HELLMUTH, OBATA + KASSABAUM, P.C.

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October 10, 2002

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2002 OCT 15 P 3:15

Chairman Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning of Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20001

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

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I am a principal with HOK Architects and a long time resident of Watson Street, NW which is within the boundaries of ANC 3D. In fact ANC Chairman, John Finney, is my neighbor. I write to you as a neighbor in support of the St. Patrick's Proposal at 4925 McAarthur Boulevard.

I am familiar with St. Patrick's interest in converting the existing 4925 building into a junior high school. I cannot imagine a more appropriate use. The site is large and is located in one of the busiest streets in our neighborhood. The proposed use will retain the existing building and the open space on the site which is very valuable to the urban streetscape. I welcome this opportunity for the preservation of open space, since our neighborhood is filled with countless examples of infill construction; some of the new houses are more attractive than others.

I am disappointed that this proposal seems to have divided our neighborhood. While it enjoys broad community support, some of the immediately affected neighbors have refused to engage in a dialogue since they have determined that the proposed use is simply inappropriate. As an urban design professional, I would like to state that I regard schools as a key component of vibrant residential neighborhoods such as the Palisades and I regard this proposal as an exceptional opportunity to meet the educational needs of children and preserve open space. The school has shown tremendous good will in greatly restricting this program in an effort to address community concerns. I strongly urge you to consider this proposal favorably.

I ask that you note the retention of the existing building, the modest addition, the site's location on MacArthur, the institutional use history, and the willingness to install appropriate buffers. Schools belong in our neighborhood and this small school belongs on this site.

Sincerely,

William K. Hellmuth, AIA
Senior Principal
Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum

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BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 326

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.326