

AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: September 27, 2017

TITLE: 821 East Washington Avenue –
Comprehensive Design Review for “The
Spark” Located in UDD No. 8. 6th Ald.
Dist. (48453)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: September 27, 2017

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, John Harrington, Cliff Goodhart, Tom DeChant and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of September 27, 2017, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a Comprehensive Design Review for “The Spark” located at 821 East Washington Avenue in UDD No. 8. Appearing on behalf of the project were Tom Stacey and Shayna Hetzel, representing American Family Insurance; Caroline Altfeather and Mark Schmitz.

The design team reviewed building plans, signable areas and existing conditions. The sizes of the signs are in harmony with the mullions, reveals and architecture. Signage elevations, day and nighttime views were shown, using 3” channel letters mounted to anodized aluminum panel to match the exterior materials on the building while concealing all electrical. The Main Street anchor tenants would be American Family Insurance and Starting Block. First floor signage is in full color, tenants above that would be black and white; halo lit with white LED. Along Main Street there are two sets of channel letters featuring the two anchor tenants on the ground floor (Dream Bank and Starting Block). Building identification signage (The Spark) is shown on the upper floor of the building due to the majority of traffic coming from East Washington Avenue, to give recognition to the building itself. The pocket park would contain a large joint monument sign for the two buildings that are on the same zoning lot. A second monument sign along East Main Street is on the Spark property due to the fire lane; this is the same size/scale and material as the one located off of East Washington Avenue.

Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator discussed the Zoning staff report. They are suggesting modifications in the final CDR documents for clarification of signable areas and the sizes of those signs. The biggest issue is that the City sees this as an extension of the downtown; the Commission has continuously not approved building identification signs high up on a building. These types of signage should be allowed only up to the second story. There are a few approved second story signs in this location (projecting and small blade signs on The Constellation). The idea has been to treat this as a pedestrian scale while recognizing that this is a six-lane roadway.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Is there any reason why their sign couldn't be just above the first floor, while still identifying the tenant on the second floor?
 - The biggest concern was due to the placement of landscaping, working with visibility and sight lines. There are trees blocking views to the left of the American Family sign.
 - Starting Block is located on floors 2-4. Identifying where they are at within the building is important to them because it's not necessarily an obvious placement. The building was designed with the idea that there could be identity on that specific spot on the building. I'd be concerned about overcrowding the space on the first level. The other point is the podium is a 2-story portion of the building stretching from East Washington Avenue to East Main Street, and seems to support the point of view that signage could be in both spots.
 - If we are looking at the sign location, it's slightly prowed but we've got an undulating elevation here so they're not all in a straight elevation.
- Signage should be at pedestrian entrances.
- As a bad example, the US Bank building in Milwaukee – we don't want signage on the top of buildings.
- The monument signs are OK.

ACTION:

On a motion by O'Kroley, seconded by Harrington, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-0). The motion provided that the applicant return with all wall signage. Seeing that in context on the lower level within the signable area on the first story in context with the other two proposed building signs might answer that question about second floor level signage. The monument signs were accepted.