PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON SIDWELL LANDSCAPE CONCEPT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL GREEN BUFFER

By Jane MacLeish, landscape architect, 3743 Upton Street, June 14, 2004.

Note: Here are preliminary comments on the landscape "concept" from the information provided at ANC3C meeting 6/7 by Jane MacLeish.
Jane MacLeish is a well know local landscape architect. Further she worked on the landscaping plan which was developed for The Washington Home. Subsequently she redid the plan and it is a wonderful plan.
Janes probably knows better than anyone what will grow on the Sidwell property because of her work at The Home.
I think she is very surprised at the poor quality of work done by Andropogan. They do not know what will thrive here in DC. And, as she points out the concept is "woodlands" but the reality is polluted, hot, dry DC.
I have asked Jane to turn this preliminary set of comments into a letter to the BZA. Unfortunately she will be on call for the birth of a grandchild and then away fro 2 months.

The landscape architects have a fabulous reputation. They are environmentally astute. However they are not being astute here, they are planting as if it is a woodland garden, clean air, good soil and good care. This is a hostile, sloping, polluted area and I can guarantee very little gardening attention. Few of the suggested plants will survive. (We have seen most of them die on the Washington Home grounds already). We need good old time tested City type trees that are cheap, and fairly large, sweet gums, maples, some oaks, and flowering, kousa dogwoods (don't get disease) Fringe tree, Styrax tree etc.

White Oak NO GO, tap root, can't get large. use Quercus Bicolor does real well
Liquidamber hard to get large ones.
Fagus grandifolia, again tap root can't get large much better with Fagus silvatica
Nyssa sylvatica lovely tree, can't get large.
Quercus coccinea - does not like the heat, does badly here.
Carya - impossible to get in any size and grows real slow
Cornus florida - dies, see Wash. Home gdns. us Cornus kousa
Carpinus carolinia - nice tree - small
Chionanthus virginicus - nice tree - small
Sassafras - jungle tree
Rhododendron - all do VERY BADLY in DC, See Wash Home. they DIE
Kalmia - all do VERY BADLY in DC
American holly - very expensive, some hybrids do better and cost MUCH less.
Perennials - OK but won't be looked after and will be planted in poor soil and neglected. Big holes
.
Sorry to be so negative. Surprised at Andropogon doing this, they are really trying to make it a woodland.

What does do well.(in terms of evergreens)?
Maples, some oaks, willow, pin, sweetgum, hybrid hollies, American holly, Kousa dogwoods, styrax, yoshino cherry, japanese maples. Winged euonymus, ilex glabra, boxwood, laurel, euonymus, nandina (sort of non-natives really)
Tall evergreens are difficult The leyland cypress is now subject to a blight. There are some very nice arborvitae "Green Giant" which are nice. Spruce does very well, and we have tried some fir in one garden in DC. Hollies are very expensive but terrific. The evergreen magnolia does VERY well and is available.
Hope this helps Yes you can use all this info. Sorry it's not neater! Jane"

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17149
EXHIBIT NO. 75A2

Andropogan reply to MacLeish critique of landscaping decisions near Middle School

-----Original Message-----
From: Laura Moorhead [mailto:moorheadl@andropogon.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2004 6:30 PM
To: Michael Saxenian
Cc: afloresta@kierantimberlake.com; Alminana Jose
Subject: Re: FW: Comments on Sidwell landscaping proposals

Hello Mike,

Thank you for passing on Barbara's summary of Jane MacLeish's comments. She's quite right in that we're trying to evoke a woodland -- albeit a small fragment -- this is very appropriate given the values of the School and the neighborhood setting. When recommending plant species, we looked at two sets of factors: what is indiginous here? and what will tolerate the specific, urban, stresses of our planting site?

For local, native species, we found a report of vegetation mapping in Rock Creek Park by NPS and the Nature Conservancy in 1988. We summarized the forest communities that it described for different growing conditions - ie the native plant associations typical of dry upland ridgetops, dry-mesic mid slope, or lowland areas. From these we have short listed species that, in our experience, have done well when planted in similar sites in an urban context.

Urban environments can be stressful for a number of reasons -- soil compaction, drought, heat, air pollution, salt, lack of root space, dog poop and other garbage, etc. While we might not plant some of the trees on our list in a sidewalk or parking lot setting (very hot, dry, salt stress, and little rooting room), the north side of the middle school has different stresses - namely quite shady, and probably dry, but not likely to have salt stress or excessive compaction from foot traffic. We would require soil amendments and aeration to improve the growing conditions as part of the planting specification.

Jane is right that many of these native trees are not always common in the nursery trade in large sizes. For each species, we've listed that sizes that we've been able to find in the past. Availability does vary from year to year and from season to season, so we've written in the caviat that we may need to make some substitutions if our first choice is not available.

So, white oak, nyssa and sweet gum can usually be found fairly big but the hickory can only be gotten as a short sapling, which is how we've listed it. Fagus grandifolia (beech) is available in modest sizes, which is again how it's specified. We've planted both sweet gum and nyssa at 2-3 inch caliper sizes in very dry, low/no-maintenance settings and had them survive well.
Kalmia (laurel) can't take the hot sun all day, but this will be a very shady setting; kalmia is listed as characteristic of dry upland woods in the Rock Creek park report, and should

do well if given adequate moisture during its establishment period.
Scarlet Oak (Quercus coccinea) is native to the local area, is drought and heat resistent, and should do well as long as not excessively shaded (we'd have to locate it on the edge of our planting area) or in compacted soils.
Rhododendron - I'd like to do more research on this, specific to the DC area. I suggested it because it is a tall, shade-tolerant native evergreen that I've had good success with in the Philadelphia neighborhood. It certainly won't do well in hot sun, but if it is indeed absent from the shadier gardens in the neighborhood, we can look for a substitution.
Flowering dogwood (Cornus florida) - I'm also doing some research into this one. I'm not concerned about the growing conditions so much as some of the diseases that are becoming more common with this tree (Anthracose and a fungus). If necessary, we'll substitute a similar flowering understory tree... but not Kousa Dogwood - it's pretty, but I have a recollection that it might be a host to some of the diseases that attack the flowering dogwood, and I'd like to investigate that issue some more before using this exotic species.
Hollies - suggested the American holly because it gets tall. Other hollies are shorter, and non native. Evergreen magnolia would be an ok substitute (see the previous email).

Winged euonymus, and to some extent Japanese maples (alternates suggested in Barbara's summary) are invasive exotic species that self seed and become pest species in native woodlands. (Incidentally, Norway maples and barberry are also pests, although not well publicized as such yet). We wouldn't use them on principle. Boxwood and many of the hybrid hollies are fine ornamental plants but not tall enough for the screening that the neighbors want. The cherries are pretty, and not invasive, but require more sun that we have in this setting.

I've been very impressed with the care that Lucy and your other staff give to the grounds at Sidwell, and I'm confident that these plant species, in the context that we're placing them, will get the (minimal) care that they need. If the Washington Home has concerns about providing care during the establishment period, or about providing periodic weeding, we can review the plant list again with that in mind.

regards,
Laura

Laura Moorhead
Andropogon Associates

Sidwell statement that it will continue to work on landscape design.

Suggests good intentions but also that a firm plan will not be available for BZA review and thus not part of the conditions of the BZA order.

Email dated June 16, 2004 from Mike Saxenian. Sidwell Friends School to Barbara Beelar, neighbor

Dear Barbara,

One of our neighbors shared with me your June 15 memo on our landscaping approach to the Middle School. I passed that memo on to our landscape architects at Andropogon Associates, and would like to share Andropogon's reply.

Here are three additional thoughts which I think will give comfort to our neighbors:

1. We have agreed with ANC 3C that we will revisit the plan to see whether we can enhance evergreens within the plan
2. At the School's initiative, our agreement with the Washington Home to plant on their site envisions consultation with our neighbors.
3. The plantings adjacent to the Middle School on the Home property will be maintained by the School. Our own wonderful Lucy Frerotte will lead that effort.

Just as the School is deeply committed to sustainable landscape design—an approach that uses native species rather than exotics and contemplates bridging our adjacent protected areas of Rock Creek and Glover Archibald Parks—it is equally committed to an open, consultative process with our neighbors. We respect and are responding to our neighbors' desire for screening.

I would like to work with you to develop a way to share the next iteration of landscape design with neighbors. As always, we would like to hear from any neighbors who have concerns.

Many thanks.

Mike

RECOMMENDATION ONE

MAINTAIN CURRENT ENROLLMENT LEVEL, ALREADY 20 OVER CAP, UNTIL

1. GARAGE IS BUILT AND
2. ONE YEAR DEMO OF TMP

RECOMMENDATION TWO

APPROVE PHASE I WITH CONDITION--

ANC AND BZA APPROVAL OF

- ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS FOR GARAGE AND MIDDLE SCHOOL
- LANDSCAPE PLAN

April, 2004

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE ON THE SIDWELL FRIENDS SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

BACKGROUND: Sidwell Friends School hired Wells and Associates to develop a Transportation Plan as a part of the BZA application for a multi year, multi building expansion project.

The Transportation Plan includes:

1) Traffic Study, analyzing current conditions; and
2) Transportation Management Plan, proposing methods for traffic and parking control.

The final report was presented to Sidwell the beginning of February, 2004.

Compiled by Barbara Beelar
3505 Tilden Street

TRAFFIC STUDY
SUMMARY

The Traffic Study report provides data helpful for understanding the current traffic and parking impacts as well as a sense of the of impacts of the expansion plan. The report is a good beginning, but not a definitive or objective analysis of traffic and parking. Conclusions drawn in the study are based on inadequate, incomplete or incorrect data. The consultants' finding on traffic impacts contradict those made by community representatives. Findings on parking understate the real and negative impacts in the residential neighborhoods.

PRIMARY AREAS OF CONCERN IN THE TRAFFIC STUDY

1. **CONCLUSION THAT AM PEAK TRAFFIC IS NOT A PROBLEM.** Wells and Associates report the AM Peak traffic "flowed smoothly along 37th Street and the drop-off lane operated well."(page 2) Multiple site visits by neighbors, an ANC Commissioner and a DDOT Traffic Planner do not support this observation.

2. **RECOMMENDATION THAT PM SCHOOL PEAK TRAFFIC CAN BE RESOLVED WITH DELAY IN DISMISSAL TIME..** Wells and Associates assert that the congestion on 37th Street during PM School Peak can be resolved by simply delaying Sidwell dismissal by 15 minutes, until 3:30. While Sidwell began to implement this delay in early January, congestion, non-compliance and safety issues remain 3 months later. The congestion problems will not be remedied until Sidwell manages queing and eliminates pick up at 37th and Upton.

3. **TRAFFIC COUNT METHODLOGY DILUTES IMPACT FINDINGS.** Wells and Associates used the standard traffic count measure of an hour period for their traffic counts. The reality is both AM Peak and PM peaks are compressed into a half hour time frames. Utilization of one hour basis dilutes the real traffic impact generated, supporting findings which are inaccurate.

4. **ASSESSMENT OF EXPANSION IMPACT IS FLAWED.** Wells and Associates project "minimal" increases in traffic resulting from expanded student enrollment. However, it appears that Wells and Associates did not conduct an analysis of the increase of faculty and staff up to the 190 BZA cap. With an increase of 24 students AND 18 (or 21?) faculty and staff in the Sidwell expansion would create as many as 82 to 90 additional trips, an increase of almost 10%, which is certainly <u>not a "minimal" impact</u>.

5. **FAULTY ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA**. Wells and Associates described some of the development projects in the "pipeline" which will impact Wisconsin Avenue traffic. No developments were explored to the south of the campus, though a majority of students come from this direction. More importantly, the immediate expansion of the Washington Home parking lot and the Hearst Elementary School are not mentioned though both are immediately adjacent to the Sidwell Friends property and will have tremendous impact on 37th Street.

6. **REPORT CONTAINS MANY ERRORS**. The Wells and Associates report contains numerous errors, including misinformation on parking zones, turning counts, and small items such as directional information. The errors found are listed separately at the end of this document.

TWO ITEMS OF SPECIAL FOCUS

1. **Currently only 4% of Sidwell students use mass transit**. The Private School Task Force recommends Middle and High Schools place an emphasis on mass transit utilization. This is an environmentally responsible option would compliment the "green design" in the Sidwell expansion plans. Sidwell must go a long way to embrace mass transit as a major transportation option.

2. **Of the 459 Upper School students, 124 drive to school on a daily basis.** The consultants report that 27% of the Upper School students drive. However, not all high school students can drive or have drivers' licenses. If you assume all seniors and half the juniors meet criteria to be able to drive to school, **the real percentage of students who drive is 70%, NOT 27%.**

   Sidwell prohibits student parking on campus. Each day student drivers create a 248 vehicle trips into the residential neighborhoods.

   The data in the Traffic Study is inadequate because it does not provide detail location of where these cars park. For example, it is reported that 52% or 64 of Sidwell students park on 37th Street, which is not physically possible because there are not this many parking spaces. Other students park in 2 hour restricted residential parking or illegally in a private parking lot.

   The data on student drivers may well be understated. In the student survey conducted in October, only 79% of the students responded. What about the data on the other students? Also, there is an annual Spring explosion of student driven cars. Kids get their drivers' license during the school year and want to drive to school. In sum, the October count of student drivers substantially understates actual number and the real impact oon the residential neighborhood.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Sidwell delineates three goals for the TMP:

"1) Encourage the use of public transportation;
2) Reduce traffic on 37th Street without burdening residential streets and/or alleys;
3) Provide an orderly flow of traffic on campus."

Specific steps to achieve these goals are not well detailed in the Plan.

1) Use of public transportation. Currently 4% of Sidwell students take public transportation. Staff can receive Metrochek. No data is provided on how many staff currently take advantage of this benefit.

In the TMP, Sidwell will "encourage" use of public transportation. It will continue to make Metrochek available to staff and metro passes will be available to students.

Projection: Using only "encouragement" and minimal financial incentive, it is unlikely that there will be a major increase in the use of public transportation. .

2) Reduction of 37th Street traffic. The current Sidwell generated traffic on 37th Street is as follows:

AM Peak	315 vehicle trips
PM School Peak	72 vehicle trips
PM Rush Peak	61 vehicle trips

Current occupancy rates are 1.26 students per car in the AM and 1.46 in the PM

In addition to the drop off and pick up traffic, approximately 97 Sidwell student drive cars travel on 37th Street looking for parking places, creating about 194 vehicle trip daily.

Total current vehicle trips on 37th Street generated by Sidwell: 642.

In the TMP, Sidwell will "encourage" carpooling at the 37th Street entrance. A carpool is defined as 2 students per car. If full compliance were achieved, the following vehicle trips could be expected:

AM Peak	198 vehicle trips
PM School and Rush	97 vehicle trips.
Student drivers	194 vehicle trips—no change

Total vehicle trips on 37th Street generated by Sidwell, if full compliance: 489, or reduction of 153 trips daily.

However, full compliance to the 2 student per car carpool is unlikely. This policy is being "encouraged" not required. Further, persistent difficulties enforcing current traffic

policies suggest probable shortcomings. Finally, there are no indications there would be a change in detailing of security officers, who currently do not monitor AM drop off.

3) Orderly flow of traffic on campus. To improve current traffic flow on campus, Sidwell proposes to build a garage, accessible off Wisconsin Avenue. The new traffic pattern will allow 2 lanes for drop off and pick up. Increased capacity will probably yield more orderly flow of traffic on campus.

Garage will not provide for a net increase in parking spaces on campus. There is a plan for 20 new spaces but there will be 21 new faculty and staff.

THE SIDWELL TMP HAS MANY MISSED OPPORTUNITIES. From what is presented in the TMP, it can be expected that two of the goals will not be met.

- Utilization of public transportation would be enhanced if Sidwell were to provide a shuttle service to and from the nearby Metro stations.

- Reduction of traffic on 37th Street would be enhanced if Sidwell were to define a carpool as 3 students per car and to require carpooling for drop off on 37th Street. Finally, compliance with traffic reduction on 37th Street should be mandatory, with penalties for non-compliance.

SIDWELL CHOSE NOT TO INCORPORATE RANGE OF STRATEGIES FOR TRAFFIC REDUCTION USED BY OTHER SCHOOLS. Traffic impact reduction strategies are being effectively used at various nearby educational institutions. These include:

Satellite drop off and pick up; school buses; well-managed drop off and pick up lines; controls on student parking; routing cars for reduced impact; crossing guards; off duty police officers; 24 hour hot line for parking violation; strong and effective measures to assure compliance including incorporation of traffic policies into enrollment contract; designation of one staff person responsible for all traffic plans; and neighborhood liaison committee.

None of these proven strategies are proposed in Sidwell's Plan though they have shown substantial reduction in compact impact of traffic in other residential neighborhoods.

SIDWELL CHOSE NOT TO PLACE LIMITATIONS ON STUDENT DRIVERS. Currently at least 124 students drive to school. This is about 70% of all students who can drive. The plan suggested no limitations on the number of students who drive or incentives to get these students out of their cars and on to public transportation.

Current policy is students who drive must register and must park on nearby residential streets. In the TMP, drivers will have to put a sticker on their car and are "encouraged" not to park in Zone 3 parking areas. No parking on campus will be provided for student drivers.

ISSUE OF PARTICULAR CONCERN—37th STREET TRAFFIC

The Sidwell TMP does not take into consideration the traffic generated by Phoebe Hearst Elementary School , a public school, directly across the street from the Middle School entrance. Currently Hearst goes from K through 3 but plans for expansion to 5th grade are in the works.

School generated vehicle trips are concentrated in brief periods in the morning and afternoon, making congestion more likely at these periods. Further, Hearst is less able to enforce compliance with traffic management policies because it is a public school

Currently Sidwell generates 642 vehicles trips daily on 37th Street. Even with full compliance of the 2 student per car carpooling, which is unlikely, it might be possible to reduce Sidwell traffic to 489 vehicles trips daily.

Hearst School currently generates about 230 vehicles trips daily based on a student enrollment of 150, with about 90% out of boundary.

In the next year, Hearst plans to add 4th grade and the following year 5th grade. Thus, by the school year 2005/2006 there may be as many as 300 vehicles trips daily generated by Hearst.

In the DCPS Master Plan, Hearst enrollment is to increase to 320 students. With this full expansion and maintenance of 90% out of boundary student population, there may be as many as 600 vehicle trips daily.

CURRENT: SCHOOL GENERATED VEHICLE TRIPS ON 37TH STREET: 872

SIDWELL—642
HEARST—230

BY 2005/6, SCHOOL GENERATED VEHICLE TRIPS ON 37TH STREET: 789

SIDWELL--489—if full compliance
HEARST-- 300

DATE UNCERTAIN WITH HEARST FULL EXPANSION: 1089

SIDWELL—489—if full compliance
HEARST—600

CONCLUSION: With Hearst expansion in the DCPS Master Plan, the only viable option to bring 37th Street traffic under control is for Sidwell remove all drop off and pick up traffic from 37th Street entrance to the Wisconsin Avenue.

DETAIL COMMENTS
TRAFFIC STUDY

The following comments are presented in the order the information appears in the Wells & Associates Traffic Study for Sidwell Friends School.

1. **QUESTION ABOUT DATA ON NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES.** In the four versions of the Sidwell PowerPoint presentation on their expansion plans, on page 30 (in the original version) Sidwell states there are 169 employees. Page 1 of the Traffic Study, the study states "Sidwell currently employs 172 full time educators on its DC Campus." On the following pages, the study continues to use this figure of 172. (Page 1, ph 5.)

Recommendation: Data presented by Sidwell should be accurate and consistent.

Question: What is the correct number of employees at Sidwell for the 2003/4 school year? If the 169 figure is correct, the calculations in the Study should be corrected.

2 **QUESTIONS ABOUT PROPOSED NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES.** At various community meetings, Sidwell has stated there would be 190 parking spaces in the new garage plus a few more for other vehicles. In the Traffic Study, on page 1 this structure is referred to as "A 202-spaced underground parking structure . . ." Further on the study says that there are currently 192 parking spaces now and there will be 209 spaces in the expansion, page 2. Later, on page 18, it is reported there are 186 parking spaces but when the figures are added, it shows there are 192 spaces.

Recommendation: Data presented by Sidwell should be accurate and consistent.

Questions: What is the proposed number of spaces for this garage- for both cars and other vehicles?
What is the current number of spaces for both cars and other vehicles?

3. **DATA QUESTIONED ON TOTAL VEHICLE TRIPS.** On page 2, conclusion 1, it is reported the 973 students and faculty generate a total of 1120 vehicle trips daily. This number does not seem to be consistent with data analysis elsewhere in the study and should be reviewed. Is it possible that the 248 vehicle trips by students who drive are not added to the calculations?

Question: Are Wells and Associates clear that 973 student and faculty generate only a total of 1120 round trips daily?

4. **VARIATIONS IN FIGURES.** On page 2, conclusion 3, the study reports "Sidwell traffic accounts for seven to 16 percent of all traffic on Wisconsin Avenue during the AM peak hour and three to seven percent during the PM peak hour."

Questions: **What accounts for such large ranges in traffic counts? There are the same number of kids and staff arriving and departing each day.**

5. **BIAS IN DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUE DILUTES IMPACT OF SIDWELL TRAFFIC.** Wells and Associates used the standard traffic count procedure of collecting data over an hour period. (Page 2, conclusion 4.)

The reality of Sidwell traffic patterns is that almost all of the traffic in the AM peak and PM school peak takes place in concentrated periods, approximately a half hour in duration.

Question: **Does the method of data collection using an hour as a basis for the traffic count dilute and understate the actual traffic impact?**

6. **STUDY UNDERSTATES THE TRAFFIC IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED EXPANSION.** On page 2, conclusion 5, the reports states that the expansion of school from 801-825 would add "11 to 31" vehicles trips during the school and street peak hours. This was termed "not significant" by the consultant. This statement is incorrect.

The Sidwell expansion includes increase in student and staff. To obtain a true picture of the impact of the expansion, the consultant should use data reflecting the real expansion. By understating the counts of the proposed expansion, the data then supports the consultants' assessment that the increase is "not significant".

Currently, Sidwell has 801 students and 172 (or 169) faculty and staff. Together they generate a total of 1120 vehicle trips daily. (The total is from adding 630 inbound AM peak, 251 outbound PM school peak and 239 street peak) as provided on page 2, conclusion 1.

The Sidwell expansion would increase the students to 825, or an increase of 24 and increase the faculty to 190, or an increase of 18 (or 21). In total, there would be 42 (or 45) new student and staff in the expansion, or 1015 total.

Using the ratio generated by the study, if 973 students and staff generate 1120 vehicles trips daily, then the 1015 students and staff would generate 1168 daily trips, or an increase of 48 daily trips.

The expansion will create a significant impact by generating 48 additional vehicles trips daily.

Recommendation: **The traffic consultants should revise their data and conclusion based on counts which reflect proposed increase in students AND staff.**

7. **DATA ON STUDENTS DRIVERS UNDERSTATES IMPACT**. On page 1, conclusion 8, the study says that 27% of the upper school students drive to school. Twenty-seven percent of 459 students are 124 student drivers.

The first question is: how was this figure generated? It is drawn from a student survey which 21% of the students did not respond. Was an extrapolation made to generate this figure to represent 100% response? Or, it is data based on just the responses received? Either way, there are fundamental questions about the validity of the data presented . There questions are not mentioned in the Traffic Study.

In addition, Wells and Associates report does not make allowances for the increase of student drivers over the year. The information generated in October is probably the lowest figure of the whole year. Throughout the school year kids get their drivers licenses and start driving to school. My observation of the 3600 block of Tilden Street is that the number of Sidwell cars increase from an average of 6 in the fall to 12 by late spring. Again, this is another observation which indicates the actual number of students driving to be understated.

Finally, representation of the data is inaccurate. The report says "27% "of the Upper School students drive to school. Yet, this is faulty analysis. Not all Upper School students can drive. Probably 100% of freshman and sophomores are too young to received their drivers' licenses. Probably half the juniors and all the seniors are old enough to drive and have their licenses. In this case, the correct statement is 70% of the students, old enough to drive, do drive to Sidwell each day.

Questions: **What is the actual number of students who drive to school?**
How much does this figure vary over the school year?
Since Sidwell currently registers student drivers, what data does Sidwell have?

8. QUESTIONS ABOUT AM PEAK ON 37TH STREET. The study defines the AM peak hour starting at 7:15am. Upon observation, few cars arrive before 7:30 and by 8:00 AM there no drop offs. If the whole hour between 7:15 and 8:15 is used as basis for the data, it dilutes the Sidwell generated traffic impact because it counts many cars traveling through the neighborhood, using 37th Street to get out of the neighborhood or to avoid congested Wisconsin Avenue. (Page 2, conclusion 9.)

Question: **What is the real impact of Sidwell traffic on 37th Street between 7:30 and 8:00AM**?

9. CONSULTANTS' EVALUATION OF AM PEAK TRAFFIC ON 37TH STREET DIFFERS WITH OBSERVATIONS BY OTHERS .During the AM peak on 37th

Street, Sidwell generates approximately 315 vehicles. Sidwell's traffic consultant states that "During this time, traffic flowed smoothly along 37th Street and the drop off lane operated well."

This observation is contrary to observations made by community residents, representatives of the ANC, community organizations as well as staff from DDOT.

Question: **Why are observations of the community in sharp contrast to those of Sidwell's traffic consultant?**

10. REASON FOR TRAFFIC CONGESTION DURING PM peak on 37th Street is due solely to the fact that Hearst and Sidwell release students at almost the same time. The consultants suggested the remedy would be a staggered dismissal. This recommendation has been implemented by Sidwell, moving their dismissal time back to 3:30. (Page 2, conclusion 10.) Congestion still persists.

The basic cause of congestion is ineffective management control traffic flow by Sidwell. Cars arrive at the school without order using 2 lanes for drop off or pick up. This in turn blocks 37th Street to through traffic south bound. Cars pull in and pull out of these 2 lanes in an uncontrolled manner. Until Sidwell decides to create a smooth flowing, queuing of afternoon traffic there will be on going problems, safety issues and congestion.

11. **QUESTION ABOUT PM SCHOOL PEAK ON 37TH STREET**. The study defines Sidwell PM Peak hour as beginning at 3:15 PM. (This study was done when the afternoon dismissal was at 3:15.) (Page 2, conclusion 10.)

By setting the beginning of the time count at the actual dismissal time, Wells and Associates data undercounts the traffic generated Sidwell parents who start arriving as early as 2:50 PM . None of these cars would be included in the Traffic study count.

Further, when the dismissal began at 3:15, the Sidwell traffic was gone by 3:30 to 3:35. Counting the whole hour dilutes the actual impact of Sidwell generated traffic on 37th Street.

Questions: **What was the real impact of the Sidwell traffic on 37th Street between 3:00 and 3:30?**
With the adjusted dismissal, what is the real impact of Sidwell traffic between 3:00 and 3:40?

12. **STUDY OMITS FACULTY AND STAFF TRAFFIC AND AREA PARKING.** Faculty and staff are covered in some but not all of the data presented. However, the Study provides no data on faculty and staff traffic, modes of transportation or on street parking.

Staff, who do not use their cars on a regular basis, do not have an assigned parking space. When they need to drive to school, they park in residential areas, competing with the kids for parking spaces and adding to the parking burden in the residential neighborhoods.

13. **WHAT ARE "OTHER TRANSIT SERVICES"**? It is reported on page 10 that Sidwell provides a private school bus service for a small number of students, page 10?

Questions: **Who uses this service?**
Can this service be expanded?
How many kids currently ride this bus?

14. CURB PARKING INVENTORY INACCURATE. In the map showing the various parking zones in and around Sidwell, many of the designations are incorrect. If the data presented in this map is used to support the asserting that there is "ample parking" to meet BZA zoning criteria. It should be redone to reflect reality. In short there are a lot less legal parking spaces available than suggest on this map.

Recommendation: **Curb Parking Inventory should correct to reflect actual parking spaces available.**

15. **INCORRECT DATA ON THE 37TH/ /UPTON STREET INTERSECTION**. On page 12, the traffic report notes the traffic counts were done on October 1, with supplemental data collected on October 30. In mid September, I sent an email asking Sidwell to delay conducting traffic counts until the major construction project on Upton Street between 37th and Reno was completed. Sidwell said they could not delay the count. This delay was important because the 3700 through 3500 blocks of Upton are used by Sidwell for traffic and parking. During the October construction, on some days the road was completely closed and on other days one lane of traffic was allowed to pass each way around construction equipment. Given all the disruption, it would have been impossible to 1) conduct an accurate traffic count at the intersection of 37th and Upton in either north or southbound direction; or 2) gather data on Sidwell parking in these blocks.

Nevertheless, Wells & Associates study shows normal traffic flow during this period. The existing level of service Table on 4-1 page 19 of 37th/Upton EB should not be presented because it could not be measured. Assigning it an A rating should not have been done. . On page 18, the student parking survey shows 0% parking on Upton. During the construction there was no parking in the 3500-3600 block of Upton for anyone. Again, inaccurate data is presented in the study.

In short, the data collected is incorrect and the conclusions drawn can not be supported.

16. **INCORRECT DATA ON 37TH STREET AND TILDEN INTERSECTION**. On page 12 the intersection of 37th and Tilden is included in the turning count as if it were a four-way intersection. It is not. It is a 3 way intersection- 37th Street and Tilden Street to the east. The other direction is the service entrance driveway to the Washington Home. It

is erroneous to represent the driveway as if it were a road. This inaccuracy is also shown in Figure 2-3 and Figure 2-4 maps.

The existing level of service table, 4-1 on page 19 should not include the EB data on 37th Street/Tilden Streets.

17. ONE OF FOUR DROP OFF SPOTS UNKNOWN TO SIDWELL ADMINSTRATORS. The traffic consultant lists 4 drop off and pick up locations including the Upton Street/37th Street intersection, illustrated with a photo of "afternoon pick up at 37th and Upton Streets". As late as a meeting on 2/2/04 with the Assistant Head of School and the Clerk (Head) of the Board of Trustees, Sidwell representatives were unaware this off-site existed. It is possible that the Security Officers are also unaware of this spot.

Parents use of this intersection as a drop off and pick up site as a way to avoid the congestion at the Middle School. Yet, it is a very dangerous. On average a dozen unsupervised Sidwell students meet their rides here.. Pick up at this site adds to the chaos and safety problems along 37th Street. Since the implementation of the 3:30 pick up time, the pick up traffic at 37th and Upton has expanded northward, with some parents now picking up on 37th between Upton and Van Ness. (Page 12, last paragraph.)

Since the release of the Traffic Study, Sidwell has taken no action to cease pick ups at this unsupervised location. .

18. INCORRECT OBSERVATION. In trying to understand the discrepancy of increased number of walkers during the PM peak, Wells and Associates states that "the fact that after school dismissal, a significant number of students counted as walkers were attending off-site athletics events (i.e. at the soccer field east of 37th Street)." (Page 16). This is incorrect. Hearst Field was not permitted for Sidwell use after school. In Fall, 2003, D.C. Stoddert Soccer League had field use permits starting at 4:00 PM.

19. DATA ON OFF-SITE PARKING LOCATIONS. The study lists on street parking locations reported by the 79% of the students who answered the survey. The data is not useful to neighbors, the ANCs or the institution because the blocks of the streets listed are not provided. (Page 18.)

Questions: **What are the specifics blocks of 38th, 39th, Quebec, Rodman and Upton are used by Sidwell students for parking?**
Why is Idaho Avenue not included?

20. 12% OF THE STUDENTS REPORT PARKING IN MCLEAN GARDENS, A PRIVATE LOT WHICH IS POSTED "NO TREPASSING CARS WILL BE TOWED". (Page 18)

Questions: **Did Sidwell previously know about illegal parking by Sidwell students?**

Now Sidwell does know, what do they planned to do?

21. HOW MANY SIDWELL STUDENT CARS PARK IN RESTRICTED 2 HOUR RESIDENTIAL ZONES? Which of the blocks of the streets where student report they park are posted with residential parking restrictions? (page 18)

The study has numerous inaccuracies (detailed elsewhere) where it lists streets as unrestricted parking zones when they are restricted 2 hour residential zone, such as the 3500 and 3600 block of Tilden, or no parking zones such as the south side of Quebec from the 3700 to 3400 blocks.

22. TROUBLING TRAFFIC IMPACT AT QUEBEC AND WISCONSIN AVENUE. The Existing Level of Service chart, Table 4-1 shows poor levels of service west bound at the intersection of Quebec at Wisconsin Avenue. This is of deep concern to the residential community as well as a safety hazard for Sidwell commuters.

Questions: What is the explanation for the F level in the PM Street Peak? What actions does Sidwell plan to mitigate this very dangerous situation?

Recommendation: Further study should be made reasons for poor level of service at this intersection at Quebec and Wisconsin Avenue. Wells and Associates should develop recommendations to remedy the problem generated by Sidwell traffic. Sidwell should implementation of such recommendations and prove resolution of this safety hazard. .

23. MAJOR OMISSIONS IN THE BACKGROUND TRAFFIC FORECASTS SECTION—NO DATA FROM SOUTH OF CAMPUS.

Starting on page 20, the study reports some of the expansions in the pipeline to the north of the Sidwell campus. This listing is only those approved projects, not the myriad of developments that could take place under the Office of Planning Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor study.

No developments to the south were listed. Yet, in the study on page 25, it is reported that an estimated 54 percent of the trips are oriented from the south.

24. NO DATA ON MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD.

The Washington Home will be adding an additional 4 units to their hospice facility and 4 new staff. In the addenda letter to Ward 3 DDOT Planner, Ms Hawkinson, Wells and Associates say that the increase in staffing for the hospice would create "negligible" impact.

The Sidwell traffic consultants did not analyze the traffic generated by the Home's non-

nursing staff which leaves at 3:30 most departing via the service driveway, which is immediately adjacent to Sidwell Middle School and occurring at the exact same time Sidwell has delayed afternoon delay pick up to 3:30.. There was no consultation or coordination with The Home when this change was instituted.

More seriously, Wells and Associates do not address the impact of the expansion of the Washington Home parking lot, which has been approved by the BZA. The Home will increase their parking lot from the current BZA cap of 75 spaces to 132 spaces. This expansion of parking and service will increase traffic on Upton and 37th Street. The changes have been approved, are in the pipeline, right next door to the Sidwell property but not considered in the Wells and Associates Traffic Study

Hearst Elementary School is located directly across the street from the Sidwell Middle School. Hearst is scheduled by DCPS for a major expansion -- tripling in size and increase in student population from 150 students to 320 students. There will be an addition of a gym, cafeteria and a library. The school will expand to include 4th and 5th grades. Since 90% of the student population lives out of boundary, this could mean an increase in vehicle trips from about 275 per day to close to 600 per day just for the students. These changes are in the pipeline with addition of the 4th grade scheduled for fall, 2004. Hearst is immediately across the street from Sidwell, but not mentioned in the Wells and Associate Study. All traffic to Hearst Elementary School must use 37th Street. There is no alternative drop of site on another street, as there is for Sidwell Friends School.

Question: **Why was this critical information on traffic on 37th Street omitted in the Wells and Associates report?**
What different conclusions would be made if this information were factored into the findings of this report?

Recommendation: Wells and Associates should redo their report and findings to factor into the traffic impact on 37th Street and surrounding areas as a result of development plans in the pipeline in the immediate area adjacent to Sidwell Friends School.

ERRORS IN THE WELLS AND ASSOCIATES TRAFFIC STUDY

Page 1. Hearst Elementary School and Hearst Recreation Center are located EAST not west across 37th Street.

Page 4. Figure 1-1. The location on the "site" on the map is incorrect. The balloon points to the Hearst Elementary School and Hearst Recreation Center, east of 37th Street.

Page 7. Currently there are 2 signs posting speed limit of 15 mph on this stretch of 37th Street. However both the signs are located at the end of the block near Quebec. Thus south bound traffic on 37th Street is not currently controlled by posted signs.

Page 7. Curbing parking is NOT permitted along both sides the whole length of 37th Street, as described in the Traffic Study. In front of Sidwell Middle School there are several signs saying "No parking from 8 to 4 school days."(These signs are regularly ignored by the school.)

Page 8. The photo of "Tilden Street, Looking East, at 37th Street" is mislabeled. The photo is of Quebec Street looking west.

Page 9. Figure 2-1 is misleading. There is no 4 way intersection at Tilden and 37th Street. There is a 3 way intersection and the 4th is the service driveway from the Washington Home which just happens to enter at this intersection.

Page 10. In site inventory, it says there are "186 parking spaces on the Sidwell campus" Yet, with the details, the study shows a total of 192. Which figure is correct?

Page 11. Figure 2-2. The east side of 37th Street between Tilden and Upton has the same permit zone, not different zones as shown on the map.

Page 11. Figure 2-2. What is the break in the zoning shown just south of MS entrance but short of the unrestricted area?

Page 11. Figure 2-2. Since other parking areas and specific blocks mentioned elsewhere in the text, they should be shown in this map, e.g. Rodman Street, 39th Street, 38th Street, Upton Street and "McLean Gardens parking lot". Why is Idaho Avenue not included?