

DATE: July 21, 2016
TO: Members of the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Scott Tempel, City Planner

..Title

Sign Permit - Sketchy Artist 300 Division

..Body

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The Sketchy Artist is requesting new signage for its store at 300 Division St. S. They would like to install a new entrance wall sign and a projecting sign.

The applicable sections of the Downtown Historic District regulations in the sign ordinance include the following (Staff response is shown in **bold**):

1. Placement: Signs shall be positioned so they are an integral design feature of the building; signs shall complement and enhance the architectural features of the building. They shall be placed so that they do not destroy architectural details such as stone arches, glass transom panels, or decorative brickwork. Unless other placement is specifically approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission for reasons stated in the certificate of appropriateness by the Commission, signs may be placed only as follows:

- a. At or above the horizontal lintel, cornice, or beltcourse, or above the storefront windows;
- b. Projecting from the building;
- c. Applied to or painted on canvas awnings;
- d. In areas where signs were historically attached.

Staff response: The signs meet placement requirements. The signs will be located in the Beltcourse signboard. The signs will not destroy any architectural details of the building, and will complement the building. The applicant needs to confirm 8ft. of clearance under the projecting sign.

3. Sign Shape: Signs shall be designed to match the historical time period elements and regional location of the City, which primarily exclude such features as cut corners and non-rectangular shapes. In most cases, the edges of signs shall include a raised border that sets the sign apart from the building surface or hanging space. Individual raised letters set onto the sign area surface are also preferred.

Staff response: The signs may not meet shape requirements. The wall sign has no backing or raised border. Lettering is proposed to be attached directly to the Beltcourse, however, the Beltcourse is recessed giving the appearance of a raised

border. The projecting sign is rectangular with circular element of the logo projecting from the sign. No raised border is shown.

4. Colors: Sign colors shall coordinate with the building façade to which the sign is attached and shall be compatible with the property's use. A combination of soft/neutral shades and dark/rich shades are encouraged in order to reflect the historical time period. No more than two colors shall be used for the sign letters.

Staff response: The signs meet color requirements. The signs coordinate with the building façade. The darker muted color of the building Beltcourse exists currently. The basic white color of the lettering contrasts with the dark background for good visibility.

5. Material: Signs and sign letters should be made of wood or metal that is in keeping with the corresponding historical time period of the building. Brackets for projecting signs shall be made of iron or other painted metal, and shall be secured at the top of the sign and anchored into the mortar, not the masonry.

Staff response: The signs meet the material requirements. The signs are made of MDO board. The projecting bracket is simple, painted metal, attached directly to the transom, so the sign does not hang.

The following is some information on MDO board:

Medium Density Overlay (MDO) and High Density Overlay (HDO) Plywood (also called signboard) are engineered wood panels, originally designed for sign makers. Both MDO and HDO are hardwood plywoods with a resin soaked fiber overlays between the veneer layers and on both surfaces. The top veneer layer on both sides is "A" grade, providing for an extremely smooth surface <<http://theplywood.com/cabinet-grade>>, without voids, to apply the fiber overlay. The resin-soaked fiber overlays are applied with heat and pressure, forming an extremely strong, extremely flat and extremely smooth engineered wood product that is waterproof. The only differences between the two products are that the density of the exterior fiber layer on the HDO is considerably higher than for MDO and it is manufactured with higher resin

6. Message: The sign message shall be legible and shall relate to the nature of the business. These requirements may be accomplished through the use of words, pictures, names, symbols and logos.

Staff response: The signs meet message requirements. The signs are legible and relate to the business. The projecting sign consists of the business logo.

7. Lettering: Lettering styles shall be legible and shall relate to the character of the property's use and the era of the building. Lettering shall preferably include serif rather than strictly block type styles. Each sign shall contain no more than two lettering styles, and the lettering shall occupy no more than approximately 60% of the total sign area.

Staff response: The signs may not meet lettering requirements. The wall sign contains one legible lettering style; however this is a sans serif font. A block type style has been chosen that may not be seen to relate to the era of the building. The LDC states serif fonts are preferred, not required. As for sign area, without a sign board it is difficult to determine whether the sign meets the 60% coverage limit.

8. Illumination: External illumination of signs is permitted by incandescent or fluorescent light, but shall emit a continuous white light that prevents direct shining onto the ground or adjacent buildings. Exposed neon signs shall be permitted when installed inside windows of the interior of the building. The use of internally lit signs, such as but not limited to backlit plastic, is not permitted. Exceptions to this guideline shall be allowed for public service, time/temperature and theater signs.

Staff response: The signs meet illumination requirements. The signs will not be illuminated.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff will support approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness if the HPC feels it sufficiently meets the standards.