

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF  
CAPITOL HILL/FIRST HILL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
MARCH 21, 2001**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Project Number:	2100171
Address:	1818 E. Madison
Applicant:	Streeter Architects for Thomas, Inc.
Board members present:	Tom Phillips (Chair) Joy Jacobson Greg Wharton
Board members absent:	Merv Gorasht Barb Gregory
DCLU staff:	Michael Jenkins

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is proposing a mixed-use project at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> and E. Madison. The project includes 7,000 square feet of retail and separate office space with approximately 145 apartment units located on five floors of residential above the retail/office area. Partially below grade parking will be accessed from two separate locations, one along Madison and one on 19<sup>th</sup> Ave, and will include approximately 207 spaces. Surface parking spaces will also be provided along the western side of the building fronting Madison and the north side of the building fronting 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. The surface parking will be located near each access for the parking garage.

The site is located in a C1-65 zone, but is surrounded by a variety of zones including NC2R-40 to the north, L3 to the west/northwest across an unimproved alley and an NC3-65 zone to the immediate west along Madison and South of the site. Single-purpose residential uses are located in the L3 and NC2R-40 site. The project is located at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> Ave and Madison Street and is presently occupied by a vacant building that housed the Fratelli Ice Cream office/warehouse site. This site is prominent in the neighborhood for its Cow Mural that faces 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. There is a distinct grade change along the northwest portion of the site between the site and the adjacent L-3 zone.

**BOARD COMMENT/QUESTIONS**

- Location of access – alley versus street
- Reason for proposed surface parking next to garage access on both 19<sup>th</sup> and E. Madison

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

18 members of the public attended this meeting. The following issues and concerns were raised during the meeting:

- Number of parking spaces
- Concern about queuing in public right of way when accessing garages, if width of required access is reduced

- Prefer mixed use development proposed
- Appreciated attention to number of parking spaces
- Concern about effect of light and air with building located so close to north property line
- Ensure that project is both pedestrian and neighborhood friendly
- Design improvements should be continued around all facades
- 19<sup>th</sup> should have retail that attracts daytime users
- If facades are broken down into smaller, distinct styles, how will they be joined
- Having building sited right on Madison is important
- Concern about height and mass of building in relation to surrounding residential properties
- Parking is difficult now and may be more so when Mt. Zion continues its redevelopment plans
- Developer appears to be sensitive to needs of the community
- Façade facing alley should also have visual interest and scale to avoid monolithic quality facing adjacent residences
- Attempts should be made to save the existing mural
- Developing historic references from neighborhood would be nice
- Large windows are important
- Slope of Madison is an impediment to the design on the building, especially with the potential for blank walls next to the street
- How construction impacts will affect parking in neighborhood

Additional comments in writing were offered by those in attendance, which were submitted at the meeting and are available for review.

### **PRIORITIES**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by proponents and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance, identifying by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*" that are of the highest priority to this project:

**A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics - 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 features.**

The Board felt that it was very important for the project to respond to the slope/grade change in their design of the building.

**A-2 Streetscape Compatibility – The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way**

The Board noted that the applicant's conceptual plan to break up the building into distinct design statements was important and a good first step.

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

The Board felt that the corner feature/entrance was important to the project, but that further definition of the other building entrances, including the residential portion, was important. The Board felt that it was also important for all of the entrances to the building, to read/appear based on their particular use, such as retail entrances looking retail, residential with a residential look, etc.

**A-4 Human Activity - New Development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

The Board felt that it was important to encourage street side activity on both Madison and 19<sup>th</sup>, but also indicated that the predominate retail entrance should be on 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. The Board also felt that the slope of the site as it rises west along Madison might be better suited to office rather than retail uses. The Board felt that shifting the building along Madison to the west property line would help establish a strong streetwall along Madison. The Board indicated that the removing vehicular access on 19<sup>th</sup> with the building extended along 19<sup>th</sup> would reduce a ‘gap tooth’ effect between structures. The Board also indicated that the building should also have more sense of enclosure over the Madison St surface parking area through extending architectural components of the building or the parking area should be reduced.

**A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites - 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.**

The Board indicated that the current design has negative impacts on properties on both sides of the subject property. The Board felt that the garage entrance area should be designed to address the entry area of the house to the north. The Board also indicated that the height, bulk and mass resulting from the line up of the 6 individual structures so close to and along the north property line are important in evaluating the impacts of the development.

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

The Board indicated they would provide further comment once detailing is made available, but they generally liked and supported the proposed location of Open Space.

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

The Board reiterated and restated their previous direction, specifically indicating that the surface parking along 19<sup>th</sup> and on Madison should be minimized, appropriately scaled, screened and the size of curbcuts reduced as much as possible. The Board did indicate that the proposed access points for the garage on 19<sup>th</sup> and on Madison would help provide relief from potential backups if there were only one garage access point, given the size and siting of the project.

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

The Board indicated that the conceptual massing did response to the importance of the 19<sup>th</sup> and Madison intersection but wanted to see a more sufficient response at the next meeting.

**B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility - 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 the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

The Board indicated that they were particularly interested in the effect of the project on surrounding residential properties and were also interested in the building responding to the change in commercial intensity through redevelopment in the area.

**C-1 Architectural Context - New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

The Board indicated that the project should set the context for the area, as the existing context is changing along Madison and as it is at a prominent corner.

**C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency - 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.**

The Board was concerned that the building be designed to be a complete architectural statement around all four sides and not just a façade along 19<sup>th</sup> or Madison. The Board was concerned that there not be just a commercial platform for the residential building, that the residential and commercial portions should be seamless. The Board did support the conceptual massing where the building would be broken up into distinct facades. The Board was also interested in how any signage on the building would be incorporated into the design of the building.

**C-4 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.**

No specific direction was given, other than supporting the guideline as applied to this project.

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

Board members felt that it was important for the building to screen access to the parking areas. At the next meeting, the Board was interested in the applicant showing diagrams of vehicular and pedestrian access patterns and how the access will potentially enhance the design of the building.

**D-2 Blank Walls - 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.**

The Board was particularly concerned that the Madison Street, Northside and Alley facades avoid blank walls, due to the grade changes and proximity to adjacent residential uses.

**D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks - Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.**

The Board reiterated their previous direction in other guidelines, indicating that screening of the surface parking area was required and that additional architectural treatment for any surface parking along Madison be provided.

**D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures - The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

The Board was concerned that if views of the parking access inside the building are possible that the view should be obstructed as much as possible, especially due to surrounding residential uses.

**D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas - 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 can not 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.**

The Board indicated that attention should be paid to this, since the alley would probably not be available for services.

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

The Board was concerned that attention be paid to provide clearer vision of the alley area.

**E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites - Where possible and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

The Board felt it was important to keep the trees along 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. The Board also felt it was important to provide hardscape and/or architectural details that referenced neighborhood and historic detailing.

**DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

The applicant requested a Design Departure from SMC 23.47.008B2 requiring 80% of structure's street front façade to be occupied by non-residential uses. The rationale for the request was based upon the applicant's desire to have two curbcuts, one on Madison and another on 19<sup>th</sup> as well as the effect of the grade change rising to the west along Madison limiting the ability to provide street front access to any non-residential uses. The Board indicated that the applicant needed to make their case visually, but were also sympathetic to the request due to the acknowledgement of the difficulties posed by the grade change.

The applicant also indicated that a Design Departure for the width of required curbcut and access to parking areas. SMC 23.54.030D2 establishes standards for widths of mixed use properties. SMC 23.54.030F2 establishes standards for curbcut width in a C1 zone. No specifics about the possible departure were forwarded by the applicant for the Board to develop a position on the request.