Stavins & Axelrod Properties, Inc.

April 2, 2002

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 83

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Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustments
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 16852 - St. Patrick's School
4925 MacArthur Boulevard, N.W.

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

I am the parent of two children at St. Patrick's School and am also a real estate developer active in the District of Columbia. As a St. Patrick's parent who has witnessed first hand the wonderful education offered by St. Patrick's new middle school, I feel that the expansion of St. Patrick's program into the building at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard will create a valuable educational resource for the Palisades community and the city as a whole.

As a real estate developer, I know that the St. Patrick's proposal is highly responsive to the concerns of the neighborhood and represents a solution to the land use issues posed by the site which is far superior to any of the other possible alternatives. The building at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard has already been converted to institutional use; the grounds have already been improved with a parking lot large enough to meet St. Patrick's needs. Thus, there will be almost no physical changes to the site as a result of St. Patrick's use of the property as a school. St. Patrick's traffic plan has been carefully conceived to ensure that the school will have "zero traffic impact" on the surrounding neighborhood. The shuttle bus bringing students to and from the school will travel on MacArthur Boulevard, not Ashby Street. The existing house, which has architectural significance, will be preserved. As will the existing landscaping which includes many mature specimen trees.

Given that the house on the property has already been converted to institutional use and is no longer suitable for a residence, the alternative uses of the site are either another institutional use, which will undoubtedly pose similar or greater issues to the neighborhood or, most likely, the subdivision of the site into 5,000 square foot lots (permitted as a matter of right in the R-1-B zone) with houses at the full permitted height of 40 feet. From a land use point of view, it would be unfortunate to have still another high density residential development added to the MacArthur

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Boulevard corridor. This would entail the demolition of the existing house and most of the existing landscaping and would adversely impact the views of the neighboring residences.

Accordingly, I believe that the BZA should give the preservation of the existing residence and landscaping "great weight" in its deliberations and urge you to approve the St. Patrick's School application.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Axelrod