Gwenn and Paul Sewell Gebhard
4920 W Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007-1520
202-342-2389

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2002 MAR 11 PM 3:58

March 8, 2002

Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA case file/application no.: **16852**

Dear Sir or Madam,

I support the current plan put forth by St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School to use the property at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard as a permanent site for the school's emerging Grades 7 & 8 program.

My husband and I own a house at 4920 W Street NW, one block away from the Victorian building at 4925 MacArthur Blvd. We live here with our two daughters, ages 12 and 9. They attend Washington International School where they are enrolled in the French bi-lingual program. We enjoy living in the Palisades community very much. While I will not be sending my children to St. Patrick's because we have already made a commitment to bi-lingual education, I think that having the school nearby adds to the quality of the community rather than detracts from it.

I like the St. Patrick's plan for several specific reasons:

- Green space and trees would remain as they are;
- The house and its architectural integrity would be continued;
- No additional residential development would occur at this time; and
- Sidewalks would be cleared off after snowfalls.

I would greatly prefer to have St. Patrick's as a neighbor than most of the imaginable alternatives. My real concern would be that a developer would tear down the whole house and replace it with 3 houses because it is zoned as three lots. I find this alternative extremely upsetting.

The issue of traffic around Ashby Street and W Street is something that I think can be dealt with in a reasonable way. The School has taken a proactive and positive approach by hiring a traffic consultant and holding public meetings. I attended one such meeting at the school on Monday evening, February 11. The

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 25

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.25

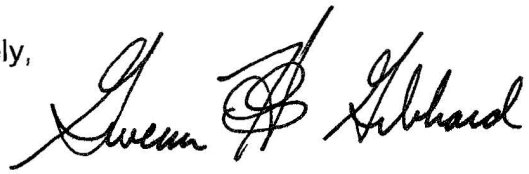
idea of using two or three shuttle buses to bring the students from the Whitehaven campus is sensible and practical. My hope would be that by having the shuttle buses stop to unload along MacArthur Blvd would help to slow some of the traffic that currently speeds along well above the speed limit. Frankly, speeding traffic is a greater concern to me than the possible increase of cars using Ashby and W Street.

The issue of increased noise around the proposed school property seems, to me, to be stretching the fiction of this being a calm, quiet, empty neighborhood. This is not suburbia. As many Palisades residents say, this is like a village, a noisy village. We have church bells, airplanes, a lot of car traffic along MacArthur even during midday, children and dogs and people walking around on the sidewalks, sirens, and even police horses walking through on an irregular basis. I work at home, in an office in my house, so I can attest to the fact that this is not a particularly quiet area. I believe that to complain about middle school children and their attendant noises when they are not in class is frivolous.

The current occupants of 4925 MacArthur Boulevard do not add anything to the quality of life in this neighborhood. I believe that St. Patrick's School would add to our quality of life. In fact, in one significant way, I believe they would be a great improvement. The current occupants do not keep the sidewalks clear in the wintertime. In past years, when it has snowed or rain has turned to ice, the sidewalks along both MacArthur and Ashby in front of this house have become treacherous. They are not cleared nor are sand or salt spread to prevent pedestrians from slipping. I walk my dog around this block daily and find it difficult to do after snow has fallen. St. Patrick's mentioned in their plan that they would be keeping the walks open and clear in all weather, and that would be a real benefit to life in our neighborhood.

I wholeheartedly support St. Patrick's plan for using the property at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard. Thank you for giving attention to my letter.

Sincerely,



Gwenn H.S. Gebhard