ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1D
PO Box 53342, Washington DC 20009

'00 FEB 23 P4:48

February 23, 2000

OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Ms. Sheila Cross-Reid
Board of Zoning Adjustment
One Judiciary Square
Washington, D.C. 20001

RE: BZA Application No. 16554 of James and Julie Edmonds for a Special Exception for the Studio House School of the Arts at 2306 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Dear Ms. Reid:

At a duly noticed public meeting of the Sheridan-Kalorama ANC 1D held on February 9, 2000, with a quorum present (2 of 2 Commissioners), the Commission discussed the above referenced application. The proposal is to permit the establishment of a music school on the premises. The abovenamed applicants, Cornish Hitchcock, the attorney for the applicants, and Mr. Carter, the traffic consultant, were present and presented the proposal to the residents of the neighborhood. The property is the Barney Studio House located on the northwest quadrant of Sheridan Circle.

The issues that were discussed were the inadequate parking, traffic congestion, the nature of the proposed operation, the intense use of the building, the impracticality of the proposed solution of dropping off and picking up students, and the proposed residential use of the upper level of the house.

Zoning regulations require that the proposed school is to be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions. A special exception is granted if it will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property.

The number of students is objectionable. The applicant proposes a very intense use of the property, with a constant stream of persons arriving and departing every day and/or night of the week. The proposed schedule of a 2-hour morning class, half-hour lessons for 9 persons between 3:00pm and 8:00pm (end of last class) and a 2-hour art class from 7:00 to 9:00pm on Monday through Thursdays means that 117 persons would be entering (and leaving) the house on each of these days. If all of these persons arrive and depart by motor vehicle there will be 234 vehicle trips every day. There would be an equivalent intense use of the house on Fridays, with a morning class, afternoon classes and evening recitals. On Saturdays, 99 persons would be arriving and departing throughout the day, with 198 vehicle trips. There will be recitals on Sundays. The application proposes 64 recitals a year--more than one per week. The largest recital space holds 90 persons.

BZA
Case No. 16554
Exhibit No. 26

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16554
EXHIBIT NO.26

The applicants proposal for meeting the parking requirements is objectionable because it is unrealistic and unsafe. While just about every available piece of the sideyard is measured off for the nine required parking spaces, no mention is made of the fact that the only car that can leave the sideyard without moving other cars onto the street is the last car in. Also, there is a wall on both sides of the entrance to the sideyard and a large tree that has narrowed the driveway where it meets the sidewalk. Either all of the cars would have to be backed in so they can enter Sheridan Circle going forward or all of the cars would have to back out into Sheridan Circle. It is extremely difficult to back out, given the narrow opening between the walls (in fact it was partially demolished recently by a vehicle going through the opening) and the large tree. Views are obstructed as well. Because of this dire situation and the great inconvenience, it is the belief of the residents of the neighborhood that the teachers (the applicants state that they would be using the parking) will not use the sideyard but would park on the residential streets.

In addition, while the parking requirements are technically met according to the application, there are only 7 parking spaces for 9 teachers. The applicant also will have a registrar, director, and security guard on site. The applicants have not satisfactorily answered the question of where they will park, given their statement that they will reside in the house. There is likely to be demand for parking by students who are drivers.

The proposal of the applicant to have students dropped off in the curb lane is unrealistic, unsafe, and objectionable. The curb space immediately before the house consists of two driveways, the applicant's and an active one used by the Korean chancery. Beyond that, there are only two parking spaces, one of which is inaccessible from the sidewalk because of concrete jersey barriers located there for security reasons for the nearby Turkish Embassy. That is in front of the private residence located next to the Barney House and the only parking that may be available to that residence. There is no rear parking. Therefore, there is curbspace of one car to drop off and pick up students, although as many as 18 will be arriving and leaving at the same time. The one car then would have to pull out into a lane of traffic going around the Circle. Other cars waiting to drop off or pick up students then would have to back up into Massachusetts Avenue traffic going around the Circle. The traffic study presented by the applicant was criticized as being inadequate because the Q Street bridge is currently closed for construction and therefore the traffic that uses the lane in Sheridan Circle to access the bridge is not currently not using it. The bridge, a major cross town thoroughfare, is scheduled to reopen in August 2000, just before the proposed school would begin operations. The proposed use of a security guard to assist the drop off procedure does not cure the traffic congestion and the safety hazard that will result. The guard by law cannot start directing traffic.

The inadequacy of parking was addressed by numerous nearby residents. One who lives near the Barney House stated he cannot get repairmen to come to his home because there is no place to park. It was pointed out that the nearby streets are already congested with cars, many of which are parked illegally, for events at the nearby Church of the Pilgrims. In addition, there are foreign missions nearby which use a great deal of the on street parking at all hours of the day and night.

There was discussion about the nature of the proposed school, which the residents found

objectionable. Despite the proposed non-profit status, the residents believe the applicants will be using the house for commercial and business purposes. It is financially expedient for the applicant to maximize the use of the space by creating nine cubbyhole spaces for music lessons and using the upper space in the 1-1/2 story garage for art classes. In fact, the applicant, in response to a question about the need for the immediate use of the house as a music school, stated they were "not running a charity."

While the applicant states this mixed use is consistent with the original use of the house by Mrs. Barney, it is not. Mrs. Barney had a salon for celebrity performances, was herself an artist, and did not have money-making ventures occurring on a seven-day a week basis. In addition, Mrs. Barney resided in the house. Neither one of the Edmonds is a music teacher. The Edmonds, despite the application indicating that the present use of the property is owner-occupied, do not reside in the house. There is no indication that the house will be occupied by the owners. The fact that the applicants are misrepresenting in their application the occupancy of the house did not appeal to the residents. There is no assurance that other aspects of their proposal are true representations of the uses to which the house would be put. It was also pointed out at the meeting that during the recent snowstorms, the sidewalks in front of the Barney House remained unshoveled, indicating bad faith to those who raised the issue about the neighborliness of the applicants.

Numerous letters and phone calls were received by the Commissioners in opposition to the application. The letters are attached.

There were about 70 persons in attendance at the ANC meeting. No one spoke in support of the application. A straw vote was taken; all "voted" to oppose the application.

It was then motioned and a resolution was passed to oppose application number 16554.

The Commissioners appointed Linda K. Bumbalo, SMD1D02, in whose SMD the application is located, to represent it in this matter.

Sincerely,

Linda K. Bumbalo
Chairperson ANC 1D

Attachments

Letters of Neighbors

Alan N. and Heather K. Jacobs
2230 Q Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

February 9, 2000

Commissioner Lance P. Salonia
Commissioner L. Rumbalo
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1-D

Re: Application of James and Julie Edmonds for Special Exception @ 2306 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.

Dear Commissioner:

We have resided at 2230 Q Street, NW for the past 11.5 years, approximately ½ block south of the Barney Studio house. We are opposed to the request to use this residentially zoned house as a music and art school.

The application, if approved, would bring an intense overwhelming use into our historically designated neighborhood. After carefully reviewing the application, we have reached the following conclusions:

1. The property's location on Sheridan Circle will create a safety hazard for children being dropped off or picked up for either lessons or recitals. We have witnessed motorists travelling south on Massachusetts Avenue into the circle failing to yield to traffic in the circle on numerous occasions. These motorists, some of whom are driving far in excess of the speed limit as they drive through the circle in the curb lane preparing to turn right on 23rd Street, would create a potentially hazardous situation for parents stopped to drop off or pick up their children.

2. The proposed application will further overwhelm the parking in our already overly congested neighborhood. The Church of the Pilgrims, which is located approximately 1 block south of the property and directly behind my house has many functions which are held mostly on weekend evenings. People attending this function, park illegally along Q Street and in our rear alley, not only blocking the use of our garage, but also inhibiting the ingress/egress of emergency vehicles. Coupled with the neighborhood restaurants and clubs, our neighborhood is virtually inundated with parked cars on weekend nights. The application states that there would be 64 weekend recitals with as many as 90 people attending. I cannot imagine how our adjoining neighborhood can absorb the additional cars that will result from this use.

Please do not recommend approval of this application to permit a music and art school in our neighborhood. It simply is not compatible.

Sincerely,

Alan & Heather Jacobs

February 8, 2000

Commissioner Lance P. Salonia
Commissioner L. Rumbalo
District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1-D

Re: Requested Special Exception for Barney Studio House

Dear Commissioners:

We have owned and inhabited our house at 2228 Que St. N.W., just around the corner from the Barney Studio House on the south side of Sheridan Circle, for over 20 years. As a long time resident of the neighborhood, we wish to express our opposition to the request for a special exception for the Barney Studio House to use the premises for a music school.

The application suggests that there would be as many as 64 Friday evening or Sunday afternoon concerts/recitals in addition to the regular weekday classes. The application states that at least one of the rooms for the performances may seat up to 90 people.

Our chief concern is the effect these concerts/recitals will have on parking in the neighborhood. This is an extremely congested area. On weekend evenings we suffer from cars parked illegally in our alley (inhibiting entry to our garage), and from cars parked illegally on Que Street too close to the cut for the alley, creating a dangerous situation for anyone trying to turn onto Q St. from the alley. This has resulted in a number of accidents. The exception would put an additional, unreasonable strain on the neighborhood every weekend.

The application suggests that because the concerts/recitals would be after the workday there would be no parking problems. Our experience over the course of many years is the opposite. Weekend nights are the most congested, and the most likely to generate illegally parked cars. This is because of the many restaurants, movie houses, and the like in the immediate vicinity that draw people to the neighborhood Friday and Saturday evening. We simply can not absorb more cars with the frequency and number contemplated in the application, and still have any resemblance of a safe, residential block.

We also are concerned about the safety/inconvenience of having a number of students dropped off and picked up in front of the premises. Parents waiting to pick up a student from a lesson will have to wait in their cars in the curb lane of Sheridan Circle for their child to come out. This wait, which may take a number of minutes at a minimum, will lead to a substantial line of cars around the Circle, as any observer of similar pickup points at elementary schools around the city know. This will create a substantial traffic hazard for people coming south on Massachusetts Avenue, many of whom are driving at a fast rate in the curb lane as they enter the Circle, in preparation of turning right on 23rd Street.

We hope that you will recommend against the application as currently written.

Sincerely,

Paul and Ellen Hoff

CHARLES REED TANGUY
2235 Q STREET NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20008

February 9, 2000

Ms. Linda Bumbalo, ANC Commissioner
Mr. Lance Salonial, ANC Commissioner

Dear Commissioners,

We are opposed to the opening of a school in the Alice Pike Barney House on Sheridan Circle because parking will go from difficult to impossible in the neighborhood.

We live just around the corner on Q Street. We have lived at this address for 22 years. Every year parking becomes a bigger problem. In 1978 it was unusual to find all parking spots filled on our block. At the worst we would drive around the block and find a space that had just opened up. Today it is usually impossible to find an open space.

In addition to music and art classes during the week, we understand that as many as 40 student recitals plus as many as 24 recitals by guest musicians with as many as 90 visitors at one time are contemplated. We see no way that vehicles for this many people can be accommodated on our local streets. We believe this will lead to illegal parking in neighbor's driveways as has occurred in Georgetown and illegal parking in the alleys thereby blocking access to our neighbor's garages and parking spaces. Additionally, illegal parking in alleys can block access by emergency vehicles if needed.

Sincerely yours,

Charles R. Tanguy

Irene Tanguy

Irene Tanguy

Charles R. Tanguy Jr.

THEODORE L. BRACKEN
2206 Q Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

February 9, 2000

TO: ANC Commissioners Linda Bumbalo and Lance Salonia

RE: Alice Pike Barney Studio House

As residents of the Sheridan/Kalorama neighborhood I write on behalf of my wife and our family to object to the use of the Barney Studio House as a commercial "school" enterprise. The neighborhood simply doesn't have the flexibility in parking or traffic patterns to accommodate this additional commercial business. We are already inundated with parking problems from the embassies, the local School For Friends at the Church of the Pilgrims, AA meetings at the Church, and the patrons of bars and nightclubs on P Street.

Sheridan circle is a dangerous place for pedestrians, as are most of DC's circles, but this one more than most because there are no traffic lights and most commuters treat the circle as a continuation of Mass. Avenue as they barrel to and from work each morning and evening. We know this better than most as we have two small boys 10 and 8 with whom we like to go biking in the neighborhood, including up and around the Sheridan Circle area. It is a VERY dangerous place. The loading and unloading of students, the double parking, and the difficulty of finding parking when recitals and other "public" events are held will bring additional traffic problems to an area that is already clogged with cars. Witness what happened when Q Street Bridge was closed last fall. All hell broke loose until the police began directing traffic.

As a family of four we struggle to keep our little Q Street environs a safe, residential neighborhood for our growing children. Every time some new, non-residential business or embassy diminishes the residential nature of our street, we the residents are the ones who suffer.

We ask that you reject the Barney House bid to become a music school and require that its purposes conform with the residential nature of the neighborhood.

Respectfully Submitted,

Theodore L Bracken

22236 Q St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

TO; THE ANC COMMISSIONERS

FROM: CAROL ANN KELL

DATE; FEBRUARY 8, 2000

I am writing to you because of concerns I have about the possibility of a music school being housed on Sheridan Circle.

From my understanding of the number of students the school will have has customers as well as the number of concert dates planned in a year, I feel as though this is not a good idea for our neighborhood. The traffic congestion that would result from students being dropped off every half hour (and picked up) as well as the parking necessary for concerts in which 90 people might be expected, would overtax the limits of an already congested area. There is very little street parking as it is and our alley is often clogged with illegally parked cars (right off 23rd and Q Sts.)

So, while I like the idea of the building being used for a nice thing like a music school, I think the scope of the plan is more than our neighborhood can accommodate.

Thank you for your consideration.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALAN S. HAYS II, 2234 Q STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20008 OPPOSING THE GRANTING OF A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO THE ZONING OF THE ALICE PIKE BARNEY HOUSE LOCATED ON SHERIDAN CIRCLE
February 9, 2000

1. The Sample Used in the Traffic Study Is Seriously Flawed.

a. The traffic study is incomplete and cannot be used to assess traffic patterns in Sheridan circle. The study was made on December 9, 1999, long after the Q Street bridge had been closed for repairs in September 1999. A major route from downtown offices to homes in Georgetown is Northwest on Mass Ave, around Sheridan Circle past the Alice Pike Barney House, right on 23rd Street, then right onto the Q Street bridge at the traffic light heading into Georgetown. I have observed this traffic backing up into Sheridan Circle during busy periods. This traffic was not observed during the traffic study because the Q Street bridge was closed in December 1999. Application of James H. And Julie P. Edmonds for Special Exception Review and Approval of Studio House School of the Arts, December 1999 ("Application"), Exhibit 3, page 15, Exhibit 8.

2. The Traffic Study Ignores Serious Safety Issues

a. The traffic study does not address safety issues. We run a substantial risk of witnessing serious accidents, perhaps even deadly, when children are dropped off or picked up in front of the Alice Pike Barney House.

b. There is only one parking space at the curb in front of the Alice Pike Barney House. The space in the southeast direction from the Alice Pike Barney House parking space to the corner of 23rd Street is blocked by large concrete anti-terrorist security barriers. It is impossible to get from the street to the sidewalk through these barriers. The space to the northwest are two driveways and the Korean Chancery. This means that every music class "shift change" will require as many as 18 "Music Moms" plus an additional 8 "Art Moms" at certain times to discharge or pick up a child at this single parking place. Common sense suggests that these "Music and Art Moms" will either park illegally, perhaps as far back as Massachusetts Avenue, or worse yet double park, or drive around and around Sheridan Circle waiting for an opportunity to get into that one spot.

c. It is downhill from the 24th Street light and into Sheridan Circle. Traffic moves quickly on this stretch.

d. Cars already in the circle (perhaps going to Georgetown via 23rd Street) have the right-of-way over cars entering from Massachusetts Avenue. Drivers entering the circle are looking to the left for and at cars having the right-of-way. As they swoop into the circle, often at relatively high speeds, their attention refocuses on

traffic in front of them just as they approach the Alice Pike Barney House. What will their reaction time be if a "Music or Art Mom" decides to dart back into traffic at that moment or is double parked in front of the Alice Pike Barney House? It seems to me common sense suggests that this traffic situation during the evening rush hour, every weekday, creates a substantial risk of a serious accident.

3. **Contrary to Dr. Clark's Unsupported Assertion, Parking Is a Major Problem on the Residential Streets in the Immediate Vicinity of Sheridan Circle.** Application, Exhibit 3, page 17.

a. On-street parking is not easy in this neighborhood. The parking problem is compounded by the Church of the Pilgrims located just a short 1 ½ blocks away from the Alice Pike Barney House. In addition to its normal church sponsored activities, the church rents its meeting halls, one of which can hold about 200 people, to large unaffiliated organizations at least once a week and sometimes more frequently. Cars from these events flood the neighborhood. Finding legal parking spaces while these events are taking place is impossible.

b. The Edmondses propose student recitals with a maximum attendance of 45 students and guests and with no more than 40 recitals a year. In addition, the Edmondses propose up to 24 recitals a year by guest musicians with attendance by as many as 90 people. This is a total of 64 recitals or an average of 2.5 recitals per week if recitals are limited to two 13 week periods as proposed by the Edmondses. The Application suggests that the number might not be more than 2 recitals a week or 52 a year. Twice a week for 6 months every year resident parking will be impossible due to the Alice Pike Barney House musical events. The Application, Exhibit 3, pages 9, 13-14.

4. **There Are Not Enough On-site Parking Spaces to Satisfy Zoning Requirements.**

a. The on-site parking sketch does not appear workable for 9 spots. The plan assumes all relatively small vehicles. Even then, the plan leaves little room to get in or out of cars or walk space around the cars.

b. The on-site parking plan makes no provision for Mr. or Dr. Edmondses cars or school vehicles. This school will be one of three music schools owned and operated by Mr. Edmonds. It is certain that he will need a vehicle to get to his other schools located in Virginia. The on-site parking plan also makes no provision for a car for Dr. Edmonds who presumably needs a car for her job and to run household errands. The Application states that "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." Ten teachers and 17 classroom seats requires nine parking spaces. If the Edmondses and/or the school need two or three spaces, then only six or seven

spaces are left to satisfy the parking requirements of nine spaces. Application, Exhibit 3, page 14.

5. **A Special Exception for a Commercial Business in this Residential Neighborhood Will Establish a Dangerous Precedent and Could Lead to Objectionable and Unintended Use of the Alice Pike Barney House.**

   a. The Edmondses personal income and revenue to cover their business expenses will come from this and other music school businesses owned and operated by them. A non-profit corporation, as proposed by the Edmondses, does not mean they intend to minimize revenue or not develop other revenue producing activities which could be shoe-horned into the zoning exception. For example, nothing seems to prevent them from renting out the public spaces for a party of up to 90 people with music, wine and hors d'oeurvres under the guise of a "performer recital". This is how H.H. Leonard's mansion on O Street got started, a business which has expanded seemingly without end and ravaged one of our nicest neighborhood residential blocks.

I oppose the granting of a Special Exception to the zoning of the Alice Pike Barney House located on Sheridan Circle for the foregoing reasons.

Alan S. Hays II

Alan S. Hays II
2234 Q Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008