MEMORANDUM

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING RECEIVED
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TO: Palisades Board of Directors

FROM: Alma Gates and Douglas Ormerod

DATE: January 7, 2002

RE: Loss of Residential Property

St. Patrick's School has been awarded a contract on the property at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard for their Jr. High School at a price of $1.695M and the residents who live adjacent to, and in the general vicinity of, MacArthur Boulevard and Ashby Street feel great concern that the residential nature of their community will be seriously compromised by the addition of a school. The section of MacArthur Boulevard from V Street to Dana Place has been devoted to residential use.

These residents have a point, and as you know, we have lived on Ashby Street for over 30 years. The sale of 4925 MacArthur Boulevard to a school is not the real issue. The real issue is the granting of a variance to the zoning code for the property that may begin a movement to change zoning for other properties in this residential community. The residents who live in the vicinity of the property do not want commercial or institutional sprawl to begin winding down MacArthur Boulevard and up side streets. The Ashby Street neighborhood is within easy walking distance of an area already devoted to commercial or educational use but it is residential, while the area of MacArthur Boulevard between Whitehaven Parkway and V Street has been designated a commercial area. The educational institutions have captured the Whitehaven corridor and the houses on Whitehaven, with the exception of one rental unit, have been torn down or converted to school use. Ashby Street residents do not want to experience the same fate that befell the residents of Whitehaven Parkway.

For over 30 years neighbors have shared Ashby Street with the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute at the 4925 MacArthur Boulevard location. At first glance it is easy to say this is an educational institution, so what is the problem? The problem is that when the Institute applied for a variance the BZA was very specific and careful to point out that this is a residential area and strictly limited the use of the building to Saturday mornings and one evening a week and placed a cap on the number of adults who could occupy the building at any given time. The BZA was very firm regarding their decision to grant a variance for the Institute and stated, "it must not create a hardship for the immediate neighbors because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions." The Washington Psychoanalytic Institute is a far cry from a full-time Jr. High School, operating five days a week, nine to twelve months out of the year, for up to 60 teenagers whose voices and behavior are seldom under control.

The Board of the Palisades Citizens Association will be asked to support a variance for 4925 MacArthur Boulevard. Will the Board support the residential nature of this community and its residents or will the Board support a zoning variance that will allow random commercial and educational enterprises to be scattered throughout residential neighborhoods?

BZA Case #16852

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 50

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.50