

January 14, 2012

Chair and Members of the
Planning and Environment Committee

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Re: Applications – City of London – Piccadilly Area Neighbourhood Association
Montessori School House of Children
719 Waterloo Street

We have had an opportunity to review the staff report regarding the above-noted applications and offer the following comments:

1. We are appreciative of the opportunity to meet with City of London staff and members of the Montessori School Board of Directors. We found the discussion to be positive and a step in the right direction.
2. We are pleased with the proposal to limit the expansion of private schools and the establishment of new private schools within the Piccadilly Area Neighbourhood Association area
3. We support the proposal to retain the Residential R2 zoning at 719 Waterloo Street and the proposed Neighbourhood Facility Special Provision R2(2)/NF1() zone.
4. We are concerned with the statement "if site plan approval" is required. Given that the proposal is to convert a residential building at 719 Waterloo Street to a private school, a site plan process should be required. As the main objection from the neighbourhood, to the proposal, relates to parking and traffic concerns, we request that a public site plan process be required.
5. We request that consideration be given to restricting the number of students, despite the recommendation of the planning staff. We ask that the cap be applied to all of the buildings being used by the Montessori and not just 711 and 719 Waterloo Street. The staff report is somewhat misleading as it seems to suggest that the Montessori is established only at 711 Waterloo Street and is proposed to expand to 719 Waterloo Street. This is not the case. The Montessori is located with 311 Oxford Street, 742 Waterloo Street, 718 Waterloo Street, 707 Waterloo Street, 711 Waterloo Street and now 719 Waterloo Street (and the Colborne United Church). We also understand that this application also suggests that 701 and 703 Waterloo Street could also be converted in the future to a private school. The Committee should also be aware that there are also three day care uses in the same block. Therefore capping the number of students is important to the neighbourhood.

6. We request that the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to work with the Montessori and the Piccadilly Area Neighbourhood Association and area landowners to decide on the best option to improve the traffic situation, including alternative drop off locations, instead of being requested to do so.
7. We request that the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to conduct a neighbourhood planning study of the Piccadilly Area neighbourhood to address the broader issues, instead being requested to do so.
8. We question if additional parking is being required with the proposal. The school is being expanded, but there appears to be no suggestion that additional parking is being required.
9. We are concerned with the proposal that an indoor connection between 719 Waterloo Street and the existing private school facility is being proposed, as it will be difficult to convert 719 Waterloo Street back to a residential use in the future, if it is structurally connected to the abutting building.
10. We are very surprised at the comments from the City's Transportation Division. It is obvious that they have never been to our neighbourhood during the peak times. We would be happy to share videos and pictures of the traffic issues in the area with them or invite them to witness it.

We do acknowledge that the traffic and parking issues in our neighbourhood are not solely caused by the Montessori, but also the day cares in the area. Given the concentration of non-residential uses in the area, the main issue of the neighbourhood remains traffic and parking which has not been addressed by the proposal. We wonder what motivation the Montessori would have to work with the neighbourhood, if approval is given to the rezoning, with no traffic and parking solution in place. We therefore request that consideration of this matter be deferred until such time as a solution to the traffic and parking problems, through continued cooperation between the City, Montessori and the neighbourhood has been found. We have only met once, which is not sufficient time to discuss this matter thoroughly and determine if a solution(s) can be found.

We appreciate the positive discussions that have occurred thus far between the parties and wish to continue that dialogue to determine if a solution to the traffic and parking issues can be found. We suggest the approval of the applications is premature until that occurs.

We request notification of the decision of Council regarding this matter.

Sincerely

Anna Woodson
Director
Piccadilly Area Neighbourhood Association