

Ms. Donna Hanousek - Zoning Case 11-07C / Feb 2nd, 2012

Zoning Commission Board

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As residents of Westover Place we would like to express our opposition to the changes proposed by American University from a one level to a two level garage for the following reasons:

- The new design of the two level garage will not allow emergency vehicles such as ambulances to access the buildings from the garage. They will have to access from the surface creating noisy conditions for the neighbors. This change to the garage design will increase the intense use of the space. According to the plan approved by the Zoning Commission, the site would not have intense uses it would be residential buffered by administrative and faculty buildings that would be empty at night except for the dorms.
- The change in the garage design will also impact the amount of traffic as now big loading vehicles can't fit in the loading zone of the garage and the deliveries will be made to the main campus. The loads will then be transferred to smaller trucks or service vehicles which will then deliver to the East Campus using the loading dock in the garage: all these transfers will increase the traffic in an already extremely congested area.
- The deeper excavation could potentially affect the groundwater flow and could impact our neighborhood by diverting water that can seep in our basements. It's like adding half a football field, 7 feet deep.
- The language in the original order is too vague as to what is AU's responsibility to the Westover residents if water damage occurs at a result of their construction; if they are allowed to proceed with this new design the legal language in the order must be very specific as to what AU will be responsible to our community.
- In addition at the last ANC meeting American University's representatives informed the community that they plan to have the office of Public Safety located in one of the East Campus buildings, this is a 24 hours operation and in total opposition as to what approved by the Zoning Commission regarding the space being vacant at night except for the dorms, this will add to the noise and disturbance of the adjacent neighbors.
- AU also revealed in the last ANC meeting that they plan to have their shuttle buses circulate through the East Campus in order to alleviate the traffic on Nebraska Ave. Again this will be contradictory to the use of the space as approved by the original Zoning Order. If AU wanted to alleviate the traffic on Nebraska Ave. they should have not constructed on the East Campus adding more students and traffic in the area. Why add more parking if the shuttle runs Monday thru Saturday over 18 hour daily? (Weekends till 3 am)
- We are amazed at the lack of design and planning by AU that realized all these issues with the garage after the fact; a project of this magnitude should be thoroughly thought and planned before construction starts and not on the fly as the project is progressing. In presentations made by AU at several meetings with the community the heights of the buildings were changed in their plans, since we pointed these discrepancies now the height of the buildings are back to what they originally presented to the Zoning Commission for approval: this project is like a moving target and we feel the need to be alert or AU will construct whatever fits their needs at the moment. We firmly believe that the garage can be redesigned to maintain the one level as originally planned by extending it under the space for building No. 6 or looking for other options. If AU loses parking spaces they will have to figure out a way to make them or adapt to the new number of spaces.

Respectfully submitted John L. Chamberlain, Jr.

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Please sign and Fax to 202.727.6072 --
or email PDF to zsubmissions@dc.gov

Please complete this by February 2nd, noon

ZONING COMMISSION
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