



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 617 North Shore Drive

Application Type: Signage Exception Pursuant to MGO 31.043(3) to Permit the Use of Wall signs on a Building Façade not Adjacent to Off-Street Parking Area
UDC is an Approving Body

Legistar File ID #: [85976](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Tom Weber, Camp Randall Rowing Club | Mary Beth Growney Selene, Ryan Signs, Inc.

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the installation of a wall sign on a wall that is not adjacent to a parking lot or street, on the lakeside elevation, a non-qualifying elevation for signage.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The Sign Control Ordinance, [MGO Sec. 31.043\(3\)\(d\)](#) states that: *“After a public hearing as provided in Sec. 33.24(4)(e)3(d), the Urban Design Commission (UDC) may permit the use of wall signs on building façades not adjacent to off-street parking areas where, due to a variation of building setbacks, a signable area exists, provided the area of the sign shall not exceed the area of the wall sign permitted on the front of the building.”*

Landmarks Commission Action: The project site is a location designed landmark. As such, the Landmarks Commission is also required to review also review and approve the requested signage. At their November 11, 2024, meeting the Landmarks Commission reviewed and subsequently approved the requested wall sign, subject to the approval of the Parks Division.

Summary of Design Considerations

Project Site Location. The project site is located in Madison’s downtown core with frontage and access from both the lakeside (Monona Bay) and street (North Shore Drive, primary street frontage). The project site is home to Brittingham Boat House, which is a local landmark, as well as the Camp Randall Rowing Club. The site is visible from John Nolen Drive, as well as North Lake Shore Drive.

Existing Signage. Currently the only signage on the property is a small wall sign located on the street facing elevation above the main building entry. This wall sign provides building identification and address information.

Summary of Code Requirements and Proposed Signage. Since the lakeside elevation is not adjacent to an off-street parking area associated with the development or a public street, signage is not allowed on this elevation. As noted above, the UDC may grant an exception to this requirement provided that this sign does not exceed the area of a wall sign permitted on the street-facing elevation. In this case, the Sign Code allows for the larger of the following in calculating the maximum allowable sign area:

- A sign that is not greater than 40 percent of the signable area, which in this case equates to:

105 square feet signable area x 40 percent = 42 square feet maximum sign size, or

- 2 feet of sign area per lineal foot of building frontage, **not to exceed 100% of the signable area (105 square feet)**, which in this case equates to:

84 feet of building frontage x 2 feet = 168 square feet of signage.

However, this option results in a sign that exceeds 100 percent of the signable area (105 square feet), so this the maximum size permitted would be 105 square feet.

- However, either option is further limited, so that the maximum net area of signage cannot exceed 80 square-feet in size.

The proposed sign, at 24.56 square feet, is consistent with the size limitations in the Sign Code.

The proposed sign is comprised of individual channel letters with aluminum faces and sides with a painted finish. The logo will also have an aluminum face and sides with a digitally printed graphic. The sign will be externally illuminated with an LED light wash, mounted under the roof eave, and directed back towards the sign.

Summary of Staff Analysis. A signage exception is required because the sign is located on a non-qualifying elevation, not facing a street or parking area associated with the building. Staff notes that as part the UDC's evaluation of whether a sign should be permitted on a non-qualifying elevation, similar to other signage requests, the proposed location of the signage, site context, overall design aesthetic of the proposed sign, and justification for the request related to visibility and business identification are all a part of the UDC's considerations.

Based on the information presented in the application materials related to design aesthetic, illumination, and justification related to visibility and business identification, staff is supportive of this request. Staff requests the UDC review the proposed sign and make findings based on the following:

- The proposed wall sign is consistent with the code limitations regarding size.
- The sign is placed in a manner that is integrated with the architecture of the building; it identifies building entrances.
- Given the visibility of the building from lake and the need for identification for boaters and drivers along John Nolen Drive, the placement of the sign on a non-qualifying elevation, is necessary and results in a higher level of visibility and business identification than another location on the qualifying elevation.
- Generally, the proposed sign is of quality design aesthetic, including individual channel letters.

Staff Requirements:

Staff notes that as part of the sign permit application, proof of landlord/property owner (City of Madison Parks Division) approval will be required.