

October 12, 2016 (B)

Urban Design Commission
City of Madison

RE: 950 John Nolen Drive Sign Plan Approval – Watermark Lofts – Comprehensive Design Review of a SE Suburban Employment District in UDD #1

Dear Commission,

Attached is the proposed sign plan for the Commercial Site, Zoned SE, located at 950 John Nolen Drive, in UDD #1.

Please note that we intend for any window signs allowable by the Sign Control Ordinance to remain allowable per the ordinance. Also, for reference, we have included the proposed designs for a future tenant moving into the southeast elevation (Generations Title). Additionally, the intent of this CDR is to confirm that the property owner has discretion to allow any tenant to have signage in any one signable area as reasonable close to its space as possible.

We believe the requests related to this request satisfy the seven items for consideration of Madison Sign Control Ordinance, section 31.043(4)(b) Comprehensive Design Review Criteria, as discussed below:

- 1) The signage proposed on the southeast and southwest elevations indeed creates visual harmony between the signs, buildings and site and results in a signage of appropriate scale and character.
- 2) The wall signage proposed for the elevations are intended to identify the property and direct visitors in an effective manner; the proposed ground signs do the same.
- 3) The signage proposed for the elevations are not intended to violate stated purposes of ordinances.
- 4) The signage proposed will meet minimum construction requirements of the Chapter 31 Sign Control Ordinance.
- 5) The signage proposed is on-premise of the owner's property and does not go beyond the restrictions of Advertising or Off-Premise Directional Signs in the Chapter 31 Sign Control Ordinance.
- 6) The signage proposed is not intended to present hazards, obstruct views, obstruct visibility of lawful signs, or negatively impact visual quality, and it does not appear to do so.
- 7) The signage proposed is on the owner's private property.

Following is information specific to Urban District #1 Requirements and Guidelines with requests for exceptions:

4. Signs. Signs in the district shall meet the following requirements and conform as much as possible to the following guidelines.

a. Requirements.

- vi. A minimum setback of five (5) feet from the public right-of-way is required of all ground signs. A minimum setback of ten (10) feet from the public right-of-way is required for signs exceeding ten (10) square feet in net area. A minimum setback of twenty (20) feet is required for all signs exceeding twenty (20) square feet in net area.

The two items italicized immediately below were approved at the 8/17/2016 UDC meeting.

There is an existing ground sign on the property; it is 15 square feet, 3'-6" from the curb, and setback 33' from the property line. While there is currently no permit for this existing sign, we ask that the sign be allowed where it is currently placed and a permit be issued for it.

A proposed second ground sign, located at the property's driveway off the John Nolen Drive cul-du-sac is designed to 23.2 square feet and proposed location is 4'0" from the property line. The site is located towards the end of the John Nolen Drive Service Road. The placement of this proposed sign is important for those looking seeking this property. The placement of this sign does not interfere with the vision triangles.

vii. The height of a ground or wall sign shall not exceed ten (10) feet along John Nolen Drive or eighteen (18) feet elsewhere in the district unless a higher sign is specifically approved by the Urban Design Commission based on the following criteria:

A. An exception from the height limitation is necessary for a sign located on the site of an establishment to be identifiable and legible from the nearest roadway at prevailing speeds; and The placement of the wall signs allows the building to be identifiable and legible. **The traffic on John Nolen Drive has a speed limit of 35 MPH, and the building setback is approximately 147' from the curb. All signable areas requested have an overall height of 13'4" above the building's sidewalk terrace (noted as 100'-0" on the building's architectural drawings).**

B. An exception from the height limitation will result in a sign more in scale with the building and site and will result in a superior overall design. **The wall signs are designed to fit the scale of the elevations on which they are placed.**

In response to the commissioner's feedback at the 8/17/2016 UDC meeting:

Commissioners' Feedback #1:

"The new sign locations seem to have no relationship whatsoever to the building architecture or tenant entries."

- As a result of commissioners' feedback from the 8/17 meeting, the number of signable areas on the southwest elevation has been reduced. Additionally, the signable areas are centered between architectural elements directly above tenant entrances; specifically, between residential balconies.
- The proposed sign plan is not dramatically different from the original building plan represented.

Commissioners' Feedback #2:

"There's no coherence with any of the signs; they need to relate to the windows and building better; it's a negative impact on the architecture."

- We believe the revised plan included with this application is coherent for these reasons:
 - To maintain architectural consistency with the building, we added the requirement that all backer panels must approximate the James Hardie's "Arctic White" finish. Colors of letter returns, vinyl, trim cap, etc. are at the discretion of the property owner.
 - All designs are similar so that the backer panel will approximate the building to diminish distraction and negative impacts on the building.

Commissioners' Feedback #3:

“Putting it on the white material erodes the value of that composition. Tucked under the balconies or suspended is much more appropriate.”

- With this application, we have included a design concept of an under-canopy, suspended sign for reference. However, after careful consideration, we conclude the under-canopy suspended sign would not be feasible; the canopy height is 10'6", therefore the under clearance of the suspended sign would only be 8'. This will result in in safety hazard concerns for pedestrians.

In summary, the proposed sign plan is intended to optimize property identification. As such, we are seeking approval of this sign plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan E. Pietrzykowski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Pietrzykowski
DP Industries LLC d/b/a **Grant Signs**