

## SPECIAL MEETING.

Berkeley, California,  
Monday, June 20, 1938.

1. Upon the unanimous consent of the members of the Council of the City of Berkeley a special meeting was held in the Council Chamber of the City Hall on the above date. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Present - Councilmen Berg, French, Gaines, Herrick, Hoyt, Martin, Porter, President Ament and City Manager Thompson. Absent - Councilman Mork.
2. President Ament announced the purpose of the meeting was the hearing on the application of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, Inc. for permission to construct a church edifice at the southeast corner of Piedmont Avenue and Dwight Way and that three-quarters of an hour would be given to both sides.

Morse Erskine, Attorney for the Society, was the first speaker. He stated that the district is not a high type residential district any longer as many apartment houses, fraternities, sororities and boarding houses have located there; that the church would not depreciate the property in the neighborhood; that the members would comprise only Americans including many business and professional men and women; that the minister is a Hindu but a gentleman and scholar and the City should be willing to welcome him; that the church will add to the cultural life of the City and that he did not think the Council had any right to deny the permit for the reason that the City Planning Commission, after investigation, could find nothing in either the location of the building or the character of the improvements which is detrimental to the public health and safety in accordance with Subdivision 3 of Section 15 of Ordinance No. 2180-N.S.

Otis Marston addressed the Council stating that he did not feel a church would depreciate property as property he owns in North Berkeley had a number of churches around it but he has not had difficulty in renting his houses or has anyone complained it was too near a church.

George Knowles spoke stating that he felt the City Planning Commission were very fair in their meeting and that the Council should follow their first recommendation.

H. H. Gutterson, Architect for the proposed church edifice, explained the plans and specifications for the building stating that it would be only two stories in height surrounded by trees, a stucco exterior with a clay tile roof and ecclesiastical windows; that the auditorium will be set back about twenty-five feet from Piedmont Avenue and four feet from Dwight Way with a large garden wall extending from the building to the east lot line where they are planning to park automobiles; that the Piedmont Avenue side would be a garden area and that the character will not in any way be oriental as no insignia or device will be on the outside to indicate any oriental architecture and that as many trees as possible will be retained.

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H. H. North, 2414 Prospect Street, attorney for the protestants, stated that the people in the neighborhood are not protesting against this church but just that they do not want any church; that they have located there as a place for homes and not for churches or stores; that the protest contains about 94% of all the property owners and residents in the district which clearly shows their position in the matter and that he feels they should build in a district where there are already churches in what might be termed a church district. He, also, stated that the corners of Dwight Way and Warring Street and Dwight Way and Piedmont Avenue are dangerous from a traffic standpoint and that if automobiles are parked adjacent to these corners they will only add to the danger. He then called upon the following residents and property owners in the immediate vicinity in order for them to explain their views:

Louis Bartlett, 2434 Warring Street, T. M. Shearman, 2499 Piedmont Avenue, Robert Lipman, 2467 Warring, James A. Gillett, representing his mother Mrs. J. L. Gillett, 2437 Piedmont Avenue, Warren McKibben, 2522 Piedmont Avenue, Robert Stutt, 2500 Warring Street, Mrs. J. F. Hackett, 2611 Piedmont Avenue, Ramsey Probasco, 2522 Warring Street and Mrs. Austin Sperry, 2534 Warring Street, all voiced their objections to the church being located on this property.

Fred H. Duhring, Appraiser for Mason-McDuffie Realtors, stated that wherever there is a church, school or public building it hurts the sale of property in the district and affects their value as most people do not care to live close to a church or any public building.

President Ament stated that he was in favor of a church and had a number of people representing this church come to him and that they were very fine people and he has no objection to the church but feels the wishes of the people who have lived in that district for years should be considered and because of the majority protest he felt he would have to vote in their favor.

Councilman Berg moved that the petition be denied. Councilman French seconded the motion but in so doing stated that it was without prejudice but that he feels they should locate in a church district; that the first voting of the Council on this matter was on the basis there were no objections to the construction of this church and he feels it is a very bad precedent for a church to go into such a hostile community. On call of the roll the resolution was unanimously adopted. Councilman Gaines in voting "aye" stated that he did not feel it would be in the interest of this church to locate in a neighborhood which is so hostile to it. Councilman Herrick stated that it was the most difficult decision she had been called upon to make and she believed in religious freedom but, also, feels the wishes of the residents should be considered. Councilman Hoyt stated she had no prejudice against any church but feels when the majority of the residents are opposed that it should be considered. Councilmen Martin and Porter voted "aye" without comment.

3.

RESOLUTION NO. 22,699-N.S.

Denying the application of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, Inc. for permission to construct a church edifice at the southeast corner of Dwight Way and Piedmont Avenue. Ayes - unanimous. Noes - none. Absent - Councilman Mork.

Adjourned.

Edward A. Ament  
President of the Council.

ATTEST: Florence E. Turner  
City Clerk and Clerk of the  
Council.