



City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

DATE: 10/18/2016
TO: East Design Review Board Members
FROM: Magda Hogness, SDCI Land Use Planner
RE: Project No. 3020338, 2925 E Madison St
October 26, 2016 6:30 pm
Seattle University, 1000 E. James Way
Fr. LeRoux Conference Center - Student Center 160

Hi, enclosed are the past meeting report and packet for the upcoming Second EDG meeting.

Project Summary: The 40,422 sf project site is located in the Madison Valley Neighborhood. The applicant is proposing a 7-story structure containing 75 residential units with 26,600 sq. ft. of retail at ground level and parking for 158-156 units.

Public Comment Summary: To date, design related public comments have included:

- Concerned that the proposed development does not fit with the nature of the neighborhood
- Concerned with the height, bulk and scale of the proposal and the frontage along Dewey.
- Concerned with traffic and parking entry impacts.
- Support for the development; having a serious anchor business would improve the business district.
- Would like to see nice-sized balconies; that would probably help the appearance.
- Support for the scale of proposal; it is in scale with other development on Madison, would like to see higher density of housing along arterials.
- Support a version of the plan that allows for a larger open area facing Madison so that it is more street friendly and less of a canyon.
- Support for many street trees on all sides, as well as landscaping on the roof. Keeping streets green is very important in maintaining the character of the neighborhood, and this design achieves that goal.

Project Highlights: My feedback to the applicant included guidance to resolve the proposed massing option based on past Board direction. I've identified the following topics as important to address at this stage:

1. **Response to EDG:** A response to the first EDG meeting guidance is provided on pgs 5-21.
2. **Height, Bulk, Scale, Response to Context and Topography:** At the last meeting, addressing the residential context and responding to existing topography was identified by the DRB as important to address. A series of diagrams are provided on pgs 12-13, but it's not entirely clear how the massing relates to the context. In order to demonstrate how the design respects adjacent properties and responds to past DRB Guidance, I've asked the applicant to indicate the existing context on the series of diagrams. I've also requested additional site sections documenting the changing setback condition and dimensioned floor plans for all floors.
3. **Height Calculation Methodology:** At the EDG meeting, the Board requested additional information height calculation methodology, *"In order to address concerns about how the building height is calculated, the Board requested more information and if possible, verification that the calculation is code compliant for the next meeting."* (CS1-C-2, CS2-D, DC2-A-1) The height calculation methodology has been vetted with the Zoning Reviewer. Please note, the DRB's authority is limited to the Design Review Guidelines, as always. The DRB does not have the authority to weigh in on whether or not a project will meet height calculations. However, as some guidelines relate to height, such as height, bulk and scale, and those topics are in the DRB's purview. For example, the DRB could state that while the project appears to meet the code compliant height calculation, it is too tall in light of the Design Guidelines.

4. **Northwest Corner:** Visible from Madison and Dewey, the design of the northeast corner massing is important to consider. At the last meeting, *“The Board noted that the tallest massing volume appears to be at the northeast corner and agreed this area will be highly visible and the scale relationship is critical.” (CS2-A, CS2-B, CS2-C1, CS2-D, DC2-A-2, DC2-B, DC2-D-1)”* I’ve asked the applicant to explain how the design addresses the corner scale relationship and to provide additional studies and alternates for the corner.
5. **Exceptional Tree/ Grove.** At least one option must show retention of all Exceptional Tree(s) including the grove per Director’s Rule 16-2008, and any related departures so that massing alternatives preserving the trees may be considered with the other massing options. This option is provided on pgs 6-7. I’ve asked the applicant to clarify and indicate which trees qualify as Exceptional. An Arborist report showing the location of trees is provided on pgs 44-46. I’ve requested an updated table based on the latest correction from SDCl, consistent with the option showing the preservation of the Exceptional Tree(s)/Grove.
6. **Landscape Concept:** For the landscape design, incorporating variation in planting was recognized as important to address with the design. *“Reviewing the proposed planting, the Board was concerned with the equally spaced columnar row of trees and recommended differing scales of trees. For the next meeting, the Board requested more details about the landscape plan, including information on efforts to incorporate the existing tree canopy.” (CS1-B-3, CS1-D, CS2-B, CS2-D-2, DC3-C, DC4-D)* I’ve asked the applicant to document the landscape design concept; add a brief narrative explaining the intention behind the proposed trees and planting selection.
7. **Departures:** I’ve requested additional rationale about how the design better meets a specific design guideline for departure request 1, dual access to parking garages. Related to this departure request, I’ve also asked for more information about how proposed loading/parking access and façade treatment responds to past DRB Guidance. *“The Board agreed that splitting up the loading and parking access appears logical but requested more information before indicating their preference. For the proposed trash and loading area along Madison, the Board implied that the designing pedestrian character of the street is critical to address the priority of the pedestrian realm. (CS2-B-2, PL1, DC1-B-1, DC1-C, DC4)”*

To recap, the following topics were discussed during the last meeting:

1. **Height, Bulk, Scale and Massing Options:** The Board acknowledged the public’s concern with the height, bulk and scale of the proposal and agreed that the massing needed to further transition along Dewey and the single family zone. The Board commended the applicant’s effort to date and unanimously agreed the general massing and frontage along Madison is an appropriate scale. The Board discussed the strengths of the massing options and supported the courtyard community space shown in Option 2 and terraced massing shown in Option 3, but also agreed more effort is needed to respond to the site topography and context. The Board directed the applicant to return with a modified, hybrid massing option based on the guidance provided.
 - a. The Board unanimously agreed with public comment that additional setbacks should be provided to respond to the site topography and transition to the single family zoning. While refining the massing at this location the Board also recommended studying if there is potential to save some of the existing trees. (CS1-C, CS1-D, CS2-A, CS2-B, CS2-D, DC2-A, DC3-C-3)
 - b. In order to address concerns about how the building height is calculated, the Board requested more information and if possible, verification that the calculation is code compliant for the next meeting. (CS1-C-2, CS2-D, DC2-A-1)
 - c. The Board supported the inclusion of a community space along the street as shown in Option 2. The Board also discussed if a courtyard should be provided and ultimately agreed that a courtyard could be developed, but providing adequate community space for gathering is a higher priority and noted this activity could potentially occur as part of the interior program. The Board recommended developing the grocery retail frontage with adequate space for outdoor/indoor dining opportunities and pedestrian amenities to engage and interact with the streetscape. (CS3-A, CS2-B-2, PL1, PL3-C, DC3)
2. **Response to Context and Topography:** Echoing the public comment regarding the frontage along Dewey, the Board was concerned with the extent of blank wall shown.
 - a. The Board questioned if two stories of elevated parking provides the best frontage along Dewey and the adjacent single family zone. The Board recommended studying different alternates address the residential context and respond to existing topography. (CS1-C, CS2-A, CS2-D-2, CS3-A-1, CS2-B-3, DC1, DC3-C-3)

- b. The Board was also concerned with the visibility of concrete and gabion baskets and recommended developing a sensitive solution using high quality materials which better relate to the surrounding residential context. (CS2-A, CS2-B, CS3-A-1, CS2-B-3, DC2-B, DC3-C-3)
 - c. The Board noted that the tallest massing volume appears to be at the northeast corner and agreed this area will be highly visible and the scale relationship is critical. (CS2-A, CS2-B, CS2-C1, CS2-D, DC2-A-2, DC2-B, DC2-D-1)
- 3. Site Features and Existing Tree Canopy:** Affirming the public comment, the Board requested more information about the status of the trees, including snags, and the urban forest corridor. The Board stated that although replacement trees will never be the same, generous planting could still be provided. Reviewing the proposed planting, the Board was concerned with the equally spaced columnar row of trees and recommended differing scales of trees. For the next meeting, the Board requested more details about the landscape plan, including information on efforts to incorporate the existing tree canopy. (CS1-B-3, CS1-D, CS2-B, CS2-D-2, DC3-C, DC4-D)
- 4. Trash, Vehicular Access and Loading Location:** The Board recognized the diverse public opinions regarding the parking, garage and loading access locations. The Board agreed that splitting up the loading and parking access appears logical but requested more information before indicating their preference. For the proposed trash and loading area along Madison, the Board implied that the designing pedestrian character of the street is critical to address the priority of the pedestrian realm. (CS2-B-2, PL1, DC1-B-1, DC1-C, DC4)
- 5. Materials:** The Board strongly supported the quality of materials presented at this early phase. (CS3-A-1, DC2, DC4-A-1.)