

From: Save Madison Valley
To: [PRC](#)
Subject: Feedback on Project 3020338
Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2016 10:50:57 AM

Please see comments below from Liam Stacey (liams@uw.edu)

Dear Magda Hogness,

The purpose of city planning is to improve the city. Below I provide just a few of the many ways that this project makes our neighborhood worse and constitutes a significant taking of the quality of life for hundreds of people who live in the Madison Valley. Specifically, I address several design flaws or misrepresentations of the structure proposed for 2529 East Madison Street.

Commercial garbage trucks will upload noisy metal dumpsters in a previously quiet residential neighborhood on Dewey. This will happen numerous times a week for each of: trash, compost, and recycling. I can attest that this poses a significant deterioration in residential life since the Valley School placed their metal dumpsters next door to our house. All conversation stops until this noisy operation is over. This site will require the trucks to drive around numerous small streets just to get to the garbage service area on Dewey. This impacts pedestrian life, children playing outside, traffic, safety of children riding bicycles and gardening at the P-Patch, incidental damage to parked cars, and the peace of many homes.

This structure will impose an unacceptable abundance of traffic through a residential neighborhood with narrow streets to get to the entrance on Dewey. The intersection at Dewey and Republican is already hazardous in the morning, after work, and on weekends. These streets are only wide enough for one car to pass, there is considerable parking pressure in the neighborhood, and there are already drivers aggressively using these narrow streets as shortcuts. This increase in density will exacerbate these problems.

NC2-40 as I read the code means 40 feet. This building breaks this rule on both sides. I don't care how you calculate it: height is height.

Re CS1B: The building not only takes advantage of solar exposure, it takes solar exposure from people walking to the park, cyclists riding to work, and residents of the building across the street. This building's height above Madison is a far more egregious transgression against the public than that of the building on the northwest side of the street because it will block the sun from much of the street for most of the year. Since the purpose of buildings is to improve our market place, this is a flaw.

Re CS1D: It is an affront and insult to incorporate the poorest landscape elements of the neighborhood, such as the 1/2 story "walled effect on East Dewey. Key landscape elements in the Madison Valley are: the community P-Patch garden, the triangle park (for which neighborhood members have plans to restore to habitat), residential flower or habitat gardens, and the street and yard trees that are both on Dewey and East Madison. This project has none of these landscape elements.

Re CS2A: The "Architectural presence" could not be described as anything but "a money grab". The lot line to lot line approach tells this narrative. It is not the narrative of floral balconies and neighbors who pass each other in the stairwell (they will take the elevator from so high). Additionally, the roof-top gardens are likely to be way too hot in the summer, and blasted by rainy south winds in the winter. Grocery stores need heat exchangers and noisy air ducts. Where will they be present?

Re CS2-B: Neighboring open spaces are enjoyed. From this we can not conclude that the building should be designed to block out sky, eliminate trees and out shade streets and a city park (2001 East Madison is the city park which members of the neighborhood were planning to restore to native habitat), homes and a P-patch. (Although this seems redundant, I state it to point out that this is a case of not meeting several "guidelines".

Re CS2-D The design does not respect adjacent sites in that it towers over them, completely blocking all afternoon light from the entire neighborhood to the east. Imagine coming home from work one day to play with your children in the sunny back yard only to discover that developers took the sun away. The neighborhood P-patch gets sun only in the midday and afternoon. This building will block all mid-afternoon sun from most of the patch.

Re CS3-A: the Character of the neighborhood is one of floral gardens and trees. Almost all the businesses in the area have some of these elements. This building provides none of that.

DC2-B-1 and 2: The plan's ivy covered wall is still a monotonous wall. It is possible to create a green wall that will endure our climate, but they require maintenance. This plan creates a situation where the neighborhood would have to continuously badger the building managers to maintain attractive greenery on this wall. It is basically a problem of absentee ownership. To contrast this scenario: the garden store had a direct interest in the neighborhood as customers, and the owner worked at the store full time. They paid employees to remove invasives and plant and maintain a native understory on East Dewey.

The developers present a mythical "trade-off" where they will either save trees to the south or provide a street level outdoor space. The reality is that we can have both. In fact, they could build a structure that had apartments facing south starting at the level of Dewey, Parking underneath and behind these residences. And only two stories of residences above the PCC. They could propose a building that collected all rain water, with PV. pannels, insulated to "pasive haus" standards, street level covered bicycle parking, and no off-gassing materials. Only the people and the city can hold these the market accountable to our desired standards.

The city seems to condone building such as this because some people believe that they provide much needed housing. The fact of the matter is that there is no shortage of deteriorating buildings to replace with three story apartments. There is, however, a shortage of open space, open sky, access to play fields, and sunlight. Many neighborhoods need "revitalization" and investment. Let us be firm about our building standards and our community wishes. Let us keep the quality, rather than sacrificing it for a mantra of "density". Let us encourage investors to build size appropriate buildings in areas that need redevelopment. Lets require that increased density also comes with an expansion of our park space. The city should feel no need to approve an illegal building simply to satisfy a developer who paid a lot for a lot..

Related note on the "density for transit" myth.

The call for density comes about when people ask how we are going to get mass transit. The fact of the matter is that in no city has anyone given up the car until parking and traffic were simply too unbearable, or because walking, biking and bus options were just too easy. We can make walking options easy with pleasant streets (this building is a stark contrast to this). We can make public transit easy and pleasant with smaller more frequent bus routes, to more places. In any case, driverless taxi and shuttles may make the whole argument moot, so please stop buying the argument that we need to convert all neighborhoods to 4 story canions in order to get people out of their cars, rather just look at the streets of N.Y. and see that that does not work.

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