

From: [Lindy Wishard](#)
To: [PRC](#)
Subject: 3020338, Development at 2925 E Madison St, Seattle, WA 98112
Date: Wednesday, July 13, 2016 3:19:57 PM

3020338, Development at 2925 E Madison St, Seattle, WA 98112

Dear Design Review Committee,

My name is Lindy Wishard. I have lived in Madison Valley for 16 years. In the last decade, I have served on the Madison Park and Madison Valley Community Councils, the Madison Valley Merchants Association, and I currently chair the East District Council. My comments do not represent those groups, but are informed by years of neighborhood advocacy.

Until recently, Madison Valley struggled to even be recognized as a neighborhood. People would say, “Do you mean Madison Park or Maple Valley?” There was no forethought put into creating a neighborhood along Madison St. It was, and remains, a through street.

As a result of this poor planning, we do not have a central community gathering space. There is no town square, plaza, and even the sidewalks are super narrow. This is a rare opportunity to change the very character of Madison Valley from a pass-through corridor to a destination neighborhood.

The massing of design option 2 creates a much needed public gathering space.

Imagine families stopping in the entry to talk with one another coming and going from the grocery store, or sunny bistro seating for people who have picked up a bite to eat in the deli, even outdoor classes or occasional music—the possibilities are endless.

If the bus stop is moved in front of the grocery, as currently anticipated, the courtyard space is an an advantage to bus riders loading and unloading.

More space in the front means more room for unique landscape features, outdoor vending, more color and variety that will improve the experience of **millions** of people passing on foot, bike, car, and bus.

To me, community is getting to know your neighbors, in person. The courtyard design supports community.

An example of a similar successful courtyard design would be Pike Motorworks on Pike St.

The following comments are organized by section:

Context and Site

CS1-B: Sunlight and Ventilation

The setbacks of Option 2 allow more light into the pedestrian corridors, and will keep this portion of Madison St from feeling cavernous.

CS1-C: Topography

The mixed-height zoning of this site require a step-down in the rear.

CS1-D: Plants

The restaurant patio design is lovely, and does a wonderful job of connecting the building to green space to the east.

CS2-A: Location in the City and Neighborhood

While the architect has provided some beautiful elevations, the overall design of the building façade could do a better job of incorporating elements that are consistent and emphasize the “European Village” feel of the neighborhood such as; awnings, transom windows with divided light, pediments, climbing vines, etc. Incorporating some traditional design elements in a modern way will go a long way toward making the building fit into the existing streetscape.

Example: The new buildings of the University Village do an excellent job of creating the feeling of history in new construction.

CS2-B&C: Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces / Relationship to the Block

I prefer the modulated west corner of the building in Option 2. It allows for more windows and better views for residents to the west, and is more interesting to look at from the street as opposed to the 90° corner of Options 1 & 3.

CS2-D: Height & Scale

The height of the building is similar to that of the Madison Lofts, and scale complies with the zoning.

The architect has done a great job in the preferred design to transition to the residential neighborhood. Screening with trees or climbing green ivy will be an improvement.

CS3-A: Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

Madison Valley has a distinctive street character, because most of the buildings are old. Incorporating traditional design elements will be key to preserving this feeling.

CS3-B: Local History & Culture

In an attempt to create an identity and sense of place, the Madison Valley Merchant’s Association and Community Council worked together to create a brand, “Seattle’s European Village.” A neighborhood logo and website were created to communicate the brand. <http://www.madisonvalley.org>. A French-themed signature event, Bastille Bash, helped promote the neighborhood. Today we’re creating a neighborhood landmark designed to reinforce the theme and tell passersby that this is the neighborhood of Madison Valley (illustrations sent to the architect).

Public Life

PL1-A: Network of Open Spaces

We have little open public space at the street level. The courtyard and open patio space would be an amazing addition.

PL1-B: Walkways and Connections

Greater setbacks along Madison will improve pedestrian infrastructure, volume, and

amenities.

In Options 1 and 3, I am concerned about pedestrian and bicycle congestion. While the setback is more generous than required at the entry, I suspect the the grocery and additional retailer are going to be a draw. Coupled with the possibility of moving the bus here, a generous setback would be smart.

L1-C: Outdoor Uses and Activities

See above letter regarding courtyard outdoor uses and activities.

PL2-A: Accessibility

While I would prefer a street-level entrance, stepping down into the courtyard doesn't bother me. In fact, I think it would create the feeling of a nice barrier between the street and courtyard. Ramps could provide ADA access from the sidewalk.

PL2-B,C& D: Safety / Weather Protection / Wayfinding

Sensitive lighting is a desirable design feature. I have not seen the lighting plan for the building, so I can't comment in detail.

Some covered spaces are preferred.

Unique signage design can add to the "village" feeling of the neighborhood and is a good way to incorporate detail to the project. Signs with down lighting are preferred to backlit.

PL3-A&C: Entries / Residential Edges

Greater setbacks along Madison speak to most of the pedestrian concerns in this section.

More space will also allow great opportunity for enhanced entries to the retail and residential units.

PL4-A, B & C: Bicycles / Transit

See comments above regarding space allocation for pedestrians, cyclist, and a potential bus stop.

Moving the bus stop has been in the works for some time, as the current bus stop impedes the future Madison Street Greenways connect on 29th. Drawings of the crossing at 29th and Madison have been sent to the architect.

Design Concept

DC1-A 2 & 3: Gathering Spaces / Flexibility

The courtyard on the Madison side meets the gathering places and flexibility requirement.

DC1-B & C: Vehicle Access / Service Uses

Ideally there would be no curb cuts on Madison, but I understand that may not be possible given the limited access to the back of the building. The proposed split entry is a good compromise. Placing the resident entry on the back helps to minimize the number of cars passing through the sidewalk on the Madison side.

If something can be done to obscure the service entrances from the pedestrian area that would be appreciated.

DC2-A: Massing

See comments above. Also, please carefully consider Jeremy Braun's recommendation to allow a departure for extra height in the middle of the building to offset setbacks on both sides of the property.

DC2-B & C3: Facade Composition / Fit with Neighborhood

The developer's use of high quality materials, such as brick and wood, are greatly appreciated. Incorporation of traditional design elements will give the building a timeless and enduring design aesthetic.

DC3 A & B: Open Space & Open Space Uses

Option 2 speaks most directly to the open space concept. I commend the architect for incorporating setback, terraces, and roof space into all the design options.

DC3 C: Design

Please consider Jeremy Braun's recommendation to terrace the east side of the building while incorporating the Mercer stair. The terraces could extend the pea-patch up the side of the hill, making a nice connection to green space.

DC4 A: Materials

See comments above.

DC4 B: Signage

Signage is a key concern in Madison Valley and Madison Park. Madison Park even has signage guidelines created by Lola, the unofficial mayor of the Park. These vintage guidelines have been provided to the architect.

DC4 C: Lighting

See comments above regarding lighting. Also, consider the residents of Madison Lofts who are at eye level with the development and most greatly impacted.

DC4 D: Landscape

The architect has gone long on landscape for this project. Thoughtful landscape, trees, and green screens are greatly appreciated.

Thank You:

Charles Strazzara has done an amazing job creating three great design options for a challenging site. All three options successfully accomplish the Design Review Program's goal of fostering design excellence.

It's clear that Velmeir cares a great deal about the quality and success of the development, and recognizes that good design and collaboration will achieve that goal. I look forward to welcoming our new neighbors.

Finally, thank you to the volunteers who make the community input process possible.

Sincerely,
Lindy Wishard