

AGENDA # 3

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: December 1, 2021

TITLE: 825 E. Washington Avenue –
Comprehensive Design Review (CDR) of
Signage Located in Urban Design District
(UDD) No. 8. (67177)

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 Albouras, Christian Harper and Jessica Klehr.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of December 1, 2021, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review (CDR) located at 825 E. Washington Avenue. Registered and speaking in support was Andy Inman. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Jennifer Koester, Aaron Schmillen and Josh Wilcox.

The sign package proposes a wall sign above the primary entrance and a blade sign, a ground sign along E. Washington Avenue, a sign on a separate structure that houses auxiliary equipment for pedestrian arrivals to the hotel, a wall sign for a walk-up food window, and exit signs for one-way exiting onto E. Main Street.

Matt Tucker, Building Inspection Director gave an overview of the signage package, noting the location in UDD No. 8 with overlaying regulations that have been thoughtfully crafted in plans over the years. Signs high on buildings have not been approved, with the preference being at a pedestrian scale appropriate with the design of the buildings being the default. This has resulted in a very well-signed area abutting a 6-lane highway. The principal issue is the code requirement that when projecting signs and ground signs are proposed, one shall not exceed 12 square feet; both could be much larger on their own. They are trying to convey a lot of information in one specific area of the site, which leads to sign clutter. Regarding Sign #6, there is two-way traffic here, points of one-way traffic are along the south and there are signs there already required by Traffic Engineering. There is a conflict with a “do not enter” sign where there are parking spaces; that should be removed from the sign package. Inman noted that there are two-way arrows there, it is incorrect on the sign plan, those arrows should both be exiting. Traffic Engineering would have required those if it is indeed a one-way. Tucker further noted that for the record, the signs higher up on the building are not being requested, that graphic was submitted for reference only.

Inman noted they will verify with Traffic Engineering, understanding their error on the sign plan with the arrows, and asked for approval subject to discussions with Traffic Engineering. Regarding sign clutter, he noted that guests will have to pass the hotel, do a U-turn and come back. The intent initially was the best location for

wayfinding as the trees can make it difficult to see signage on the building. There is desire to maintain consistency of signage along this corridor. The ground sign below the tree canopy will be more visible than the projecting sign on the wall. If a guest is approaching from the west, the projecting sign will be more visible for pedestrians as well as vehicles as a marker to turn into the one-way entrance access point. They appreciate staff's comments, it is a difficult building to sign given the food window, pedestrians, vehicles, transient guests and approaching from this point on E. Washington Avenue.

Tucker noted that if the E. Main Street arrangement is one-way, there needs to be a stop sign on the building side. He is comfortable with the idea put forth about approval at a staff level. The site plan does have a stop sign as confirmed by Ms. Koester. Staff and the applicant can sort out the ingress and egress on E. Main Street.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The site wall that had lettering on it, is that there anymore?
 - This rendering is not intended for approval of signage, that is not what we are proposing.
- The blade sign is probably more effective. The tree issue is more of a rendering perspective, there are other blade signs along that corridor at that height that work well. I prefer that and prefer not to have other things cluttering up the site. I would feel differently if the ground sign were part of the building's composition but it feels unnecessary.
- The two signs at the front are clutter, I prefer not to have signage attached to buildings but I see the possible necessity for it. Choose one or the other. The other signage all meets the requirements as far as appropriateness, with exception of the 'do not enter' and 'play on.' We should also be cognizant of people who don't speak English as their first language, especially if there will be a stop sign there. It needs to be clear and more in keeping with tradition.
- The proposed monument sign on E. Washington Avenue would be to the west of that retaining wall and rise above it? I would agree, one or the other, whichever gives them the highest visibility. I like the scale of the projecting sign, the ground sign is actually more obtrusive.
- If they went with one or the other it could have a larger area.
- If it is one-way flow and we don't want people entering from E. Main Street, I would discourage any signage. Otherwise it's just more clutter.
- Traffic Engineering will dictate there be some standard signage there if it's not an entrance.
 - We will have guests parking at the Livingston ramp, so it's important for pedestrian traffic to know that this is where they enter the hotel. There will be a stop sign and more traditional compliant signage. We did show examples of neighboring signs, Gebhardt has similar blade signs and monument signs.
- Nice looking things happening here. Are any of these not illuminated?
 - Yes all signs are illuminated.
- The round blade sign, the construction detail makes me think it's a really thick massive thing out there. What is the depth of that blade sign?
 - The overall depth is only about 8-inches.

ACTION:

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (9-0).

The motion noted approval of the "eats" sign for the walk-up food service window, the sign on the back auxiliary structure facing E. Main Street, either the ground sign or the projecting sign, but not both, and

approval of the canopy sign. Sign #6 ('do not enter' and 'play on') are not approved at this time, and shall be further discussed with Traffic Engineering and City staff.