



April 7, 2015

The Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association supports redevelopment along Monroe Street that enhances and is compatible with the neighborhood character, and with city and neighborhood plans.

We appreciate that the proposed plans for 3414 Monroe Street are the second iteration of this development project, and include improvements over the initial plans.

However, we oppose this iteration of the plans due to the size, massing, and setback from the Arbor House property line.

After reviewing these revised plans, the Landmarks Commission found the development to be “so large as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjoining landmark site; however, the stepbacks lessen the visual intrusiveness.”

We concur with this finding. This unique site should be developed in a way that is more harmonious with the neighboring landmark property, the Arboretum across the street, and the overall natural feel to this entry point into the Dudgeon-Monroe neighborhood.

We recognize that the scope of the Landmarks Commission process is limited, and does not address related considerations such as underground parking. Parking issues are a major concern to the neighborhood and the inclusion of underground parking in the revised proposal is a strong benefit.

The earlier proposal called for 16 surface spaces to be shared by commercial and residential users. Because of easement requirements, these spaces were also available for used by neighboring Arbor House guests as needed on nights and weekends.. As a result, the parking seemed insufficient.

The easement agreement between the property owners has not been a point of public discussion, because it is private matter. However, it has been an important factor in the building and parking design for the site, because the agreement requires parking space availability for Arbor House guests.

It now appears that there may be some willingness to revisit the terms of this easement.

The trade-off for underground parking was additional rental square footage to offset the cost. This proposal calls for a fourth story of about 4000 sq ft, the largest fourth floor addition in the three recent developments along Monroe Street, two of which include underground parking. ¹

We recommend that the trade-off between size and parking in this plan be reexamined.

Our understanding of the easement is that it was a part of the PUD conditions for Arbor House, which were developed to address conditions at the time. The traffic and use of these several blocks have changed in the intervening years.

Reevaluating the parking, traffic, and easement conditions for the whole 3400 block of Monroe would present an opportunity to reevaluate how parking and massing are being addressed at this site. We would strongly encourage this.

Specific conditions for any new plans would also include:

- preserving the stepback of 9' from the first floor for the 2nd and 3rd stories, which is an improvement over the first design ;

- reducing the depth of the 2nd floor balconies along the Arbor House side to 4 feet; This is in keeping with the intent of the proposed 2nd and 3rd stepbacks for the 3rd and 4th floor on the Arbor House side of the project.

- requiring a landscaping plan that maintains a green buffer between the new development and adjoin property owners, including the Arbor House, and includes some of the greenspace that now exists between the current building and the sidewalk along Monroe Street. This greenspace is a strong component of the character of the corner.

¹ For comparison, Parman Place at 3502 Monroe, and the Empire building at 1911 Monroe, also

As an additional comparison, The Monroe at 2624 Monroe St., which does not include underground parking, has fourth story loft space for 3rd story apartments of 2511 sq ft.