GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

Application No. 12521, of Church Street Associates, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 3101.42 to permit a School for Theater Arts in the R-5-B District at the premises 1742 Church Street, N.W., (Square 156, Lots 311 and 335).

HEARING DATE: November 16, 1977
DECISION DATE: January 4, 1978

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The subject property is located at 1742 Church Street, N.W., and is in an R-5-D District.

2. The subject Lot 335 is approximately 3402 square feet in area and is improved with a two story brick structure which occupies approximately eighty-five per cent of the lot. The subject lot 311 is approximately 1710 square feet in area and is vacant. The last recorded certificate of occupancy No.B64366, issued February 9, 1968, for the structure on lot 335 was for a day nursery for twenty-five children.

3. The 1700 block of Church Street is developed predominantly with row house type structures with the exception of two large apartment buildings at the corner of Church and 17th Streets. Three story row dwellings are the principal housing type found in the immediate area. Immediately adjacent to the subject properties are row dwellings. The rear of the subject properties adjoins a 12 foot wide public alley which widens to 15 feet at various points along its length.

4. The application was amended at the hearing to provide for two parking spaces rather than three (as shown on exhibit No. 27). The two parking spaces now provided are on Lot 311. The parking spaces on Lot 335 has been withdrawn because of an oil tank obstruction and the grading of the lot.

5. The 1700 block of Church Street is listed as a Category III Landmark on the District inventory. There was evidence that the subject building was constructed about 1900 as a gymnasium for the Holton-Arms private school and has been used for other private school operations since that time.

6. The subject building could not be readily used for residential purposes.

7. The subject building is now in use as a school for the Theater Arts. There are currently ten students and three teachers at the school.

8. The hours of operation of the school are from 9:00 A.M., to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday.

9. Performances are given on weekends, with an average attendance of twenty-five to thirty-five people.

10. Most of the prople who attend the theater either walk or use public transportation.

11. Parking is unrestricted on the north side of Church Street. There is no parking on the south side of the street with the exception of Sunday. Public transportation in the vicinity of the site is excellent. The Dupont Circle metro station is approximately three blocks from the subject property.

12. There were many letters, of record, of individuals living in the neighborhood and petitions signed by neighborhood residents in favor of the application. The North Dupont Community Association and the Dupont Circle Citizens Association were in favor of the application.

13. There were letters, of record, of individual residents in opposition to the application on the grounds of noise problems late at night and traffic congestion.

14. The Municipal Planning Office by report, dated November 10, 1977, recommended approval of the application, stating in part that "the use of the property as a school for theater arts is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby properties. The number of students and staff is relatively small and it is unlikely that their activities will have an adverse impact upon the neighborhood."

15. Advisory Neighborhood Commission - 2B, by letter dated November 16, 1977, recommended approval of the application on the grounds that the subject theater-school would be an asset to the community and that it has been assured that additional parking problems will be created through the school's existence.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Board concludes that the use of the subject property as a school for the theater arts is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby properties. The Board notes that the number of students and staff is relatively small and it is unlikely that their activities will have any adverse impact upon the neighborhood. In addition, public transportation serves the area from many directions, and such service and the character of the area result in little additional traffic attracted to the facility. Accordingly, it is ORDERED that the application is GRANTED SUBJECT to the following conditions:

1. The premises will be closed by 12:00 midnight.

2. The maximum seating capacity for any performance shall be 125 persons.

VOTE: 4-1 (Chloethiel Woodard Smith, Charles R. Norris, William F. McIntosh, and Leonard L. McCants to GRANT, Ruby B. McZier by proxy, to DENY).

BY ORDER OF THE D. C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY: Steven E. Sher
STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

THAT THE ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS ONLY UNLESS APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING AND/OR OCCUPANCY PERMIT IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER.

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: 26 JAN 1978