



**Agenda Item #:** 2

**Project Title:** 339 W Gorham Street - Comprehensive Design Review of Signage (CDR). (District 4)

**Legistar File ID #:** 83457

**Members Present:** Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Rafeeq Asad, Christian Harper, Marsha Rummel, Shane Bernau, and Russell Knudson

**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Summary

At its meeting of June 26, 2024, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review of Signage (CDR) located at 339 W Gorham Street. Registered and speaking in support was Dan Yoder.

### Summary of Commission Discussion and Questions:

The Commission discussed setting precedent for the rest of the building and requesting staff guidance in discerning how that is addressed in the CDR. The Secretary noted that the CDR is specific about the future signage; each tenant will be allowed a projecting sign and above-canopy sign with the exception of tenant #7, which will only be allowed an above-canopy sign. The CDR also addresses consistency with size, mounting, orientation and projection away from the building. The "Roxxy" is the only one that is being designed with a more horizontal orientation and includes an exception for above canopy signage to dip below by up to five inches, which will also be allowed for future tenant signage. The Secretary noted that the architecture pushes toward projecting and above canopy signage, and the CDR request is consistent with those guidelines and requirements.

The Commission inquired about the reference of sign clutter in the staff report. The Secretary noted that staff did not have a good sense of the pedestrian perspective along State Street and Gorham Street where there is more signage. Projecting signs placed in higher quantities and in close proximity to each other sometimes results in signage that you can't see, and which becomes a question of effectiveness of signage and location of signage. And would an alternate location more spaced-out result in a more viable sign; one that is more visible.

The blade signs seem more readily viewable from the pedestrian scale, otherwise you have to be right in front of the canopy to see what it says. The staff report also acknowledges the overall size of the development and how it encompasses what might otherwise be numerous buildings that would each be permitted their own blade sign.

The Commission inquired about the design intent of the "Roxxy" blade sign. All the other blade signs are symmetrical in their profile and mirror images. Why was that not the case here? The applicant noted that the "Roxxy" blade sign was intentionally designed to be unique with a punk rock 90s vibe. The logo orientation is also part of the brand. A vertical orientation would not work as well with this logo. This design also relates better to the permanent HUB sign on the Gorham Street elevation, which is also horizontally oriented.

The Commission noted that the massing of the building is such that it appears as separate buildings and that multiple projecting signs is acceptable.

The Commission also noted the edge lighting proposed and inquired about the necessity of it. The applicant noted that while not necessary, it is attractive and unique – it adds a higher level of design and relates well to the night-club vibe inside.

The Commission inquired about the use of the “Roxxy” tenant space and how the doors will be used. The applicant confirmed that there are three doors to the tenant space: a main entrance, special event entrance (closest to State Street), and an exit only (centrally located).

A motion was made by Asad, seconded by Bernau, to grant Final Approval of the CDR as presented based on the comments and lack of concerns from Commissioners so far. The motion included findings that the signage as proposed is consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, and that there is not sign clutter, and that the uniqueness of the “Roxxy” logo is within the overall design style of others in the CDR.

#### Discussion on the Motion:

Several Commissioners noted that the signage seems excessive, especially at the corner of State and Gorham Streets, including the “Stuffed Olive” and “Double Tap.” Consideration could be given to removing one of the signs for “Double Tap,” it is too much in close proximity; signage on the door would be sufficient.

Commissioners also noted that it is important to consider the pedestrian perspective, especially as it relates to the tenant spaces, and the appearance of this as multiple buildings, which is not outside of the character for the downtown area. Reiterating that the amount of signage is appropriate.

A motion was made to amend the original motion, moved by Rummel, seconded by Knudson, to remove the “Double Tap” blade sign from the package. The motion failed on a vote of (3-2-1) with Rummel, Knudson, and Harper voting yes; Asad, and Bernau voting no; and Goodhart non-voting.

Vote on the original motion for Final Approval of the CDR as presented, a motion made by Asad, seconded by Bernau, to grant Final Approval of the CDR as presented based on the comments and lack of concerns from Commissioners so far. The motion included findings that the signage as proposed is consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, and that there is not sign clutter and that the uniqueness of the “Roxxy” logo is within the overall design style of others in the CDR. The motion failed on a vote of (2-3-1) with Asad, and Bernau voting yes; Rummel, Harper, and Knudson voting no; and Goodhart non-voting.

A motion was made by Knudson, seconded by Rummel, to grant Final Approval of the CDR, noting that the blade signage on Gorham is consistent with the CDR requirements and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, and that some sign clutter be reduced by eliminating one sign from the “Double Tap” tenant.

#### Discussion on the motion:

Commissioner Asad commented on the design perspective, that although the buildings are designed to look different, they are one cohesive project. It doesn't automatically create sign clutter because there are multiple signs. This is designed to look like different buildings. It's a pedestrian thoroughfare. Ask you to reconsider trying to eliminate “clutter” because of an additional blade sign that would potentially be allowed if the buildings were separate.

The pattern of development along State Street is such that you have narrow storefronts and a pedestrian environment where signs are naturally closer together.

State Street is a pretty visually graphically busy area. It's in line with what you expect there, with what we would typically deem appropriate for State Street, and furthermore there's a lot of wandering down this street. If you're on the

same street side as the development you're often times looking up and ahead, or on the other side looking across. The canopy has some utility from that perspective; both signs are appropriate.

Commissioner Knudson clarified that his motion did intend to allow the sign design team to choose which of the "Double Tap" signs would be eliminated.

The motion makes specific findings that the proposed signage on the Gorham Street elevation is consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines as proposed, in that they do not create sign clutter on the street elevation, and that the "Roxy" sign is consistent with CDR Criteria #1 related to visual harmony in the overall design of the sign package.

The motion failed on a vote of (3-2-1) with Knudson, Rummel, and Harper voting yes; Bernau, and Asad voting no; and Goodhart non-voting.

## Action

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Bernau, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion approves the number of signs as proposed, provided the "Double Tap" canopy sign be spaced out by at least one more bay so that there is more space in between signs. The motion includes findings that the signage as proposed is consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, and that there is not sign clutter, and that the uniqueness of the "Roxy" logo is within the overall design style of others in the CDR. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-1-1) with Asad, Bernau, Rummel, and Knudson voting yes; Harper voting no; and Goodhart non-voting.