



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Project Address: 1702 Monroe Street & 625 S. Spooner Street (District 13 – Ald. Eskrich)
Application Type: Planned Development Zoning Map Amendment & Demolition Permit
Legistar File ID # [49895](#) & [49690](#)
Prepared By: Chris Wells and Kevin Firchow, AICP, Planning Division
Reviewed By: Heather Stouder, AICP, Planning Division Director

Background

At their January 22, 2018, the Plan Commission did not find that the standards for Planned Developments were met and recommended to the Common Council that the zoning map amendment (ID 49895) be placed on file without prejudice. Specifically, the Plan Commission found that Planned Development Approval Standards 28.098(2)(a), 28.098(2)(b), and 28.098 (e) were not met. As part of the same motion, the Plan Commission did not find that Demolition Permit Standard 28.185(7)(a)2 was met and placed the demolition permit request on file without prejudice. In stating their reasons for not finding these standards met, members of the Plan Commission stated that the building, as proposed, was believed to be too large for the neighborhood and nearby residences to the north. Members of the Commission also noted concerns regarding the height, massing, and rhythm of the proposed structure and concerns that it was not specifically demonstrated that no other base district could be used to achieve a substantially similar pattern of development. Commission members also noted questions regarding inconsistencies with adopted plans in regards to these standards.

At their February 5, 2017, the Plan Commission unanimously voted to reconsider both the zoning map amendment and demolition permit requests. Revised plans were submitted to the Planning Division on the afternoon of February 7, which included modifications to plans previously presented to the Plan Commission.

Description and Analysis of Revisions

The most substantive changes made to the proposal are:

- 1) Lower the overall height
- 2) Reduce the mass at the upper stories of the building’s northeast corner in order to better conform the building to setbacks that would have been required in the TSS District.
- 3) Bike Parking Revisions

In regards to Item 1, the applicant has reduced the overall height of the building by 2 feet – 8 inches. This has been primarily accomplished by lowering the height of the second floor by two feet. To do so, a number of clerestory windows along the ground-floor commercial façade have been removed. The remaining eight inches results from a reduction in the ceiling height of the fifth floor. For a side-by-side comparison of the original versus revised elevations, please see the applicant’s graphic entitled “1720 Monroe Street Elevation Height Comparison Original (11.20.2017) Elevations vs. Revised (02.07.2018) Elevations” included in the Plan Commission’s packet of materials.

In regards to Item 2, the applicant has reduced the overall building’s inhabitable space by roughly 3,105 square feet. While the reduced mass has not affected the number of dwelling units, it has reduced the number of bedrooms by eight.

Specifically, a roughly 455 square foot “notch” of floors 2-5 has been carved away, effectively increasing the upper-floor distance at its closest point from the northern property line from 17 feet – 8 inches to 31 feet – 9 inches. (Please see Sheet G300 in the Plan Commission’s revised packet of materials). At the fifth floor level, the applicant has also pulled back the entire northeastern façade roughly 4.5 feet and pulled the northern half of this façade back an additional roughly 23 feet.

The applicant has made additional modifications regarding the footprint of the building’s fifth floor in order to further reduce the visual impact of the fifth floor upon those located to the west across S. Spooner Street. To this end, the applicant has pulled back each of the three façades which form the ‘bend’ along W. Lawn Avenue nine feet.

For comparative purposes, staff notes that while the revised design more closely conforms to the setback and stepbacks allowed in TSS Zoning, some elements of the revised building would extend within the setback area, as depicted in the applicant’s materials. On the ground floor, the one-story element which encloses the ramp to underground parking would not comply with TSS setback requirements. In discussions with staff the applicant has indicated that they believe this is preferable from a both a safety and aesthetic standpoint, compared to an uncovered ramp. It is noted that this feature also includes a green roof. The applicant’s graphic on sheet G300 depicts the setback and stepback standards with an orange plane.

In regards to Item 3, the revised plans include the addition of eight short-term bicycle stalls to serve commercial uses. These are well-distributed on the private property, with two along the W. Lawn Avenue façade, four along the Monroe Street façade, and two along the Stockton Court façade.

Public Input and Applicant Meetings

The applicant has indicated they have participated in several meetings with nearby residents to discuss revisions, and provided the following list of the meetings:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Friday 1/26 | Updated Monroe Street Merchants group during monthly First Friday meeting. Approximately 20 merchants in attendance |
| Saturday 1/27 | Met with two neighbors from the Vilas Neighborhood who testified at Plan Commission |
| Monday 1/29 | Met with group of six nearby neighbors from the Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood |
| Thursday 2/1 | Met with one neighbor from the Vilas Neighborhood who testified at Plan Commission |
| Sunday 2/4 | Provided update at the Friends Meeting House with group of ten nearby neighbors from the Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood |
| Wednesday 2/7 | Provided update at the monthly Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Association meeting |

At the time this addendum went to print, four additional letters had been received. Half show support for the proposed development and the other half show opposition. A copy of each has been included in the Plan Commission’s packet of materials. A copy of the previously submitted comments is available online at the City’s [Legislative Information Page](#).

Conclusion

The applicant has proposed modifications to reduce the proposed building's height and mass in response to the Plan Commission's previous comments on these requests. Staff believes that such modifications have improved the transition to nearby residences compared to the original submittal. The Plan Commission is advised to consider these modifications against the approval standards for demolition permits, zoning map amendments, and planned developments as part of their reconsideration of this item. This information should also be carefully weighed against the recommendations of the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan, which are discussed in more detail in the original staff report. Staff notes that while revised, the proposed five-story building remains a story taller than what is generally recommended in adopted plans. In relationship to the adopted plans, the Planning Division advises the Plan Commission to provide clear findings on the specific factors, including any site-specific considerations, used to reach its decision.

Should the Plan Commission again move to recommend/place these items on file, it must provide findings of fact, listing the standards that have not been met and the reasons such standards were not met. Should the Plan Commission find that the revised proposal meets the approval standards, it should forward Zoning Map Amendment IDs 28.022 - 00315 and 28.022 - 00316 rezoning the properties located at 1720 Monroe Street and 625 S. Spooner Street, from PD (Planned Development) District and TR-C2 (Traditional Residential - Consistent 2) District to PD(GDP-SIP) (Planned Development (General Development Plan - Specific Implementation Plan)) District – to the Common Council with a recommendation of approval. Additionally, The Plan Commission should find the standards met and approve the requested demolition permit. These recommendations are subject to the approval conditions recommended in the January 22, 2018 staff report.