

6. June 2017

Chris Davidson & Magda Hogness
Department of Construction and Inspections
City of Seattle

Re: Project 3020338 @ 2925 E Madison Street

I'm writing to express my great concern re the plans now being reviewed for this sensitive site. The proposed bulk, residential garage access, and use/massing on the Dewey Place E side are ill-conceived and require correction to bring this project in line with the published City goals for new development abutting existing neighborhoods and environmental sensitivity.

Bulk issue:

All along the height and bulk of this project on the downhill side has been problematic. For a neighborhood of modest single-family houses, any portion of that building rising to 50 feet or more is out of scale. Current plans do not step back sufficiently to concentrate the massing on the Madison frontage. Height calculations are manipulated to discount the actual slope of these parcels.

Adjacency issue:

The EDR panel accepted an unwise and ill-conceived mitigation by allowing new 'townhome' style units facing Dewey Place East. Seemingly it was a trade-off matching supposed like use to like use. But these new apartment units are far from townhome style in massing; they took away previous setback buffering and now aggravate the bulk issue. The minimal 3' roof offset at the apartments upper floor does not provide any true setback and reinforces the looming quality that has been an issue all along.

Putting these new unit entrances on Dewey will aggravate the overall parking and access issues associated with this development. Those unit residents' second cars and guest parking will be pushed onto already undersized side streets. The access to the residential parking component itself should not be allowed on Dewey given the restricted access routes to it; adding these units on Dewey as well adds even more undesirable congestion.

Furthermore, the individual unit access steps and required retaining wall system will add bulk and even more impervious area to an already over-scaled footprint. The restrictions that go with construction-confined root zones will limit the size of any trees to be planted. None will ever reach the height or provide a fragment of the existing canopy coverage. On a sensitive site adjacent to the Arboretum and linked to neighborhood greenbelts, that loss has to be made up for in some reasonable fashion. The current design does not recognize this stated City goal.

I will leave it to others to provide further opinions on other problematic portions of this MUP proposal. The above summarizes why I find this current design in need of even more scrutiny from SDCI and a better design strategy from the applicants.

I write as a longtime resident of Madison Valley and as a design professional with a Masters Degree in Architecture and an undergraduate BA in Urban Studies. I grasp the challenge of developing a sensitive site, but I think the Early Design Review panel has allowed a number of unwise design choices to move forward.

Yours truly,

Paul W. Crowther