

April 18, 2019

DC Zoning Commission
District of Columbia
CASE NO.18-21

My wife, daughter, and I live at the corner of 7th and Jackson St. NE which is a half block away from the proposed Hannover development. I fully expect the parcels to be developed and in no way am anti-development. At the same time, the current proposal lacks any significant quality of life improvements for existing residents and the neighborhood at large. Much of the community benefits package, as currently proposed, is comprised of donations that will be depleted in the short-term. This development will be in the neighborhood for decades and should include elements that benefit the neighborhood for the life of the building.

I hope there is a middle ground that ensures future residents have a great, affordable place to live while also respecting the needs and feedback of the broader community. Additionally, this development is most likely the first of many along this stretch of Eighth Street and will set the standard for the quality expected from future projects. Specific areas of concern detailed below.

1. **Overall Height/Massing** - The proposed development's seven-story height (including penthouse level) is significantly taller than any structures immediately surrounding the site and towers over the two story homes directly across the street. A decrease of two floors (i.e. four floors plus penthouse) would better suit the location and neighborhood. As a point of reference, the Brookland Artspace Lofts, which will be the closest, comparable building is four stories tall. This height reduction would also address some of the parking concerns raised in the public meeting by increasing the unit to parking space ratio.
2. **Street Tree Coverage** - Many of the renderings provided by the development team include large mature shade trees along 8th Street. This would be a major long-term benefit to the existing 8th St. corridor, the environment, and could make 8th St. a great street for pedestrians and bikers. As shown in Exhibit I, the problem is the existing overhead electrical and telecommunications lines prevent any large shade trees from reaching full maturity/height in this location. For this reason, the overhead power lines should be undergrounded. If under-grounding all lines is cost prohibitive, undergrounding the telecommunications utilities alone would have a significant benefit.
3. **Traffic Calming Measures/Complete Street Improvements** - At the public meeting where the development was discussed and in discussions with some of the immediate neighbors, I heard concerns related to unsafe speeds along 8th St. and a general hostile environment for pedestrians. From the proposal, I am happy to see the sidewalk completion included, but much more can be done to remedy existing issues. Potential remedies include the addition of pinchpoints to provide protected parking and a narrower street section which reduces speeding, pedestrian scale lighting for safety, raised crosswalks, and dedicated funding towards bike lane construction (similar to how Monroe St. Market included in its community benefits package a set-aside for Monroe St. bridge refurbishment).

4. **Exterior Materials out of Context with Neighborhood** - In general, the aesthetic texture/materials of the existing neighborhood consists mostly of brick structures. This includes recent large developments at Monroe St. Market, Chancellor's Row, and Brookland Press (Exhibit II). The current Hannover proposal primarily consists of glass and steel with little architectural interest. It looks out of place and makes no attempt to fit into the existing aesthetic fabric of the neighborhood. Adjustments to the exterior materials could significantly improve the proposal and make it better blend into the neighborhood.

I've met with a few of the 200 footers who live across the street from the development and they share similar concerns especially with the overall height and current massing. Hopefully adjustments can be made to improve the proposal and have it live up to its full potential. I can make myself available to discuss further if it's helpful.

Thank you,

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Exhibit I – Existing Overhead Utilities



8th Street at Irving Facing North



8th Street at Jackson St Facing North



8th Street at Jackson St Facing South

Exhibit II – Recent Nearby Developments



Monroe Street Market (Included in Hannover’s Site Exhibits)



Brookland Press (Roughly 1,600 ft. from Hannover Site)



Homes Directly Across the Street from Hannover Site (8th Street Facing East)