TESTIMONY of JOYCE STANLEY BATIPPS
BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING AND ADJUSTMENTS
Washington, DC

March 21, 2000

My name is Joyce Stanley Batipps. My family and I reside at 1645 Jonquil Street, NW, where we have lived since 1980. I am a native Washingtonian who has spent only eight years of my life away from this city, my city. I moved back into Washington in 1980, when most of my contemporaries were moving out into the far suburbs, after living briefly in nearby Silver Spring, MD. My husband also is committed to living in the District. He came to Washington in 1963 at the age of seventeen to attend college and except for that same eight year period, has remained here. We each own our own businesses here in the city. My husband and daughter join me here today at this hearing. My husband left his practice of medicine today to be here. My daughter, a college student, has chosen to spend a day of her Spring break to attend this hearing today because we value our home, our neighborhood and our right to quietly enjoy our home. This home is our major asset and is the only home my husband and I own. It is our daughter's legacy.

I take great pride in my neighborhood, and I, along with my family and my neighbors, have worked very hard to keep the residential quality of our neighborhood intact. Because the neighbors are forever vigilant, we maintain a neighborhood that is stable, peaceful, clean and, in short, a desirable place to be. It is because of this very desirability that the applicant seeks a place here.

The applicant proposes to introduce some 120 children, staff, and the associated traffic into the neighborhood as it uses the Ohev Sholom synagogue which borders my street. With the assistance of its traffic planners, the applicant has submitted a traffic plan

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that is based on "best case" scenarios, that suggest unrealistic approach and exit patterns and that does not incorporate contingencies. I believe the applicant has presented to you a "sweetened" traffic plan that only works on paper.

First, the applicant has minimized the number of parents that will be car pooling, thus, presents an artificial number of cars arriving at the site. Car pooling is a voluntary activity. Although the applicant may wish for and cajole parents to car pool, no parent can be compelled to do so. On your former approval of this applicant's use of the Adas Israel site in 1995, this Board specified as one of its conditions for approval that the applicant was "to institute car pooling to minimize adverse impacts on the surrounding area." Yet as is reported in its own Traffic Management Plan, the applicant has 180 students and 92 vehicles arriving at its current site, or one car for every two students. This small ratio shows that the applicant did little to follow this Board's recommendations in the past. Why should my neighbors and I believe that the applicant will do little more than just put words to paper only to gain the Board's approval once more?

Secondly, as reported to you, the traffic plan for the Ohev Sholom site is based on a circular plan of right turns. Traffic enters Juniper Street by making a right turn from 16th Street, the cars queue in the alley to discharge the children, exit onto Jonquil, again making a right turn, and finally onto 16th Street by making a right turn.

The effectiveness of this plan is contingent on quick stops and discharges, with little disruption to the circular flow of the vehicles. However, the plan does not take into account that a clog will quickly be created when exiting vehicles on Jonquil Street attempt to enter 16th Street against the heavy southbound traffic to make a right turn onto 16th. Since there

is little interruption of the southbound flow of traffic, it is difficult to make that right turn. I never attempt to exit Jonquil Street at rush hour at that intersection, choosing to go further south to Holly Street which is a signal controlled intersection. While the applicant states that the traffic signal at Kalmia Road will temporarily stop the southbound traffic, their traffic planners did not survey the number of vehicles from eastbound Kalmia Road making right turns onto 16th Street with the green signal. In preparing the traffic report for Lowell School in 1998, the company of O.R. George & Associates, Inc., which is currently a consultant for the applicant, reported that during its survey on October 22, 1997, between 8:00 a.m. and 8:45 a.m., 50 cars made a right turn onto southbound 16th Street from Kalmia Road. This is critical because it demonstrates that there are decreased opportunities for vehicles from Jonquil to get onto 16th Street before the signal changes at Kalmia and 16th again for the southbound traffic. This stoppage on Jonquil Street will backup the vehicles in the alley waiting to exit, and in turn will backup the entire line entering onto Juniper Street from 16th Street.

In addition a crucial factor that has not been addressed in this plan is that as Jonquil Street approaches 16th Street, at the alley, it curves. This is a blind curve. At that point, a vehicle traveling east toward 16th Street and one traveling west on Jonquil toward 17th Street cannot see each other as they approach that curve.

Many drivers use Jonquil Street in the morning to travel northwest, avoiding having to make a left turn from 16th Street at Kalmia Road, the next northern intersection. Moreover, vehicles are allowed to park on the northern side of Jonquil Street. This narrows the passing range, causing those westbound vehicles to swing out around the

this school must stay in the District. I cannot understand then how Adas Israel synagogue, with one of the largest congregations, if not the largest congregation in Washington can cast this school out from its current home, all while knowing that JPDS has not found a suitable site. It would seem to me that because this school is so important to the Jewish community and is the only Jewish primary school in Washington that great efforts would be made to keep it at its current location rather than force it into an ill suited site where these very young children have nothing more that a dark narrow passage way in which to play. I would think that the congregation would rally together to keep the school at its current site a little while longer to ensure its existence while JPDS awaits the construction of its permanent home over the next three years. My neighbors and I are asked to be tolerant of what we see as an major inconvenience and disruption to the quiet enjoyment of our homes. Why is it then that the community at Adas Israel cannot show the same level of tolerance for this school over the next three years for the good of the greater Jewish community?

In closing, I would refer you to Mayor Anthony Williams' Budget Proposal and the City-Wide Strategic Plan for the Year 2001, which he introduced on March 6, 2000. In this plan, the Mayor speaks to building and sustaining healthy neighborhoods. He encourages residents to achieve their visions for their neighborhoods. My neighbors and I have a vision for our neighborhood. It is one that encourages home ownership and a commitment to keeping our neighborhood stable and tranquil. Our opposition to the special exception for this applicant speaks to this vision. Further, in his strategic plan, the Mayor notes that a priority with District residents is to improve the capacity of the ANCs to represent the

parked vehicles into the eastbound lane. It is at this blind curve that the exiting vehicles from the queue will lineup on Jonquil to empty into 16th Street. This is a very dangerous point. I have been surprised as I headed home on more than one frightening occasion to face an approaching vehicle head on when I have swung too far out as I rounded that curve. This is an extremely dangerous point and one at which no care or attention has been given by the traffic planners.

Part of my fear with all of this is that many drivers, who are exiting the alley, will not wait to make the right turn onto Jonquil and then onto 16th, but will instead make a left on Jonquil Street as they exit the alley. These cars will then come down Jonquil Street to exit via 17th Street. My home is situation at the intersection where Jonquil, Juniper, 17th and Holly Streets meet, already a busy commuter corridor where drivers regularly speed through and disregard stop signs and endanger us all. We do not need to add more cars to this already dangerous mix in our residential neighborhood.

The proposed site is so ill suited that it cannot even handle the necessary flow of cars in and around its own grounds. Young children must be let out in a alley, a public alley, as there is no other place for them to disembark. The applicant proposes to convert this narrow public alley into a one way roadway during its car pool queues, eliminating access to other private and public vehicles. As a tax paying citizen, I resent this seizure of public space.

Finally, the applicant and its supporters have repeatedly said to the residents that the fate of the Jewish Primary Day School is in our hands; that this school is too important to die; and that the guilt will lay with us if this school is to perish. We have been told that

citizen interests, and he supports this priority. Our ANC has reported to you its opposition to the exception for this applicant. Its opposition represents the sentiments of a majority of the affected residents. Councilmember Jarvis, our Ward 4 representative, has also gone on record in opposition of the applicant's use of the proposed sites, as she reflects the concerns and interests of her constituents. In a time where we District residents have so few opportunities for a democratic government and process, I respectfully request that this board please listen to our elected officials and to those of us who live in the affected neighborhood and make it our home and not to those who live far beyond the confines of this neighborhood but seek to influence what happens there.