

6. COA-063206-2019

PUBLIC HEARING DATE

November 26, 2019

PROPERTY ADDRESS

1500 North Lombardy

DISTRICT

Belgian Building

APPLICANT

Virginia Union University

STAFF CONTACT

C. Jones

Commission of Architectural Review

STAFF REPORT

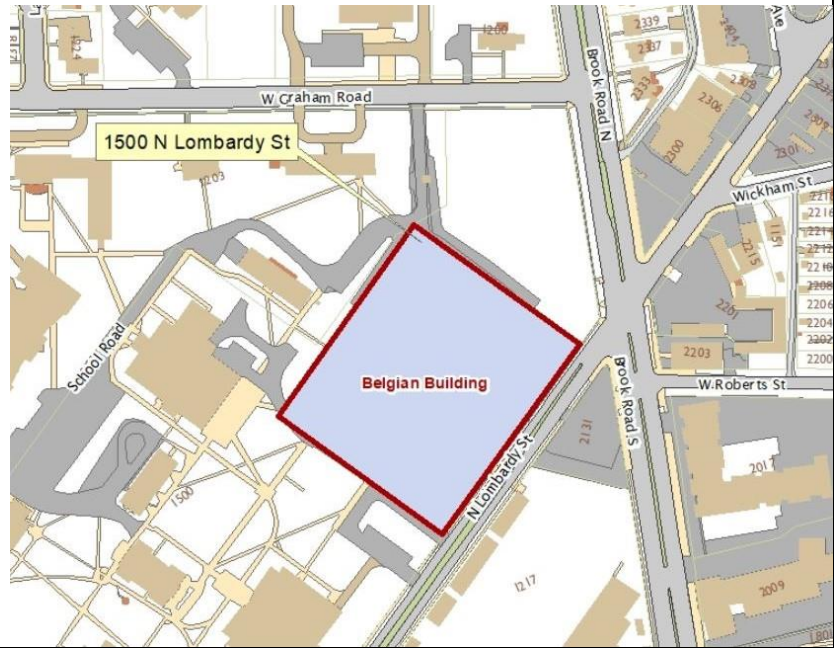


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Install four internally illuminated wall signs on the Belgian Building Tower.

PROJECT DETAILS

- The applicant proposes to install one internally illuminated sign on each of the four faces of the Belgian Building tower.
- Each sign will have the letters "VUU" in maroon. The "V" will be 17'-7 3/4" by 17' and will project past the two "U"s. Each "U" will be 7'-11 7/8". Each sign will be approximately 300 square feet.
- The signs will be mounted on the louvers at the top of the Belgian Building.



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BUILDING DETAILS

The Belgian Building, originally a pavilion designed by Henry Van de Velde in the International style for Belgium's entry into the 1939 New York World's Fair, is an individual City and Old Historic District and is individually listed on the State (1969) and National Registers (1970). The approximately 165-foot tall tower originally held bells, which were donated to President Herbert Hoover for his Stanford University library. Representative of the International Style, the complex has minimal ornamentation and colors, uses modular forms and flat surfaces, and has an emphasis on volumes. The belfry section of the prominent tower is defined by a distinctive use of louvers.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

DEFER

PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The Commission has not previously reviewed this application. Staff notes that members of the zoning staff have denied this application since the size of the proposed signs exceeds what is allowed.

STAFF COMMENTS

Staff recommends deferral of the application to allow the applicant the opportunity to work with staff on a design that meets the *Guidelines* for signage.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Standards for Signage, pg. 73	<i>Designs for signs in City Old and Historic Districts should reflect the pedestrian scale of the District. Signs within a District should be modest in size and addressed to pedestrians and slower vehicular traffic. Large signs designed with heavy, high speed vehicular traffic in mind are not appropriate. Please note: sign size restrictions are imposed by the Zoning Ordinance, and cannot be modified by the Commission.</i>	Staff finds that the four proposed wall signs do not meet the standards for signage. The signs are not modest in size nor are they designed to address pedestrians, but rather drivers on the surrounding streets and highway. Staff also notes that the Zoning Division has also denied the sign application because it exceeds the permitted sign-area in an institutional zoning district.
Flat Wall Signs, pg. 74	<i>Flat wall signs are wooden or metal sign panels applied directly to a building façade when a storefront cornice is not present. Generally, these signs are intended to be viewed from a moderate distance. Flat wall signs should be designed to enhance the facade by blending with the architectural features of the building. They should not be merely applied to the surface of the building, nor should they cover or obscure important architectural elements.</i>	Staff finds that the proposed signs do not meet the Guidelines for flat wall signs. Staff finds that the signs are not designed to be viewed from a moderate distance as required by the <i>Guidelines</i> . Staff also finds that they obscure important architectural elements of the building, namely the louvered section. Staff finds that the signs are applied directly to a character-defining feature of the building, which will obscure and likely damage this feature, and greatly detract from the overall architectural character of the building.
General Signage Guidelines, pg. 75	<i>7. Signs should not be internally illuminated.</i>	The applicant proposes internally illuminated signs. Internally illuminated signs are not permitted under the general signage <i>Guidelines</i> .

FIGURES



Figure 1. Belgian Building complex.



Figure 2. Belgian Building tower.