April 11, 2002

Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

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Re: BZA Application No. 16852
St. Patrick's School – 4925 MacArthur Blvd.

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

My name is Mary Ann Reed and I live less than two blocks away from St. Patrick's proposed site for its new seventh and eighth grade. I have been closely involved with all of the proceedings concerning St. Patrick's and this property. It has been a very disheartening experience. I am both saddened and appalled by the message that has been imparted to St. Patrick's seventh and eight graders by neighbors who oppose the proposal. The neighbors in opposition stand on street corners and stop passing neighbors to spread misinformation about St. Patrick's. While doing so, they refer to St. Patrick's students as "hoodlums" in an effort to guarantee the signing of their petition. Their tactics of intimidation, coercion, and misinformation reflect the path they have chosen to stop St. Patrick's. Neighbors who have resided for many years on and around the block of the proposed site are afraid to go against the organizers. My children are keenly aware that they and their classmates are not wanted here. Every single one of these students is a good citizen of this community and a wonderful person in his/her own right and they deserve much better than abusive treatment at the hands of desperate neighbors.

Is this the message that the District wants to send to its young people? As one neighbor, whose own children attended private school in the District, has said, "Why don't you go to the suburbs like everyone else!" Is it in fact a growing theme in DC that schools do not belong in neighborhoods? I shudder to think what will happen to the District when it has banished a large and very vital part of its population to the suburbs. Families will follow their schools, and the children will return as adults to the places where they felt most welcome. When we outgrew our home, we moved within the same neighborhood, just to remain close to St. Patrick's. The presence of St. Patrick's in this neighborhood is of incredible importance to this community. That was the message delivered by the overwhelming vote of the Palisades Citizen's Association.

St. Patrick's cares, first about their children and second about their community. I have been a part of the St. Patrick's community for 10 years, and I have been a part of the Palisades community for 16 years. This is where I have chosen to raise and to educate my children. I do hope that you will not allow a few selfish and narrow-minded people with unfounded concerns about their personal well being to force these children to go to the suburbs for their education. St. Patrick's has more than adequately addressed every objection raised by the neighbors. However, because the neighbors refuse to talk to the folks at St. Patrick's, they are unaware of just how far the school is willing to go in alleviating their concerns. Please do not let this small group of obstinate people, who are unwilling to negotiate, defeat the St. Patrick's proposal that the significant majority of the Palisades community has supported.

I strongly support the granting of a special exception for St. Patrick's to locate grades seven, eight and nine (temporarily) at 4925 MacArthur Blvd. My children will be there for only two years, but I am more than willing to share my neighborhood with St. Patrick's for the rest of my life.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Reed

Mary Ann Reed
4841 W Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 234

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.234