

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION **PRESENTED:** October 2, 2019

TITLE: 770 Regent Street – Comprehensive Design Review for the UW Campus Hotel.
8th Ald. Dist. (57443) **REFERRED:**
REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary **ADOPTED:** **POF:**

DATED: October 2, 2019 **ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad, Lois Braun-Oddo, Jessica Klehr, Shane Bernau and Craig Weisensel.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of October 2, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review located at 770 Regent Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Aaron Ebent and Nate Gundrum, both representing Mortenson Development.

Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator walked the Commission through the Zoning staff report regarding this request. Staff concerns relate to the size of two signs: one on the canopy and the projecting sign on the east end. There doesn't seem to be a benefit or strong argument for the larger size, particularly for the projecting sign. Staff has visited the site and feel the larger canopy graphics will do its job, while the larger projecting sign seems unnecessary, and the argument has not been made for the need for the larger signs.

Ebent presented the sign package for the Hilton Garden Inn. The site is odd in terms of its location which is what drove the discussions on signage. The signs are consistent with the brand, in scale with the building and will contribute to the project's commercial success. Many hotel guests are first-time visitors or people who will only visit once, it's not a building type where people constantly return, this is about visibility and wayfinding. The building has no primary street presence and it setback approximately 200-feet from Regent Street. It is visible through a narrow viewshed between two office buildings that have mature vegetation. Most people will arrive to the hotel in a vehicle. The site is bounded on the north by the bike trail and on the east by the East Campus Mall, this activates what is otherwise a surface parking lot. The signs proposed include a monument sign at Regent Street identifying the main entry drive (which is in compliance), a canopy sign above the front door, two blade signs, a ground mounted sign, a parking entrance sign for first-time guests, and ancillary plaque signs at the building entrance. Views were shown from Regent Street and East Campus Mall, as well as a comparison of what is allowed for signs by code versus what they are requesting as part of this CDR. Staff does not have an issue with the canopy signage as that identifies the front entrance of the hotel. For the blade sign, 20 square feet would be allowed; they are requesting 44 square feet; legibility is going to be a challenge for that particular sign in a smaller size, but the blue cabinet that will house the sign will catch attention. They are also asking to turn the sign 90 degrees to it is visible from the street.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I'm not seeing the need for blade signs at all when it's right next to the canopy sign. It takes away from the architecture.
 - The primary approach is from Regent Street, but when you look at the greater context there is viability of this sign being seen from West Washington, or if they turn into one of the earlier entrances they might not see where the building is. It's to help from other approaches.
- I see the need for a blade sign but not to the size that you have it. It seems pretty redundant. Being seen from West Washington is a weird angle. As for the "P" sign for parking, once you get to that point you'll know where you are and where the parking is. I do agree that the Hilton Garden Inn above the canopy is more proportionally larger for this building and should be left larger.
- I can see where that blue sign as you approach that driveway from Regent Street is probably what's going to catch your eye. Proportion-wise the smaller one seems it should be of a certain size, and I'm not convinced that it needs to happen on both sides of the building. I'm definitely sure a 4-foot diameter parking sign is crazy, I see no reason for that.
- We have to remember that 9 times out of 10 people are using their GPS to find places. This is just a secondary way of letting people know.
- The end sign distracts from the architecture. The larger canopy sign works out proportionally. I know how much you've worked on this challenging site and you've come a long way. The benefit of the sign is minimal compared to keeping with the architecture.
- The smaller one seems not proportional to the façade.
- Is that smaller blade sign something that would normally be permitted?
 - It needs UDC approval because it does not face the street.

A motion was made by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Weisensel, to approve the sign package as permitted with the exception of the "Hilton Garden Inn" letters over the canopy as proposed by staff at 32 square feet.

Discussion continued as follows:

- (Tucker) In the staff report we had made a recommendation that the blade sign size be bumped up to 32 square feet (permissible is 20). Do you mean the 20 or the 32 blade sign, permitted or recommended?
- What is the City's preference for the diameter of the parking sign?
 - Three square feet.
- Does the sign have to be blue? It takes away from the architecture. If it wasn't blue I would change my vote.
 - I don't know that we can answer that definitively today, but we are willing to look at other color options that work better with the building materials.

Bernau moved to amend the motion to replace the word "permitted" with the words "staff recommended," so both blade signs are 32 square feet, the canopy size as proposed by the architect, and the staff recommended size for the parking circle. The amended motion was seconded by Braun-Oddo.

ACTION:

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Weisensel, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of the signage package as "staff recommended" (32 square foot blade sign) with the exception of the "Hilton Garden Inn" letters over the canopy as proposed by the architect. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-2) with Braun-Oddo, Klehr, Harper and Bernau voting yes; Asad and Weisensel voting no; Goodhart non-voting.