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21 May 2002

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Chairperson Griffis
Board of Zoning Adustments
of the District of Columbia

Fax: (202) 727-6072

Re: BZA Application No. 16852
St. Patrick's Episcopal School
4925 MacArthur Blvd., NW

Dear Chairperson Griffis,

At the request of Alma Gates, I have reviewed the statement of the applicant and drawings (see list below) as submitted with their application.

Drawings Submitted:
Existing (2/26/02) & Proposed (3/06/02) Site Plan
Existing & Proposed First Floor Plan (4/01/02)
Existing & Proposed Second Floor Plan (4/01/02)
Existing & Proposed Third Floor Plan (4/01/02)
Existing & Proposed South Elevation (4/01/02)

The school is proposing to eliminate the existing fire escape, and to install a new stair tower and elevator on the south side of the building. This will create an unsafe condition whereas a student in the west classroom/offices exits directly from their rooms into the existing stair #2 to access stair #1. The students do not have two means of egress from every classroom/office. The Proposed Second Floor drawing for example indicates existing doors from the offices and classroom on the southwest corner to the existing (45° angle). These doors shall be 1 hour rated doors in a 1 hour rated corridor

The proposed site plan does not work with the parallel parking along the east side because the cars wouls have to back out of the parking lot onto Ashby Street.

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BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 280
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.280

Furthermore, in other similar jurisdictions, there would be a requirement for a buffer inluding a fence and tree screening along the east and south property lines. This buffer would include a 12'0" tree buffer from the property line to a 6'0" board-on-board fence. The 12'0" buffer would have evergreens at 12'0" on center, or a combination of deciduous trees at 25'0" on center, with evergreen shrub underplanting. The parking lot/aisleway would be set off from the fence by 3'0" to protect the fence. It is my understanding that the proposed parking plan has to be submitted and approved by the Director of the Highway Department.

I believe the building does not lend iteself for a conversion into a larger school facility, and that the applicant has not made an attempt to protect and screen the adjacent neighbors from the proposed use.

I hope you and the board will consider the above comments while deliberating this case.

Sincerely yours,

Richard C. Lessard, AIA
District Architect
Disctrict Resident

cc: Alma Gates (fax: 202-338-4418)