Louise Hayes
4622 Ellicott Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016

20 March 2002

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

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

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

As a staff member and parent of a St. Patrick's graduate, I write to offer my support of the proposed use of 4925 MacArthur Boulevard by St. Patrick's School. I have worked here at St. Patrick's for nine years, almost all of them as Assistant and Office Manager to the Head of School, Peter Barrett. In that capacity, one of my responsibilities has been to assist with the outplacement process for Grade 6 students. Over the last nine years I've watched and listened to parents as they went through the process of finding a spot for their child after Grade 6. There have been many times when I've heard "if only St. Patrick's lasted longer."

With the realization in the spring of 2000 that some of our students were concerned about the lack of options, "what if" really started to enter people's minds. Something was going to need to be done to assist future students by giving them another option. The idea of "what if" became reality and St. Patrick's set about creating a Grade 7 program. Through the unbelievable dedication of many individuals, long hours of planning and strategizing and just plain hard work, St. Patrick's was able to achieve what some thought to be the impossible. Populate, staff, fund, locate (and renovate) a site, and develop a well thought out and meaty Grade 7 curriculum to complement the current standards of St. Patrick's. Happily, the inaugural Grade 7 classes began this past September in rented space at The River School on MacArthur Boulevard.

Over the years we've all read articles in national and local publications about urban sprawl: Individuals and communities lamenting the loss of the small-town neighborhood, flight to the suburbs, too much commuting, students being bused outside their neighborhoods, one mega mall after another, the loss of communities of architectural character by the homogenization of more of the same, bigger is better. Palisades, to their credit, has dedicated themselves to keeping that sense of a timeless neighborhood: Family restaurants, a busy public library, playgrounds, and their

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wonderful 4th of July parade and festivities (a parade that St. Patrick's enthusiastically participates in). I see the proposal for St. Patrick's Grades 7 and 8 at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard as a very positive addition to the vitality of this neighborhood, and very much in keeping with the ideals that Palisades stands for.

St. Patrick's is a school with a clear mission to support and instill values in young people. This is a caring community that recognizes and promotes service to the community as an integral part of the greater good. The young people of St. Patrick's have used their energy and spirit on many occasions in service to their immediate community as well as the community of man. St. Patrick's proposal for Grades 7 and 8 has worked very hard to offer a strict set of conditions to avoid any negative impact on the neighborhood. The plan to maintain the integrity and architecture of the beautiful Victorian, as well as the commitment to keeping the green space also speaks to our desire to value the space in context to the community. The site will not be devalued but refreshed and maintained. Our desire as a neighbor is to commit to the spirit of community that Palisades holds so dear, where values, and children, and families are embraced—as a neighborhood.

I truly believe that St. Patrick's can be a vital and dynamic contribution to this neighborhood. I urge you to approve St. Patrick's application.

Regards,

Louise Hayes

Louise Hayes
Office Manager
St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School