

Pat Egaas

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Planning Commission and Hearing Examiner
City of Bainbridge Island, WA

Re: Madrona School request for Major Conditional Use Permit

Dear Planners and Hearing Examiner,

First let me say my objection is strictly permitting ANY large school campus being constructed next to our homes and is not in any way directed to the program offered the Madrona Waldorf School. I live a few hundred feet from the southern boundary line and next door to the Halvorsen property that borders the entire proposed property line. The City of Bainbridge Island zoned this area for residential ~~use only~~.

I want you to step away from the well drawn plans for a just few minutes, and put yourself in our shoes and try to visualize what this means to all of us who have long called this neighborhood our home. The proposed campus has been designed supporting current environmental requirements but of course is far from residential in appearance or impact. The planning commission has a decision criteria to follow. The school proposal **fails line 1a in your decision criteria** for a major conditional use permit:

1a. The conditional use is harmonious and compatible in **design, character and appearance with the intended character and quality of development in the vicinity of the subject property** and with the physical characteristics of the subject property;

Let's look at meaning of "intended character", "appearance" and "harmonious". You will see the "intended character" of the surrounding area is a residential neighborhood and the "appearance" is modest family homes. Do you see any large commercial buildings? A large building accommodating up to 400 people? Any parking lots? Daily gatherings of large crowds of people exceeding legal residential noise limits? Do you see any acreage lit up at night? Any property zoned for commercial use? No. That is what the school campus will comprise of. The school is not harmonious or compatible in appearance and does not fit in to the intended character in the vicinity.

APPEARANCE: Plans include several large commercial type school buildings (some two story) and a nearly 40-vehicle parking lot that cannot be hidden, all of which are NOT compatible or harmonious with our homes or the vicinity surrounding us. Neither is a large 400-seat auditorium with classrooms on the second floor compatible, along with inadequate on-site parking at maximum enrollment to fill it up for special events. The school plans are NOT compatible as outlined in **Line 1a**. It will totally change the character and appearance and will never blend in; it will dominate the neighborhood in a negative way. **The 400-seat auditorium and the implications of how it will be used should alone be a deal breaker for the Major Conditional Use Permit.**

The private school will look, function and have the appearance of a commercial business in a rural neighborhood. Yes, I understand you view schools differently because it involves children. But compare their plan to building a retail business or doctor's clinic in the same place. All would include large buildings, clients arriving daily, a staff and a parking lot. There is no difference. School clients are just shorter and noisier. Their non-profit school status should not give them a pass to invade a rural community. We all assumed zoning laws would prevent this type of development in rural zoned neighborhood areas.

Neither the character, appearance or the use of the property blends in to the existing neighborhood in the vicinity. Again, line 1a.

WHO WILL THE SCHOOL CAMPUS SERVE? Tuition based private schools do not serve educational needs for the majority of the families with children on Bainbridge Island. For most working families, private schools are not affordable alternatives to public schools. Our public schools are in financial trouble due to declining enrollment. Private tuition based schools, affordable mostly by the wealthy, no doubt play a part in their enrollment decline. Several current students are from off-island.

THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS: The Halvorsen home, for three generations, sits just a few feet from the proposed driveway, 39+-vehicle parking lot and playground area shared by all students. A small vegetation buffer along the edge of the property line cannot hide those elements, along with the noise. The Halvorsen's, a family on this property for three generations, feels abandoned and uncared for by the city planners in favor for the benefit of the wealthy. Whether accurate or not, that is how they feel. Stop by and see for yourself before you make your decision. The Lowery property is just not big enough to accommodate their massive plans without sacrificing their closest neighbors.

The proposal also fails line 1f in your decision criteria:

1f. All necessary measures have been taken to eliminate or reduce to the greatest extent possible the impacts that the proposed use may have on the immediate vicinity of the subject property;

NOISE: The planners are not addressing the **NOISE factor**. All children scream and squeal at the top of their lungs when they are at play whether a public or private school. This is where our peaceful outdoor existence will cease. When the school staff met with neighborhood representatives, they admitted the school would bring uncontrollable noise. They cannot regulate it, they cannot control or eliminate it. Will we listen to classroom and recess bells all day long? The planning commission must acknowledge the noise and acknowledge the change the noise will bring to the vicinity when they make this final decision. The most immediate home and outdoor area affected by the noise is the Halvorsen's, but the noise will be part of everyday life for all the homes in the area, and certainly including mine.

TRAFFIC ISSUES: Someone provided a traffic study I have not seen and decided there is no significant traffic issues on North Madison Avenue. That is wrong. On any given morning when the drop-off area to the school will be full of vehicles, just one car unable to enter the school from either direction will start a long backup of vehicles on Madison, many heading for the next ferry and all required to reduce their speed to 20MPH. I can confidently predict this will be an issue at times now and even a larger and more frequent issue in the future unless they are required widen Madison for turn lanes into the school. It would be a shame to wait until someone is injured or worse.

OTHER USES: Where does it say if built, they are not allowed to rent their buildings and auditorium for public events and turn this venture into a truly commercial retail space? It was addressed by the neighbors, but has been ignored so far by the planning commission. We would like the answers.

Please do not break the intentions of those who made the wise zoning decisions years ago. We trust those we elect to honor those intentions. **The proposed property was divided by Nancy Lowery into four residential building lots and is zoned for four residential homes. That is what would be compatible with this neighborhood** and that is what Nancy intended for her property.

SUMMARIZE:

- Our current zoning and neighborhood description is rural family homes.
- The proposed school campus is comparable to a commercial development bringing commercial impact and uncontrollable noise.
- It does NOT blend in to the surrounding area.
- It is a total departure from what is here.
- It does NOT pass your own criteria.

Vote NO to the Conditional Use Permit.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Egaas".

Pat Egaas

3/8/17