February 9, 2002

4912 "W" Street N.W.
Washington DC 20007

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ANC Commissioner Eleanor Roberts Lewis
5034 Dana Place N.W.
Washington DC 20016

Dear Commissioner Lewis:

We write to you in grave concern about the proposal from St. Patrick's School to acquire 4925 MacArthur Boulevard to establish a junior high school. First, the context of our objections to this proposed use:

Our home is across "W" Street from the affected block, facing north toward the site in question. Our location places us only a few yards beyond the official 200-foot "neighbor" perimeter of the MacArthur property. Attracted by the tranquil green residential nature of the Palisades, we purchased the house in 1970 for ourselves and our two sons, then 2 and 4 years of age. Several years ago we modified the facade with the addition of two large bay windows facing "W" Street N.W. Both my wife Margareta and I are now retired, and so are at home much of each day, with a constant view of the street.

In recent years we have been conscious of a steady increase in the traffic on "W" Street, keeping pace with MacArthur Boulevard's regrettable evolution into a major traffic artery. Lately we have also observed a change in the nature of the "W" Street traffic. More and more, trucks and buses and fire engines have been using our street. A new category of heavy use has been added since the major earthmoving and construction began at the former Mt. Vernon college and the new Field School – mobile construction equipment has been brought in via our street, often by night, with the result that our telephone and fax line, which spans "W" Street, has been knocked down three times since last September, each time requiring Verizon to come out and reconnect us. Neighbors have had the same experience. We feel justified in dreading that the imminent reopening of the George Washington Mt. Vernon campus to its full planned enrollment will intensify the traffic problems on "W" Street.

Now the St. Patrick's School, reversing their very recent assurances to the BZA, have decided that they must expand, and have purchased the property at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard, proposing a junior high school enrollment of 60 students. St. Patrick's has advised the parents of their currently enrolled elementary students to use "W" Street to Foxhall to reach their drop-off and pick-up queue on Whitehaven Parkway. Clearly, even though bus transfer of junior high students from Whitehaven to MacArthur and back is promised, an additional

BZA Case #16852

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 55

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.55

burden of 60 vehicles, each morning, and 60 vehicles each afternoon on "W" Street traffic, en route to Whitehaven, can be expected, beyond the increase George Washington's new campus will impose on our once-quiet residential street. This will not be diminished much by car-pool parents being allowed to deliver and pick up their junior high students directly at the new MacArthur facility, to which 12 faculty and staff will also drive. Note, too, that the junior high school, with its facade frontage required by law to be designated "No Parking," will shift the parking even of beleaguered Ashby residents over to "W" Street.

Finally, even today the access to and from "W" Street on the Foxhall end is problematical and dangerous. In recent days, a 4-car accident took place on Foxhall around the Dexter Street access; this caused the backup of traffic clear to Canal Road. When the Mt. Vernon GU campus and the Field School are in full operation, this gridlock will become an everyday occurrence, even should St. Patrick's school find some way to prevent the chronic hangover into Foxhall Road of their Whitehaven drop-off and pick-up queue.

Under these circumstances it is the sheerest folly to allow the establishment of a new St. Patrick's junior high school, the daily movements of whose students, faculty and staff will impose heavy additional burdens on Foxhall, "W" Street, MacArthur, and Whitehaven Parkway. **We ask that ANC 3D turn down St. Patrick School's request for a special exception.**

The very qualities of spacious, green tranquility that have made the Palisades a magnet for private schools are vanishing under the mounting pressure from private schools: St. Patrick's, Field School, Lab School, Rock Creek International, River School, Mt. Vernon campus of GU, Georgetown Day and Our Lady of Victory. It is time for our Mayor to establish an area-wide, if not a citywide moratorium on private school establishment and expansion, pending a major planning initiative involving public discussion and environmental study, whose outcome will be enforceable standards, limits and controls.

Sincerely,

David M. Paul, Jr. Margareta C. Paul

cc: Chair John W. Finney, Commissioner Ann Heuer, PCA President Erik Gaull