February 9, 2000

To: Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment

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Ref: Application Number 16554 for Special Exception for a Music School

OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

We are writing to request party status in opposition to application 16554 made by James H. and Julie P. Edmonds requesting special exception for 2306 Mass Ave. We live at 2304 Mass Ave with our 4 children. Unlike the Edmonds, our townhouse on Sheridan Circle is our only, hence our primary residence. We are very concerned about the adverse effect the proposed use of 2306 would have on noise and traffic. We purchased a home in the Kalorama neighborhood because we believed the R-3 residential zoning protected the amenities of the neighborhood and would provide a stable environment for family life. We do not believe the intense use proposed for a music school and recital hall in application 16554 is appropriate.

Our home shares a party wall with 2306 Mass. Ave., our bedroom and children's bedrooms are along the party wall next to the proposed recital halls for 2306 Mass. The entryway of 2306 is adjacent and just below our bedroom window. Since December we have seen how the Edmonds, though they are not now living on Sheridan Circle, now use 2306 for occasional entertaining. We have seen how the occasional noise from normal residential scale entertaining would not be a problem, however the intense continuous use proposed in the application, particularly on the proposed weekday evenings and on the proposed 40 weekends a year will be a major accommodation for us. We can clearly hear the piano playing through the party wall even when the windows are closed. Also the noise from groups of people assembling for proposed corporate functions, smoking and talking outdoors at the entrance to 2306 just below our bedroom balcony would be an issue. Moreover, the historic restrictions in place for the interior of 2306 would make mitigation of the noise problem difficult.

The previous use of 2306 Mass Ave by The Smithsonian Institution was not as intense as the proposed use stated in the application 16554. The most recent Smithsonian use was primarily residential for one or several visiting scholars a year with public hours for occasional house tours and occasional entertaining which is quite different from the intense and continuous proposed use in application 16554. Any matter of right use, not requiring an exception, would be more in line with previous uses and less abusive of the neighborhood than the proposed use in application 16554.

If the Edmonds were to live at 2306 and also use the residence as a recital hall and school as proposed in application 16554, the question of the separations required by the building code between residential and public assembly occupancy would need to be addressed. The historic restrictions in place for the interior of 2306 would make mitigation of the mixed-use problem difficult to resolve.

We are also concerned about parking and traffic problem that would arise from the proposed use in application 16554. The application inaccurately states the parking and traffic situation adjacent and in front of 2306 Mass. Ave. The actual situation as we know it from our current use is as follows: moving from west to east along Mass Ave. around Sheridan Circle there are 3 Korean Embassy spaces, the Korean Embassy driveway, 2306 Mass. Ave Driveway, 2 curbside public parking spaces (which other residents and we use) and further down 2 spaces for the Turkish Embassy residence. We do not want to loose the scarce public curbside spaces in front of our house for the proposed drop off zone. The proposed drop-off zone we believe will block the Korean Embassy driveway entrance. Consequently, regardless of the proposed valet and/or parking attendant arrangements, we believe given the proposed numbers of students and visitors that the drop off in fact would occur in the outside traffic lane of Sheridan Circle. This would be a dangerous situation that would block eastbound traffic.

Moreover there is inadequate on-site parking and insufficient off-site parking to support the proposed 90 seats recital hall and school and residential use at 2306. In contrast to what is stated in application 16554, we have seen that after 6:30 in the evening only a few Embassy parking spaces become available for residential parking. For example, the Turkish Embassy spaces do not become available. There is very little

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commercial or private parking nearby. In contrast to what is stated in application 16554, we do not believe that the on site parking available in the side yard at 3206 Mass Ave (actually only 3 or 4 spaces if circulation space is provided) would support the number of students or employees and residents indicated in the application. The application indicates 9 tandem spaces and no drive aisles. The driveway is only 9 feet wide and even if parking attendants are provided cars would have to be moved into public space to get cars parked at inside spaces out.

We have spoken to the Edmonds about our concerns and views on the requested special exception. We indicated we would like to have them as residential neighbors, but were very concerned about the evening and weekend intensity of their proposed music school and recital hall use. We have written this letter because we are surprised that we are not acknowledged in the application as owners of the adjacent property. It also gravely concerns us that the application implies that Mr. and Mrs. Edmonds currently reside at 2306 Mass Ave when, in fact, they do not.

We believe that approval of the special exception application would require major accommodations on the part of our family. Moreover it would devalue our home as residential property and erode the residential character of the neighborhood. The traffic caused by the proposed special exception would adversely affect parking and traffic in the vicinity. The noise from the proposed school use would deprive us of the quiet enjoyment of our home. The proposed special exception meets neither the technical requirements nor the intent of the zoning regulations. The goal of zoning in a residential area is to protect residents from objectionable uses of adjoining properties and promote healthy neighborhoods; this proposal would detract from that goal. Consequently we are strongly opposed to the granting of the special exception for 2306 Mass. Ave. and request that it not be approved.

Sincerely,

Richard and Elizabeth Turner