5829 CHEVY CHASE PARKWAY, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

March 1, 2000

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Government of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

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OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

RE: Application No. 16561

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board:

This letter is to express concern about the application of the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament (SMBS) for a special exception to expand its facilities at 5831 Chevy Chase Parkway, N.W. My wife and I are the next door neighbors of Blessed Sacrament School. We are separated from the school building known as the Roach Center by a narrow alley.

The SMBS last appeared before the Board of Zoning Adjustment to request approval for the addition of the Roach Center to its parish school. The Board approved the request, over objections raised by neighbors, saying "the school is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions as the result of the erection of this addition."

In fact, this expectation has not been matched by reality. The current reality is that activities in the Roach Center frequently interfere with the peaceful use of nearby residences because of intense nighttime noise that is caused by electric horns, police whistles, electronically amplified live music, electronically amplified recorded music, the thump of basketballs, electronically amplified voices of announcers at large gatherings, and the applause, shouts, and cheers of large numbers of persons in the building's multipurpose room.

The windows of the multipurpose room in which these noisy nighttime activities take place are often left open intentionally or allowed by inattentive or overworked event supervisors to remain open so that the disturbance to neighbors is maximized.

Considering that the design of the windows–even when they are kept closed–are inadequate to contain the intense noise of many regular and special nighttime events at the school, I ask that the Board of Zoning Adjustment deny the special exception unless the Archdiocese of Washington/Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament take effective steps, as part of their proposed project, to soundproof the building that now houses intensely noisy activities.

Sincerely,

Clay H. Wellborn

BZA
Case No. BZA 16561
Exhibit No. 26

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16561
EXHIBIT NO.26