



Agenda Item #:	4
Project Title:	414 E. Washington Avenue - Comprehensive Design Review of Signage (CDR) Located in Urban Design District (UDD) 4. 2nd Ald. Dist.
Legistar File ID #:	74667
Members Present:	Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Christian Harper, Shane Bernau, Juliana Bennett and Amanda Arnold
Staff Present:	Katie Bannon, Zoning Administrator
Prepared By:	Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of November 30, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review (CDR) located at 414 E. Washington Avenue. Registered and speaking in support was Duane Johnson, representing Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC. Registered in support and available to answer questions was John Leja, representing LZ Ventures.

The building fronts E. Washington Avenue in a design style typical of an urban apartment building from the early 20th Century, and will be completed early this winter. The CDR shows three sign types in five locations: two gaslight wall signs on Franklin and Hancock Streets, a canopy sign over the front apartment entrance centered in the recessed area along E. Washington Avenue, and two engraved signs flanking the entry. The wall signs and canopy sign are compliant with MGO. The engraved letters are 8-inches tall and are not painted or lit, adding subtle elegance to the architectural detailing of the entry and reinforcing the design goals of the project. The engravings are being considered memorial signs per MGO, and are allowed twelve square feet on each street frontage (3) up to a total of 36 square feet. They are asking for a total of 10 square feet of memorial sign on the left and right side of the upper area. It is a unique ask but they believe the architecture of the project is also unique.

Katie Bannon, Zoning Administrator noted the need for this CDR because the applicant desires two memorial signs on one street frontage. Typically these are not intended to serve as building identification, and are located more at building corners and lower on a building, although location is not specified in the code. One memorial sign is allowed per each street frontage with a maximum of twelve square feet, they cannot be illuminated and do not require permits. The applicant is proposing two memorial signs on one street frontage, staff has concern with regard to CDR criteria #2. There are a lot of similar buildings that do not need two memorial signs like this. Staff requests the Commission make a finding for that criteria for the record. All other signage for the package meets code.

The Commission discussed the following:

- This is a consideration for placement, but nobody asked beforehand and now it's kind of a done deal. I'm wondering what happened in the process that a simple question could have resolved whether this was allowed instead of dealing with it after the fact.
 - We were working on this with the sign company at a very fast pace during the pandemic. The sign company had requested some heavier signage and some additional detailing, we were trying to reel that

back. We were having trouble with ordering materials, we had to order the precast panels so we made the request to make these changes without going back to the City and get their input.

- I would make a general comment that these types of engravings, especially if they're not lit, are fairly subtle. I don't find it problematic from an aesthetic standpoint. We have a lot of respect for the people that are in charge of the sign ordinance and it's disappointing when something like this happens. We don't want to send a message that you can go ahead and do this because we'll approve it anyway. Personally I think this is not a big deal in the scheme of things.
- I drove by there, the memorial signs really come off like architectural detailing. To Katie's point, if there is acceptance by the Commission we really need to go back and be specific about CDR criteria #2 and its necessity due to design aesthetics of this building's architecture.

Action

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Arnold, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (5-0).

The motion noted the following:

It is unfortunate that the designers didn't look at precedent for where memorial signs would be appropriately located, but in this condition, considering the detailing of the building and the materiality, the duplicated memorial signage on the front of the building is acceptable.