City of Seattle

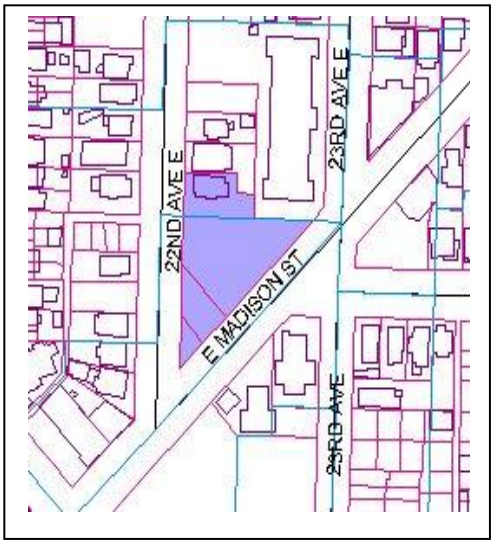
Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3001064
Address:	2200 East Madison Street
Applicant:	Matt Roewe, VIA Architecture for Aegis
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, February 16, 2011
Board Members Present:	Sharon Sutton (Chair) Evan Bourquard Dawn Bushnaq Clint Keithly Lisa Picard
Board Members Absent:	Wolf Saar, Recused
DPD Staff Present:	Lisa Rutzick

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone:	Neighborhood Commercial 3-65 and Lowrise 3
Nearby Zones:	(North) L3 (South) NC3 -65 (East) NC3 -65 (West) L3
Lot Area:	25,450 sq. ft.



Current Development:	The NC3 parcel is vacant; the smaller L3 parcel includes a two-story duplex, wood-framed house which would be demolished. Three existing English Elm trees are located on the site and have been identified as exceptional trees.
Access:	From 22nd Avenue
Surrounding Development:	Combination of single and multifamily residential structures to the north. Grocery and church uses across Madison to the south with multifamily and single family beyond.
ECAs:	None
Neighborhood Character:	The development site is located on the north side of East Madison Street between 22nd Avenue and 23rd Avenue. The site consists of a triangular parcel zoned NC3P-65 immediately north of Madison and a L3 multifamily parcel along 22nd Avenue immediately north of the triangular portion. The site slopes gently down five feet from the northwest corner about three quarters of the site area towards the southeast. The final quarter of the site, near the intersection of Madison and 23rd slopes more steeply down an additional ten feet for a total grade differential of about fifteen feet.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a six story assisted living facility with approximately 90-100 residential units located above the communal and office uses associated with an assisted living facility situated at ground level. A small commercial space is also proposed at the corner of Madison and 22nd Avenue. All of the parking for the proposed development is to be provided in a below grade garage that is accessed from the street.

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: February 16, 2011

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The revised design concept included a consolidated access area, an expanded open space at the gateway corner, an L-shaped tower and a design parti that responds to the lower scaled neighborhood context. Additionally, activation of the eastern corner with a staff break room instead of a blank wall was proposed. Building materials from the street facing facades were shown wrapping around to the northern façade. The pedestrian entry along Madison was further elaborated as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately six members of the public attended this Second Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted that greater, more effective street lighting is needed at night, especially for ground level public spaces.
- Appreciated the more sensitive design along 22nd Avenue that responds to the quieter nature of the residential neighborhood and the more commercial design along Madison – both of which reflect the appropriate character and context of that façade.
- Concerned with the driveway traffic from the proposed development across from an existing driveway and would like to see landscaping included to soften the views of the drive area.
- Believed that the vehicular driveway entry plaza should be further studied to ensure that it can accommodate the largest truck maneuvering that is likely to occur without having to back on to 22nd Avenue. The intersection of the Madison façade and the 22nd Avenue façade is too abrupt and incongruous. The design of this joint needs further study and the two facades should be better stitched together. The increased width of the sidewalk along Madison should be even and enhance clear sight lines.
- Pleased with the design improvements, but the Madison entry is weak and should be more prominent and integrated into the recessed space.
- Suggested that the Madison entry will be less utilized by residents and guests and therefore should be de-emphasized.
- Noted that the Madison entry should be more prominent and announce the building to the public. Unhappy with the loss of the existing trees on the site; would like to see Elm street trees planted along 22nd. The corner café should be well buffered from the noisy, fast moving traffic of Madison; effort to create a more comfortable and calm space is critical. Support the canopy effect over the café seating to create a protected area. The façade treatment provides a nice rhythm to the building and the bay treatment along the north façade is positive.
- Noted that a traffic study should include all pipeline projects in the area.
- Preferred a color palettes that is not grey tones; color scheme should have vitality.
- Advocated for a three-dimensional gateway quality at the corner rather than a flat experience.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: January 5, 2011

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. Options B and C include the removal and replacement of these trees.

The first scheme (Option A) showed, as a required alternative, the preservation of exceptional trees located along the boundary of the L3 and NC3P-65 portions of the site. The mass of the building is concentrated along Madison, intended to preserve the three trees. A curb cut just southwest of the intersection of 23rd and Madison gives access to the below grade parking garage. A drop-off and loading zone is provided at the corner of 22nd and Madison.

The second scheme (Option B) concentrates the massing of the building along Madison creating a "V"-shaped building mass. Access to below grade parking, however, is relocated to the north end of the site along 22nd, and is combined with the resident drop-off zone to provide on-site maneuvering and loading and unloading for trucks. A podium courtyard for Memory Care residents is provided over this resident drop-off zone.

The third and applicant preferred scheme (Option C) utilizes an "L" shape organizing parti, which opens up to Madison in the form of a memory garden terrace. It provides a similar access scheme for drop-off, parking, and loading/unloading as Option 2. Its' layout, however, provides a more ample footprint for development, and a more dynamic massing along the Madison frontage.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 12 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Objected to the size of the proposed building.
- Supportive of the proposed neighbor as a positive contribution to the neighborhood. Like the formal arrangement of the 22nd Avenue façade and would encourage the design to be simple. The pedestrian areas along 22nd Avenue should be better emphasized at ground level with landscaping, art, swales, etc. The corner use should open to the public and see to engage the public at this important location.
- Support the broken massing along Madison. Believe the L3 zone lot is an important buffer to the lower density zone to the north. Encourage breaking up the flatness of the 22nd Avenue with bay windows. If a pedestrian pass-through route is pursued, it should be done safely with a well-lit pathway. The landscaping along the right-of-way should allow for usable spaces, not just purely ornamental.
- The corner at 23rd Avenue and Madison should be a pedestrian friendly experience with transparency at the ground level. The main entry along Madison should be more evident.
- Concerned that the trees located on the L3 zoned lot are unhealthy and should not preclude development. Like the open space concept for this lot and encouraged sharing this space with the First Place day care program next door. The trees should be replaced.
- This site is an important gateway location and future development should convey the uniqueness of the neighborhood.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines of highest priority for this project. The citywide guidelines are summarized below. For the full text, please visit the Design Review website.

A. Site Planning

A-1 **<u>Responding to Site Characteristics</u>. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board all agreed that the shape of the site presents a dramatic and prominent corner at the southwest corner.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the proposed café use at the gateway corner is desirable. The Board stressed that this corner open space feel safe and three-dimensional to the desired users.

A-3 **<u>Entrances Visible from the Street</u>. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the entrance to the assisted living facility should have a presence along Madison that is gracious, welcoming and well-marked.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that the Madison entry should be further examined to create more of a presence and even strive to become more of a 'beacon' element along the lengthy street front. The design of this entrance should be a grander gesture with a more expansive space or have a more prominent architectural feature to draw pedestrians along the sidewalk and break up the long façade. The Board noted that due to the long stretch of building along this block face, this entry is the only point of penetration and physical interaction with the proposed development. As such, this entry should strive to be active and apparent.

A-4 **<u>Human Activity</u>. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board was very supportive of the widened sidewalk width along Madison. The Board also agreed that the proposed planting strip with vegetation will provided a needed visual and physical buffer between the pedestrians on the sidewalk and the street.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed a desire for more overhead weather protection along Madison that offers protection to pedestrians, in addition to the increased width and landscaping in the right-of-way, and create a less exposed space along this busy arterial. The overhead protection should wrap around

onto 22nd Avenue as well. The Board also recommends consistent sidewalk width along Madison to keep the vantage point open as viewed down the street.

A-5 **<u>Respect for Adjacent Sites</u>. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the L3 zoned lot creates an important buffer to the lower density zone to the north. The Board would like to see the building design strive to incorporate some of the historical character of the neighborhood.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board appreciated the initial concept of incorporating details from the musical history of this neighborhood into the gateway corner location.

A-7 **<u>Residential Open Space</u>. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that Option C with its space plan located at the second floor, is superior to the other alternatives because its' south facing facade will have better solar exposure.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the proposed second floor continued to be south facing as part of the memory care garden with the L-shaped building surrounding this open space.

A-8 **<u>Parking and Vehicle Access</u>. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed at length the proposed location of the vehicle access and loading and drop off area clustered along the 22nd Avenue frontage. The Board was concerned that all of the back of house functions and curb cuts created a vehicle dominated and harsh pedestrian environment that lacks contribution to an active streetscape. The Board strongly recommended consolidation of these multiple drive lanes and garage openings to create a design that defers to the pedestrian and creates a more vibrant ground level. The Board observed that the proposed circulation was creating a large hole in the streetscape and a large gap between the gateway corner and the Lowrise zone to the north. The Board also stressed that the ground level should be integrated into the overall façade composition to present a cohesive design.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board was very pleased with the consolidation of the access driveways into a singular access point and the creation of a service circle. The Board would like to see continued examination of the navigability of the circular drive, including queuing, maneuvering, and ability to accommodate

vehicles of larger sizes and proportions. The Board is also interested in reviewing more information regarding the warning system that will allow a single lane driveway into the parking garage.

A-10 **<u>Corner Lots</u>. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board clearly acknowledged the prominent corner at 22nd Avenue and Madison as a gateway, but also emphasized the corner as 23rd Avenue and Madison as well. The Board agreed that the ground level at these corners should be hardscaped rather than landscaped. The Board noted that the base of the 23rd Avenue and Madison corner need to be resolved and that having a blank wall at this sidewalk level is not desirable.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that locating the staff break room at the easternmost corner was a positive move to help enliven this end of the building and avoid the blank wall between the sidewalk and garage previously shown.

The Board was very supportive of the decision to locate more open space at the gateway corner rather than along the northern edge of the site. The Board encouraged development of a three-dimensional quality to the gateway corner that would include physical, aural and visual buffers to the seating area, such as lighting, artwork, seat walls and water features. The Board encouraged developing several alternatives for this corner design, all of which seek to encourage its usability and success of the retail corner, as well as create a beacon that draws pedestrian down the sidewalk.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 **<u>Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility</u>. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that the 22nd Avenue facade design should acknowledge the lower zone height across the street. The massing of the preferred alternative (option C) addresses the Madison length the best and situated the upper level open space along Madison, effectively breaking down the massing of the upper levels along this street.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board continued to agree that the proposed massing proportion best suits the site conditions. The Board agreed that the

22nd Avenue façade design concept responded to the lower zone across the street with the use of the projecting bays and color distribution. The Board was pleased with the efforts to break down the Madison façade into 50-60 foot wide modules.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-2 **<u>Architectural Concept and Consistency</u>. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board concluded that all sides of the building, including the north façade, should be thoughtfully designed to respond to the particular conditions of that specific façade. The Board noted that the party-wall of the northeast façade should be carefully considered as it is viewed from the abutting Lowrise zone.

The Board felt that the pedestrian street language of 22nd Avenue should wrap around to the northwest façade. The Board stressed that the design of this façade should be simple and avoid being overly busy. A few images on the packets particularly interested the Board members, including the photograph in the upper left corner of page 25 depicting a brick façade with large fenestration and instead of projecting decks; the decks recede from the facade wall. The Board also noted the bottom left image on page 24 which shows a stepping back and diminishing quality of the upper levels – which the recommended in response to the lower zone across 22nd Avenue. The packet is available here.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed at length the point of intersection where the 22nd Avenue façade meets the Madison façade. Both facades have appropriately and successfully responded to the scale and character of these differing streets; however the joining of these facades creates a design challenge. The design of this juncture will be highly visible at this prominent gateway corner and needs to be addressed from the top all the way to the sidewalk. The overhead weather protection canopies need to respond to changed planes in an elegant manner, as do the proportions and design of these facades. The Board agreed that the treatment of the building top/cornice should be consistent. The Board also pointed out that a similar condition exists at the eastern corner as well and that these two corners need to appear as a related part of a larger cohesive structure.

C-4 **<u>Exterior Finish Materials</u>. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.**

C-5 **<u>Structured Parking Entrances</u>. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.**

See A-8. The Board expressed support for departures from the loading berth size and driveway width if such reductions would result in a vibrant and attractive pedestrian streetscape along 22nd Avenue. The Board expressed support a decrease from the quantity of loading berths, if such an option is available through the Land Use Code.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 **<u>Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances</u>. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board expressed interest in the sidewalk areas along Madison and 22nd Avenue, the L3 parcel and the possibility of a pedestrian pass-through along the north side of the site. All of these open spaces are important with unique considerations. Overheard weather protection, landscaping, lighting and safety are important and desirable features.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that these continue to be important features to be considered and designed as the project design evolves. See A-10.

D-2 **<u>Blank Walls</u>. Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board reiterated several concerns regarding the multiple driveways along 22nd Avenue and the resultant gap in a pedestrian friendly streetscape that effectively becomes a blank wall. See A-8 for more discussion.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the driveways along 22nd Avenue were reduced to a single drive. Also, the blank portion of the building at the eastern tip has been addressed with a staff break room which will include windows facing the sidewalk.

D-6 **<u>Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas</u>. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

See A-8.

D-7 **<u>Personal Safety and Security</u>. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that if the pass-through path is created, then great attention should be given to safety and security along this path with lighting. See also Board's comments regarding the interface of pedestrians and vehicles along the 22nd Avenue frontage.

See also E-3.

At the Second EDG, the pass-through path concept was eliminated. See A-8 regarding safety of the vehicle maneuvering.

D-11 **<u>Commercial Transparency</u>. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the Madison Street frontage and the ability of the proposed building program to enhance the activity and interaction between the interior spaces and the streetscape. The Board strongly agreed that a long, blank wall would be unacceptable and efforts should focus on engaging the street rather than turning away from the street. The Board was very pleased with the proposed widening of the sidewalk and agreed that tapering down the width is less desirable.

See A-3 and A-4.

D-12 **<u>Residential Entries and Transitions</u>. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that a prominent and gracious entryway along Madison is important to identify the building and break up the long street length.

See A-3.

E. Landscaping

E-3 **<u>Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions</u>. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that enhancing the planting strip along Madison and widening the sidewalk along this busy arterial are both critical moves to enhance the pedestrian experience at this gateway location. The Board also supported the concept of extensive vegetation and swales in the already wider 22nd Avenue right-of-way. The third special site condition pertains to the portion of the site that lies within the L3 zone and is proposed to be left undeveloped and landscaped either as an amenity to the future tenants of the building or a pocket park. The Board adamantly stated that whichever option is selected, that the access to the open space from the proposed building needs to be resolved and the security and safety of this open space must be considered.

At the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board continued to support the widened sidewalks and landscaped planting strips. The revised plan for the service circle entrance that is partially located in the Lowrise zone has made the discussion of an open space on this portion of the lot inapplicable.

EXCEPTIONAL TREES – DISCUSSION FROM EDG

A special site condition is the presence of three identified exceptional trees currently located on this site. The information presented to the Board describes the trees as having an extensive roots system that would prohibit the excavation areas needed for construction. Page 29 of the EDG packet shows that the preservation of the trees would result in a reduced development potential of the site to 74%. The Board's concern with the scheme that would preserve the trees is that all of the access would be forced closer to the corners of Madison and 22nd and 23rd, both of which create a significant impact to an already challenged pedestrian streetscape. Furthermore, both of these prominent corners are gateway opportunities for the Miller Park and Madison Valley neighborhoods and locating vehicular access at these corners would be a detriment to the architecture and pedestrian environment. The proposed open space for the resultant building would be shifted to the north side with less solar exposure and increased shadow from the building. For these reasons, the Board unanimously agreed that this scheme would be contrary to Design Guidelines A-8, A-10 and C-5 and the proposed site plan that eliminates the trees is a far superior option. Thus, the Board supported the removal of the trees and the required replacement of the trees in appropriate locations.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

1. **Loading Berth Height (SMC 23.54.035.C):** The Code requires a loading berth height of 14 feet. The applicant proposes a loading berth height of 13 feet.

   The Board indicated possible support for such a departure if the applicant can show the reduced height will not adversely affect the loading needs of the future tenant and would result in minimization of the loading area's presence along 22nd Avenue.

2. **Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.005.D):** The Code requires that in a pedestrian zone, residential uses may not exceed 20% of street level, street facing façade. The applicant proposes that the majority of the street level, street facing facade will be residential.

   The Board indicated possible support for this departure provided that an active and engaging street front is designed along Madison, the residential entrance is more prominent and welcoming and the ground level includes significant transparency and the sidewalk is widened and well-landscaped.

3. **Driveway Width (SMC 23.54.030.C1e):** The Code requires a driveway width of 20 feet for two-way traffic. The applicant proposes a 14-foot wide one-way driveway.

   The Board indicated interest in reviewing a warning system that would work to alert cars exiting the garage and cars entering the driveway at the same time and accommodate the necessary queuing. See guidance contained in this report.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.