

Dela Cruz, Jeff

From: Chris <gcjnzn@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2017 6:12 PM
To: PRC
Subject: project 3020338

I would like to take this opportunity to state my view on the proposed design for this project that is being reviewed on the evening of 9/13. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the review, and so I am making my statement here.

In my opinion, there are a number of major issues with the proposed design that make it an unfit addition to the neighborhood, and many of these issues fall within the perspective of scale. The most obvious of these is the direct reference to scale in item D of the Urban Pattern and Form section, Height, Bulk, and Scale. This section calls on the developer and the city to, "Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition. Note that existing buildings may or may not reflect the density allowed by zoning or anticipated by applicable policies." The design currently being reviewed fails to meet this guideline in its entirety. The height, bulk, and scale of the neighboring buildings is single and two-story residences, whereas the proposed design is for a 70 foot tall building that spans almost an entire block, from the north end of Dewey avenue to just one residential lot short of the south end. The design supposedly offsets the approximately two and a half times increase in height through a series of setbacks that occur at various heights of the building, but the first of these is quite literally a façade that is composed of a series of extremely shallow extensions that are defined as townhome fronts. Again, however, they are in reality a building façade that provides no transition between the existing residences across the street and the overall building itself. Instead, anyone waking down Dewey avenue would find themselves between buildings that are approximately 15 to 25 feet in height on the one side, and 47 feet in height at the lowest point on the other. I cannot imagine any circumstances in which someone would describe this as a transition that respects the existing scale of the surrounding neighborhood, or that could be considered an appropriate complement.

The consideration of transition is extended further in the Zone Transitions section of the Urban Pattern and For section. This section reads, "For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development." I cannot believe that anyone would agree that the current design creates a stepped transition. The transition of this design to the surrounding residences is stark, abrupt, and, again, on a scale of approximately two and a half times that of the surrounding residences. This section also lists specific factors to consider. Among these are:

- Distance to the edge of a less (or more) intensive zone. The distance separating the proposed design from the existing structures is a narrow side street, just wide enough to allow two cars to pass each other. On one side of this divide is a collection of standard sized houses and on the other, a four story, almost block long structure.
- Differences in development standards between abutting zones. Prior to the introduction of this project, there were no differences in development standards across any of the zones in this area. From the north end of Dewey, for ten or twelve blocks, and east and west of Dewey for two or three blocks at a minimum, all of the architectural structures were single and two story residences. And even past these zones, the transitions were gradual, from one and two story commercial building to three and four story commercial and residential buildings to the west, while to the east there is a two story community use building and a two story private school. This project drops into the middle of this residential area a massive, six story structure that is out of scale not only to the residences directly across it on Dewey, but to the entire area for at least two, and in some directions substantially more, blocks all around it.

Another aspect of the scale of the proposed development that fails to meet another of the guidelines is the reference to scale in the section headed Fitting Old and New Together in the Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes in section CS3, Architectural Context and Character. This section reads, "Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, *scale and proportion*, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials." The scale of this design, again, is completely out of proportion to the scale of the existing building structures, and dwarfs them completely. It not only fails to create the compatibility between itself and the existing architectural context referenced in the guideline, it creates a distinct, separate, and completely incompatible zone, separated only by a narrow back alley. Quite simply put, on the one side of the street is a series of individual residences that are of a relatively common and standard size and proportion, and on the other is a massive architectural construct that can only be described as monolithic relative to those structures around it. And it is simply not possible to consider scale and complement when one is forced to use the term monolithic as a relative descriptor.

A third issue with the current design that I see falling under the scope of scale is the Relationship to the Block, as defined in the CS2, Urban Pattern and Form section of the guidelines, specifically the Full Block Sites guideline, which is applicable to this design, the remaining single lot on the south end of Dewey notwithstanding. This section reads, "Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design. Consider providing through-block access and/or designing the project as an assemblage of buildings and spaces within the block." It can be argued that the current design meets the requirements to break up long facades, and to provide detail and human scale at street level, and while I have to concede that this is an aesthetic interpretation, my own personal feeling is that it does not. Again, the townhouse front facades are, in my opinion, far too shallow and as a result, still present a long façade that has some minor variation. And what little variation it does provide is almost entirely overshadowed by the massive bulk of the remainder of the building, such that simply standing on the other side of Dewey, one would not be able to avoid the feeling that the building front is one single, long, and, yes, monolithic presence – a presence that utterly dominates any and all of the surrounding neighborhood from which it is visible.

When considering the guidelines and their reference to scale, there are, as I stated at the beginning, multiple issues with this design. It is because of these issues that I feel compelled to submit this letter, and to ask the design review board to accept the responsibility that they have assumed, to maintain the quality and character not of this neighborhood, but of this city, and all of the neighborhoods in it, and reject the proposed design, and demand that the developers present them, and us, with a design that meets and respects your own guidelines.

Finally, there is one other issue I see with the scale that is not related to the guidelines themselves but rather with what I see as the lack of respect for those guidelines, for this board, and for the neighborhood in general that this latest design, and its immediate predecessor, demonstrates. In response to the community's input on the initial design, the board informed the development company that it would need to come back with another design, which addressed the community's concerns around the bulk and scale of that design. In response, in both the next design proposal and this one, the developer has submitted designs that in fact increase the overall size of the building, and the corresponding bulk and scale. In light of that, it would be extremely difficult for me, were I a board member, to feel that the developer is showing a willingness to acknowledge both the community's and the board's input and concerns, and that the subsequent design proposals were submitted in good faith, or with any degree of respect to that input. And while personal feelings cannot, and should not, be a consideration in this process, all parties in the process should be able to feel that they are being treated with respect and integrity by the other parties. Absent that, the process cannot hope to deliver its intended goal of a workable and agreeable solution for all of the parties involved, and the increase in scale of the last two submissions, if approved, would indeed fail to meet that goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Chris Janzen.