



City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020338

Address: 2925 E Madison St

Applicant: Charles Strazzara of Studio Meng Strazzara

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Board Members Present: Natalie Gualy, Chair
Curtis Bigelow
Barbara Busetti
Christina Orr-Cahall
Amy Taylor

Board Members Absent: Dan Foltz

SDCI Staff Present: Magda Hogness, Shelley Bolser, Abby Weber

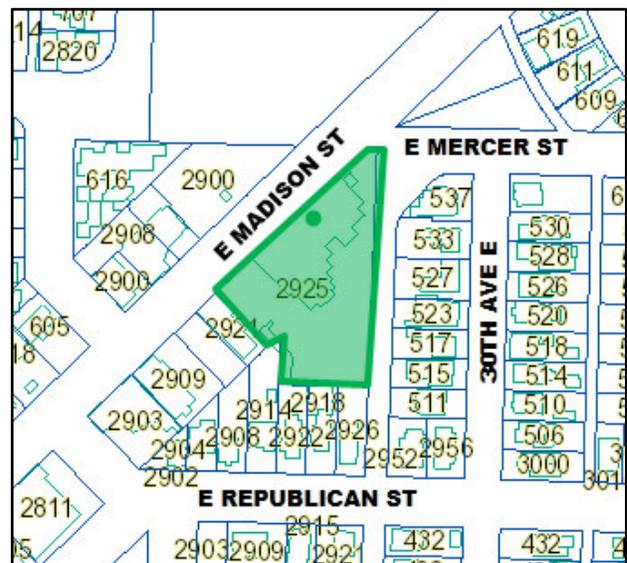
SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC2P-40 and NC2P-30)

Nearby Zones North: Single Family (SF 7200)
South: SF 5000
East: SF 5000
West: NC2P-40

Lot Area: 40,422 SF

Access: The subject property currently has vehicular access off E Madison S.



Environmentally Critical Areas: The site is a mapped Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA), due to steep slope and liquefaction prone soils.

Current Development:

The site is occupied by one story retail structure, known as the City People's Garden Store.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The project site is located in the Madison Valley neighborhood, characterized by its close proximity to Madison Park to the east and the Arboretum to the north. This neighborhood is predominately comprised of single family and multifamily residential housing types and commercial and retail uses along E Madison St, which the City has designated as an arterial.

The site has street frontage on E Madison St, Dewey Pl E and an unimproved portion of E Mercer St. Access for E Mercer St dead-ends Dewey Ave due to steep topography. A pedestrian hill climb is proposed at this location as part of this proposal.

Recent development includes sizeable residential and mixed-use buildings. To the northwest, across E Madison Ave, is a 3-story masonry building, the Madison Loft Condominium. Adjacent to the southwest is a 2-story wood frame structure, the Washington Park Art Studios. To the south and east of the site are single family structures as the zoning transitions to single family. This site has the potential to serve as a transition area from the multifamily and commercial uses along E Madison St to the single family zone south and east of the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing a 4-story mixed use building consisting of 26,600 sq. ft. of retail space and 75 residential units and includes parking for 158 vehicles. The existing structures are proposed to be demolished.

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE July 13, 2016**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following comments were offered at the meeting:

- Concerned with the height, bulk and scale of the proposal; the proposed development completely overwhelms the site and displays a lack of sensitivity to its potential neighborhood, and is inconsistent with Design Guidelines CS2.B1 and CS2.C2
- Noted that the site has two or more individual Exceptional Trees and an Exceptional Grove and that the proposed removal of these trees is inconsistent with Design Guideline CS1.D1. The proposal disregards direction to provide a fully code compliant option with respect to the steep slope, ECA and buffer, access and street improvement exception.
- The proposal utterly fails to respond appropriately to the context and site per Design Guidelines, CS1-C Appropriate Use of Natural Topography, CS1-D Incorporate onsite landscaping, and CS2-B Open Space to inform site design.
- Concerned with how height is being measured; approximately one third of the site is a 40 percent steep slope, with more than 30 feet elevation change from toe to top, yet the height diagram shows only a 2.5 ft differential step down between the flat area and the 30 ft drop in elevation.

- Noted that the graphic of the section cut is not representative of the true massing proposed; at the north end of the site, the building mass looms over the Dewey residences. A more than 60 ft vertical façade rises above Dewey. This is a 40' commercial zone, neighboring a single family zone and is inconsistent with Design Guidelines CS2.D11 and CS2.D4.
- Rather than respecting the topography, or using the site features to inform the design, this project eradicates the site topography, inconsistent with Design Guideline CS1.C2.
- Currently a natural buffer with a mature urban tree canopy sits between the NC2P-40 commercial zone and single-family homes. This project would remove that buffer, rather than providing a transition between more and less intense zones, as Design Guidelines CS2.D3 and CS2.D4 recommend.
- Lack of support for the 156 car, two story, 320 foot long parking garage exposed on Dewey. It will release fumes, noise, and light into neighboring homes. The proposed façade changes the character of Dewey and creates an unfriendly and unsafe- feeling pedestrian environment, inconsistent with guidelines Dc1.C1, DC1.C2, andDC4.C2.
- Lack of support for the garage entrance of Dewey Place, a non-conforming street because of its narrow width, which will draw a large influx of traffic and impact safety. The proposal includes 30 additional parking spaces above requirements and is inconsistent with design guidelines CS2.D5 and CS2.B2.
- Concerned with the removal of existing vegetation, which includes 39 mature trees, over 20 native plant species and over 14,600 sf of tree canopy. The urban tree canopy and green space on Dewey is contiguous with the Mercer Madison Wood, the Arboretum, and is part of a larger urban forest corridor. The Design Guidelines CS1.D2 encourage preserving or extending urban forest corridors.
- Lack of support for the south façade blank wall. The east side along Dewey continues the visual effect of a blank wall. All these walls are at street level, creating an unfriendly pedestrian environment, inconsistent with guideline DC2.B2.
- Concerned that the proposed retail floor is below street level, causing people to have to walk down ramps or steps. The grade separation is unnecessary and is poor design, inconsistent with guideline CS2.B2.
- Concerned that the proposal severely curtails privacy and outdoor activities on its south and east side, inconsistent with guideline CS2.D5.
- Supportive of the development; this project will bring a socially responsible grocery co-op and add many needed residential units to this fast growing city that is experiencing a housing supply crisis.
- Noted that the neighborhood doesn't currently have a central community space and views this project as a rare opportunity. Supported the courtyard space shown in Option 2.
- Impressed by the proposed street frontage along Madison.
- Supported the proposed materials.
- Would like to see more setback and terracing along the Dewey façade.
- Concerned with tree removal. The project will eliminate a mature and grove of urban trees that shelters, shades, and beautifies the adjoining neighborhood.

- Lack of support for back-lit signage or obtrusive lighting; prefer to see unlit stencils and awning signage.
- Concerned with the location of loading off Madison St; it is not in keeping with a pedestrian friendly environment. Would like to see more consideration given to the placement and design of the garage and loading area.
- Concerned with noise impacts, in particular from the HVAC units.
- Strongly supported a combined option of with the community space as shown in Option 2 and Option 3.
- Lack of support for the proposed hillclimb.
- Supported proposal Option 3, as it provides a good balance of attractive commercial property with minimal disruption to the neighborhood.
- Supported the scale of proposal; it is in scale with other development on Madison
- The Madison Greenways group has been in discussions with the City and SDOT to implement a greenway through the neighborhood, with the greenway crossing Madison St. at 29th Ave E. As a part of that effort, Madison Greenways, SDOT and Metro are in talks to move the existing eastbound bus stop along Madison east one block to the front of this building site. The design should plan for the repositioning of this bus stop.
- Would like to see significant sized trees on Dewey and on Madison and a variety of planting proposed.
- Concerned with traffic and parking entry impacts for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Would like to see a smaller grocery, the green space and tree canopy preserved and the natural topography respected.
- Concerned with drainage impacts.
- Supported the project, but would like to see the south frontage refined.
- Supported a pedestrian connection from Madison to Dewey.

SDCI staff also summarized design related comments received prior to the EDG meeting:

- Lack of support for strong accent colors.
- Supported the proposed vehicular entrances; splitting the entries is seems to be a reasonable way to reduce congestion.
- Supported the proposed materials brick and natural wood to blend into the streetscape.
- Supported the Dewey frontage; the architect has done a good job of reducing the visual impact of the building as well as its effect on shading.
- Would like to see the building be more adventurous in terms of saving energy, by committing to meeting one of the green standards currently offered by the City of Seattle.
- Concerned with the shading of the p-patch garden; would like to see the developer and architect respond to the presence of and potential impacts on the Mad P-Patch.
- Lack of support for a commercial loading on a residential street. Would like to see most traffic and commerce on the main thoroughfare, Madison St.
- Would like to see increased setbacks along the parking structure and a substantial screen of tall trees to soften that view.

- The garage entrance on Dewey would be hazardous to pedestrians, as Dewey is a very narrow street with no planting strips, narrow sidewalks, and a single lane that hosts two-way traffic.
- Supported the preferred design Option 3; it is successful at minimizing shading to adjacent structures and using the natural topography to inform the design.
- Noted that building will serve as the east anchor of the Madison Valley commercial district and that many of the buildings in the area feature square-paned/divided windows. Would like to see that feature repeated here, particularly in the transoms above the large retail windows. The transom windows shown in the EDG renderings come close, but would like to see a more modern, rectangular panel.
- Would like to see more balance between this building's NE corner and the Madison Lofts building.
- Supported the retail space on the NE corner; as the first retail space, most westward-bound travelers will encounter in the retail core, and should be distinctive per Design Guideline CS2-C.
- Supported Option 2 as it is suited for greater community involvement and is better for more users of the site. The preferred design (Option 3) does include a generous setback for the retail entry (10'), but its width along the street front is limited compared to Option 2.
- Noted that Option 2 does have a greater impact on the residents in the valley below, and that must be addressed.
- Supported Option 3 as it transitions to the single family zones to the east and south.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

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.

- 1. Height, Bulk, Scale and Massing Options:** The Board acknowledged the public's concern with the height, bulk and scale of the proposal and agreed that the massing needed to further transition along Dewey and the single family zone. The Board commended the applicant's effort to date and unanimously agreed the general massing and frontage along Madison is an appropriate scale. The Board discussed the strengths of the massing options and supported the courtyard community space shown in Option 2 and terraced massing shown in Option 3, but also agreed more effort is needed to respond to the site topography and context. The Board directed the applicant to return with a modified, hybrid massing option based on the guidance provided.
 - a. The Board unanimously agreed with public comment that additional setbacks should be provided to respond to the site topography and transition to the single family zoning. While refining the massing at this location the Board also recommended

studying if there is potential to save some of the existing trees. (CS1-C, CS1-D, CS2-A, CS2-B, CS2-D, DC2-A, DC3-C-3)

- b. In order to address concerns about how the building height is calculated, the Board requested more information and if possible, verification that the calculation is code compliant for the next meeting. (CS1-C-2, CS2-D, DC2-A-1)
- c. The Board supported the inclusion of a community space along the street as shown in Option 2. The Board also discussed if a courtyard should be provided and ultimately agreed that a courtyard could be developed, but providing adequate community space for gathering is a higher priority and noted this activity could potentially occur as part of the interior program. The Board recommended developing the grocery retail frontage with adequate space for outdoor/indoor dining opportunities and pedestrian amenities to engage and interact with the streetscape. (CS3-A, CS2-B-2, PL1, PL3-C, DC3)

2. Response to Context and Topography: Echoing the public comment regarding the frontage along Dewey, the Board was concerned with the extent of blank wall shown.

- a. The Board questioned if two stories of elevated parking provides the best frontage along Dewey and the adjacent single family zone. The Board recommended studying different alternates address the residential context and respond to existing topography. (CS1-C, CS2-A, CS2-D-2, CS3-A-1, CS2-B-3, DC1, DC3-C-3)
- b. The Board was also concerned with the visibility of concrete and gabion baskets and recommended developing a sensitive solution using high quality materials which better relate to the surrounding residential context. (CS2-A, CS2-B, CS3-A-1, CS2-B-3, DC2-B, DC3-C-3)
- c. The Board noted that the tallest massing volume appears to be at the northeast corner and agreed this area will be highly visible and the scale relationship is critical. (CS2-A, CS2-B, CS2-C1, CS2-D, DC2-A-2, DC2-B, DC2-D-1)

3. Site Features and Existing Tree Canopy: Affirming the public comment, the Board requested more information about the status of the trees, including snags, and the urban forest corridor. The Board stated that although replacement trees will never be the same, generous planting could still be provided. Reviewing the proposed planting, the Board was concerned with the equally spaced columnar row of trees and recommended differing scales of trees. For the next meeting, the Board requested more details about the landscape plan, including information on efforts to incorporate the existing tree canopy. (CS1-B-3, CS1-D, CS2-B, CS2-D-2, DC3-C, DC4-D)

4. Trash, Vehicular Access and Loading Location: The Board recognized the diverse public opinions regarding the parking, garage and loading access locations. The Board agreed that splitting up the loading and parking access appears logical but requested more information before indicating their preference. For the proposed trash and loading area along Madison, the Board implied that the designing pedestrian character of the street is critical to address the priority of the pedestrian realm. (CS2-B-2, PL1, DC1-B-1, DC1-C, DC4)

5. **Materials:** The Board strongly supported the quality of materials presented at this early phase. (CS3-A-1, DC2, DC4-A-1.)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure’s potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project 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 no departures were requested.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS1-D Plants and Habitat

CS1-D-1. On-Site Features: Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features: Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics: Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: 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.

CS2-D-2. Existing Site Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: 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.

CS2-D-4. Massing Choices: Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: 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.

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer’s markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-C Planning Ahead For Transit

PL4-C-1. Influence on Project Design: Identify how a transit stop (planned or built) adjacent to or near the site may influence project design, provide opportunities for placemaking.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation

DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking: Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

DC1-C-4. Service Uses: Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space: Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas: Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: 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.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board unanimously recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.