

## AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** February 9, 2022

**TITLE:** 5810, 5910, 5710 Mineral Point Road -  
Comprehensive Design Review of Signage  
for CUNA Mutual. 19th Ald. Dist. (69216)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Jessica Vaughn, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** February 9, 2022

**ID NUMBER:**

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

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of February 9, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of Comprehensive Design Review of Signage located at 5810, 5910, 5710 Mineral Point Road. Registered and speaking in support were Mary Beth Grownsey Selene and Bill Fedun. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Bridget Hart.

Matt Tucker, Building Inspection Director, gave an overview of the proposal and identified staff concerns. The request for the CUNA campus involves a choice of face-lit or back-lit signage (staff would choose back-lit), and issues with signage consistency across the broader site. Two of the signs are located very high up on the new building (fifth floor and inset back); these signs are basically lost from the perception of Mineral Point Road, essentially making them vista signs which are not common in this location. Because the building is so tall and forward on the site staff questions these sign locations. He noted that the spandrel glass is an eligible signage area which brings those signs lower and more forward.

Bill Fedun spoke in support, noting CUNA's commitment to Madison and creating a campus connection point with employees. CUNA wishes to allow community and non-profit partners to utilize this building, while serving as a template for the possibilities of what to do on the rest of the CUNA campus in the future.

Mary Beth Grownsey Selene described the signage package and proposed locations for ground signs, large directional signage, campus identification signage and small directional signage designs. All of the proposed signage is compliant with the CDR criteria with exception of the lighting criteria for Signs 5 and 5a. As the existing letters will be updated in the future, she asked the UDC to consider using the new signage as the template and grant approval to the possibility of internally illuminating the letters on designs 5 and 5a. Relative to the building signage being placed on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor façade, this allows for 1,400 feet of legibility from Mineral Point Road and 960 feet from Rosa Road and is consistent with previous UDC approvals within the general area. She noted that the suggested spandrel glass as a possible signable area is an architectural detail, and would require a slatted type of background that is not conducive to back lighting. As the spandrel glass is in place, she

did not know if it would be possible to put a sign there at this point in time. Any replacement of existing wayfinding signage will be consistent with this CDR and will require an alteration to the CDR.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Clarification: We are being asked to approve signs 5 and 5a with face lighting, not back lighting, and this would also set a precedent for revision of other signage on the campus moving to face lighting?
  - We are requesting the option for either/or right now. The client has still not made a final determination on how they want to illuminate signs 5, 5a, 10 and 11. We want flexibility because we're still fine tuning some of that detail.
- I do not care for the face lit signs when they are mounted this high on the building. It does detract from the surrounding neighborhood, in particular this site is located on a hill at a high point within the City. Those are going to be visible from pretty long distances and I don't see the necessity for that. All in all the package looks really nice but I agree with staff comments. I'm most concerned with 10.1 and 11; 5 and 5a I'm less concerned with. I feel it is best practice to conceal that light source, they would be more elegant as backlit. I'm not 100% sold that the upper signs need to be lit at all.
  - The horizontal banding above each story of windows are slots. For backlighting to be effective it needs a solid background. This background material is not the proper application for this type of lighting.
- Nice signage package. What is the intent of the lit signage on the south elevation, who is the audience?
  - Identification of the entire campus, the audience is anyone who can see it and read it.
- The photo you provided on Page 9, to me it looks like that is someone pulled over taking the photo from the driver's seat. I'm questioning who is actually going to see this from Mineral Point Road, I think it's a wider audience seeing it from farther away. The east elevation façade is more successful. Is lighting that south elevation a key element?
  - I think it's important in that if it's not lit people will think there is a mechanical problem with it, when all the rest of the internal signage is illuminated, from a consistency standpoint.
- Some of the images of existing signage shown in the packet are not illuminated, they don't look like letters are burned out, just a different treatment of the signage because it's on a building and not down as a monument or wayfinding sign. If the signage needs to go up there I would be fine if it's not lit. It could be seen as less desirable for people that live in the area. I don't understand why it has to be lit when all the other signage has been successful for years and has not been lit.
- The signage in terms of its height and area on the signable area are not in question, it's just the advisability of signage that may or may not be visible.
  - Correct, if this was not a CDR this signage would be allowed by right.
- If not for the other ground and parking lot signs, they could go ahead and put that on there.
  - Yes, the CDR and the criteria talk about commonality of design.
  - Deliberate not only the location and visibility but whether it should be lit, not lit and how it should be lit. Ground and parking lot signage can be found approvable in the CDR.
  - The three building signs are now currently back-lit.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by Bernau, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0). The motion for approval provided for the following conditions:

- All sign locations are approved as submitted by the applicant.
- Signs 5, 5a, 10.1 and 11 shall be back-lit or not lit at all.

- The motion also approves the ground and wayfinding signage.