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To:
Mr. Goeffrey Griffis
Chair, District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St. NW, Room 210
Washington, DC 2---1
ref: NCRC-Board of Zoning Adjustment #16970

this letter is to record my firm opposition to the proposal by the National Child Research Center to construct any new buildings on it's Highland Place propert, to increase its daytime student and faculty population, and to hold large professional conferences on the property which will be a change in the use of their property.

My husband, Philip, and I have been long time residents of Cleveland Park I write to you my concerns about National Child Research Center's (NCRC) desire to do a large expansion of buildings, students and faculty on their property on Highland Place in the heart of Cleveland Park's Historic District. In the 1970s I was on NCRC's Board of Directors for 4 years, did substitute teaching there and our daughter, Alexa, attended the school for two years.

I think that the expansion NCRC is asking for will change that property forever, cause much more traffic and many neighborhood parking problems, and could in the future cause Cleveland Park neighbors great problems, as did the past Cathedral development of Rosedale, and then the occupation of Rosedale by YFU and their subsequent bankruptcy this last year. NCRC is one of the last large Cleveland Park properties that has remained undeveloped, beyond a few minor changes to the property such as the addition of a playground and renovation of the interior and addition of an exterior fire escape to the house, since the property's home was built at the turn of the century. What NCRC is asking for now with their expansion plans, will make an institutional campus of property which they occupied as nursery school, and which has existed and done very well for 75 years and still fits into Cleveland Park, a historic preservation district. The building NCRC wants to build is huge, both the one story -- which NCRC tells everyone is underground but in fact is one story above ground facing Ordway Street and looks very similar to NCS' development and has windows and a door in the buildings "stone wall" edifice that faces Ordway Street. The rest of that building is two stories high, and with mechanical air conditioning above that and is much longer and it is higher than the house next door and 8 feet from the property line. The house next door from the side of their garage to NCRC' s fence is 7 ½ feet. So that makes little over 15 feet this new building will be from the neighbor next door. With the mechanical building above the new building and the mechanical equipment slated for the new renovation of the original home, the noise for neighbors surrounding NCRC of their heating and airconditioning equipment will be overwhelming and quite unlike a next door home's (non instituional

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property) air conditioner.

If NCRC is allowed to expand and build what they want to, more students and faculty will come by car, plus conference participants will come (to conferences NCRC has said they plan to have) in the "large motor area" NCRC wants to build in the new building which will also be a meeting room for 150 people. Then there will be even more traffic and more difficulty parking on Highland and Newark St.

Some other things I think are important to note about what NCRC is proposing:
NCRC wants to build what they are calling, in the bottom of the new huge building, a "large motor" play room which will also have the capacity to seat 150 people. NCRC says they want to gather their grandparents, parents, faculty and students for events in this space. What they are not saying is that they also want to use this space to give conferences to educators on weekdays and possibly evenings and weekends, which I believe they will be charging admission to attend. Where will there be parking for all of these events? What will the traffic be like when people attend these events. These type of events are changing NCRC from "just a nursery school" to an educational institution. They held such a conference for DC teachers this fall and asked them to not park around NCRS's school streets but to spread out and park in other neighborhood streets. Why? Because neighbors are now very concerned about traffic and parking and have been recording what NCRC's daily traffic and parking is. There has been, with the increase of students and staff, which NCRC has added in the last 10 years, more traffic on Newark St. and on Highland Place. Yes, I am aware there are also other causes for this -- such as the large SUV's parked on Macomb Street so that trucks and other vehicles cannot comfortably pass on Macomb, and therefore go up Newark St. But that just adds more vehicle problems, does not take away what NCRC is adding.

In the last 10 years NCRC has cut down several large old trees to build their deck and more playground area. If they are allowed to build what they are proposing, many more trees will be sacrificed and lost due to both the new buildings and the equipment which will have to come on the property to build them. It has taken over 100 years for many of those trees to grow. If they develop the property as they want, the property will look bare compared to many of the surrounding neighborhood homes.
NCRC says that 80% of their property will not be built on. Need to look at what they are factoring in in their figure of 80%. Are they factoring in the NCRC property from Highland Street and Ordway Street which is hilly and goes to a fence NCRC has put around the playground? Are they factoring in the strip of property between NCRC and the purple house next door? Are they factoring in the sidewalk circle and front lawn of the building? Look at the present playground - a great deal of it is cement and decking and has already been built on. Look at what they are building to enlarge the present bike shed (which is already on the property line and will continue to be) next to purple house garage and what the huge new building will take in ground space on the present playground space. The open property mentioned above is not usable for playground space or any building. If allowed to expand as they want, the NCRC present playground will look like an institutional campus of a larger school. Right now it looks like a Nursery School in an old home with a nice playground next to the school.
NCRC currently violates a 1998 BZA special exception order. It told BZA that it would back then if it received the ability to take 120 students (even this is in dispute, was this for each session or just total per day?) it would not do further construction, it would not add more students and and it would not to alter their operations (certainly holding conferences on the property will do this).
Over 100 nearby Cleveland Park families have filed a motion to dismiss the project application because the current impact of NCRC is already very difficult in terms of traffic on Highland and Newark and also on surrounding street's parking.
ANC-3C unanimously opposed the project based on pervasive commotion, congestion, noise and other adverse effects, and the Federation of Citizens Associations resolved unanimously to ask for a cap enrollment for NCRC at an absolute number, not a number floating according to NCRC's "session of the day".

Those who have lived in Cleveland Park and worked hard for historic preservation and keeping the neighborhood "livable" see that institutions who develop their property to maximize it for their institution both for use and money, rather than understand that they are located in a residential neighborhood, can for those who have to live next to them cause many problems such as the ones I have already mentioned (parking and traffic) and also: noise from larger populations on the property and machines such as air-conditioning and heating for the larger buildings, regular trash pick up at very early hours, outside PA systems used for

school events, scale of buildings (even if they are "underground") and other problems that neighbors next to them can further enumerate. Also note that most schools are more appropriately located on larger streets than Highland Place - such as Wisconsin Ave, Reno Road and 34th Street etc., not a winding, completely residential street, which in some stretches does not even have a sidewalk.

I hope that you take into consideration my letter and the other letters you are receiving from many others in the Cleveland Park neighborhood who have great concerns for Cleveland park, traffic increases and problems, difficulty in parking on residential streets due to increased use at the NCRC facility, and permanent changes in the historic district if NCRC is allowed to go forward with the plans they have laid out for their expansion.

Thank you,

Nancy G. Harter