

AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: January 11, 2006
TITLE: 126 Langdon Street – Comprehensive Design Review, Wall Sign. 8 th Ald. Dist.	REFERRED:
	REREFERRED:
	REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED:
	POF:
DATED: January 11, 2006	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Paul Wagner, Chair; Cathleen Feland, Robert March, Ald. Noel Radomski, and Lou Host-Jablonski, Todd Barnett and Michael Barrett.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of January 11, 2006, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review for a wall sign located at 126 Langdon Street. Appearing on behalf of the project was John Gibbs of Grant Sign. Gibbs presented details on the proposed wall sign, which was intended to provide consistent signage for several private student housing facilities within the area purchased by FirstWorthing. The new sign was intended to replace an existing oversized internally lit awning sign, which represented an overall reduction of 50% in signage. Staff noted to the Commission that the request for comprehensive design review was necessitated size of the wall sign being well in excess of the 12 square feet allowed within the area; 25 square feet as proposed, as well as beyond the 25% increase in size that a standard sign variance would support. Staff noted to the Commission that, under the “comprehensive design review” ordinance provisions, the Commission is required to make findings on the proposed sign’s consistency. Following the presentation, several Commissioners felt that the wall sign as proposed was necessary to fit a building of this size; within a preliminary motion. Staff emphasized to the Commission that findings on the following were required: “Approve a comprehensive design plan for either an existing or new building should the integration of street graphics into the overall building design be prohibited solely by the restrictions of this ordinance, with the objective of the comprehensive design review being the recognition of exceptional effort to create visual harmony between street graphics, the building and the building site.” Staff noted to the Commission that the desire to approve the sign based on the rationale that it was necessary to fit a building of this size did not fully address the above stated criteria. In addition, staff referenced the definition for comprehensive design review as follows provided further specification on making a finding on the signage as follows:

- “A review process whereby the City’s Urban Design Commission may recognize exceptional effort to integrate street graphics with building architecture by granting special allowances in height, area or setback of street graphics.”

Based on input from staff, a preliminary motion was restated.

ACTION:

On a motion by March, seconded by Feland, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-2) with Barrett and Barnett voting no. The motion provided that the proposed wall sign provided address of the criteria relative to “comprehensive design review” within the Street Graphics Ordinance. In support of making this finding, it was noted that the replacement sign was tasteful and appropriate in scale to replace an oversized awning with a smaller graphic.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 4, 6, 6, 6.5, 7 and 8.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 126 Langdon Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	7
	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	6
	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	8
	-	-	-	-	6.5	-	-	6.5
	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	6

General Comments:

- Sign is certainly an improvement but sign is not fully integrated with building architecture.
- Better than existing awning for this neighborhood.
- Though smaller and more tasteful than the previous sign, this fails to meet the spirit of the ordinance.
- Appropriate to building. We should encourage this sort of branding.
- Sign is appropriate to the building, context and site, which makes a variance acceptable.
- Big improvement over existing canopy/signage.
- Appropriate and in harmony with building architecture.