Mother's Day 2001

BZA
Case No. 16611
Exhibit No. 153

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2001 MAY 14 AM 10:13

District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Room 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application Case No. 16611: Proposed Edmund Burke School Expansion

Dear Board Members,

As residents of the District of Columbia for 25 years, we would like to express our support for the planned expansion of Edmund Burke School, which will be presented at a hearing on Tuesday morning. Our son is an 8th grader at Burke, a school that offers an urban setting, a diverse student body, a solid community service focus, an impressive financial aid program, a strong curriculum, and highly regarded and strongly committed faculty members and administrators.

We can relate to the concerns of those living on Upton Street, the adjoining streets, and the rest of the Forest Hills neighborhood about Burke's expansion plans. And we are familiar with the NIMBYism (not in my back yard) tendencies of homeowners. The area we live in has many schools as neighbors. In addition to Key Elementary School, the Palisades (and its immediate adjoining area) is home educational facilities such as the Lab School; Georgetown Day lower school; Rock Creek International School, the River School for the Deaf, George Washington University's adjunct campus at the former Mount Vernon College; Discovery Creek (which hosts field trips and sessions for students from schools throughout the Washington metropolitan area); a number of preschool/nursery schools, and (soon) the Field School. As a result, the Palisades area has had its own share of experience with traffic, parking, and congestion issues.

We ourselves are not unfamiliar with schools as neighbors. We live directly next door to the Palisades Community Church, which in addition to church-related activities, is also the setting for numerous community gatherings, including scout troops and numerous private music lessons—plus the Community Preschool of the Palisades, which is in session each weekday throughout the school year. We know all about parking issues, noise concerns, etc. However, the church and the preschool were there before we moved in, yet we still chose the setting, as must be the case with most of Burke's neighbors on Upton and Tilden streets. There has been a school at 2955 Upton Street since 1911, and Burke has occupied the site for 27 years.

Throughout the city, other independent schools have either created new campuses (such as Rock Creek International School and the Field School) or have embarked on expansion projects (such as the Maret School and Georgetown Day lower school) and, in the end, have managed to successfully work with their neighbors to address issues such as traffic flow. This is not a new school moving into the neighborhood, this is an existing school that wants to expand due to increasing enrollment requests and tightly squeezed space. People do not choose Burke for its expansive campus, multiple ivy-covered buildings, extensive athletic fields, swimming pool, theater for dramatic and musical performances—because Burke, unlike the majority of independent schools in the city, has none of them. However, the school still has a strong following, even without all those trappings. What the planned expansion will give to the school is not frivolous or unnecessary. It will mean critically needed performance space in the form of a theater/auditorium for its top-rate dramatic arts and music program—in place of the school's currently used open atrium space—which has no stage, barely any room for scenery or props, only a small amount of seating area for audiences, and which already doubles as a location for school assemblies. It also will mean an enlarged library and much-needed classroom space.

Burke has worked hard to be responsive to the concerns of the neighborhood about the increased traffic flow potentially caused by an expansion. It already has made extensive attempts to mitigate traffic problems and congestion with a curbside drop-off lane for up to seven cars, off-duty police officers have been hired to monitor and direct traffic during drop-off and pickup times as well at evening school functions, charter bus pickups and drop-offs from school trips and athletic competitions have been moved to Connecticut Avenue; parents have been strongly urged to park on Connecticut Avenue when coming to the school for evening meetings or performances; students have been encouraged to car pool and to use public transit. Burke also will put into place an extensive plan for parking and traffic circulation once the expansion goes forward.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16611
EXHIBIT NO.153

Schools make good neighbors. They help maintain and increase residential property values. They help add to the prestige of a city, of a neighborhood, which in turn helps to both attract, and maintain, residents. Burke wants to remain a city school. The school, as well as parents of Burke students recognize the importance of cooperation and the need to be respectful of the concerns of the school's neighbors. There needs to be a peaceful, mutually acceptable solution to the current discord. Give Burke a chance to prove that the situation can be worked out in a way that is mutually beneficial for all concerned. Please give your approval to the application for Burke's expansion.

Sincerely,

Karen and Robert Whale
5428 Hawthorne Place, NW
Washington, DC 20016
phone: 202-244-3040
fax: 202-244-4198
e-mail whalewine@aol.com

Support for the Edmund Burke School Expansion Plan

The following residents of the area surrounding Edmund Burke School do not oppose the current plan to expand to accommodate 360 students (from the current 295). This document was reviewed by the Head of School of Edmund Burke School who verified that the statements are accurate. The signers of this document reviewed the current traffic plan and the most recent proposals by Burke. In their new proposal, Burke has:

- created access to the school from Connecticut Avenue
- eliminated drop-off and pick-up of students on Upton Street,
- created a total of 75 on-site parking spaces to be used by faculty and students for school time and evening events
- pledged to require all students who drive to school to park on-site
- agreed to construct a driveway parallel to the public alley between Van Ness and Upton streets to be used for Burke School traffic only and to eliminate Burke School traffic from that public alley
- agreed to continue traffic control positions to ensure enforcement of traffic regulations
- limited evening events to school related activities only (i.e., no renting of Burke School space to non-Burke School groups)
- expanded a Metro benefit program for Virginia and Maryland families in which Burke will pay for ½ of the cost of riding Metro to school instead of driving
- agreed to provide school vans to pick up in the morning near Pierce Mill and North of the school on Connecticut Avenue, thereby eliminating those cars from the area around the school

With these conditions, the Burke School expansion will result in an clear and significant improvement to the current traffic conditions in the neighborhood

Signature	Printed Name	Street Address
Deirdre K Karambelas	Deirdre Karambelas	2938 Upton St. NW
Karambelas	N.G. KARAMBELAS	2938 UPTON ST. NW
Denise Couture	Denise Couture	2934 Upton St. N.W.
Frank Wolf	FRANK G WOLF	2942 UPTON ST NW
Kimberly Shore	KIMBERLY SHORE	2902 Upton St NW
Noah C. Weiss	NOAH C. WEISS	2930 UPTON St, NW
Amy R. Goldson	AMY R. Goldson	4015 28th PL NW
Shasta Barton	SHASTA BARTON	2920 Upton St, NW
Andrea DiPietro	Andrea DiPietro	2949 Tilden St. NW
Gregory Green	Gregory F. Green	2949 Tilden St NW
Rose Wolf	Rose Wolf	2942 Upton St. NW
Paul L Kane	PAUL L KANE	2900 Upton St NW
Frances F Kane	FRANCES F KANE	2900 Upton St NW

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- pledged to improve its performance in the future by reporting enrollment to the BZA and the ANC and/or to abide by any BZA plan for monitoring compliance

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Signature	Printed Name	Street Address
Rachel M. Cowger	Rachel Cowger	2930 Upton St, NW
Kelly Gordon	Kelly Gordon	2930 Upton St. NW
Constance L. Bruce	CONSTANCE BRUCE	2944 Upton St, NW
Thomas W Bruce	Thomas W BRUCE	" " " "
Jeremy Bratt	Jeremy Bratt	2902 upton St, NW
Paul S Williams	Paul S. Williams	2918 Upton St NW
Penelope Williams	PENELOPE WILLIAMS	" " " "
Zinat Khwaishan	Zinat Khwaishan	4107 Conn. Ave NW
James P. Seavers	JAMES P. SEAVERS	2906 UPTON ST, NW
Lisa Ennion	Lisa C. Ennion	2906 Upton St NW