STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION
FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION
STUDIO HOUSE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
2306 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W.

I. INTRODUCTION

This is an application for special exception review and approval to permit the Studio House School of the Arts (the "School") to occupy and use the residential dwelling at 2306 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. (Square 2507, Lot 4) and the carriage house on the premises (Square 2507, Lot 5) as a private school in a D/R-3 Zone District. This request for special exception review and approval is made pursuant to Sections 206 and 3108.1 of the District of Columbia Zoning Regulations, 11 D.C.M.R. (Zoning)(as amended to 6 March 1996)(the "Zoning Regulations"). Approval of the application will allow the School to offer a program of music and arts instruction to the community.

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II. THE ALICE PIKE BARNEY STUDIO HOUSE

The land area of Lots 4 and 5 contain 8600 square feet. Most of the School's functions would take place in the Alice Pike Barney Studio House, a semi-detached, four-story residential dwelling with two basement levels. The second house built on Sheridan Circle, it is a stuccoed, Mission/Arts and Crafts style townhouse. An elevation view of Studio House and floor plans appear as Attachment 1 to this Statement. The exterior and two interior floors of Studio House are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, based on the property's association with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and with

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the lives of persons significant to our past. The Studio House contains 9000 feet of gross floor area and is located on Lot 4. On Lot 5, immediately to the west and adjoining Studio House, there is a two-story accessory carriage house with 860 feet of gross floor area. The special exception in this diplomatic/residential zone, if granted, would involve use of the Studio House for music instruction and recitals. The upper level of the carriage house would be used for art instruction and for music instruction for young children. The open areas of Lot 5 would be used for the parking associated with the School. There is one parking space in the carriage house and eight other spaces on Lot 5 for off-street parking by faculty and students.

The Studio House was built in 1903 by Alice Pike Barney, a leading patron of the arts in the first two decades of the 20th century. Mrs. Barney constructed and used the house as a residence and studio for the visual and performing arts, and a salon. She entertained a number of dignitaries, including Presidents William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. Artists who performed at the Studio House included Enrico Caruso, Sarah Bernhardt and Anna Pavlova. Numerous works of art adorned the walls, as part of Mrs. Barney's effort to showcase the work of many artists.

The Studio House was thus built and used for art exhibitions and musical performances. In particular, the second floor, containing several studios, presents nearly continuous open space suited to entertaining and public display. The top two floors above the performance and exhibition space -- constituting approximately 2300 square feet of floor space -- were used as Mrs. Barney's residence. The Studio

House was thus built as a mansion, and it is difficult today to maintain such a large building as a single-family residence, which is one of the two matter-of-right uses in the D/R-3 zoning district (the other being diplomatic office use).

Mrs. Barney died in 1931, and in 1960, Mrs. Barney's daughters donated the property to the Smithsonian Institution. From 1960 until 1979, the Smithsonian used the Studio House for office use. It was the original headquarters of the American Association of Museums and housed offices of the Smithsonian's Traveling Exhibit Services. It also provided overnight accommodations for visiting dignitaries. In the late 1960s, the top two bedroom floors were converted into apartments for Smithsonian scholars in residence. Throughout this period, the two main floors -- where the recital areas are located -- were frequently used by the Smithsonian for receptions and entertaining. Following a renovation in 1979, two main floors were opened to the public for tours, special programs – including performances – and changing exhibitions. The Studio House and the interior spaces on the first two floors (containing the recital and exhibition areas) were designated as historic landmarks by the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board in 1995 and have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1999, after the property had been vacant for some years, the Smithsonian sold the Studio House to Mr. James H. Edmonds and Dr. Julie P. Edmonds of Washington, D.C., who are the Applicants in this proceeding. The building will be an owner-occupied residence, as the Edmonds family has moved in and resides on the top two floors, as did Mrs. Barney. They propose to use the rest of the house for

music and art, as did Mrs. Barney. They therefore seek special exception approval to maintain the historic character of the Studio House as a residential building that is also dedicated to the arts -- thus carrying on the work and the tradition begun by Alice Pike Barney nearly a century ago.

The proposed uses reflect an appropriate preservation of the building for its historic uses. With 9000 square feet of floor space, the building is far larger than typical single-family dwellings in the District of Columbia, which have an average floor area of closer to 2000 square feet, and it is thus difficult to maintain solely for residential use. The alternative matter-of-right use, as an embassy or chancery, is essentially an office use. The use proposed here – as a residential dwelling that is also dedicated to musical and art education – is in keeping with the historic usage of the property and will add significant benefits to the community, as well as be consistent with the existing mixed-use zoning classification.[1]

III. THE STUDIO HOUSE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Mr. Edmonds is the founder of the Studio House School of the Arts, which is presently being incorporated under the District of Columbia Non-profit Corporation Act. Once incorporated, Mr. Edmonds will serve as chief executive officer and chairman of the board of directors. After incorporation, the School will file an

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[1] Section 206.1 of the Zoning Regulations permits the location of a private school via special exception in any residential zone, including the purely residential R-1 zone. The Board approved an exception in an R-1 zone in Application No. 15984 (served 1 November 1995) involving the Selma M. Levine School of Music.

application for recognition as a tax-exempt educational organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Mr. Edmonds has had a long and active interest in arts education in the Washington, D.C. area. A native Washingtonian, he has for the past 13 years operated a music school as part of Foxes Music Works in Falls Church, Virginia. He operates another music school in Arlington, Virginia By creating the Studio House School of the Arts, he hopes to offer District of Columbia students and residents the benefits of a first-class music school.

The School intends to offer individual music instruction for students of all ages. Classes will be designed for all levels of skill, from beginner to advanced performance instruction. The mission of the School is to offer a high level of musical education and to instill in students a love of music and the rewards that come with the commitment to playing a musical instrument.

Based on its belief that recitals are an integral and important part of a student's musical education, the School plans to hold student recitals in the existing performance areas in the Studio House. Believing too that the opportunity to hear and learn from professional musicians is an important part of a student's musical education, the School plans to offer recitals by professional musicians, for example, members of the Washington Guitar Society, or members of the string or brass sections of the National Symphony Orchestra, who will perform music and discuss technique and other matters with students. As a benefit to the neighbors and the community, the School is prepared to offer available seats at these recitals to the

public at no charge.

Although the focus of the School's work will be music education, the School also intends – consistent with Alice Pike Barney's goal of promoting visual as well as performing arts -- to offer group art instruction in the 400 square feet of the upper floor of the carriage house, along with introductory music instruction for young children.

IV. PROPOSED USE OF THE STUDIO HOUSE

Music lessons will not take place in the historically designated rooms on the first two floors. These floors will be preserved intact along with a number of Mrs. Barney's original furnishings, which the Applicants purchased from the Smithsonian and plan to maintain on the premises. There are presently two studios in the basement, and the School plans to add seven new studios in the basement area, thus bringing the total to nine studios to be used for individual instruction. Classes will be one-on-one instruction, and thus no more than nine students could take lessons at any one time of the day from nine instructors. It is proposed that lessons take place during after-school hours from 3 to 8 P.M. on Monday through Thursday, 3 to 6 P.M. on Friday, and 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. on Saturday. There will be no music instruction on Sundays, although the Applicants propose holding recitals on Friday evenings from 7 to 9 P.M. and on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 P.M.

The School also proposes using the second level of the carriage house for small group lessons for children between the ages of four and six, who would be

introduced to musical concepts. Enrollment would be limited to eight children per lesson, which would take place once a week between 10 A.M. and Noon on Monday through Friday. There would likely be no more than one group lesson a day within this time frame. There would thus be no more than eight students and one instructor on the premises at any one time during morning hours. These lessons would not overlap with the after-school lessons for older children or with the proposed group art instruction discussed below. No change to the existing floor plan is necessary.

The School would also use the second level of the carriage house for group art instruction of no more than eight students and one instructor at a time. It is proposed that lessons take place Monday through Thursday evenings from 7 P.M. to 9 P.M. No changes to the floor plan would be necessary.

As Table 1 demonstrates, the maximum usage of Studio House for lessons would involve at most 17 students (nine music and eight art) and 10 teachers (nine music and one art) on the premises at any one time, and that maximum would occur only during a one-hour period (7 to 8 P.M.) on Mondays through Thursdays, when music lessons in the Studio House and a group art class in the carriage house would be taking place at the same time.

TABLE 1: PROPOSED LESSON SCHEDULE

	WEEKDAYS
10 A.M.- 12	Up to 8 music students (ages 4-6) plus 1 instructor (Mon.-Fri.) (carriage house)
3 - 8 P.M.	Up to 9 music students (individual lessons) plus 9 instructors (Mon.- Thurs.; Fri. classes will end at 6 P.M.)(Studio House)
7 - 9 P.M.	Up to 8 art students (group class) plus one instructor (Mon.-Thurs.)(carriage house)
	WEEKENDS
9 A.M. - 2 P.M.	Up to 9 music students (individual lessons) plus 9 instructors. (Sat. only; no Sun. lessons)(Studio House)

Maximum proposed usage on-site during lessons:
17 students (9 music and 8 art) plus nine instructors (8 music and 1 art) between 7 and 8 P.M. on Monday through Thursday evenings.

Additional on-site personnel would consist of the director, a registrar (who would check students in and handle scheduling of lessons), one part-time custodian during morning hours only, and one part-time guard/parking attendant during the (3 to 8 P.M.) after-school hours, whose job would include escorting children from the curb into the building and then back the other way when the lesson is over.

Recitals, whether by students or outside musicians, would be scheduled on Friday evenings (a day when scheduled lessons would end two hours earlier at 6 P.M. and no art lessons would be scheduled), as well as on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 P.M. Student recitals would generally consist of a single teacher presenting approximately 15 of his or her students to an audience of parents and friends.

Recitals from professional musicians are designed to give students the

opportunity to hear works performed by professional musicians and to interact and learn from professionals. These recitals would be limited to small groups, most likely trios or quartets, particularly in light of the small and intimate size of the performance spaces in the Studio House.

Both student and professional recitals would take place on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons, and Table 2 summarizes the proposed schedule. Turning first to student recitals, it is anticipated that there would be a total of 20 instructors, each of whom would want one recital in the spring and one in the fall. The School would thus put on a maximum of 20 student recitals per semester for a total of 40 annually. With a limit of two recital times per week, there are at most 26 slots available for recitals during each of the 13-week spring and fall seasons, 20 of which would be used for these student recitals.

Recitals by guest performers would also be limited to this Friday/Sunday schedule with no more than 24 such recitals held in any one year. In this way, the Applicants would have flexibility to offer such recitals at various times of the year.

TABLE 2: PROPOSED RECITAL SCHEDULE

Applicants propose up to 40 student recitals and 24 guest performer recitals a year according to the following schedule:

Fall Season (13 weeks)	Spring Season (13 weeks)
Student recitals:	Student recitals:
Up to 10 on Fridays (7-9 P.M.)	Up to 10 on Fridays (7-9 PM)
Up to 10 on Sundays (2-4 P.M.)	Up to 10 on Sundays (2-4 P.M.)
Guest performer recitals:	Guest performer recitals:
Up to 3 on Fridays (7-9 P.M.)	Up to 3 on Fridays (7-9 P.M.)
Up to 3 on Sundays (2-4 P.M.)	Up to 3 on Sundays (2-4 P.M.)

Winter and Summer Seasons
No student recitals.
Up to 12 guest performer recitals, assuming that six such recitals are offered in the fall and six in the spring in the time slots not used for student recitals in those seasons. The actual number of summer/winter recitals could be higher -- subject to the overall cap of 24 -- if fewer such recitals are offered in the fall and spring.

Finally, the Studio House is being occupied by the Edmonds family, who are living on the top two floors in the area occupied by Mrs. Barney and later used by the Smithsonian for visiting scholars. The building will thus retain its residential character and usage as in Mrs. Barney's time.

V. ZONING AND LAND USE OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA.

The site is in the D/R-3 Zone District, located on the southwest side of Sheridan Circle which is on Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. in the Embassy Row part of Washington. The surrounding area is composed primarily of embassies and chanceries, including facilities operated by the governments of Turkey, Rumania

and Ireland. It appears that only six of the buildings within 200 feet of Studio House presently have low-density residential uses. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway abuts the rear of the property.

VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

We have consulted with the staff of the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board and have been advised that no review by the Review Board is required. There will be no renovation or alteration to the exterior of the Studio House or to the interior spaces that enjoy landmark designation. The only work to be done is matter-of-right construction of additional wall partitions in the basement level of the Studio House, which is not covered by the landmark designation.

VII. SPECIAL EXCEPTION CRITERIA

The proposed private school portion of this dwelling is in a residential district and therefore must obtain special exception review and approval for occupancy. No variance from the Zoning Regulations is being sought.

Section 206 of the Zoning Regulations sets forth the criteria by which this application must be judged:

§ 206.2: The private school shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.

§ 206.3: Ample parking, but not less than that required in chapter 21 of this title, shall be provided to

> accommodate the students, teachers, and visitors likely to come to the site by automobile.

The Schedule of Requirements for Parking Spaces set forth in section 2101.1 of the Zoning Regulations requires a private school in all districts other than C-4 or C-5 to have the following number of parking spaces:

> For each building: 2 for each 3 teachers; plus either 1 for each 10 classroom seats or 1 for each 12 stadium seats or 1 for each 10 auditorium seats, whichever is greater, except as provided in § 2106 [which applies only to universities and colleges].

In this case the Schedule of Requirements is subject to 11 D.C.M.R. § 2100.5, which states when, as here, the use of a building is changed, "[n]o additional parking spaces shall be required for a historic landmark or a building or structure located in a historic district which is certified by the State Historic Preservation Officer as contributing to the character of that historic district."

Finally, the application must comply with the general standards of § 3108.1 of the Zoning Regulations, which states that special exceptions "will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property . . .." As we now explain, the proposal for an educational, non-commercial use of this property satisfies the applicable zoning standards.

VIII. THE PROPOSED USE SATISFIES SPECIAL EXCEPTION CRITERIA.

The School will not be objectionable to nearby properties because of noise,

traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions.

Number of students: The School's emphasis on individual instruction and its staggering of lessons throughout the day would result in a maximum of 17 students (nine music and eight art) and 10 instructors (nine music and one art) on the premises at any one time. More precisely, that level of usage may occur during only one hour of the weekday, namely, the 7 to 8 P.M. time slot on Mondays through Thursdays when there may be music lessons and a group art lesson going on at the same time. During all other lesson periods, the maximum usage would involve nine students and nine instructors. The maximum number of people on site would thus appear to be to less than the number of people at nearby chanceries.

Recitals would be scheduled outside of normal lesson times, *i.e.*, on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons, and the School proposes to hold most of these recitals during the fall and spring, following the schedule proposed in Table 2 above. Each recital would entail the following usages:

-- A student recital will involve one instructor presenting approximately 15 students twice a year, once in the spring and one in the fall. In Mr. Edmonds' experience, each student is accompanied an average of two individuals (parents or siblings in most instances), so the maximum attendance would be 45 students and guests per recital. These recitals would take place in the recital rooms on the historically designated floors, with no more than 40 such recitals scheduled each year.

-- Recitals by guest musicians would also take place in these historically designated rooms, several of which can seat 20 to 50 patrons, and one of which

could hold up to 90 seats. These recitals would not overlap with individual lessons, so no more than 90 visitors would be on the premises at any one time. With a proposed limit of 24 such recitals a year, guest recitals would occur on an average of less than once every two weeks.

Noise: Nor would the School be objectionable on the basis of noise. Lessons will be conducted in the building using soundproofed studios. There will be no outdoor performances, and it is unlikely that indoor recitals could be heard by neighbors. The walls at the front of the building are 24 inches thick, and the windows would remain closed to prevent distractions from street sounds. The sidewalls are similarly extra thick.

Traffic and public transit impact: In terms of vehicular traffic, the Applicants are prepared to meet the Schedule of Requirements for Parking Spaces, which requires two spaces for every three teachers and one space for every ten classroom seats. With a maximum of nine teachers at the Studio House and one art teacher at the carriage house, seven spaces would be needed for instructors. With a maximum of 17 classroom seats in use at any time (nine studio lessons plus eight art students), two additional spaces would be required for students. A total of nine spaces would thus be needed and presently exist on-site, as shown in the plan included in Attachment 1 of this Statement.[2] Although some cars will be parked behind others

[2] As noted above, the parking requirements in the Zoning Regulations are subject here to 11 D.C.M.R. § 2100.5, which states when, as here, the use of a building is changed, "[n]o additional parking spaces shall be required for a historic landmark . . .." During the Smithsonian's ownership, the property was subject to

(which is how the Smithsonian laid out the site too), ingress and egress should not be an issue, as instructors will be arriving and departing at the same times, *i.e.*, just before and just after 3 to 8 P.M. lesson period, and a parking attendant will be on the site during these hours. Parents will be encouraged not to wait during a student's lesson, and Mr. Edmonds' experience is that parents tend not to wait in any event.

The Applicants have retained the professional services of a traffic expert, Dr. Everett C. Carter, professor emeritus in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Maryland, who has conducted a preliminary analysis of traffic, parking and circulation patterns in the area and whose preliminary conclusion is that the entire Sheridan Circle currently operates very well. A copy of Dr. Carter's preliminary analysis appears as Exhibit 8 in support of this Application. A final analysis will be presented in conjunction with the hearing. Specifically, Sheridan Circle operates at a Standard Level of Service "B" or better from 5 to 6 P.M., and the several trips generated by the School would not alter this fact. The following aspects of the proposed operations support this view:

-- The School will not operate during morning rush hours, when traffic is headed southbound along Massachusetts Avenue, directly in front of the Studio

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the exemption in the Zoning Regulations for federal uses (11 D.C.M.R. §§ 106.4, 106.5)(the Smithsonian never obtained a certificate of occupancy, for example), although the site remains mapped in the D/R-3 district. In any event, the Smithsonian laid out the open area on site for the nine spaces that the Zoning Regulations would have required and that the Applicants are prepared to offer.

House, towards the Downtown area.

-- By staggering the hours of operation and the classes, traffic congestion as a result of School activity is highly unlikely. Moreover, music instructors are likely to arrive and depart almost simultaneously, *i.e.*, shortly before classes start at 3 P.M. and shortly after classes end at 8 P.M., thus making ingress and egress from the parking lot fairly straight-forward during these non-rush hour periods.

-- Through traffic is unlikely to be slowed by the arrival of vehicles picking up or dropping children off at the School. A curb lane immediately in front of the Studio House allows cars easily to pick up or discharge a student. This drop-off area is generally not used for parking because there are two curb cuts relatively close to each other west of the Studio House, one of them providing access to the Studio House's parking. Moreover, there are diplomatic parking spaces immediately to the east of the Studio House in front of the Turkish Embassy, which are often occupied by parked vehicles. As a result, parents dropping off or picking up students will be able, without impeding traffic, to pull in and stop behind vehicles parked in these spots in front of the Turkish Embassy. Also, because traffic on Sheridan Circle is one-way, vehicles stopping at the Studio House will only experience the normal difficulty rejoining the flow of traffic.

-- It is Mr. Edmonds' experience from operating music schools that parents generally drop students off and then return to get them, rather than wait until the class is over. The School will encourage parents to drop off and pick up a student at a specified time. Moreover, to minimize the time spent on dropoff and pickup, and

to provide assistance and protection for the students, a security guard will help children into and out of their automobiles during the 3 to 8 P.M. afternoon hours, thus reducing the stopped time and the need for parents to leave their cars on the street while waiting for a student to go to or emerge from his or her lesson.

-- On-street parking is available during anticipated peak periods of usage. The Studio House is located on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue, where some embassy parking restrictions exist, some of which are removed after 6:30 P.M. Because the predominant use of Massachusetts Avenue in this area is for embassies and chanceries, which is a form of office use, there is less demand for parking during the post-6:30 period and weekend periods when the Studio House would be offering its music and art courses at the same time or offering recitals. Thus, the operation of a school at the Studio House site should not significantly affect the demand for parking or the availability of on-street parking for neighbors.

-- Public transportation is available. The Dupont Circle Metro station on the Red Line is located three blocks away at the corners of 20th and Q Streets, N.W. In addition, two major bus lines operate in both directions along Massachusetts Avenue, and 44 buses enter Sheridan Circle between 3 P.M. and 8 P.M. on week-days. Finally, the Foggy Bottom Metro station on the Blue/Orange Lines is seven blocks away at the corners of 23rd and I Streets, N.W.

IX. PUBLIC BENEFITS TO THE DISTRICT FROM THE STUDIO HOUSE

There is thus no reason to believe that Studio House would produce any

objectionable impacts. To the contrary, the opening of the Studio House School will offer important benefits to the community.

Mr. Edmonds has 13 years of experience operating similar music schools in Virginia, and granting this application would allow District residents and District children to enjoy the advantages of a well-regarded arts school operating in the District of Columbia close to the Downtown area. The School will establish high musical standards for students and make its programs available to all students regardless of race or religion. Mr. Edmonds has previously worked with the District of Columbia Public Schools in meeting the needs of public school children in the District, for example, by the donation several years ago of 20 flutes from Foxes Music to economically disadvantaged students who would might not otherwise be able to play an instrument.

The School will sponsor a scholarship program under which ten annual scholarships would be awarded to disadvantaged District of Columbia school children (*i.e.*, who qualify for the D.C. Public Schools free lunch program), who are identified by teachers as having merit or potential.

Approval of this application will thus allow the School to pursue its educational mission, preserve a National Register residential property, and help make the city of Washington a richer community culturally.

X. CONCLUSION

The Studio House School for the Arts' proposed use as residence and private

school satisfies the criteria for obtaining special exception approval in a D/R-3 mixed-use zone. For these reasons, the Applicants respectfully request approval of this application, which would allow them to maintain this very special landmark.

Respectfully submitted,

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