

**Herbaugh, Melinda**

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**From:** Jeremy Braun <private3020338@digitalaidhosting.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 25, 2016 7:03 AM  
**To:** PRC  
**Subject:** Design Review Public Comment Round 2, Project #3020338

ATTN: Magda Hogness (Assigned Planner)

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing to provide comment on the following project for preparation of the second early design guidance.

Project#: 3020338  
Address: 2925 E Madison St.

I've reviewed the EDG packet provided by the applicant, including their assessment of how they applied the Seattle Design Guidelines. Please find my own opinions and feedback below. In general, I believe the applicant has successfully responded to the Board's feedback, and improved the design to the point that it should move forward in the permitting process.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, I look forward to seeing the Design Board's guidance and recommendations.

Jeremy Braun

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== Height, Bulk, Scale and Response to Context and Topography ==

One of the primary concerns from EDG #1 was how the building transitions to the single-family neighborhoods to the east on Dewey Place, and to the southern lot border. The updated design includes extra setbacks along Dewey, and the landscape plan allows for a larger variety of plants. The landscape renderings show a variety of trees being used along both walls. The height modulation provided by these helps to break up the project's walls.

Today, a large portion of the existing slope is covered in blackberry bushes, especially to the east. The design now includes extensive climbing vines and greenery, which mask the concrete surfaces of the garage, will help reduce noise from the building, and provide a buffer to transition from the single-family lots to the commercial district.

To the south, in addition to the larger than required setbacks, the applicant has provided a large balcony on the roof of the first floor, including space for significant tree plantings to mask the upper stories of the building from the backyards of those homes.

Regarding context, the building matches the scale of the Madison Lofts building across the street. It's also similar in bulk to the apartments/condos to the west of the Lofts, and it's not much taller than the apartment building to the site's west. The Mandatory Housing Affordability draft upzones increase the base height along this commercial district to 55' (up from 40'). I suspect that we'll see some of the smaller, ageing 1, 2 and 3 story commercial structures be redeveloped to take advantage of this as time goes on. Neighborhoods grow in scale as larger buildings are built.

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== Height Calculation Methodology  
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The building's height is compliant with the Seattle Municipal Code. The terracing of the project's eastern and southern façades modulates the height and reduces the impact significantly from the allowed zoning envelope.

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== Northeast Corner  
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The Northeast corner of the proposed building presents as a three-story structure as you view the building from the East. The depth of this portion of the structure as viewed from Madison street is the size of a single residential unit.

From Dewey, the choice of natural materials (wood) for this portion of the façade integrates the building with the landscape plantings and urban forest to the east.

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== Exceptional Tree / Grove  
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I've read through the arborist reports posted to DCI's website. If you have time before the meeting, it's worth reading this one in particular:  
<http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/eplan/GetDocument.aspx?id=693390&src=WorkingDocs&n=Arborist%20Report%3A%20Arborist%20report>

It makes a compelling argument that the existing exceptional trees/grove will likely not survive a development on the site, even if they are preserved during construction. As such, their removal is compliant with the Seattle Municipal Code and the Director's rule 16-2008 (concerning the protection and removal of such trees).

Any departures granted to preserve the trees and maintain the allowed FAR would significantly increase the building's scale, bulk and mass.  
Doing so would be detrimental to the surrounding single family neighborhoods.

The preliminary landscape plans include a variety of trees and plantings on multiple levels that preserve the green and wooded feel of the existing slope.

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== Departures  
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I believe the split parking garage entrance provides the best way to protect the surrounding residential neighborhoods from the commercial traffic the proposed building will generate. If the board does not agree with this departure, it will have a huge environmental impact on the neighbors on Dewey Place and Republican, as commercial trucks and garbage trucks navigate small residential streets to service the needs of this commercial space. There is already precedence on this site and surrounding ones for curb cuts on Madison.

Traffic is worst along Madison during the morning and evening rush hours. Placing the residential entrance on the back side keeps those additional cars away from Madison during these busy times.