

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION      **PRESENTED:** December 1, 2021

TITLE: 222 W. Gorham Street – Signage Approval  
in the Downtown Core. 4<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist.  
(68169)      **REFERRED:**  
**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

AUTHOR: Kevin Firchow, Acting Secretary      **ADOPTED:**      **POF:**

DATED: December 1, 2021      **ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Tom DeChant, Shane Bernau, Russell Knudson, Craig Weisensel, Christian Harper and Jessica Klehr.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of December 1, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of signage in the Downtown Core located at 222 W. Gorham Street. Registered and speaking in support was Dan Yoder, representing Sign Art Studio.

Staff noted that the Downtown Design Guidelines reference keeping signage simple. This proposal includes a marquee element for live entertainment, with the applicant indicating the necessity to promote live music. Staff notes from a use standpoint that this is considered a restaurant/nightclub, not a theater use.

The applicant proposes very high end signage with traditional open-faced channel letters and exposed neon. The canopy marquee style is very shallow to meet the ordinance for a wall sign. There is accent lighting underneath and changeable copy on the track under the main lettering. They are opaque background so just the letters themselves illuminate. The client has expressed a desire to state the live events and saw this as a tasteful way to achieve that.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Is the changeable text electronic?
  - Those are old school manual, very traditional in every sense.
- It really is an old fashioned marquee in that regard. I kind of like it at this location.
- Happy to see this is old style.
- Please tell me you're going to have a mechanical bull.
  - I would love to be able to answer that, I believe so but I cannot definitively answer that.
- I'm not sure if I understand the blade sign.
  - That one is a reuse of their existing sign from a previous location installed in a code compliant area where the previous blade sign was for the previous business.
- That one was previously approved.

- Are the letters illuminated?
  - The individual placards themselves are lit up. That night rendering you see is pretty indicative when it is illuminated.
- I'm aware of the business and the branding, the font of the signage all aligns with that business, but I can't help but notice a lack of harmony with the building architecture and the style of signage. It may not be something that could be remedied, I wonder if there are opportunities to explore a more modern font perhaps to go with this more modern looking metal building.
  - We went through several renditions. Their actual logo includes a tribal bull head, we knew right away it wouldn't fit the layout of the signable area, so they have come further than what they originally wanted to do. I hear what you're saying, that would be a tough one based on their branding.
- Appreciate your bringing this in front of us. Especially because of the backlighting and not being digital, this is an appropriate location for this type of sign.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Weisensel, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (8-0).