HELLMUTH, OBATA + KASSABAUM, P.C.

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March 26, 2002

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Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

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

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

I am a resident of the Palisades community where I have lived for the past nine years. I am the parent of two children both of whom attended Horace Mann Elementary and then when on to the Potomac School in McLean, Virginia. My family and I have no particular connection to Saint Patrick's School. I do, however, recognize the need for more educational opportunities in the Palisades neighborhood. Educational choices are one of the key factors that motivate families to live in any given community. Therefore, I write in support of St. Patrick's application to place a program containing grades seven and eight on the property at 4925 MacArthur Blvd.

It is astonishing to me that neighborhoods are opposing the presence of schools in their communities. This is a pattern which is occurring throughout the National Capital Region and is clearly a part of "NIMBY" (not in my back yard) thinking. We need to consider and embrace the broader questions of educational opportunities for our children. Further, we need to locate these schools within the residential communities they serve as a key element in creating a livable community.

As an architect and urban planner I am glad to see that St. Patrick's will be preserving the existing building and open space rather than subdividing the lot and shoehorning in several residential lots as has been done elsewhere on MacArthur Blvd. recently.

St. Patrick's has been a good neighbor in the Palisades community for many years and has put forth an impressive proposal to mitigate any potential negative impacts on the immediate neighbors. The presence of the school here will have a demonstrable positive impact on the Palisades community as a whole.

Sincerely,

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

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BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 59

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.59

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