

Department of Ecology Storage Building

1 - Administrative Review

Design Review Staff Report

August 3, 2020



Staff:

Dean Gunderson, Senior Urban Designer

Taylor Berberich, Urban Designer

Neighborhood & Planning Services
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201

Applicants:

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509-456-8236 x 231

Design Review Board Authority

Spokane Municipal Code [Chapter 04.13](#) Design Review Board

A. Purpose. The design review board is hereby established to:

1. improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors and the City early in the design and siting of new development subject to design review under the Spokane Municipal Code;
2. ensure that projects subject to design review under the Spokane Municipal Code are consistent with adopted design guidelines and help implement the City's Comprehensive Plan.
3. advocate for the aesthetic quality of Spokane's public realm;
4. encourage design and site planning that responds to context, enhances pedestrian characteristics, considers sustainable design practices, and helps make Spokane a desirable place to live, work and visit.
5. provide flexibility in the application of development standards as allowed through development standard departures; and
6. ensure that public facilities and projects within the City's right of way:
 - a. wisely allocate the City's resources,
 - b. serve as models of design quality

Under SMC [Section 17G.040.020](#) Design Review Board Authority, all public projects or structures are subject to design review. Recommendations of the Design Review Board must be consistent with regulatory requirements per [Section 17G.040.080](#) Design Review Board

Recommendations.

Recommendations of the Design Review Board will be forwarded to the Planning Director and the chair of the North Hill neighborhood Council.

Project Description

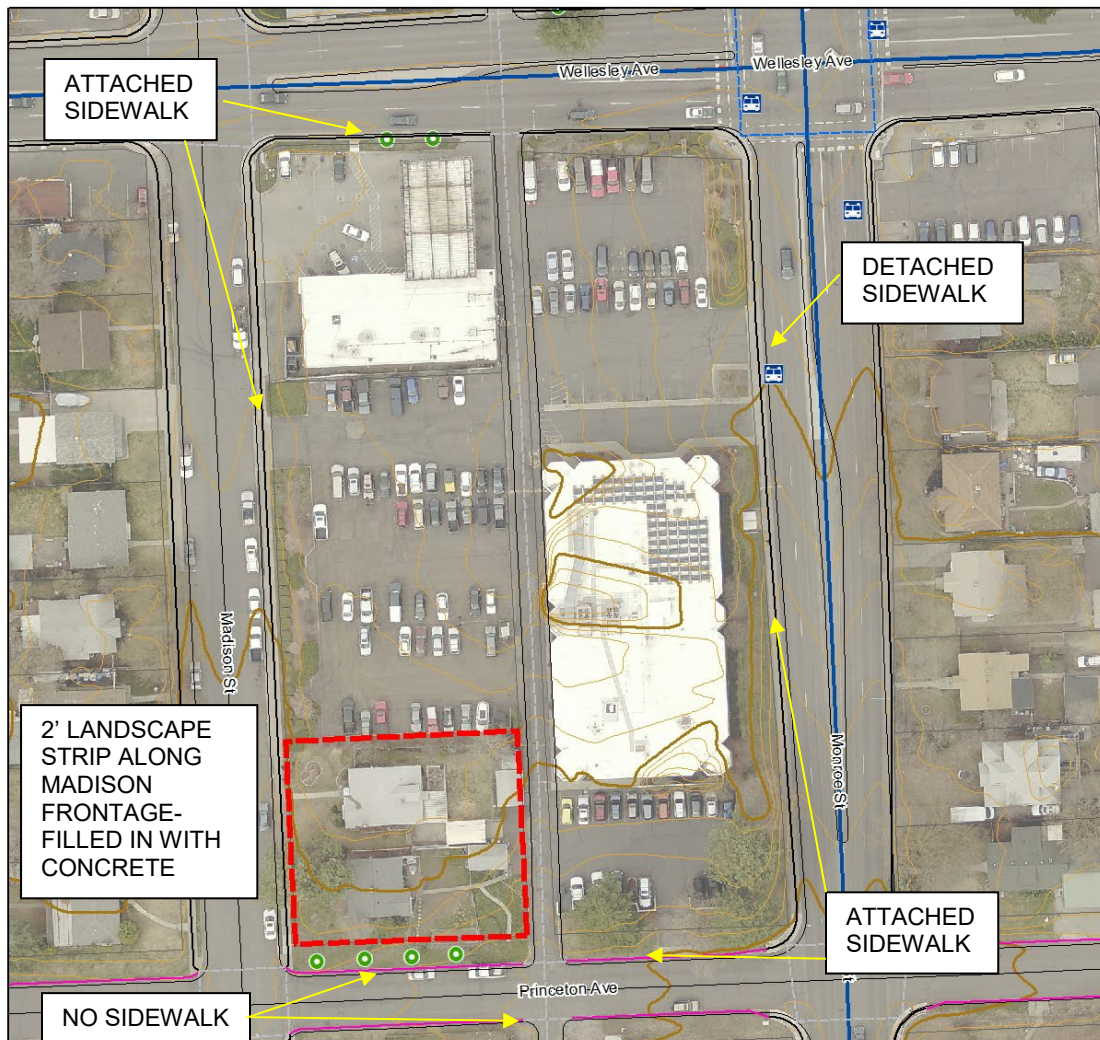
Please see applicant's submittal information.

Location & Context



The Department of Ecology is located at 4605 N Monroe Street, and the proposed storage building is located on the neighboring parcel to the west at 4508 N Madison Street, in the North Hills neighborhood. The STA Bus Route 33 runs east/west along Wellesley on a 15-minute loop. The STA Bus Routes 4 and 124 run north/south along Monroe on 15 loops.

Character Assets



DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY STORAGE BUILDING SITE CONTEXT

LEGEND

Site	Sidewalk	Topography
Tree Inventory	Sidewalk	Index
STA Bus Route	Crosswalk	Intermediate
STA Bus Stop	Road Crossing	
	Missing	

There are four mature hawthorne trees along Princeton Street which are in poor condition (see communication with Urban Forestry following this report).

There are attached sidewalks along the west and north property lines. On the Monroe Street frontage, there is a detached sidewalk that extends from the bus shelter to just before the Wellesley intersection (approximately 200 feet of sidewalk). The remaining portion of sidewalk south of the bus shelter (approximately 200 feet) to Princeton Street is attached. Please see the annotations on the map above for clarification on the sidewalks.

Regulatory Analysis

Zoning Code Requirements

The property is zoned Office-35. The applicant will be expected to meet zoning code requirements. Applicants should contact Current Planning Staff with any questions about these requirements.

Recommendations of the Design Review Board must be consistent with adopted regulations. The DRB may not waive any code requirements.

The applicant is seeking variances from the following code sections (note, these are not departures from a design standard, and are being reviewed for approval by other departments in the City):

17C.200.050.B.2 Street Tree Implementation: Street trees shall be planted between the curb and the walking path of the sidewalk.

The applicant is seeking a variance to this code section in order to construct an attached sidewalk, with trees behind the curb along Princeton Avenue and Madison Street. The intended sidewalk configuration still meets urban forestry requirements, as the trees would still be within the dedicated right-of-way.

17C.120.230.B.2 Setbacks and Sidewalks: Sidewalks are required to be constructed and shall be at least twelve feet wide and consist of a clear walking path at least seven feet wide (in addition to planting zone for street trees per SMC 17C.200.050). Part of the sidewalk width may be located on private property. The sidewalk dimension shall be measured from back of curb to building facades or parking lot screening.

Table 3-G Sidewalk and Pedestrian Buffer Strip Design Parameters: City of Spokane Department of Engineering Services Design Standards. Table 3-G stipulates that all sidewalks in a Commercial zone shall be a minimum of five feet in width (unless required to be a different width per any other section of the code), with either a three foot hard-surfaced pedestrian buffer strip or a six foot six inch wide planted pedestrian buffer strip.

The applicant is seeking a variance to these standards in conjunction with the above variance request. In addition to the back-of-sidewalk planting location for the street trees, the applicant is proposing the construction of a seven foot wide sidewalk (to include the clear walking path).

For more insight into the variance and departmental comments, see the email correspondence attached to this report.

Commercial Design Standards

Design standards in the code appear in the form of Requirements (R), Presumptions (P), and Considerations (C). Upon request of the applicant, the board may offer some flexibility from certain eligible code “design standards” if the board recommends that the proposed solution is equal or better than what is required, and still meets the purpose of the standard.

Section 17C.120.500 Design Standards Implementation:

The design standards and guidelines found in SMC 17C.120.510 through SMC 17C.120.580 follow [SMC 17C.120.015](#), Design Standards Administration. All projects must address the pertinent design standards and guidelines. Design standards are in the form of Requirements (R), Presumptions (P), and Considerations (C). Regardless of which term is used, an applicant must address each guideline. An applicant may seek relief through [chapter 17G.030 SMC](#), Design Departures, for those eligible standards and guidelines contained in the zoning code.

City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan

[Comprehensive Plan link](#)

CHAPTER 3: LAND USE

LU 1 CITYWIDE LAND USE

LU 1.1 Neighborhoods: Utilize the neighborhood concept as a unit of design for planning housing, transportation, services, and amenities.

LU 1.5 Office Uses: Direct new office uses to Centers and Corridors designated on the Land Use Plan Map.

LU 2 PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT

LU 2.1 Public Realm Features: Encourage features that improve the appearance of development, paying attention to how projects function to encourage social interaction and relate to and enhance the surrounding urban and natural environment.

LU 4 TRANSPORTATION

LU 4.1 Land Use and Transportation: Coordinate land use and transportation planning to result in an efficient pattern of development that supports alternative transportation modes consistent with the Transportation Chapter and makes significant progress toward reducing sprawl, traffic congestion, and air pollution.

LU 4.2 Land Uses That Support Travel Options and Active Transportation: Provide a compatible mix of housing and commercial uses in Neighborhood Centers, District Centers, Employment Centers, and Corridors.

LU 5 DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

LU 5.1 Built and Natural Environment: Ensure that developments are sensitive to the built and natural environment (for example, air and water quality, noise, traffic congestion, and public utilities and services), by providing adequate impact mitigation to maintain and enhance quality of life.

LU 5.5 Compatible Development: Ensure that infill and redevelopment projects are well-designed and compatible with surrounding uses and building types.

LU 6 ADEQUATE PUBLIC LANDS AND FACILITIES

LU 6.9 Facility Compatibility with Neighborhood: Ensure the utilization of architectural and site designs of essential public facilities that are compatible with the surrounding area.

CHAPTER 4: TRANSPORTATION

TR GOAL A: PROMOTE A SENSE OF PLACE- Promote a sense of community and identity through the provision of context- sensitive transportation choices and transportation design features, recognizing that both profoundly affect the way people interact and experience the city.

TR GOAL F: ENHANCE PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY- Promote healthy communities by providing and maintaining a safe transportation system with viable active mode options that provides for the needs of all travelers, particularly the most vulnerable users.

TR 1 Transportation Network for All Users: Design the transportation system to provide a complete transportation network for all users, maximizing innovation, access, choice, and options throughout the four seasons. Users include pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities, as well as freight, emergency vehicles, and motor vehicle drivers.

TR 7 Neighborhood Access: Require developments to have open, accessible, internal multi-modal transportation connections to adjacent properties and streets on all sides.

CHAPTER 8: URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DP 1 PRIDE AND IDENTITY

DP 1.2 New Development in Established Neighborhoods: Encourage new development that is of a type, scale, orientation, and design that maintains or improves the character, aesthetic quality, and livability of the neighborhood.

DP 2 URBAN DESIGN

DP 2.3 Design Standards for Public Projects and Structures: Design all public projects and structures to uphold the highest design standards and neighborhood compatibility.

DP 2.5 Character of the Public Realm: Enhance the livability of Spokane by preserving the city's historic character and building a legacy of quality new public and private development that further enriches the public realm.

DP 2.6 Building and Site Design: Ensure that a particular development is thoughtful in design, improves the quality and characteristics of the immediate neighborhood, responds to the site's unique features - including topography, hydrology, and microclimate - and considers intensity of use.

DP 2.15 Urban Trees and Landscape Areas: Maintain, improve, and increase the number of street trees and planted areas in the urban environment.

DP 2.21 Lighting: Maximize the potential for lighting to create the desired character in individual areas while controlling display, flood and direct lighting installations so as to not directly and unintentionally illuminate, or create glare visible from adjacent properties, residential zones or public right-of-way.

CHAPTER 9: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

NE 12 URBAN FOREST

NE 12.1 Street Trees: Plant trees along all streets.

NE 12.5 Tree Replacement Program: Do not allow tree removal in the public right-of-way without a program for tree replacement.

Staff Recommendations

Staff recommends Administrative Design Review approval with the following conditions. Please note, the applicant's responses have been copied verbatim from a letter submitted July 29, 2020. To view the full letter, see the applicant's submittal. The applicant's responses are noted below in *blue italics*, any further staff comments are noted in **green bold**.

1. The applicant is strongly encouraged to retain one or both of the existing Ponderosa Pine trees that are slated for removal (near the intersection of Princeton and Madison, see image below). The Spokane City Council has adopted a resolution declaring the Ponderosa Pine the official tree of Spokane, and encourages the conservation of mature specimens located within the city.

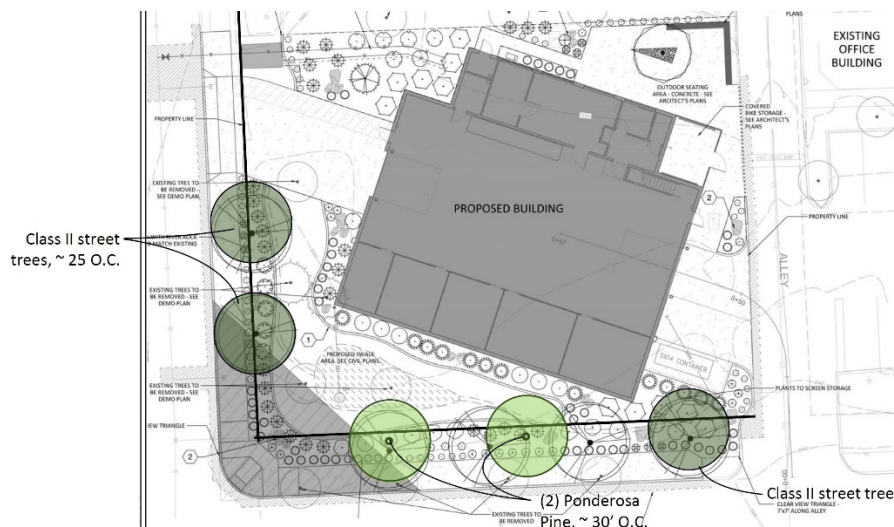


Existing Ponderosa Pine

Applicant's Response: The eastern-most tree must be removed as it is within the area of the building foundation. As a result, the other (westerly) pine may be compromised from the other tree's removal. It appears to be a one-sided tree having grown too close to the tree being removed and its health and safety for people and property are in question. And probably most important, this project has been mandated by the Governor to be a net-zero project, which relies significantly on the use of a roof-mounted photo-voltaic array that would be blocked from the sun by these trees. Their removal is imperative to this project's success.

Further Staff Comment: Based on conversations with the DRB Chair and Urban Forestry, staff recommends the following condition.

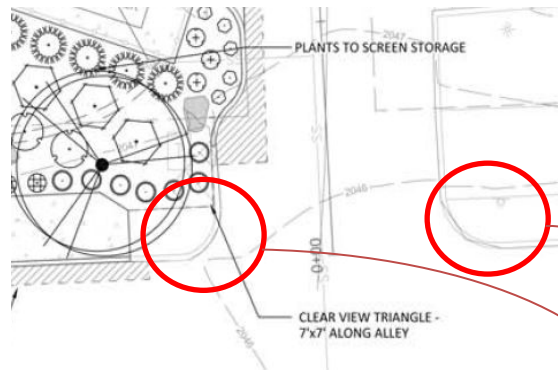
The applicant shall modify the street tree plant specification to match the image in the figure below. This is consistent with Urban Forestry's requirements for the Street variance, but the two westerly-most street trees along Princeton Avenue shall be Ponderosa Pine.



2. The applicant shall adhere to the requirements of the Urban Forester regarding the placement, classification, and care of the new street trees along Princeton Avenue and Madison Street (within ROW, Class II trees, proper bedding & use of certified arborist, etc.). This recommendation is modified per the staff comments & figure in Recommendation #1.
3. The applicant shall provide ADA-compliant sidewalk ramps along both sides of the alleyway adjacent to the subject site (see figures below). ADA-compliant sidewalk ramp shall match the new ramp installed by the Department of Ecology at the same alley's intersection with Wellesley (just north of the subject site).



Existing Alleyway Conditions



Proposed Alleyway Conditions

Location of new ADA-compliant sidewalk ramps

Example of ADA-compliant sidewalk ramp constructed by applicant (Dept. of Ecology) at the north end of the alleyway



Alleyway Condition to match

Applicant Response: The existing sidewalks at the alley do provide a flush transition to the pavement. Although it appears a slight slope is provided to get that flush transition, they are not a curb ramps and are not constructed with a tactile warning surface. However, they were constructed and inspected last year and assumed to be in compliance with city regulations. It was the intent of this project to tie into this recently constructed sidewalk without modification. The east side of the alley is outside of this project's boundary and no work was anticipated there.

Further Staff Comment: The applicant is required to construct a sidewalk along their frontage, and as an accessible route it must comply with ADA requirements, meaning at minimum an ADA compliant sidewalk. The previous phase was not part of an accessible route and was therefore not required to provide an ADA compliant sidewalk.

4. While the applicant has provided the material selection for the metal panel exterior finishes (AEP Span: Flex Series, Fluted and Flush Panels), the applicant has not provided a color selection. As the intent is to match the adjacent Dept. of Ecology office building, the applicant shall use the following AEP Span Standard Architectural Colors for the facility:

Fluted Panels (to mimic the DoE Office Bldg's fluted masonry): "Regal White"

Flush Panels (to mimic the DoE Office Bldg's metal-paneled fascia): "Weathered Copper"

5. The proposed outdoor enclosure located at the southeast corner of the facility shall meet all the screening and impact abatement requirements stipulated in [SMC 17C.200.070.A Screening and Impact Abatement](#). If the 5'x14' "container" depicted within the screened enclosure is to accommodate storage, this storage area cannot be located within 15' of the street lot line along Princeton Avenue, per [SMC 17C.200.070.A.4](#). Currently, the screened enclosure is located only 6' from the Princeton Avenue street lot line.

Applicant Response: The 5' x 14' container is a self-contained modular container and not an open storage area. With a permanent cover, or top, it is believed to fall under Section 17C.120.300 as a detached accessory covered structure, having setbacks consistent with the building's setback. The fenced enclosure is used for screening, along with landscaping as described in 'Technique 2' of Section 17C.200.070, and no open storage will occur within the fenced area. All storage will be confined within the container.

Further Staff Comment: per the applicant's assertion this would be an enclosed accessory structure, which would require the surrounding fence to adhere to 17C. 120.310.C.4, therefore the fence must meet the 17C.120.570, Treating Blank Walls design standard. Currently the proposed chain link with vinyl slats does not meet that standard.

6. The new curb-cut located on Madison Street shall not reduce the ADA-compliant width, slope, or cross-slope of the adjacent sidewalk to less than 5'-0" per [SMC 17C.120.230.2 Setbacks and Sidewalks](#) and COS Engineering Standards. The depicted width of the sidewalk at the top of the curb-cut's ramp is only 4'. While a variance is granted to reduce the sidewalk width to 7', a minimum ADA-compliant width must be maintained along all sections of the sidewalk, portions may rest within an easement on the parcel.
7. The new sidewalk along both Princeton Avenue and Madison Street (even with a permitted variance) shall conform to the construction material requirements, two-foot grid, color and float finish per [SMC 17C.120.230.B.4 Setbacks and Sidewalks](#).

Applicant Response: Although concrete color and finish are without rebuttal, the 2x2 grid requirement does not seem to be consistent with any other sidewalk in the area of this project. Control and expansion joints would be provided as required and per ACI guidelines.

Further Staff Comment: this is an engineering design standard, for which the applicant has not requested a variance, nor has one been granted.

Note

The recommendation of the Design Review Board does not alleviate any requirements that may be imposed on this project by other City Departments including the Current Planning Section of Planning and Development Services.

Policy Basis

Spokane Municipal Codes
City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan

Department of Ecology Storage Building

Administrative Review DRB Chair Recommendation

On behalf of the Design Review Board, under the authority granted to the Chair by Rule 24.1E of the Rules and Procedures of the Committee:

- ☒ I accept and concur with the staff recommendations, adopt these recommendations as my own findings, including the conditions recommended by staff, for the reasons stated.
- ☐ I accept and concur with the staff recommendations, adopt these recommendations as my own findings, including the conditions recommended by staff, for the reasons stated, with the following modifications:

- ☐ Upon the information provided by staff, the following are the Chair's recommendation, conditions and reasons: (attach other sheets as necessary)

The decision of the Chair of the Design Review Board may be appealed to the full Board by contacting the Board Secretary.


Kathy Lang, Chair, DRB

8/3/2020
Date

cc: Louis Meuler, Interim Director of Planning Services
Tami Palmquist, Associate Planner, Current Planning Manager

Note: Supplementary information on file with City of Spokane Design Review Board.