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OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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6 November 2000

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

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

BZA
Case No. 16611
Exhibit No. 66

To the Board:

I support the proposed Edmund Burke School expansion subject to the concerns I express in this letter. I live on the South side of Upton Street, diagonally across from the school. I am directly affected by the traffic and parking issues that surround this application. I am also the parent of student who started in the sixth grade at Burke this fall.

Edmund Burke is a school with a strong commitment to the city and to social service activities. The current administration of Edmund Burke School has shown a willingness to work with the community to help alleviate parking and traffic problems. They have hired traffic police, they have eliminated non-school related evening events, and they have made themselves available to deal with complaints.

I believe that if Burke does not expand in its current location, they will seek an alternate site. The possibilities for new occupants of the Burke site are less desirable. If another school goes into the site without need for a zoning variance, they will be far less cooperative with the community. If another apartment building is built, the residents will likely park on Upton Street, as do the residents of the Consulate and the Park Place North. An apartment building will mean an overall increase the density of the area, cannot be regulated with respect to traffic and parking, and will not afford the traffic "breaks" during weekends, school vacations, and summers.

Upton Street, between Connecticut Avenue and 29th Street, is a short, narrow, over-burdened street. We endure traffic from Burke, Levine, UDC, Metro and, especially, Howard University Law School as well as through traffic going to and from Rock Creek Parkway. Parking by Howard Law students and residents of the apartment buildings leaves no space for Upton Street residents at any time of the day, any day of the week. By comparison, Van Ness Street just north and parallel to Upton Street is minimally affected by Burke traffic and only somewhat affected by Howard Law School traffic.

I do not consider myself a traffic expert nor do I consider any of the persons who

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will testify in support or in opposition to the Application to be traffic experts. I do however know what I see and what I experience. The current situation at Burke for drop-off and pick-up of students places the entire traffic burden on Upton Street with cars double parking next to the parked cars. Several traffic plans have been proposed. I understand as of the date of this letter another traffic plan which I have not seen has been proposed. The traffic plans have been described as attempting to "equitably" distribute the traffic burden caused by the expansion among the affected parties. While I do support the expansion, I strenuously object to any traffic plan that places any of the increased traffic burden caused by the expansion on Upton Street. The chairperson of the BZA during the hearings on the Levine School application said that Upton Street was already over-burdened and this was before Levine began operating and before the apartment building on Connecticut Avenue between Tilden and Upton was built. There is no way to "equitably" distribute the traffic burden on a street that is already over burdened.

I stress my support for the proposed expansion in concept. I urge the BZA to obtain objective traffic advice from real experts who are not mere advocates for any party to this proceeding. The traffic issue is a technical issue. I am confident that a technical solution can be found if the proper expertise is brought to bear on the issue. If no expansion occurs, we are left with an unacceptable traffic problem on Upton Street.

Parking by Burke students during the day is not a problem since the school has agreed to monitor all Burke cars and to restrict parking by students to those areas that are not restricted to residents. In addition, the expansion plans call for additional parking spaces, both leased and on-site.

Edmund Burke School is committed to the community and to the city as a whole. They have a strong community service component and financial aid package. I believe that with the proper plan, the expansion will be a net benefit for the neighborhood.

Very Truly Yours,

Deirdre K. Karambelas

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