

April 29, 2008

Mr. Ronald Druker
The Druker Company
50 Federal Street
Boston, MA 02110

RE: Proposed Project at 350 Boylston Street

Dear Mr. Druker:

Thank you for presenting your current proposal for the redevelopment of 350 Boylston Street to the Boston Preservation Alliance's Board of Directors on April 16. Following your presentation, this letter is intended to supplement the more general Project Notification Form comment letter the Alliance submitted to the Boston Redevelopment Authority in January 2008.

Although the Alliance generally agrees with many of the objectives stated in your presentation, we believe that the current design falls short of your stated goals in several critical areas. Moreover, the Alliance feels that the prominent location at the corner of Arlington and Boylston Streets demands a landmark building - one that will be recognized immediately and increasingly appreciated over time. The building should not be a "background building" but should embrace the Arlington Street Church with an equal presence and celebrate the corner with visual emphasis. The new building should strive to create a new urban ensemble of landmark buildings similar to that of Copley Square.

The proposed project represents a very large mass occupying one third of a city block where four separate buildings once stood. Unlike the adjacent Heritage on the Garden, which is of a similar scale, the proposed building at 350 Boylston Street reads as monolithic, static and ill-proportioned. While the upper floor setbacks are positive, the "contemporized bay" treatment fails to successfully break up the scale of this mass to one more appropriate to the site's heritage and context. The new building should also be organized to reflect the difference between the retail and office uses. This will create an opportunity to emphasize the retail, linking it visually to other high-profile retail in the area. This distinction will also serve an important design function by further breaking up the massing of the building.

The Alliance endorses The Druker Company's commitment to ensuring that the building facades are beautifully detailed in fine materials. However, even the most elegant detailing and use of noble materials will not ameliorate the massing and scale of

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the current design. The bays, which are the only element offered to break down the scale of the building's mass, appear as slices of an extruded form applied to the building. There are no transitional design elements that integrate the bays into the underlying structure. Similarly, the rounded and glazed corner of the building reads as a heavy, volumetric "extruded" form that fails to properly celebrate what must be one of the most important corners in the entire city. One Exeter Place is a similar attempt at a contemporary interpretation of Back Bay fabric illustrates out of scale buildings cannot be "brought into context" merely by applying geometric shapes to a flat unbroken building mass.

The Alliance appreciates the past work of The Druker Company, and believes it has had a positive impact on Boston over the past four generations. However, we feel that this site is of immense importance to the City of Boston given its prominent location overlooking the Public Garden. For this reason, the Alliance respectfully requests that The Druker Company reconsider the entire design of 350 Boylston Street. The Alliance is confident that a contemporary building can be successful at this location. We look forward to working closely with you in the creation of another Druker Company landmark at the corner of Arlington and Boylston Streets.

Sincerely,

Susan Park
President

Sarah D. Kelly
Executive Director

cc: State Representative Martha M. Walz
Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston Civic Design Commission
Boston Society of Architects, Urban Design Committee
Jay Rourke, Project Manager, BRA
Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay