

## AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION      **PRESENTED:** July 24, 2013

TITLE:    741 East Mifflin Street/754 East  
Washington Avenue – PUD(GDP-SIP),  
Signage Plan for a Mixed-Use  
Development – The Constellation. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ald.  
Dist. (24584)

**REFERRED:**  
**REREFERRED:**  
**REPORTED BACK:**

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary      **ADOPTED:**      **POF:**

DATED: July 24, 2013      **ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Lauren Cnare, Richard Slayton, Cliff Goodhart, Dawn O’Kroley and Tom DeChant.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of July 24, 2013, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED PARTIAL FINAL APPROVAL** of a signage plan for a mixed-use development located at 741 East Mifflin Street/754 East Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Mary Beth Growney Selene, representing Ryan Signs, Inc.; and Christopher Gosch, representing Gebhardt Development. Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator introduced the PD project signage package for the 12-story “Constellation.” Wayfinding signs, a ground sign and a combined projecting sign that serves tenants of the building are included. The first floor is intended to be retail oriented towards pedestrians and occupants; the second floor is more office oriented. The first floor signs are internally illuminated and hang under a canopy, and the second floor signs are back-lit with the corner tenant allowed signage on both street frontages. The ground sign as proposed is compliant. The commercial office signs are allowed one sign per tenant with the main identification sign for the development itself being about 25-feet. Growney Selene noted that USquare is probably a better comparison to this building, with its first and second floor blade signage, but they are limiting their signage to no more than four on East Washington Avenue and no more than two on Livingston Street first floor; second floor is limited to no more than two on East Washington Avenue with no more than three on Livingston Street. The monument sign will be at the corner of Livingston Street and East Washington Avenue.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- If we start approving signage here what will stop anyone else from requesting that sort of signage for their businesses, like the Glass Bank for example (secondary sign band)?
  - We can only put wall signage on opaque panels or spandrel panels; vision glass does not count. I’m afraid we’re opening a Pandora’s Box if we approve all this above grade signage.
- When we approved this building is had very clean, smooth lines and now I see those lines getting junked up.

- When the client submitted the PUD/PD, it specifically said we would abide by Chapter 31 and UDD No. 8, and we do. With the exception of the size of the directional signs, which we feel are very important because of the combination of tenants and residents.

Staff noted that some signage in the secondary sign band is not consistent with sign code provisions requiring their location as close as possible to tenancies.

- I think the “Constellation” sign should be illuminated because constellations just by definition are lit...I would like to see a nice glow to that.
  - We envision this now as routed aluminum with just the lettering lit.
- There is product you can use that diminishes the amount of light coming through that.
- Did you study the height of the main Constellation sign with the overhang?
  - It doesn’t obstruct that view at all. The band of wood is slight but it’s closer to flush with the brick.
- Why can’t we have iconic architecture in this City without needing signs? I liken this to the Chrysler building not needing signage. You should say the Constellation and by its architecture people should know which building it is.
- I can see now why they don’t want a tree there – it will block the signs.
  - (Staff) We’ve had to rework the trees in conjunction with right-of-way improvements up until last week to accommodate the requirements of UDD No. 8 as well as Forestry and Fire so we had the best level of tree canopy that the level requires.
- (Gosch) It’s driven by the owner, developer and tenant needs. I know in the leases it states we would provide signage as applicable to City ordinance and Urban Design Commission approval. We get a lot of pressure and demand for more signage based on visibility from East Washington, and from their perspective this is a way to make their presence known.
- Since the last referral there has been intense dialogue with the Mayor to come up with a package that is acceptable, and I do believe this meets those standards.
  - The only feedback I got was the concern about the projecting illuminated sign. It does comply with the code provisions for signage.
- My concern is Arbor Gate, I think that was a mistake. If we do this for the Constellation it’s setting a precedent for everything else along East Washington Avenue. Then it becomes “why can’t we do this on the Square?” This is a slippery slope kind of thing.
- The second tenants, are they the type that would typically advertised with the Yellow Pages, online, more professional services? Or are they more business to consumer type businesses?
  - The leases that have been signed above the ground level, one tenant is not too interested in signage, the others if we went to them and said we couldn’t offer them signage they would walk away.
- I’m curious if the internal signage will have a different character.
- I think the proximity of the Cargo Coffee diminishes the building identification. Consider moving the coffee signage. I think the Constellation sign would have more strength.
- What about combining signs that list tenants? That way if you said “I’m in the Constellation building” they could go there and find you on the directory.
- Ideally a motorist is watching the road.
- I agree with the Chrysler building analogy.
- I don’t have a problem with more first floor signage, it’s the second floor band.

## **ACTION:**

On a motion by Cnare, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0). The motion provides for the following:

- Second floor signage band is not approved, look at alternatives for building wall signage such as a wall directory sign or monument sign that identifies those tenants.
- Study alternative locations for the Cargo Coffee signage, perhaps in conjunction with or separate from the Constellation projecting signage.
- The Constellation routed face or opaque projecting sign is approved as proposed (not with the Cargo piece).

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 5 and 7.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 741 East Mifflin Street/754 East Washington Avenue**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	7

General Comments:

- Tasteful and relatively low key considering overall scale of building.