

Herbaugh, Melinda

From: Tony Hacker <tonyhackerphd@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2017 4:04 PM
To: PRC
Subject: Project 3020338, 2925 E Madison St, 9/13/2017 DRB REC Meeting Comments

From: Tony Hacker

To: Magda Hogness

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From: Tony Hacker, 515 30th Ave E, Seattle 98112

To: Magda Hogness

Subject: Public Comment on Project #3020338, 2925 E Madison St

Date: September 12, 2017

My name is Tony Hacker. I have been a resident and small business owner in Madison Valley for 20 years. I also am a member of Save Madison Valley. I support responsible development of this site, and we are relying on you to make sure the applicant follows through with the Board and Planner requests and develops this parcel responsibly.

The Design Recommendation meeting, like the three prior Early Design Guidance meetings, leaves each of us from the community with barely enough time to make a few basic points, much less provide the Board with critical details. This is why I am submitting this more thorough comment than the oral comment I plan to make at the Recommendation meeting on September 13.

In prior meetings, the community has presented the Board the multitude of problems with this project. Unfortunately, nearly all of the most problematic issues we've brought to light still stand. And now, almost a year and a half after presenting their first design, the applicant still has not adequately mitigated design impacts, nor presented a proposal consistent with the Design Guidelines.

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While some important areas have been taken up by the board and passed along to the applicant, the applicant consistently appears to disregard or minimize Board direction, and making a complete mockery of our

community's concerns. In prior letters and emails, we have documented and passed on to you the applicant's errors, omissions and inconsistencies.

The most glaring and egregious example of this is with regard to the project's size: the community has consistently protested that the project's height, bulk and scale are too massive for this site. You have reiterated to the Board before EDG2 and 3 that: "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."

So, the community complains that the height, bulk and scale are too massive; the Planner offers that the DRB could address these issues, but the Board has done so only timidly. And perhaps because of the Board's reticence, the applicant disregards Board direction, and instead offers up a ruse: using a loophole in the code, a steep slope we all can see is considered not to exist; then, only because it suits them for the height calculation, the applicant uses this now "non-existent steep slope" to fabricate an "average grade," thereby paving the way for a six-story building on a site zoned NC2P-30 and NC2P-40. Is the slope there or not? None of these tricks are in the spirit of the Design Guidelines or the Seattle municipal code, which state that a building's height should follow the topography of the site. Instead, if this project is allowed to move forward, the applicant would build nearly twice as high as the zoning height limit and as if the steep slope didn't exist.

Moreover, in the interest of covering nearly every square inch of the site with an enormous, oversized building the applicant uses a similar ruse with regard to the site's trees, claiming that all of the site's trees must come down because construction of this building will destroy the trees. So, the developer proposes the complete destruction and removal of a healthy urban forest containing a thriving and sustainable mix of trees, birds and mammals. The result is an environmentally destructive project that does not, as it is supposed to do, keep the environmental impacts to a minimum, keep the removal of trees and vegetation to a minimum, or keep grading activities and impervious surfaces to a minimum.

These examples of the applicant's ruses with regard to the height calculation, steep slope, and trees are not the only ones. The applicant uses a similar ruse with regard to the residential garage entrance. Unlike the applicant, who has used data taken from a manual and run it through a computer program, we have obtained conclusive, real-time, on-the-ground data from the actual traffic patterns around the site to demonstrate that the addition of a second garage entrance on Dewey will have no appreciable beneficial effect on Madison traffic (it still would have an "F" LOS designation), and will make Dewey and surrounding streets perilous for pedestrians, and potentially inaccessible for cars.

The last area of potential chicanery is with regard to water issues. I have written to you about this before, so I only mention it here briefly. The applicant's plans released so far do not include any civil engineering plans and therefore cannot be evaluated for how the project proposes to collect and discharge wastewater, surface runoff or local groundwater (springs). Given the four instances I described above, I am very concerned that the applicant will attempt a similar ruse regarding the collection and discharge of water from the site. This building is in an area where there is already far too much water from a confluence of these three sources. This has caused repeated and severe flooding in the area – severe enough that our neighbor died here when her home flooded.

To sum up, I provide a list of the project's inconsistencies tied to specific Design Guidelines:

- The project's height, bulk and scale are far too massive for this site and are larger than at EDG 1. A six-story building is proposed in an NC2P-30 and NC2P-40 zone. (CS2-B.1, CS2-C.2, CS2-D.1 and CS2-D.4)
- This project would be devastating environmentally because it would not, as it is supposed to, keep environmental impacts to a minimum, keep the removal of trees and vegetation to a minimum, or keep grading activities and impervious surfaces to a minimum. (CS1-D.1 and D.2)
- Rather than respecting the topography, or using the site features to inform the design, this project eradicates the site topography and fabricates an "average grade" so that the design ignores the existence of the steep slope entirely. (CS1-C.2)
- The proposal fails to respond appropriately to the context and site. (CS1-C and CS2-B)
- 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. There is no transition when a 70-foot tall by 300-foot long structure is directly adjacent to and abuts single-family homes. (CS2-D.3 and CS2-D.4)
- Finally, the design includes a residential garage entrance on Dewey. This second, unnecessary entrance, not only wouldn't improve traffic on Madison (still an "F" Level of Service), it would make Dewey and surrounding streets perilous for pedestrians, and potentially inaccessible for cars.
- These are areas where we feel this proposal is not responsive to Design Guidelines. Please help the applicant respond appropriately. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Hacker