

## ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 31, 2019



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 3241 Garver Green  
**Project Name:** Garver Feed Mill  
**Application Type:** Comprehensive Design Review Initial/Final Approval  
**Legistar File ID #** [56485](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector  
**Reviewed By:** Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

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The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review INITIAL/FINAL APPROVAL. The property is located in a Planned Development (PD) district, which allows for signs as permitted in a Traditional Employment (TE) district. The redevelopment of the Garver Feed Mill has turned it into a multi-tenant building with various uses, with future plans to construct a number of micro-lodges surrounding the main building. This site abuts Olbrich Gardens and South Fair Oaks, which is two lanes and a speed limit of 25 mph.

Pursuant to Section 31.043(4)(b), MGO, the UDC shall apply the following criteria upon review of an application for a Comprehensive Sign Plan:

1. *The Sign Plan shall create visual harmony between the signs, building(s), and building site through unique and exceptional use of materials, design, color, any lighting, and other design elements; and shall result in signs of appropriate scale and character to the uses and building(s) on the zoning lot as well as adjacent buildings, structures and uses.*
2. *Each element of the Sign Plan shall be found to be necessary due to unique or unusual design aspects in the architecture or limitations in the building site or surrounding environment; except that when a request for an Additional Sign Code Approval under Sec. 31.043(3) is included in the Comprehensive Design Review, the sign(s) eligible for approval under Sec. 31.043(3) shall meet the applicable criteria of Sec. 31.043(3), except that sign approvals that come to Comprehensive Design Review from MXC and EC districts pursuant to 31.13(3) and (7) need not meet the criteria of this paragraph.*
3. *The Sign Plan shall not violate any of the stated purposes described in Sec. 31.02(1) and 33.24(2).*
4. *All signs must meet minimum construction requirements under Sec. 31.04(5).*
5. *The Sign Plan shall not approve Advertising beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.11 or Off-Premise Directional Signs beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.115.*
6. *The Sign Plan shall not be approved if any element of the plan:*
  - a. *presents a hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic on public or private property,*
  - b. *obstructs views at points of ingress and egress of adjoining properties,*
  - c. *obstructs or impedes the visibility of existing lawful signs on adjacent property, or*
  - d. *negatively impacts the visual quality of public or private open space.*
7. *The Sign Plan may only encompass signs on private property of the zoning lot or building site in question, and shall not approve any signs in the right of way or on public property.*

**Ground Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance:** This zoning lot is allowed up to two ground signs with a shared net area of 64 sq. ft., and a maximum height of 10' for monument style signs, based off of the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes.

**Proposed Signage:** The applicant is requesting to have two ground signs approved. The first is the main ground sign located at the driveway entrance on South Fair Oaks. The sign is almost 9 feet tall and the net area appears to no more than 32 sq. ft. per side, however the measurements of the letters and the scaling of the ground sign do not match. The applicant also does not provide the dimensions of net area boxing to confirm the proposed size. The second ground sign is the north face of the refuse enclosure next to the cold storage building. The enclosure is eight feet tall and 45 feet wide. The applicant propose to have 14 tenant panels mounted to the enclosure, with each tenant panel being 8.75 sq. ft. The overall net square footage for this ground sign appears the total net is about 190 sq. ft., however the dimensions of the net area boxing is not provided, so staff cannot confirm the exact size, nor can staff calculate how much additional square footage the applicant is requesting.

**Staff Comments:** The main sign at the driveway entrance off of South Fair Oaks would comply with the ordinance, however, including the multi-tenant ground sign, which is found further in the lot, the total net area square footage appears to be about 180 sq. ft. more than what the code allows. However, there are a variety of different uses inside the main building, and the CDR does not show any tenant wall signage on the building, making the signs on the refuse enclosure the only identification for the tenants on the lot. This sign also cannot be viewed from the street, and would only be visible to the visitors of the site. The material of both signs are of high quality material and unique and attractive design, keeping with the industrial and re-use theme found on the lot and in the main building. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

**Canopy Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance:** Summarizing Section 31.071, above-canopy signs can be installed instead of canopy fascia signs, but are restricted to the business name and logo, be constructed of freestanding characters and the logo, have a max height of 2' and the next of the logo being a max size of 4 sq. ft. These signs also cannot be wider than the width of the canopy or the corresponding façade, whichever is narrower. Above-canopy signage may not project further than from the building than the canopy to which it is attached and a sign that crosses architectural detail may not be displayed closer than three feet from the nearest face of the building.

Below-canopy signs may be suspended below an attached canopy in a position parallel to the building face, in lieu of a wall sign, and where is no canopy fascia sign visible when facing the building. These signs are to be mounted beneath the canopy, and shall not project or extend beyond the limits of the attached canopy in any direction. The sign face shall have a maximum vertical height of two feet, shall not hang more than one foot from the lower most edge of the canopy, and must have a vertical clearance of 9 feet above pedestrian areas, and 14 feet above vehicular ways.

**Proposed Signage:** The applicant is proposing for both an above canopy sign and a bellow canopy sign to be installed on the same canopy. The above canopy sign consists of 18" tall individual letters with a total net of 18 sq. ft. The lower canopy letters are also individual letters, 10" tall. Complete dimensions are not provide, but the sign appears to be about a third of the size of the above canopy sign.

**Staff Comments:** The above and below canopy signs provides the main identification for the main entrance of the building on the south elevation. Individually, both signs should comply with code; however, together they need CDR approval. The dual signage provides a unique signage that is not commonly found throughout the city.

The signs are of high-quality material that incorporates material found within the architecture of the building. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

**Wall Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance:** Summarizing Section 31.07, wall signs may be attached flat to or affixed parallel with a distance of not more than 15 inches from the wall. No sign affixed flat against a building wall shall extend beyond any edge of such wall. **There shall be one signable area for each façade facing a street or parking lot 33 feet in width or greater.** For buildings with more than one tenant, each tenant is allowed a signable area as reasonably close to its tenant space as possible. Standard net area allows for 30% of the signable area. In no case shall the sign exceed 120 sq. ft. in net area.

**Signable Area defined in Sign Ordinance:** One designated area of the facade of the building up to the roof line that is **free of doors, windows (for purposes of this definition, spandrel panels or other non-vision glass used as an exterior building material are not considered windows) or other major architectural detail**, that extends no higher than the juncture of the wall and the roof.

**Proposed Wall Signage:** The applicant would like a sign to be mounted to the window above the south entrance of the building. The sign identifies a second entrance found on the south elevation of the building, however the location of the sign is not a qualifying signable area, and there already is above and below canopy signage proposed on the same elevation.

**Staff Comments:** These styles of signs are unique to Madison, having approved only a few somewhat similar signs in the past (e.g. Park Bank on East Main Street, Hilldale). Usually these types of signs are of high design and high quality material and give the building an original look. However, the applicant is already requesting other signage on the same elevation (the legacy signage discussed below, and the canopy signage mentioned above), without explaining the need for a third sign. The canopy sign seem logical given it appears to identify the main entrance to the facility. An argument has not been clearly presented as to why the third sign should be allowed by this CDR. **Staff believes the UDC should request additional information to justify the need for a third sign on the same elevation as the canopy signage and the legacy signage.**

**Legacy Signage Permitted per Sign Ordinance:** After a public hearing as provided in [Sec. 33.24\(4\)\(e\)3.](#), the UDC may permit a "Legacy Sign" as follows: one or more wall signs on a building that was constructed in whole or in part for a commercial or employment use, if the proposed sign or signs depict solely one or more of the following:

1. business name;
2. name of the building;
3. logo;
4. description of an accessory use that was accessory to a prior use of the building or zoning lot (may include a product name);
5. an exact replica of a known prior sign displayed on the building.

Each of the elements listed in 1. through 5. above, if included in the sign in question, must be found to have a provable, demonstrated historical relationship to a prior sign on the building that pre-dates 1940 or to a prior use of the building that pre-dates 1940. The UDC shall find that there is direct historical relationship between the proposed sign and a pre-1940 use of the building.

The UDC shall approve the materials, design, size, and location of the sign with specificity and the proposed sign shall match the original to the extent that any details of the original sign are known. The sign must blend appropriately with the historic nature of the building and shall not be illuminated. The location and size of the sign must be found by the Urban Design Commission not to interfere with existing signage on the zoning lot. If the appearance of a prior sign is known, the proposed sign shall match the prior sign completely and this will satisfy the criteria of this section. A sign that includes the name of a business or product that is not currently on the premises of the building cannot be approved unless the business or product is no longer in existence, or unless the business or product name can be shown to be commonly known as the name of the building. This section shall not be used to approve an advertising sign or off-premise sign as defined in this ordinance.

Number and Location of Legacy Signs. Legacy signs under this section may be approved on not more than two (2) façades per building. There is no limit to the number of legacy signs per façade but each sign must be found to be eligible under sub. (j)1. through 5. above.

A legacy sign shall take the place of, not be in addition to, a wall sign that would otherwise be allowable under [Sec. 31.07\(2\)\(a\)](#) and (b), except that a legacy sign may not be approved as an alternative to [Secs. 31.07\(2\)\(a\)1.](#) or 2. and may not be approved as a roof or above-roof sign. A legacy sign also shall not be approved in lieu of a wall sign under [Secs. 31.07\(5\)](#) or (6). The UDC shall consider all existing wall signs on the façade when considering an application for a legacy sign. Legacy signs may only be displayed within an allowable signable area as defined in [Secs. 31.07\(2\)\(b\)](#) and [31.03\(2\)](#), unless the proposed sign is an exact replica of a prior known sign on that building and the location of the prior sign is also known, in which case the sign may be displayed in the prior location, as long as the building exterior has not been significantly modified in that location.

No Additional Wall Signs. Once a permit has been approved for legacy sign(s) on a façade under this section, no new permits for wall signs will be issued.

**Proposed Signage:** The applicant proposes to repaint two faded signs on the main building (one on the south elevation and the other on the west elevation of the building), both of which say Garver Supply Co. Both are an exact replica of the known prior sign displayed on the building, a condition of additional sign code approvals UDC can grant (31.043(3)(j)). However, the applicant is proposing both a wall sign on the window and an above and below canopy sign, requiring CDR approval.

**Staff Comments:** These styles of signs are unique to Madison, having approved only a few somewhat similar signs in the past. The repainting of the signs will add to the historic and industrial look of the building, as well as create a sense of place. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review.**

**Other signs shown in CDR:** There is a wall sign on the North end of the building, which matches the style of sign found on the window sign on the south elevation. This sign appears to meet code and does not require any special approvals. There is also mentioning of a possible location of mural/messaging on the back end of the refuse enclosure. Murals are not considered signage and should not be included in CDR requests. As for the possible messaging, without additional information as to what the message is, the material, or size, this should not be included with the request.

**Notes:**

- Final application shall show dimensions of net area boxing for both of the ground signs.
- Final application shall show dimensions of both types of canopy signs and clearance from grade.
- Noted area of possible location of mural/messaging shall be taken out of the application imagery.