BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 308

5023 V Street NW
Washington, DC 20007
September 30, 2002

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20007

Re: Application 16852

Dear Mr. Griffis:

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
RECEIVED
2002 SEP 30 PM 12:18

We are writing you to voice our strong objections to the granting of the above application request to St. Patrick's in the Palisades area. There are numerous reasons why the city should not allow St. Patrick's to take over the residential mansion on MacArthur Boulevard for conversion into a private school:

- *Washington, D.C. will see no property tax revenue from this location* but will nonetheless be required to provide St. Patrick's with expensive taxpayer-funded city services (sanitation, fire and police, etc.).
- *St. Patrick's already has considerable tax-exempt property holdings in the Palisades area* off of MacArthur Boulevard. To allow this private institution to take control of more land without paying its share of taxes is an egregious assault on Palisades property owners who have seen their taxes increased in recent years.
- *St. Patrick's expects the city to eliminate public parking from the blocks surrounding the private residential mansion.* Again, we have a case of public land being appropriated for tax-exempt private use.
- *The MacArthur Boulevard mansion is not zoned for school use.* It does not meet the architectural requirements of a school facility.
- *This takeover by St. Patrick's will lead to further traffic congestion* in an already congested residential district. Contrary to St. Patrick's claims that it has reduced congestion in the area, what the school has done is simply scatter the traffic in different regions, not reduce it. St. Patrick's administration and parents have shown little interest in pursuing car-pooling or public transportation to address this crucial issue.
- *St. Patrick's is a wealthy, heavily-funded private institution that is using its tremendous financial resources to pressure the city into allowing the school to colonize a residential district.*

The St. Patrick's lobbyists have been using effective phrases and buzz words such as "anti-education," "anti school," and "anti-child" to silence the neighborhood opposition to their proposed expansion. This is an arrogant simplification of a very complex issue. We believe in schools but not schools that offer children insufficient accommodations for children.

We both live behind the small, private River School. This school provides important services for children but under extremely poor conditions. The River School, for example, uses a converted parking lot

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 308

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.308

behind the building, facing an alley, as a small playground for the children. Although this alley is heavily traveled by parents who drop their children off in SUV's, the school does not maintain the alley or contribute to its repair and/or plowing. It also has maintained a passive stance with regard to ensuring that traffic lights and other pedestrian safety devices are working properly in the area of the school.

If a building is not properly zoned for school use, then the city should not allow it to be used for school use. Please encourage the St. Patrick's lobbyists to consider a more appropriate location that would not exhaust the neighborhood's resources and make unreasonable demands on the people living in the area.

With every good wish,

Very truly yours,

Max Alvarez

Christine Alvarez

Christine Alvarez
(202) 625-1939