Elizabeth W. Ehinger
6665 32nd Place, NW
Washington, DC 20015
(202) 364-4272

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April 8, 2002

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Chairman Geoffrey Griffis
441 4th Street, NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA No. 16852

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

As a long-time resident of the District of Columbia, I am pleased to offer my strong support of the application of St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School to use the existing building at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard for its middle school. I support the enhancement of educational opportunities for middle school students in the District as a way to enhance livability in the city. I believe it will retain current families and attract new ones.

My older son will be entering middle school this fall. When he was first entering school, we chose to send him to private school. Now, we discover that the only private middle school in the District that he will have the opportunity to attend is St. Patrick's. St. Patrick's is an excellent school with a great academic reputation and a strong social conscience. It is wonderful that it has started a middle school so we do not have to send our son 20 miles from home and out of the city at age 12 in order to attend school. It is essential, however, that the school have adequate facilities to support its program and I therefore support the use of the MacArthur Boulevard site for that purpose. I believe it is imperative that there be more middle school opportunities for DC children in order to attract families to live here. The presence of top flight private schools in our city will continue to contribute to the public welfare because it enables families of diverse backgrounds to obtain the best education for their children and therefore encourages them to locate or remain in the city.

I am familiar with the property that is the subject of the application and understand that it has been used for non-residential purposes for over 40 years. I believe that the proposed middle school use will make a far greater contribution to the neighborhood by expanding educational options for our children than the existing use by the Washington Psychoanalytic Society. I also believe that through a strict set of operating conditions, any potential adverse impacts on the neighborhood can be avoided. For example, I understand that the school has proposed a shuttle drop-off arrangement that will greatly limit any traffic on Ashby Street. I also understand that, with the exception of one back-to-school night annually, there will be no night or weekend use of the property. I cannot imagine that the noise associated with 60 middle school students could have an adverse impact on this neighborhood. The site is located on a bus route and is also affected by the National Airport flight pattern. The proposed use is both reasonable and appropriate.

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 87

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.87

I urge you to consider my thoughts as you decide this application. I have been a St. Patrick's parent for nine years and believe the school and its leadership to be excellent members of the Palisades community and strong supporters of the businesses there. I can assure you that St. Patrick's School is an honorable institution that is sensitive to community concerns, as is evidenced by the way in which the school managed its renovation project. The current Head of School and the Board of Trustees will ensure that the school meets its commitments to the community and the city. The addition of a middle school to this already established institution could only enhance the City's ability to attract and retain new residents.

Very truly yours,

Elizabeth W. Ehinger

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