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March 19, 2002

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Attention: Chairman Geoffrey Griffis
441 4th Street, N.W., 2nd Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: BZA No. 16852

Dear Chairman Griffis:

As long time residents of the Palisades neighborhood, and as the parents of children at St. Patrick's, we are writing to let you know of our support for St. Patrick's to use the building it purchased at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard as a classroom facility for its 7th and 8th grade students.

Our son and daughter are in the 5th and 6th grades at St. Patrick's and have collectively been there for 19 years, beginning with nursery school. St. Patrick's has provided both of them with outstanding elementary education and they are well prepared to continue on. I'm particularly concerned about our son, because he is an average student (as most students are) and the choices that will be available to him after 6th grade will be particularly limited. This is because of the intense competition for the limited number of places available in other independent schools. We, of course, want Willie to receive the same caliber of education that he has received at St. Patrick's and, as a practical matter, St. Patrick's expansion to 7th and 8th grades is his only real option, if he is to remain in an independent school in the city.

We have paid close attention to the objections of the Ashby Street neighbors to the proposal, and while we are sympathetic to the concerns they have noted, it seems to us that they are effectively taking the position that their concerns are paramount to the exclusion of the concerns of Palisades' residents like us that our children continue to obtain St. Patrick's quality education in the neighborhood. There are four St. Patrick's families on our stretch of Chain Bridge Road alone within walking distance of St. Patrick's. The question raised in our minds is whether St. Patrick's has realistically and meaningfully addressed the concerns of the Ashby Street neighbors and I believe that it has in a thoughtful way. If one considers a school in the neighborhood to be a community asset, the modest and badly needed expansion that St. Patrick's seeks would appear to outweigh the concerns of the Ashby Street neighbors, which, in any event, have been addressed and resolved by St. Patrick's plans.

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 81

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.81

We believe that the situation would be different if a start-up school was proposing to move to the neighborhood. But, St. Patrick's is a neighborhood institution. It has been providing quality education to our neighbors for generations. The proposal they make is modest and is an ideal use of the property. Under these circumstances, we would hope that the Association would support St. Patrick's plan.

Sincerely,

William M. and Kathryn K. Barnard

Cc: Mr. Peter Barrett
Ms. Katherine Bradley