



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

**DATE:** 9/5/2017  
**TO:** East Design Review Board Members  
**FROM:** Magda Hogness, SDCI Land Use Planner  
**RE:** Project No. 3020338, 2925 E Madison St  
September 13, 2017 6:30 p.m.  
Seattle University  
965 12th Ave  
Pigott 104

Hi, enclosed are the past meeting report and packet for the upcoming REC meeting. Please mark them up, bring them to the meeting and if you are new to reviewing the project, please also take them on your site visit.

**Project Summary:** The 40,422 sf project site is located in the Madison Valley Neighborhood. The current proposal is a six-story structure containing 82 residential units with 26,100 sq. ft. of retail at ground level and parking for 140 stalls.

**Public Comment Summary:** The following design related public comments have been received since the last EDG meeting held on January 25, 2017. For previous comments please refer to summarized public comment in the enclosed meeting report.

- Concerned with the height, bulk and scale of the project; the project is out of scale to the neighborhood.
- Noted that the project site is adjacent to less intensive zones on three sides, and it is inconsistent with all five of the design guidelines that address the height, bulk, and scale of zone transitions (CS2.D.1-5).
- The design of the building does not take in account the existing slope and would significantly decrease the daylight for the surrounding neighborhood.
- Noted that the proposed building will shade the Mad-P community garden in the afternoon during the growing season. Would like to see additional shade studies to more clearly elucidate this impact on the garden and provide mitigation.
- The upper level setbacks are inadequate so the result is a large, looming building that towers over the narrow, largely pedestrian street of Dewey.
- Would like to see current building reduced, in particular along the east facade.
- The building height and the removal of the tree buffer zone are inconsistent with the requirement for a transition between more and less intense zones in Design Guidelines CS2-D.3 and CS2-D.4.
- Lack of support for the townhouse units and entrances on Dewey.
- Preference for a 25'-30' setback along Dewey.
- Concerned with the NE corner and would like to see additional setbacks incorporated to respond to site topography and transition to the single family zone.
- Concerned with the removal of trees and healthy urban forest habitat; destroying a grove of Exceptional trees harms the environment and contradicts City goals of environmental sustainability.
- Concerned with the loss of valued green belt. The urban tree canopy and green space is contiguous with the Mercer Madison Wood, the Arboretum, and is part of a larger urban forest corridor that connects Lake Washington to Portage Bay and Union Bay
- Concerned that the proposal will significantly decrease the amount of permeable surface on the site and will maximize the hardscape surfaces.
- Would like to see the buffer between the proposed development and the single family homes increased to afford and increased area for trees.

- Concerned that the planting area in front of the townhomes is minimal and won't be adequate to recreate the urban green space that has provided ecological services to the area and served as a buffer. Exceptional trees are being removed, and the replacement plantings are not comparable.
- Would like to see the existing tree canopy retained or replacing it at least 1 for 1 to provide adequate buffers.
- Support for the proposed landscape; the architect's landscape plan is generous, in contrast to other new developments of similar size.
- Noted that the builder should take serious precautions to prevent migratory birds from colliding with this building. Would like to see bird-friendly lighting and glass.
- Lack of support for vehicular access on Dewey; dual access solves the applicant's internal problem of how to have an oversized supermarket and 82 residences on the same site but does nothing to alleviate the problem on Madison and the surrounding streets.
- Concerned with a vehicular entrance on Dewey as it threatens pedestrians' safety and is inconsistent with guidelines CS2D5 and CS2B2. Dewey is a narrow street, often used as a walkway for the neighborhood.
- Support for the split vehicular entries, having residents enter and exit on Dewey this will ease congestion on Madison St during rush hour, which is a concern for those who use the Madison street arterial. Would like to see dumpsters located on the Dewey side of the parking garage.
- Would like to see the project consider widening Dewey.
- Support for vehicular access exclusively from Madison.
- Concerned with pedestrian safety and the garage entrance on Madison.
- Support for the pedestrian stair. Lighting on such a stair is important, and will be difficult to get right. Public safety must be balanced against the additional light shining into the neighborhood nearby.
- Lack of support for the staircase to/from Madison as it would disrupt the quiet, residential community.
- Lack of support for back-lit signage or obtrusive lighting; would like to see signage and lighting that is tasteful.
- Concerned with the potential for light pollution from ambient and security flood lights around the building and on the terraces, as well as the headlights from traffic entering and exiting the garage.
- Lack of support for bold accent colors on the exterior of the building.
- Support for the project and the changes that have been made.

**Project Highlights:** My feedback to the applicant included guidance to resolve the proposed massing option based on Board direction from the last meeting (summary on back of this page). I've identified the following topics as important to address at this stage:

1. **Response to EDG:** A summary response to the EDG meeting guidance is provided on pgs 6-7.
2. **Dewey Frontage: Height, Bulk, Scale and Response to Context:** At the last meeting the Board supported the addition of townhouses along the Dewey frontage, and also agreed with public comment that the townhouses appeared shallow and that the north and south portions of the façade have yet to be resolved. In the current design the frontage has been modified in line with Board guidance to read as a simplified and cohesive expression. Comparative graphics of the prior and current design are shown on pages 8-15. A series of alternate studies are also provided on pgs 54-55.

For the north and south portions of the façade, the applicant has responded by expanding/modifying the setbacks to improve the visual separation between the upper and lower massing. Comparative graphics are included on pgs 16-17. Alternative studies are provided on pgs 50-51 for the south portion and 56-57 for the north portion.

Also I wanted to reiterate that the building height calculation methodology has been vetted and approved with the SDCI 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 bulky in light of the Design Guidelines.

3. **South Frontage:** The Board recommended a "*sensitive transition to the adjacent residential properties to the south.*" A rendering of the proposed design and series of alternate studies are provided on pgs 52-53.

- 4. Vehicular Access and Related Departures:** Related to the departure requests and developing a sensitive solution to the Dewey frontage, vehicular access alternates are shown on pg 44-46. Please note, SDOT and SDCI support the dual access proposal for both safety and traffic operation reasons, as indicated in the email included on pg 46.

For the curb cut width departure, I've asked the applicant present comparative perspective views showing the code compliant version and the current proposal.

- 5. Madison Streetscape and Gathering Space:** *"The Board approved of the widening of the sidewalk along the street as it creates more opportunity for interaction. For the additional outdoor space adjacent to the grocery entry, the Board recommended the development of a public space which is true to the nature of the space and agreed the space can either function as a gathering space or an active sidewalk. In either case, the Board encouraged incorporating additional seating, space for pause and sightlines for streetscape connection."* (CS2-B-2, PL1, PL3-C, DC3). I've asked the applicant to present more detail on this area and include a composite landscape plan with more detail about the design of seating types and other special features.
- 6. Trees and Canopy, Streetscape and Landscape:** *"Related to the replacement canopy, the Board stated their preference for the addition of evergreens, to provide year-round landscape buffer. (CS1-D-1, CS2-B, DC3-C, DC4-D)"* I've asked the applicant to explain in more detail how layered planting (including additional evergreens) has been incorporated into the design to provide a year-round, landscape buffer. Related to the streetscape along Dewey, I've requested an enlarged plan and elevation of the terraced retaining walls/townhouse stoops, with the materials (of the retaining walls, gates, raised planters, etc.) and the heights noted. A series of sections are included on pg 35. The pedestrian stair is shown in plan view on pgs 34-35 and a perspective view is included on pg 39. For the meeting, I've asked the applicant to present an enlarged composite landscape plan of this area with basic paving material notes, species and size of planting, design of overlooks, seating types, etc.
- 7. Materials and Detailing:** The cladding choices and the relationship between the different materials are documented on pgs 7, 40, 50-61. I've requested more information on the different materials and to clarify the type of fiber cement panel proposed (thickness, hidden or exposed fasteners, etc.)

Along Dewey adjacent to the northeast corner, I've asked the applicant to explore a façade plane change where materials transition (between retail and residential above) to be cohesive with the rest of the architectural cladding treatment. (DC2, DC4-A)

To recap, your guidance provided during the last meeting was as follows:

- 1. Response to EDG:** The Board acknowledged the public comments concerned with the height bulk and scale of the proposal, however, they concluded that the massing development is responsive to previous guidance and that the design, overall, is on the right track. The Board strongly supported the rearrangement of uses, specifically the addition of townhouse units along the Dewey frontage as the use better reflects the residential character of the neighborhood, provides an intentional transition to the surrounding single family zoning and better responds to the existing topography. The Board directed the applicant to proceed with the developed Massing Option 3. (CS1-C, CS2-A, CS2-D, CS3-A-1, DC1, DC2-A-2)
- 2. Dewey Frontage: Height, Bulk, Scale and Response to Context:** Although the Board supported the addition of townhouses along the Dewey frontage, the Board agreed with public comment that the townhouses appeared shallow and that the north and south portions of the façade have yet to be resolved. The Board gave the following guidance on the proposal's edges and transitions:
  - For the townhouse frontage, the Board recommended exploring the height and depth of the modulation to read as a simplified and cohesive expression. In addition to refining the plane changes at the townhouses, the majority of the Board recommended further articulating the relationship between townhouse and retail above, potentially with additional upper level setbacks. (CS2-A, CS2-D, CS3-A-1, DC2-A-2)
  - The Board noted that the north and south ends of the frontage appeared very flat and requested continued massing development in order to develop a sensitive transition along the entire frontage. (CS2-A, CS2-D, CS3-A-1, DC2-A-2)

- c. The Board was supportive of the thoughtful approach to the streetscape treatment and agreed the various elements, including terraced retaining walls, railing design and layered planting, reflect a residential character. (CS2-B-2, CS3-A-1, PL1)
3. **South Frontage:** Echoing public comment, the Board expressed concern about providing a sensitive transition to the adjacent residential properties to the south. The Board recommended further articulating the lower portion of the facade and adding clerestory windows to be cohesive with the rest of the architectural cladding concept. (CS1-C, CS2-D, CS3-A-1, DC2-A-2, DC2-B)
4. **Vehicular Access:** The Board agreed with public comment that the code compliant alternative showing vehicular access solely off Dewey was the least preferred of the alternatives shown as it creates visual impacts and pedestrian circulation conflicts. The Board discussed the two other options, split access and all access off Madison. Ultimately the Board agreed that they would like additional information, graphics, and input from the technical experts including the City, before indicating their preference on vehicular access location and the related departures. (PL1, DC1-B-1, DC1-C)
5. **Trees and Canopy:** The Board acknowledged the public's concern for the loss of the significant mature planting, however, the Board deferred to the arborist study as reviewed and approved by the City and supported the arborist's findings recommending the removal of the canopy. Related to the replacement canopy, the Board stated their preference for the addition of evergreens, to provide year-round landscape buffer. (CS1-D-1, CS2-B, DC3-C, DC4-D)
6. **Madison Streetscape and Gathering Space:** The Board discussed the character of the public community space along Madison. The Board approved of the widening of the sidewalk along the street as it creates more opportunity for interaction. For the additional outdoor space adjacent to the grocery entry, the Board recommended the development of a public space which is true to the nature of the space and agreed the space can either function as a gathering space or an active sidewalk. In either case, the Board encouraged incorporating additional seating, space for pause and sightlines for streetscape connection. (CS2-B-2, PL1, PL3-C, DC3)
7. **Materials:** The Board continued to approve of the quality of materials presented, in particular along Madison. For the Dewey façade, the Board agreed with public comment that that colors are playing a larger role than needed in differentiating portions of the facade and recommended simplifying and resolving the material treatment into a cohesive language. The Board also encouraged the introduction of masonry along the Dewey façade to incorporate residential character and relate to the other main frontage. (CS3-A-1, DC2, DC4-A-1.)

At the time of the Third Early Design Guidance Meeting the following departures were requested.

1. **Vehicular Access (SMC 23.47A.032.A.21):** The Code requires vehicular access from Dewey Pl E. The applicant prefers two points of access from both E Madison St, a pedestrian street, and Dewey Pl E, but has also shown an option showing all access from Madison St.

The Board indicated initial support of a departure as the code compliant alternative showing vehicular access off Dewey was the least preferred of the alternatives shown due to impacts to surrounding residential context. A departure has the potential to reduce visual impacts and pedestrian circulation conflicts and better meet Design Guidelines DC1-B-1 Access Location and Design and DC1-C Parking and Service Uses. The Board agreed they would like additional information before further contemplating the two other access options.

2. **Curb Cut Width (SMC 23.54.030F.2.b.2):** The Code allows a maximum 30' curb cut. The applicant proposes a 40' curb cut width off of E Madison St.

The Board indicated they would like additional information including a diagram of the widened curb cut along Madison in full use before considering the departure. For the proposed trash and loading area, the Board implied that designing the pedestrian character of the street is critical to address the priority of the pedestrian realm.