

From: John Jacobs [mailto:jjacobs_msn@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 3:19 PM
To: Martin, Al
Cc: Rummel, Marsha; Mayor; Monks, Anne; Tucker, Matthew
Subject: Mullins' permanent signage - 2550 University Avenue

Dear Mr. Martin,

Could you please distribute this message to the members of the Urban Design Commission prior to today's meeting?
Thanks.

John Jacobs

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TO: Urban Design Commission
RE: Permanent signage for Mullins' project - 2550 University Avenue

I support Mayor Soglin's efforts to reduce sign clutter in our city.

The signage proposal for the Mullins' project at 2550 University Avenue contains way too much excess signage for a building that abuts a residential neighborhood.

With the possible exception of Lucky's, I'm not aware of any other recently approved large apartment or mixed use building in or near central Madison with this level of signage. In my opinion, after the Lucky elephant sign was approved, approval of the large lighted "U"s on the top of the Lucky building was unnecessary and was a mistake. Lucky's is not in the same type kind of neighborhood as Mullins' building in any case.

Quality projects like Sequoya Commons, Grand Central, the Depot, and Monroe Commons do not have the magnitude of excess signage that is being proposed for Mullins.

1. The request for *permanent* approval of *three* Jumbo-Sized (108 square feet) temporary real estate banners that can be placed on the top of the north, east and west elevations "when space is available for lease" should be simply, and flatly, denied. Since there may be an apartment for lease at any time, city residents can forever enjoy the 6 foot by 18 foot "**APARTMENTS FOR RENT**" banners that graced the top floors during construction if this is approved.

In my view, Mullins' non-code compliant banners were appropriate during construction. But now that the apartments are rented (see Sue Springman email below), these huge banners should not go back up, even if they are temporarily permitted until September 1, 2012. Why let Mullins to wrap their building in huge, crude banners if other apartment owners can't? If, as Mullins continually has told the neighborhood, it is such a "high quality" building, why on earth would the owners even want to trash the exterior with these crass banners?

2. The large (5% of total elevation area) *illuminated* "**2550**" signs that Mullins wants to emblazon on the top of the building are unnecessary clutter. A normal assortment of near ground level signs will identify both the apartments and the commercial tenants. This top floor signage - which will be readable from a jet on approach to Truax - is more typical of the large buildings that have been developed west of the beltline, but not those in the central city. I'm confident that folks driving by Mullins will know there's a large apartment building on University Avenue.

3. The three story tall, permanent metal banner that's proposed to identify the building above Old University Avenue is more unnecessary, excessive clutter. Functionally, I can't imagine how to fit "2550" on a 30 foot tall by two foot wide strip and have it look proper. If Mullins had provided the setback they repeatedly promised the neighborhood, they'd have room to work with on their own land instead of cramming it into two feet of sidewalk overhang. It's goofy and unnecessary in any case.

4. If the proposed canopy signs exceed our normal code requirements for a commercial building, I ask that you scale them back to fit the code. Having a PUD should not mean that you don't have to follow at least some standard conditions.

As we block the sky and crowd out trees with high density infill, I ask that we please not pollute what's left of our visual environment with excess and garish signage.

Thank you all for putting so much of your time and effort into serving our community.

John Jacobs