting no. The motion provided for no text on the awning valance and no courtyard sign, with a finding that the "Comprehensive Design Review" standards are met.

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 rating for this project is 9.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 829 East Washington Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	9
	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-

General Comments:

- Only objection is that this is five signs for one establishment.