

Date: June 6, 2017

To: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

From: Mark M. McDermott, 3016 East Republican Street – markmcdermott1@msn.com 3016
East Republican Street

mmcd

RE: Comments on Proposed Project #3020338 – 2925 East Madison Street

I am writing to oppose this project as it is currently designed. I am not categorically opposed to a new project at this location but any project on this site should honor and protect our neighborhood, the environment, and the wellbeing of our community and comply with city and state law and policy.

We live in an era of growing cynicism and fear that our government increasingly does not act in the best interests of the people and focuses too much on the ever growing desires of corporations for profit maximization at the expense of the people. This project is a classic example of profit maximization at the expense of the people in the Madison Valley neighborhood. Our City and the department should uphold the letter and spirit of the law and reject this project as currently proposed.

DESTROYING A GROVE OF EXCEPTIONAL TREES HARMS THE ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRADICTS CITY GOALS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Our community, nation and world faces growing threats from climate change. Ever increasing CO2 emissions threaten all of us. Every day public and private officials and citizens can take action to reduce these threats or make them worse. Someone much wiser than me once said: "Think globally and act locally." In that spirit I object to the current design of this project and urge the department to act on behalf of the wellbeing of our community and not the narrow profit-driven interests of an out of state developer that ignores the long-term adverse effects of this project.

This project will add to these environmental threats as it proposes to cut down a wonderful exceptional grove of mature trees that have brought joy and beauty to my life, family and community. In doing so, it violates the letter and spirit of the City's Comprehensive Plan which calls for protecting and expanding our citywide tree canopy. The Plan calls for cleaning the air, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, achieving an urban forest with a mix of tree species and ages, and promoting a contiguous healthy ecosystem.

Cutting down a mature set of trees does not mitigate greenhouse gases but instead helps to destroy part of a contiguous ecosystem that runs from this property to the nearby greenbelt to the Arboretum and down Lake Washington Boulevard. A smaller project can be built on this site that would not require the removal of this exceptional grove of trees.

INAPPROPRIATE SIZE AND SCALE OF PROJECT

The size and scale of this project is inappropriate for the neighborhood as it abuts single family dwellings on the east and south. It will tower above the neighbors to the east and south and

ignores the Design Guidelines which call for an effective and appropriate transition from more to less developed sites. We will lose the grand vista of the exceptional grove of trees and it will be replaced with a 70-foot-high building mass that is almost a football field in length. I jokingly refer to it as "Godzilla on Madison." It defies belief that the City Council and Mayor who passed the City's land use laws and Comprehensive Plan would think that this proposed transition from a massive hulk of a building to single family residents was the type of development they were encouraging.

THE SITE HAS A STEEP SLOPE THAT IS BEING IGNORED

This site has a very steep slope on the east side going down to Dewey Place. The project designers are pretending that the slope does not exist. In an area zoned for buildings with a maximum height of 40 feet, the designers have proposed a 70 foot high building on the east side of the project. Pretending that this steep slope does not exist by some "engineering sleight of hand" does not create alternative facts. It is a plain fact that the structure will reach 70 feet high on the east. The department should reject this project until such time as the redesigned project is scaled back and adequately addresses the steep slope issue and is set back properly so the overall height is reduced.

THE PROJECT WILL INCREASE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Having a parking garage entrance on Dewey Street is unacceptable. Dewey is about 18 feet wide and is barely wider than an alley. With parked cars on one side, the street is effectively a one lane street. Having the cars for 72 apartments going in and out of this very narrow street will add significant congestion to an already congested neighborhood. With added congestion on the Madison Street corridor, grocery store patrons may decide they want to park south of Madison. This will add to the parking challenges south of Madison as well as increase traffic congestion. This project should be scaled back in terms of size and keep the parking entrance off Dewey Place.

In my remarks I have chosen to not cite chapter and verse of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code and Regulations or Design Review Guidelines. Many other neighborhood residents and a well-respected land use attorney have cited these relevant legal sources repeatedly at earlier Design Review Board meetings and through many written comments. Instead I have chosen to talk about the many significant adverse human and environmental impacts that this project will create.

The Department should resist the pressure from out-of-state developers and others who will profit off of the degradation of our community and natural environment by rejecting this project as currently designed. In doing so, you will be upholding the spirit and letter of the law and help restore people's belief that we live in a city where our government is, first and foremost, of, by and for the people. A smaller better designed project that enhances our community would be welcome. This project is not welcome.