

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: November 19, 2014

TITLE: 441 North Frances Street – Signage and Lighting Package for “The Hub at Madison.” 4th Ald. Dist. (32683)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: November 19, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Richard Slayton, Tom DeChant, Lauren Cnare and Cliff Goodhart.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of November 19, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a signage and lighting package located at 441 North Frances Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Brian Munson and Jeff Zelisko, representing Core Campus. The Secretary noted that Planning staff is fine with the lighting plan so long as it meets ordinances. They are in the leasing stage now and identifying where tenants will go, and are asking for the opportunity to at least explore that some of these areas could have multiple signs per tenant. This has to do with the symmetry of the building and how the signs would be set up. The second component has to do with the residential lobby entrance signage. The scale of that space is almost of a 2-story volume so they have a sign that is designed within the context of that lobby. The third aspect is identification signage at the corner of State and Frances Streets. This has been designed into the context of this building from the beginning. This would be sized in the scale of the building, bring it in close proximity to the streetscape (not up on the 12th story) but also keep enough separation between that signage and the retail signage. All of these will return to staff when the actual tenants are known, but they are now looking for flexibility in the design of these signs. Zelisko discussed the signage in more detail and the lighting which includes wall sconces with LEDs, bow lights underneath canopies and service monitor lights that are also LEDs. Currently they are looking at having nine tenants.

The Secretary noted that the signs up high above the first floor at the corner are the primary objection. But the applicant is asking for other things that we don’t allow on State Street under conventional zoning (such as my Hiple projecting signs). For example, two blade signs for one façade; you only get one, just like you only get one principal wall sign. If you had a tenant space that consists of two bays and they ask for two walls signs we wouldn’t give them that. You get one wall sign, one blade sign. If you look at the State Street elevation most of the blade sign locations are OK, except where they conflict with an upper facade residential/non-commercial uses. We try to avoid those impacts, especially on a new building, of having commercial signage associated with a residential use. You have multiple corner signs that are fairly high up; if those weren’t residential uses it would be less than an issue. The only way we will approve a blade sign at the second floor level is if there is

commercial uses; there are no commercial uses there. The up high “Hub” sign is the most objectionable. Most of your commercial activity is at the pedestrian level. Generally speaking the wall signs are OK.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I don't like any of the blade signs.
- I don't think there is much commercial activity on second floors along State Street, and all those blade signs you're showing are violating that zone.
 - If we had them at a smaller size we could probably make them not go past that level.
- I think it's the number. You're asking for a lot of blade signs not all associated with a real use.
- All the retail is allowed one sign.
 - We're not asking for all the blade locations, we do think there are a couple spots where the symmetry and signage could work.
- All the other places on State Street just have frontage signs.
- They get one blade and one frontage, but we try to locate the blade signs in sensitivity to the architecture and any approximate residential use. As part of it being in the Downtown Core we can require or place restrictions on the placement of signs.
- Can the blade be suspended on the canopy?
- Would something hanging horizontally under a canopy, does that count as a blade sign?
 - No, that's basically a below-canopy fascia sign. You can ask for that under Comprehensive Design too.
- For wayfinding that's good.
 - Our intent is really just to enliven the retail or restaurant experience there.
- I don't like the basic attitude that we're doing something uniform that collects all these smaller pieces we're trying to create (with individually unique architecture). These are different and you're trying to make it uniform; it looks like a big ship coming into port. I'd rather keep the individuality of the pieces that we were so deliberately creating a year ago to make it look like smaller pieces.
- The signage is imposing itself across the various types of architecture.
- It's blurring the distinction of the architecture. If one of the buildings had just blade signs and not any wall signs...
- Or some of the signage was on the façade and some on the edge of the canopy.
- Part of the problem is you're showing the maximum possible.
- I'd be careful with the sconces too. Anything that keeps it at a smaller scale will be more consistent with our original intention.
- You're showing LED strip lights on the canopies or projecting bays.
 - We just have the downlights in those canopies. The glass ones don't have them. No LED strip lighting.
- The same signage on the very lightweight glass canopy that's sitting on a steel channel I-beam, I don't know that the same use or placement of signage is appropriate.
 - This is right at the front edge, on the glass one there's a steel element that's setback so it will feel different, plus you'll kind of see through it.
- It strikes me that all the blade signs on this corner building just break up the presentation of that building.
- There is strong design here, you do not want the tenants to junk that up with their individuality. That's not something we could support.
- I was struck that the entrance sign at the residential part is actually too small. I don't want the big Hub sign at the top but I'd be OK with it at the entrance.

- I'm hearing no signage above the canopies. But maybe more artistic liberty at the actual residential entry.
- Right, perhaps the letters H-U-B rather than the beer can they have up there now.
- Staff should review the lighting of that corner where the Hub signage is currently showing to be sure it's not too bright.

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by Cnare, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0). The motion provided for the following:

- No blade signs above the canopies along State Street or Frances Street for the main corner structure; except for the lower story portion of the Frances Street retail south of the residential entry.
- Permit two signs below the canopy near the entrance on the frontage structure.
- Subtle lighting within the corner element but not facing out.
- A mix of lighting element features (sconces) façade that vary with each type of lower level storefront facade.
- Allow for a larger "Hub" entry sign on the lower level at Frances Street.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 441 North Frances Street

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

General Comments:

- Too much signage.