Individual Letters to the DC Government by Cleveland Park Neighbors of NCRC Opposing the Preschool's Proposed Construction and Expansion

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Approximately one hundred and ten households have signed the "Cleveland Park Neighbors" Petition opposing the proposed expansion and new construction of the National Child Research Center. These neighbors all reside on one of the five streets directly affected by NCRC and its associated traffic: Highland Place, Ashley Terrace, Newark Street, Ordway Street and 33rd Place.

What follows are copies of individually-written letters that some of the most heavily-affected residents – who live in the immediate vicinity of the preschool – have sent to various DC Government Officials: ANC 3C, the Office of Planning, the Department of Transportation, members of the DC Council, the Mayor and the Board of Zoning Adjustment. In many instances, neighbors wrote more than one letter, addressing the specific concerns relevant to a particular addressee.

Unlike the "Friends of NCRC," who maintained a "click on the box to send a letter" website, these letters reflect the unique thoughts and deliberations of neighborhood residents as to why NCRC's requested zoning relief should not be granted.

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 209

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OFFICE OF ZONING
RECEIVED

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.209A1

Quotations From Opposition Letters

Our sense is that while pretending to listen, NCRC's representatives are not hearing what the vast majority of the members of the Cleveland Park community, are saying: our neighborhood, our community, our safety, is important to us and we insist that NCRC factor into it's plans these values adequately.

Henry P. Little and Lydia Mendoza, 3220 Ordway Street N.W. (adjacent property)

Alarmingly, they propose to grow from a school located in an historic house to one located on a campus.

Marc and Nancy Fetterman, 3318 Ordway Street N.W.

Doubling the school's size, adding new buildings, rooftop AC units, an elevator and massive excavation of the land for an underground addition threatens the structural integrity of my more than 100 year old home. I am appalled and I am angry.

Gaylord Neely, 3207 Highland Place N.W. (adjacent property)

NCRC has circumvented all attempts to control traffic through enrollment.

Ana G. Tejblum Evans, 3828 Ashley Terrace N.W.

Despite NCRC's promises to make parents behave, they do not!

Bruce and Sallie Beckner, 3225 Highland Place N.W. (adjacent property)

In 1994, NCRC without HPRB approval or building and licensing permits and without discussion with neighbors cut down mature trees, built a new playground, altered the historic carriage house with a large concrete deck and unsightly chain link fence.

Stuart Sotsky MD., 3067 Ordway Street N.W.

NCRC is a business located in the middle of an historically important residential neighborhood. When there is a serious conflict between the predominant use and an exception to that use, we think the exception should have to yield to the predominant. That was certainly the understanding and expectation of the school's Board of Trustees when I was a member.

John T. Byam, 3100 Highland Place N.W.

There is no reason why the current discussion about unsafe and objectionable traffic conditions should begin as if the school's current size of 171 children and 38 staff is fixed in stone.....The reality is that the DOT never blessed NCRC's current size.

Gregory B. Craig, 3155 Highland Place N.W.

Turning Highland into a one way street is ridiculous. There will be the same number of cars and congestion that the DOT report "initially" found to be hazardous.

Pat Murphy Sheehy, 2941 Newark Street N.W.

Please don't make Highland Place one way. It simply would not be fair to restrict use of this public roadway to meet the needs of a private business.

David S. Hammond, Esq., 3212 Newark Street N.W.

We have learned of an appalling plan to make Highland Place one way to accommodate the added traffic....It would make the site much more dangerous for children, my own included, but ironically NCRC students as well.

Milton Viorst, 3432 Ashley Terrace N.W.

NCRC proposes to build a massive wall of buildings that we would face across the entire length of it's property... cutting down trees for these buildings.....the noise from the air handling units on these commercial-size buildings would be objectionable.

Reeve and Jane Vannemann, 3071 Ordway Street N.W.

NCRC plans a building of institutional proportions.

Bascom D.Talley III and Susan K. Talley, 3320 Highland Place N.W.

NCRC seems to want the privilege of being here without the responsibility.

Johnathan and Royal Kennedy Rodgers, 3120 Newark Street N.W.

Allowing NCRC to build a new building would represent an invitation for them to stage more events, seminars ,training sessions, and to add students and faculty which would only exacerbate the current traffic problem.

Lou Stovall, 3145 Newark Street N.W.

The impact on the neighborhood is 11 months out of the year....a childcare facility, a summer camp and numerous weekend and evening events.

Susan B. Taylor, 3301 Highland Place N.W.

When NCRC drop-off and pick-up traffic arrives, the congestion makes it infuriating to be stuck idling at the Newark Street/34th Street intersection when trying to leave one's block to go to work in the morning.

Denise C. and John G. Buchanan,IV, 3307 Newark Street N.W.

For a number of years, we have found the ever-increasing traffic during rush hours on Ordway Street, N.W. completely risky and dangerous. A TRAGEDY IN THE MAKING!!!

Samuel J. Carabetta, Jr. and Richard A. Molinaroli, 3314 Ordway Street N.W.

We hope that the BZA will send the school back to the drawing board.

Pamela and Robert Pelletreau, 3220 Highland Place N.W.

The school may in good faith make promises, but history shows they cannot keep them.....I live on the "only" block in the whole neighborhood that isn't zoned for parking. NCRC staff routinely fill up all spots on this block from 7:45am to 4:30pm so that we cannot find parking near our own homes.

Tara G. Wallace, 3300 Highland Place N.W.

Our home on 33rd Place receives the brunt of the already intolerable traffic flow.... We cannot count the number of times that we have been "stuck" in front of our house.

Charles and Deborah Both, 3411 33rd Place N.W.

Why would we reward NCRC's clear disregard for the 1998 BZA order and the arrogance with which they are ignoring their violations....with more concessions from neighbors? NCRC should first resolve their violations..... Anything different is unacceptable.

Laine Shakerdge Kaufman, 3230 Highland Place N.W.

When this school needs to expand to the point that it is destructive of neighborhood city planning then the Office of Planning needs to step in and step up to it's responsibilities.

Dorothy Rich, 3101 Newark Street N.W. (corner of Newark&33rdPl.)

Our tax bills have increased....NCRC does not pay property taxes.

Peter A. and Susan B. Hornbostel, 3030 Newark Street N.W.

We neighbors have invested time, money and years in our houses....NCRC benefits from our efforts. Those making decisions about the school today may easily be gone in a few years. WE ARE LEFT WITH THE RESULTS.

Rives F. Carroll, 3405 Ashley Terrace, N.W.

April 27, 2003

Mr. Geoffery Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW Suite 201
Washington, DC 200001

Re: Case 16970 Square 2072 Lot 30

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I am so saddened to see what appears to be political pressure forcing the Department of Transportation to modify its report regarding the "traffic situation" caused by the National Child Research Center (NCRC).

I vehemently disagree with the revised report and question the grounds upon which it is based. It enormously increases the adverse impact of an institution operating by special exception in a residential neighbor to address a significant traffic problem created by that institution. As an aside, I cannot allow my son to walk to the PUBLIC elementary school four blocks away because of the dangerous situation NCRC has created. Having cars willy-nilly blast one way down a street in no way mitigates the current situation.

NCRC has over enrolled the school by close to 50% and now wants relief by further diminishing the quality of life of the neighborhood. There seem to be no limits on what an institution operating by special exception can do, and even if there were some wording to that effect by the BZA, you, yourself, admitted there are no enforcement mechanisms. Therefore, I recommend that the BZA order the DOT to implement the "one-way traffic" plan for 24 months and evaluate its efficacy before the BZA entertains this report as a possible solution to the traffic "problems" caused by NCRC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leila Afzal
3006 Ordway Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Ms. Nancy MacWood, Representative
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3-C
3417 Woodley Road N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

September 12, 2002

Dear Ms. MacWood:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the expansion plans of the National Child Research Center. I have lived on Highland Place for thirty-three years and have been a friend and supporter of NCRC for many years. Three of my children attended NCRC and I served on the Board of the School for several years. More recently, two of my grandchildren attended NCRC and three participated in the summer camp on the school grounds. We have enjoyed the use of the School playground in after-school hours. I have contributed financially to NCRC over the years.

My opposition to the expansion plans of NCRC is based first on my concern about the increase in traffic that would result from an expansion of enrollment. The traffic situation has steadily worsened and, in the past few years, has become almost intolerable for the residents in the neighborhood. Specifically, Highland Place has become very congested due to the parents' parking and the number and size of the cars bringing the children to and from school. The drivers often ignore the stop signs, turn around in the driveways, and drive too fast on what is a narrow and curving street. The street has become unsafe for the neighborhood children and for my visiting grandchildren. I sometimes have difficulty getting out of my drive due to the parked and moving cars.

My second concern is that the expansion plan is too institutional and too large scale for the property that NCRC occupies. The School is housed in an historic house at present but the planned expansion would not fit into the historic nature of the property and of the neighborhood which is an historic district. If NCRC wishes to become a different kind of school than it has historically been, the School would be best advised to seek a location that fits the proposed expansion plan.

Lastly, and I am sorry to have to say this, the School did not involve the neighborhood in its planning process as the expansion was being developed. This omission and our subsequent experience with NCRC has eroded neighborhood confidence that the School will work with the neighborhood. There has been a breakdown of trust and good neighborliness on the part of the School leaving the neighbors with deep concerns about the School's intentions.

I know you will give careful consideration to our concerns about the impact of this expansion plan on the character and quality of our historic neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paula Atkeson

Date: May 1, 2003

To: Andrew Altman
Director, Office of Planning

Re: Supplemental Report dated April 14, 2003 by Kenneth Laden
BZA app. #16970 - NCRC, 3209 Highland Place NW, Lot 30 Square 2072
Special Exception

Dear Mr. Altman,

As an adjoining neighbor to NCRC, I was relieved to learn that the first traffic report acknowledges what all of us neighbors know. The traffic created by NCRC's current enrollment creates unsafe and troublesome traffic situations every day the school is open. Now, Associate Director Laden suggests that making the two-way section of Highland Place into a one-way street is the most likely remedy to easing some of this condition. In fact regarding the increased traffic due to NCRC's projection of 10 new students and 10 new staff as a result of the proposed expansion, he says, "...we do not anticipate that the resulting increase in traffic would significantly worsen traffic conditions in the neighborhood."

How his opinion shifted without reasonable merit causes great concern. To address this, this response will speak to his most current position. His letter starts by listing five of the reasons DDOT did not support the application in February. I will list each and address the ramifications of his proposal accordingly.

1. "Traffic and pedestrian safety at the intersection of 34th and Newark Streets"

Though Mr. Laden says, "The Department will address our transportation safety concerns at 34th Street and Newark as a separate transportation safety improvement", they are actually connected as the proposed plan **makes the intersection more dangerous.** Currently traffic can enter our Highland Place from the west via Newark or the block of Highland Place between 33rd Place and 34th Street. Since making the remaining section of Highland one-way in the other direction it **encourages traffic to enter solely through Newark** to reach the beginning of Highland and turn in.

2. "Unsafe traffic patterns when westbound thru-traffic is forced to use the eastbound thru-lane to avoid the school's 'carpool' lane.

Eastbound traffic would not face westbound traffic when the queuing line is clogging Highland. The proposal only partially addresses the unsafe traffic patterns caused by the school's queuing lane blocking the street, as **westbound cars will continue to pass on the left where there is pedestrian activity and no sidewalk.**

3. "Illegal parking on Highland Place, including blocking of neighbors' driveways and double parking of vehicles in the drop-off and pick-up 'carpool' line."

This proposal does **nothing to address these issues.**

4. "Cars making illegal U-turns and ignoring stop signs"

Ignoring stop signs will continue. Regarding U-turns Mr. Laden neglects to consider that the plan again **shifts the problem**. U-turns would drastically increase in 33rd Place. We get traffic for other reasons, people looking for parking to go to the commercial section of Connecticut, tradespeople, guests, etc. All of us who live by 33rd Place have watched cars head north on it only to discover that it is a dead end. If implemented, cars traveling north on 33rd Place would lose the option to turn east onto Highland and but instead would have to **make a U-turn on 33rd Place** to get back to Newark.
Also, cars parked on the north side of Newark between Highland and 33rd can now turn unto Highland, turn east unto Newark and down the hill to Connecticut Ave. Once implemented, this place would **increase U-turns at the intersection of 33rd Place and Newark** for those cars avoiding 34th Street traffic. This will happen most frequently during rush hours.

5. "Traffic congestion during peak drop-off and pick-up periods"

Since this plan actually gives a nod to increasing the traffic thru enrollment and staff, the trade off of not having eastbound seems limited at best.

In conclusion, Mr. Laden has publicly commented on pressure from both sides of this issue. Since his agency does not have the authority to decrease enrollment, hence, traffic, he cannot alleviate the situation. His options have neither the full support of the applicant nor opponents. They do not solve the problems. In fact he laments that this option's disadvantage "is that it places the burden solely upon the residents of Highland Place."

By what standard does a childcare center which has solely created the safety problem, operating by special exception in a residential neighborhood, get an engineering "solution" which fails to solve the problem and solely burdens the residents?

I applaud Mr. Laden's efforts. It is apparent his has spent much time and thought on this matter. However, his forwarded suggestion fails notably.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best wishes,

Linda Badami
3207 Highland Place NW
Washington DC 20008

cc:
Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Ms. Jerrily Kress
Mr. Kenneth Laden
Ms. Kathy Patterson
Ms. Nancy MacWood
Mr. John Welsh
Mr. Anthony Williams

September 17, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chair, ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Place NW
Washington DC 20008

Dear Ms. MacWood,

This letter is to voice how strongly opposed I am to NCRC's proposed expansion. As a next door neighbor, 3207 Highland, this project's impact would be especially significant.

Since I often work at home, I am well used to the sounds of the children at play, school bells and adults signing "clean-up time." It happens every day of the school week. I can actually judge the time of day by the noise or the traffic pattern. Most of the noise does not disturb me. However the commercial grade a/c unit noise is an annual nuisance, which I will shortly discuss.

I believe Cleveland Park is one of the most beautiful neighborhoods in this DC. I've been in this city for twelve years and never tire of looking at the exquisite buildings we have and the concentration of them in this area is stunning. NCRC's Main House exemplifies the extraordinary architecture possessed by the turn of the century houses in our block.

The last round of NCRC's expansion, however, in which an additional building, removal of trees and a significant increase of concrete was allowed, still jars me as I look out my side windows. It is a stretch to believe the Playhouse sustains the character and quality of the original Main House. The two newly proposed buildings only add to that incongruity.

In the current proposal, the new buildings match neither each other nor the current structures in style. The construction plans for each building to have a different roofline, each to be sided differently, and each to have windows with different styles and layout. Further, no building matches any neighboring homes.

To better understand Historic Preservation, I've read Introduction to Historic Preservation Processes Under District of Columbia Law. (The pamphlet does not give a revision or copyright date, but lists Marion Barry as Mayor.) Page 9 asks what the HPRB uses as the standard by which applications are evaluated. The answer, "Proposals are evaluated for consistency with the purposes of the preservation law. These purposes are to retain and enhance historic properties, to encourage their adaptation for current use, and to ensure that changes to designated properties are compatible with their historic character."

"...to retain and enhance historic properties"
As stated, the buildings and additions neither enhance the properties or the neighborhood. They detract from the beauty and significance of the original structure. By referring to the photos of NCRC from my house, please note how another expansion would only worsen the property. Photo #1 shows the back of the main house looking at

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the Playhouse. Note the two adults standing at the corner of the playhouse for scale. The amount of concrete in the walkways, stairs and platform is enormous, plus it is used to border sections of mulch. This is practical for a preschool but not an enhancement to historic preservation. Their proposal seeks to increase the amount of concrete and further removal of old trees.

"...to encourage adaptation for current use"

An adaptation is different than doubling the square footage, which is what the plans call for. The "addition" to the Main House will require a major excavation next to my house. Further the sidewalk between our properties will be widen and lengthened. Though the architect's sketch makes the work look straight forward it is not. Since the sidewalk is to lead to the proposed elevator between our house to make the school more ADA compliant, the grade of the sidewalk will also have to be changed. From Highland to the Main House the grade is too great. Their plans do not show how they propose to keep the front side of my yard from sagging. Construction would also require demolishing the existing sidewalk, digging a form and pouring a new sidewalk over the root systems of trees which edge our properties. One of these trees is an oak which towers above my home and NCRC.

And on the west side, to have the "Carriage House" design work, it requires not only an enormous excavation for the building, but a permanent alteration of the topography. The architect referred to this as "regrading." Choosing a softer word does not minimize the harshness of the act. The plans do not address how greatly the excavations will affect old trees and their root systems, nor does it address erosion control. Nor does the plan show retaining walls that will be needed, their design or how they will look against the backdrop of our homes.

"...to ensure that properties are compatible with their historic character"

Referring to photo #2, you'll see the commercial grade a/c units NCRC put in several years ago. (As an aside, if you consult the architect provided Existing Site Plan, the shrubs drown on the east side of the house in front of the a/c units and fence is drawn out of scale. The shrubs actually are planted from the house to the depth of the fence and their heights do not surpass my knees.)
The noise of these a/c units warranted our complaints to which they responded by surrounding them with the fence lined with fabric. They still assure us that their sound engineer says it significantly decreases the decibels. My experience says otherwise as I sit on my front porch or in my living room, bedroom or office.
Since capacity of these units is large enough to handle the increased tonnage for thousands of cubic feet increase to the Main House, they will be reused and relocated. Their proposed design moves these units from the side to the back of the main house. The architect made sure to note this to me, however all this would do is transport the bulk of the noise from the front and middle of my home to the middle and back of it.

Though I have heard much discussion of the building square footage doubling given their proposals, I have yet to hear stated the amount of concrete currently there, plus the amount that would be added. This number would more accurately define what I'm hearing being called the "footprint" of the buildings.

My proximity lends me the opportunity to show the ANC what the campus currently looks like and how ghastly the expansion would look. Since I want to get this letter to you, I am only including pictures of what the campus looks like out my side windows. At the Monday meeting I plan to give you a portrayal of the proposed expansion as rendered in Photoshop. I offer this to supplement the architect's drawings as they tend to provide construction views straight on and out of the overall context of the space.

Page 2 of the same pamphlet states "Historic designation reflects pride in the character of neighborhoods and a desire on the part of the city and its residents to protect their assets."

If this project were to proceed the character of this neighborhood would be greatly diminished and property values of this neighborhood would be decreased. It is as simple as that.

Several years ago I was at a reading of a bestselling author when a baby started crying somewhere in the auditorium. The speaker immediately turned in the direction of the noise saying that she believed a baby blessed whatever room it was in and encouraged the adult and crying infant to stay.

I actually feel similarly about a preschool in a neighborhood. It's terrific that schools are parts of communities. But under the guise of providing critical services and relief to overstretched resources, NRCR has planned a commercial endeavor inconsistent with its own history and incompatible with the residential area where it resides. I appreciate the children, but not the management of the institution. Their tactics have alienated what was once a neighborhood that largely appreciated its existence.

The design doesn't work for this neighborhood. And NCRC's callous disregard for its neighbors' concerns is unfortunate.

NCRC is a private institution and has the power manage its own needs. If they have outgrown their space, they need to reduce enrollment or move. Placing the burden of their changing business goals on the neighborhood is unreasonable.

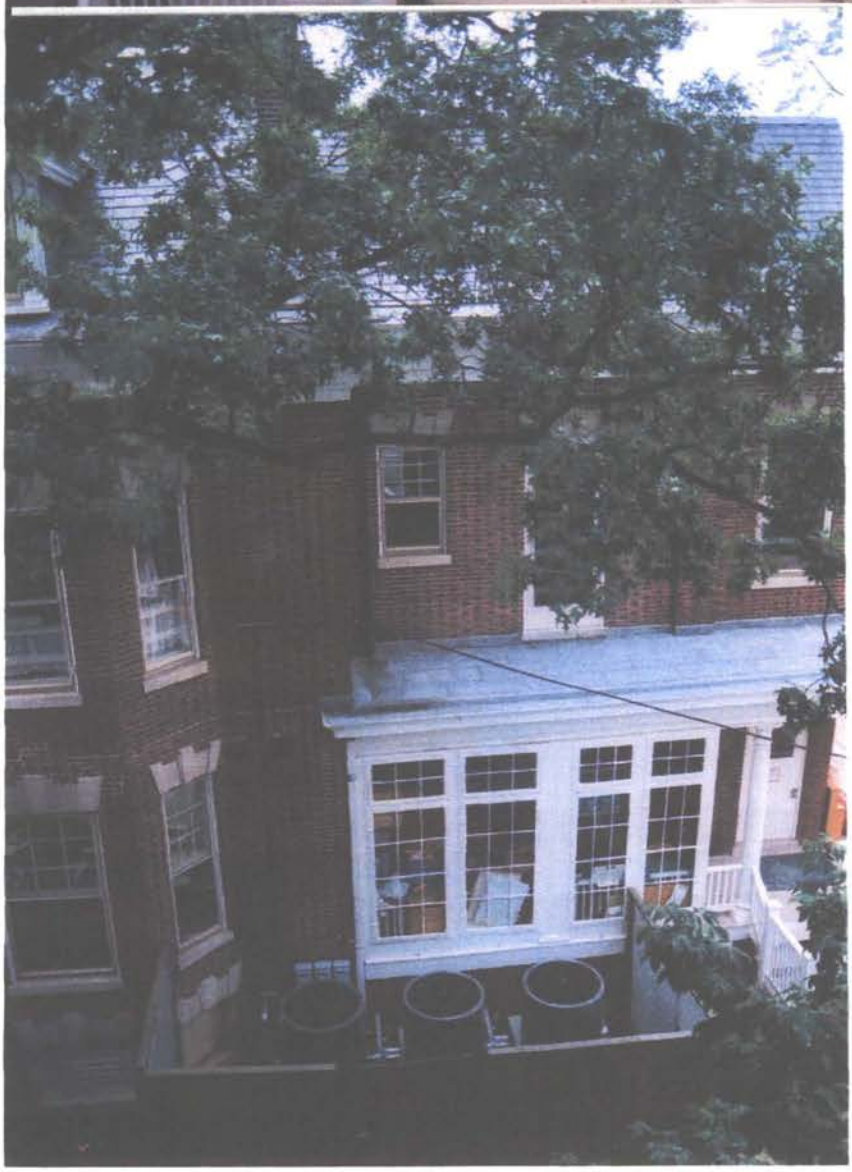
I look forward to the neighborhood meeting where our views can be expressed publicly.

Best wishes,

Linda Badami

Linda Badami





Bruce and Sallie Beckner
3225 Highland Place N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

March 14, 2003

Mr. Kenneth Laden
Associate Director for Transportation Planning
D.C. Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street N.W. – Seventh Floor
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Mr. Laden,

We are writing to voice our outrage that the National Child Research Center, with whom we share a common property line, is proposing to eliminate approximately 100 feet of permitted parking on the north side of Highland Place in order to accommodate a longer drop off zone for its queue line. This would be a very substantial burden NCRC would impose on the neighborhood generally and upon us specifically to accommodate its ever-growing enrollment. This would represent almost a doubling of the size of the no parking area that would be created in order to accommodate the needs of NCRC's excessive and illegal[1] enrollment.

As you may know, because it is narrow, Highland Place has parking permitted (Zone 3 stickers required for more than two hours) only on one side (the north side) of the street. There are five houses on the south side of Highland Place that are directly opposite the area that NCRC uses or wants to use for dropping off its children. These houses all must use on-street parking on Highland Place for parking their personal cars. One of those houses has no driveway at all; the

[1] Your March 17, 1998 report, no doubt based on NCRC's misrepresentations made at the time, incorrectly states that the child development center's enrollment is 108. In fact, at that time, the enrollment was approximately 165; it is now over 170.

other four have two shared driveways that permit the parking of only one car at a time. The result is that these neighbors must use this portion of the street, and the portion of it in front of my house (at the northeast corner of 33rd and Highland) for their personal parking and for parking for their visitors. We also use this area parking for parking of our visitors, because the north portion of 33rd Place on the side of our house is no parking at any time on both sides of the street as a result of being too narrow. The total number of street parking places available to the six houses at this end of Highland Place (including ours), from NCRC to the intersection of 33rd and Highland is now about nine spaces. NCRC's plan would reduce that amount by 2/3s – to three spaces. This is clearly unacceptable and would work a great hardship on our neighbors and a substantial inconvenience to us.

Frankly, NCRC's latest proposal is a fig leaf to try to justify its current excessive enrollment and facilitate its ambitious plans to double the size of its current facilities. As you know, since getting approval from the Department of Transportation and the Board of Zoning adjustment for an occupancy increase by using false and misleading information, there have been a succession of traffic management plans from NCRC that it claims will alleviate the traffic conditions that first prompted neighbors' complaints in 1997. Like the latest one, they all have certain common elements: the promise to improve parents' on-the-road behavior, they promise that NCRC will have enforcement/monitoring personnel deployed to assist in traffic flow management. In fact, in 1998, approximately six parking spaces on the west side of 33rd Place, just beyond the intersection with Highland, were eliminated to accommodate the heavy traffic flows generated by NCRC during its pickup and drop off times.

Despite all this, our experience has been that these plans have made no significant difference in the traffic impact. The reason is that there is simply too much traffic to be

accommodated within the physical limits imposed by these streets. Moreover, despite NCRC's promises to make parents behave, they do not. They continue to park – often illegally – and walk their children to school because they don't want to wait in the drop off line. As the videos we have shown you demonstrate, this involves:

- walking in the street, because the sidewalk is too narrow or non-existent (Sections 2305.2 and 2305.3 of Title 18 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations.)
- opening car doors and unloading passengers on the street side (Section 2214.4)
- crossing a street in the middle of the block (Section 2304.3)
- making dangerous U-turns that interfere with the flow of traffic (most vehicles, especially SUVs, do not have a sufficiently small turning radius to make a U-turn on Highland Place without stopping and backing up). (2204.1)
- backing up against the flow of traffic to get a parking place (2204.8)
- running through stop signs(D.C. police ticket code T-128)
- making the left turn from Highland Place on to 33rd Place from the oncoming lane of traffic rather than from the right lane.(Title 18, section 2203.4)
- Parking the wrong direction (2400.1)
- Parking within 5 feet of private driveways (2405.2 a.)
- Parking too close to intersections (2405.2 c.)
- Parking within 25 feet of stop sign (2405.2 d.)
- Parking within 3 feet of other vehicles (2405.2 i.)
- Parking with wheels on sidewalk (2405.2 j)

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the sham nature of these plans than the fact that, this past Tuesday (March 11), at 8:40 a.m. we observed Alexa Halaby in her black Mercedes-Benz

station wagon drive through the stop sign (without slowing down, much less coming to a full stop) at Highland Place and 33rd. Halaby, who is the project director of NCRC's efforts to get this expansion approved, was one of a succession of NCRC parents who ran this stop sign at that time. NCRC's traffic patrol was nowhere to be seen. Moreover, during the course of the past year, when we have been observing the school's traffic operations closely, we have seen that NCRC's traffic patrol people, more often than not, are not deployed as called for in their various plans. When they are deployed, it usually is only in the morning. Heavy traffic periods around mid-day and in the afternoon rarely see any traffic patrols out. We have this documented on videos shot during the entire past year. If NCRC and its parents can not comply with the preschool's own traffic plans during the time when NCRC's applications for regulatory approval are pending, what basis is there to expect that they will do any better after those approvals are granted?

Finally, let us say that we do not see this as a situation where everyone should "give a little" to make this "work." This is, by zoning and by actual fact, a residential neighborhood comprised of residents who pay very substantial taxes on their homes; while NCRC pays nothing. NCRC's use of the house next door to use for a child development center is an inconsistent use. If that inconsistent use causes adverse impacts to the neighborhood, which it clearly does, then the inconsistent use must be terminated or modified. What that means here is that NCRC's enrollment must be reduced to the level it told you it had in 1998 – 108.

We do not see why we and our neighbors should go along with being deprived of essential on-street parking to accommodate the school's excessive and illegal enrollment. We do not see why, on a daily basis, we and our neighbors should have our street transformed into the equivalent of the FedEx field parking lot on game day, with a small army of people in orange

vests (even when they show up) directing parents engaged in a mad scramble to get their child dropped off at school, either from a drop-off line or by parking as close as possible and walking in.

We understand that you are obligated to consider any proposal by NCRC, no matter how absurd on its face. But we remind you of section 1404.3(a)(2) of Title 10 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations: "**Traffic mitigation strategies should avoid removal of parking which serves residents . . .**" Given that NCRC proposes to do just that and to remove parking that is essential to these residents, we think you have no choice but to reject this idea as inconsistent with the Ward 3 Plan and likely to create an adverse impact to the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

R. Bruce Beckner

Sallie R. Beckner

R. Bruce Beckner
Sallie R. Beckner
3225 Highland Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008

September 21, 2002

The Hon. Nancy MacWood,
Chair
The Hon. John Welsh
ANC-3C
2737 Devonshire Place, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Chairman MacWood and Mr. Welsh:

Our family is one of the organizers of the group that calls itself the "Cleveland Park Neighbors." We are writing you to express our opposition to the plans of the National Child Research Center to build two new buildings on their property next to our house and to expand their enrollment and staff.

Although we have lived in Cleveland Park only since 1996, we have wanted to be here many years before then. Eventually in 1995, with the Washington *Post* filled with articles about people moving out of D.C., we signed a contract to buy a house on Highland Place, and moved in from the suburbs the next year.

The house we bought is right next door to the NCRC playground; but, with a four-year old child, that was a plus, not a minus. We do not consider the sound of children playing to be an objectionable noise. The idea of a nursery school in a big old house next to us seemed in character for the Cleveland Park neighborhood. Our youngest daughter attended NCRC for two years.

So, how, then, did it come to pass that we are against the school's efforts to expand?

We believe that the answer is that the school's recent leadership has violated express and implied covenants that bind this community together and make it special, and that the proposed expansion and new construction will do great damage to the neighborhood's historical integrity and to its quality of life.

Let me explain:

The express covenants that bind us all in Cleveland Park are those that are a consequence of being in an historic district. Therefore, if one of us – even one of us who lives in a 1940s era colonial that is not, as the historic preservationists say, a "contributing structure," wants to put a

skylight in a roof, change a portico or even change the exterior paint color, then we have to get permission to do so. We accept those limitations, even when seemingly innocuous requests to alter relatively new houses are turned down by the reviewing authorities. Residents of Cleveland Park – and especially those of us who live in the old 19th century houses like Sallie and I do – understand that while we are legally owners of our houses, we are also stewards of a heritage that is much greater than our relatively brief period of "ownership." The moral and legal obligations of that stewardship limit what we might otherwise do with our property.

Our neighbors at NCRC seem to have lost sight of those obligations. Like every ambitious business, NCRC wants to answer the siren call of growth and expansion with more staff, more students, and more teachers to teach them. As a result, you have before you a proposal from NCRC to double the amount of floor space available to the school, by substantially expanding the existing 97-year old house and by constructing two new buildings. This growth imperative – and nothing else – creates the need for construction of more buildings. If NCRC believes its classes are too big, the simple answer is to reduce their size through attrition. Since NCRC is just a preschool, that can be done in a few years. For NCRC, the covenant of preservation that exists in this neighborhood appears to be an inconvenience to be surmounted, not an obligation to be assumed.

We certainly would not oppose modest and compatible additions to the existing buildings to better serve NCRC's current student population, just as we would not oppose any other neighbor's desire to modestly and tastefully expand his or her house. However, we seriously doubt that any of our individual neighbors who have a large lot, like NCRC has, would even think of constructing an additional building of 6,000 square feet of floor space to be part of a multi-building "compound." And, if an individual neighbor actually did attempt something along these lines, we doubt seriously that any of the regulatory agencies that must review it, would support such a folly. We see no reason why the outcome should be any different for a nursery school, like NCRC, that operates under a special exception in a residential historic district.

We also write of implied obligations. Anyone who lives in an urban environment must show a little additional consideration for his or her neighbors. In this neighborhood, where some houses do not have driveways or share a driveway with the adjoining residence, it means being respectful of parking restrictions; because some neighbors must park on the street all of the time. It means not running your lawn mower in the evening when someone might be having an outdoor dinner or guests for drinks on their front porch in the summer. It means not generating loud noises with stereos and the like.

NCRC seems oblivious to these obligations as well. Even though City ordinances prohibit their use at that hour, every weekday morning at about 7:30 a.m., an NCRC staffer runs a gasoline-powered leaf blower on the playground to clear the woodchips off the sidewalk. Recently, NCRC has taken to making its "playhouse" building and playground available on weekends for organized birthday parties that have included broadcast music on a public address system outside and electric go-karts running around the playground sidewalks. Several times

each weekday, NCRC's car pickup queue reduces Highland Place to only a single lane of travel. NCRC parents park illegally, blocking driveways and occasionally blocking the exit from the stub of 33rd place that we have to use to reach any other street. NCRC "independent contractors" also park illegally for extended periods of time.

Since 1998, NCRC has expanded its operating hours, providing both an early morning drop-off and an early evening pickup. The result is that our street, which is virtually traffic-free when school is not in session, has school-related car traffic on it when neighborhood children come home from *their* school and want to use the street for bicycling, in-line skating and scootering. Being the only Cleveland Park street in the area that is not a through connection between Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues, Highland Place is the only street where this kind of play for neighborhood children is potentially feasible. You also should bear in mind that the current conditions on NCRC's special exception permit it to operate year-round; and it does have a summer camp, which also generates traffic, for all but a few weeks of the summer.

Although the school is not responsible for the conduct of its parents and the way they drive, it *is* responsible for its failure to keep the express commitments to the neighborhood regarding traffic management that were a part of the conditional grant of its special exception in 1998. Apart from painting a couple of white lines, NCRC only began to take traffic management seriously last year – when it was in the process of preparing the application for major expansion that it has now filed. If NCRC had met all of its 1998 obligations regarding traffic and if the school's enrollment were capped at its 1998 levels, that still would result in a lot of traffic for such a small street. At least, however, compliance with the 1998 traffic plan might have allayed the concerns of the neighbors who spoke up about traffic problems at that time. The idea of increasing enrollment and doubling the interior size of the school is simply not acceptable. Inevitably, it will increase traffic congestion and parking problems in this neighborhood, regardless of what kind of traffic plan NCRC says it will implement.

Finally, there is the implied covenant of fair and open dealing that should govern the conduct of all neighbors. When NCRC applied for its special exception to operate a school of 120 students in 1998, it failed to give us, and many of NCRC's immediate neighbors, written notification as required by law. Because we saw the legally-required zoning application sign posted in front of the school, we called the school office and asked what it was about. They told us it was a "technical" amendment – essentially a classification change – and would not result in any change in school operations. That was false. In fact, the school was applying for a special exception (and occupancy permit) that was 15 students above the number currently in the building at the time and 12 above the maximum number of students the school could have in the classrooms without violating D.C. Department of Health regulations. As we now see, the 1998 application was a prelude to further expansion. Likewise, the school asked for and obtained authority in 1998 to operate before 9:00 a.m. and after 3:30 p.m., the school's earlier opening and closing times. So, we were mislead about the nature of the school's 1998 application.

That is doubly unfortunate because, our daughter recently having left the school to attend John Eaton elementary, we knew that NCRC's enrollment was over 160 students, not the 120

students listed in the application and testified to by the acting director of the school. Had we participated actively in the proceedings before the Board of Zoning Adjustment in 1998, we would have been able to point out this discrepancy between the school's application and its actual enrollment. Having done so, we would have forestalled the argument that the school now makes, which is that there is no limit on its *enrollment* so long as there are no more than 120 students in the building at one time. However, we did not participate because we were mislead by the school's characterization of the action it sought as "technical."

In summary, our opposition to this project is because it does great violence to the character of the neighborhood – in terms both of appearance and of quality of life for its residents. The school has been a fixture in the neighborhood for over 70 years; but, like the rest of us, it has had a defined place. Its present efforts to expand that place should be rebuffed – just as the efforts of any one of us residents to do the same thing would be rebuffed. We urge you to recommend disapproval of NCRC's planned expansion and new construction.

Sincerely,

R. Bruce Beckner

Sallie R. Beckner

3411 33rd Place NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
September 23, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chairperson ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Place, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ms. MacWood:

We own the house at 3411 33rd Place NW, the single residence that fronts on 33rd Place, the short connector street between Highland Place and Newark Street, NW. We have lived in this house since October 1978, and in the neighborhood since 1974. Both of our children, now 25 and 21 attended NCRC in the early 1980's and we each served on the NCRC Board first as a "neighborhood" members and then as a parent members. At that time, a substantial percentage of the children at the school lived in the neighborhood. NCRC had always been a valued member of the Cleveland Park community, and had maintained excellent communications with its neighbors. The recently announced plans of a substantial construction project has sadly altered this relationship.

We are writing to urge you, and the ANC, to encourage NCRC to re-evaluate its ambitious expansion plans, or alternatively to vote to recommend denial of approval by the HPRB and BZA.

Our home on 33rd Place receives the brunt of the already intolerable traffic flow that emanates from NCRC several times a day. Because of the narrowness of the streets, and the traffic patterns, all of the cars that drop off or pickup children at the front entrance of NCRC must pass in front of our house. We cannot count the number of times that we have been "stuck" in front of our house in the morning when trying to leave for work; or the number of illegally parked cars on our street blocking ingress and egress; or the number of times that our fence has damaged by cars backing up on our narrow street; or the number of times that a side-view mirror on a car parked on our street has been shattered by traffic caused by drivers leaving the school's drop-off point on Highland Place. Adding additional staff, students and faculty, together with ancillary services that will follow, will only exacerbate this situation.

In addition to the substantial increase in traffic, the way the expansion plan has been presented to us, the school would increase its enrollment close to 10 percent and nearly double its current physical size through the proposed construction. The open space that has contributed to the special quality and uniqueness of our neighborhood will lost by this proposed construction.. The result will be the transformation of a charming "nursery school" housed in a "residential home" into an "institutional campus" comprising of "four separate buildings". This surely is inconsistent with our historic residential district and the efforts of our neighbors, and the city's HPRB to preserve this special quality of life.

If NCRC is determined to change itself into a "model regional child development center" it should also re-evaluate whether it should still appropriately be housed in the residential home on the small narrow residential street that it presently occupies. While I believe that it will be a significant loss to the Cleveland Park community for NCRC to leave its current location, the alternative of approval of its grandiose expansion plan would be far worse.

Sincerely,

Charles & Deborah Both

Denise C. and John G. Buchanan, IV
3307 Newark Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008

June 14, 2003

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street
Suite 201
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case 16970

Dear Mr. Griffis:

As neighbors of NCRC, we are extremely upset by their request to expand beyond their current enrollment, which, based our neighborhood's traffic and parking problems, already seems excessive. We strongly urge that no such permission be granted NCRC to expand further.

The intersection of Newark Street and 34th Street is already dangerous and at times extremely difficult to maneuver. When NCRC drop-off and pick-up traffic arrives, the congestion on that corner makes a bad situation far, far worse. It is infuriating to be stuck idling at the Newark Street/34th Street intersection when trying to leave one's block to go to work in the morning.

As you know, Cleveland Park is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Washington, and as such we do not all have garages or even sufficient driveways to accommodate the typical two-car family today. Finding adequate parking has become a competitive enterprise for us residents that is only exacerbated by NCRC's need for parking.

We hope that you will consider the pleas of the neighborhood when making your decision.

Sincerely yours,
Denise C Buchanan
John G Buchanan IV
Denise and John Buchanan

Cc: Mr. Andrew Altman
Ms. Kathy Patterson

JOHN & ELIZABETH BYAM
3100 HIGHLAND PLACE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008
(202) 364-7072
JBYAM@CGSH.COM

May 1, 2003

D.C. ... ZONING
2003 MAY -2 PM 3:50

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 201
Washington, DC 20001

Mr. Andrew Altman
Director, Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 4000
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Messrs. Griffis and Altman:

Re: Case 16970, Square 2072, Lot 30

On behalf of Elizabeth and myself, I am writing to urge you to oppose both the expansion of the enrollment of NCRC as well as the proposal to turn Highland Place into a one-way street going west.

Our son attended NCRC and I served on its Board of Trustees for three years. We are very fond of NCRC and respect and support its mission. At the end of the day, however, it is a business located in the middle of an historically important residential neighborhood. When there is a serious conflict between the predominant use and an exception to that use, we think the exception should have to yield to the predominant. That was certainly the understanding and expectation of the school's Board of Trustees when I was a member.

Today, the school's presence imposes several very significant externalities on the neighborhood, including much increased traffic flow, parking problems and severe and dangerous congestion problems around drop off and pick up times. Frankly, we (and we believe other neighbors) are currently at our limit of tolerance; increasing NCRC's enrollment would take us beyond. And it would, in effect, be putting the interests of a business, however well-intentioned, ahead of the interests of the neighborhood's residents, which we believe is fundamentally unfair and wrong.

Turning Highland Place into a one-way street would make it like outbound Connecticut Avenue during rush hour; it would be a mob scene. Forcing all of the school and residential traffic to flow in only one direction would so increase the traffic on Highland and 34th

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 152

Places as to make them inherently unsafe. Add the neighborhood and school children into the mix and I honestly cringe when I think about what might happen.

We think that either of these changes would make the neighborhood a less desirable place in which to live; doing both would have an exponential effect. Will NCRC compensate the neighbors for the impact their business has on the neighbors' everyday lives as well as their property values? Of course not. Then for what reason should the neighbors be forced in effect to subsidize the school's business? I can't think of one.

If you have not already done so, we would urge you to spend an hour in the neighborhood around drop off or pick up times to help inform your judgment. We think if you do, you would see that this is not a case where you have a bunch of neighbors who simply don't like change (which I know from personal experience is sometimes the case). Instead, you would see that there are very serious problems today and that the proposals under consideration would make the problems only worse.

Sincerely yours,

John T. Byam

Samuel J. Carabetta, Jr.
Richard A. Molinaroli
3314 Ordway Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, Suite 201
Washington, SC 20001

14 June 2003

Dear Mr. Griffis,
Re: Case 16970

We are very close neighbors of the Nation Child Research Center (NCRC). We are absolutely opposed to their plans for expansion.

For a number of years we have found the ever-increasing traffic during rush hour on Ordway Street, NW, completely risky and dangerous. This time of day coincides with drop-off and pick-up periods at the NCRC. This is not only unsafe for the children but the neighborhood as well.

Cars are illegally parked for special events and parents escort their children down a very tricky and difficult hill. I will never forget watching a child darting between two parked SUV's into the middle of Ordway Street onto a speeding car. Fortunately, I happened to be on the other side of the street, where there are no sidewalks, to warn the child and parent to stop in their tracks – **A TRAGEDY IN THE MAKING!!!** Just last week, at the NCRC all student Pajama Party, cars were illegally parked across from our house on Ordway Street. We alerted their Security Agent, who immediately went to the school to broadcast the problem. The parents did not move their cars until the party was over. They have complete disrespect of the neighborhood and ignore any warnings.

I hope the potential catastrophe of a child darting into moving traffic, is a sufficient example in your decision to deny the proposed expansion of the NCRC. It is completely unnecessary. It compounds an existing, severe safety issue.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel J. Carabetta, Jr. and Richard Molinaroli

cc: Andrew Altman, Kathy Patterson

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WHITE & CASE
LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP

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SUITE 600 SOUTH
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3807

TELEPHONE: (1-202) 626-3600
FACSIMILE: (1-202) 639-9355

DIRECT DIAL: 202-626-3666
E-MAIL: lcarlisle@whitecase.com
DIRECT FACSIMILE: 202-639-9355

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JOHANNESBURG

June 6, 2003

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, Suite 201
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Expansion of National Childrens Research Center ("NCRC")

Dear Mr. Griffis:

We understand that NCRC is requesting a special exception to build an addition to its facility. My husband, Charles Carlisle, and I live at 3215 Newark Street, N.W., and we oppose the granting of the special exception. The school currently presents traffic and parking problems for residents of the neighborhood. Any increase in the size of the student body at NCRC would exacerbate these problems. Accordingly, we are opposed to any expansion.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Linda Carlisle

Linda E. Carlisle

LEC:jw

Rives F. Carroll 3405 Ashley Terrace, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20008

May 21, 2003

Dan Taglierini, Director
Ken Laden, Associate Director
DC Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street, NW, 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20009

Re: Objection to change Highland Place to One-Way Street and to Eliminate Parking

Dear Mr. Taglierini and Mr. Laden,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposal to make Highland Place, N.W. a one-way street and to eliminate parking bordering National Child Research Center street frontage. These suggested changes are an attempt to adapt a small, winding, neighborhood street in a historic residential community to the requests of an over-expanded institution that is threatening the character of its surroundings by proposed inappropriate growth.

This plan is misguided. The school has an over enrollment of 51 students, 171 instead of the120 designated as the maximum by the BZA. At least 90% of these students arrive and depart each day by car, mostly very large cars. Only a handful is Cleveland Park residents. And even fewer actually walk to school. Consequently, at the six or more times throughout the school day when cars deliver and collect students, Highland Place becomes a driveway----a clogged driveway----for NCRC, no longer a viable two-way street.

Illegally increasing its enrollment and overwhelming the street's capacity to handle traffic are poor reasons for rewarding the school with greater latitude to damage the character of the neighborhood, one of the prime benefits NCRC has from its location. DOT's plans will force neighbors to accept the consequences of NCRC's proposed enrollment and building expansion to the detriment of our own properties. These are properties that most of us have owned and maintained for one to four decades. We care. We care about our neighborhood and we care about our city. We are part of a hefty tax base for D.C. At least one third of the NCRC cars are from Virginia and Maryland.

Please think twice before you take away parking places from tax payers who have no driveways or only shared driveways and who already have a No Parking restriction on their side of Highland Place. For a city trying to attract more residents and keep their current residents, this is an unwise decision. With the illegal increase in NCRC staff, parking on Highland Place is already difficult.

I urge you to leave Highland Place a two-way street. Requiring all cars to move from east to west will create traffic back-ups on narrow 33rd Place all the way along Newark to 34th Street. Every car entering Highland Place, whether from the east or west, will be forced to exit on 33rd Place. Drivers will naturally drive faster on a one-way street. This speed is already a problem from Uptown Theater movie goers looking for last minute parking spots. And neighbors will be inconvenienced as they are forced to drive around the block every time they leave or arrive home. When snow and ice render Newark Street unusable, Highland will not be an available relief route, as it has been.

DOT's proposed solutions for this already dangerous traffic situation will create more problems. The burden on the community is misplaced.

Sincerely,

Rives Carroll

Rives Carroll
29-year resident of Cleveland Park

cc: Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chair, Board of Zoning Adjustment
Mr. Andrew Altman, Director, Office of Planning
Ms. Kathy Patterson, D.C. Council member
Ms. Carol Schwarz, D.C. Council member
Mr. Phil Mendelson, D.C. Council member

Rives Carroll ***3405 Ashley Terrace, N.W.*** ***Washington, D.C. 20008***

September 18, 2002

Nancy McWood
3417 Woodley Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Ms. McWood,

My family has lived in Cleveland Park for 28 years, 10 of those years on Ashley Terrace where it meets Highland Place. Our children enjoyed many hours of play at the NCRC playground decades ago and our son attended its summer camp. NCRC was a welcoming neighbor. I don't remember problems with carpools, traffic, and incompatibility between the school and neighborhood. Today, however, I am opposed to more cars, carpool trips, traffic, congestion, pollution, more students, and a significantly larger institutional facility in a quiet residential neighborhood.

I am concerned by the number of cars that turn onto Highland Place each morning, noon, afternoon, and evening. They are not only bigger but more numerous than I remember. And when the drivers are late, they step on the accelerator as they pass our house. The proposed increase of fifteen students and six staff positions could unduly exacerbate the already existing traffic congestion on Highland Place at drop off, pick-up, and family festival times. Although the school has made a concerted effort to educate their carpool drivers, they still frequently block the narrow curve of Highland by double parking or nosing their cars into line. I know they think they're only stopping for a few minutes, but it only takes that much time to cause a dangerous situation or a bottle neck at this blind corner.

With respect to the fifteen student increase, it is unclear whether or not that means fifteen in the morning and fifteen in the afternoon, equaling a total of thirty students, or whether that means a total of fifteen students. The question is a valid one since, when in the late 90's NCRC was granted an enrollment increase to a maximum of 120 students, the neighbors agreed and believed 120. NCRC's unspoken intention was different and unexpected----120 at any one time during the day. This interpretation has resulted in 168 students----48 more than the number on which there was agreement----and who knows how many more cars and round trips to and from Highland Place, especially when sometimes parents arrive in separate cars for meetings and functions. In fact, in light of these deceptive numbers, does six new staff mean only six or more?

Adding more students in order to decrease class size, the reason that has been given to neighbors for expansion, seems backwards. If classes are too large, then decrease enrollment. I can see that NCRC may need space for gatherings of parents and students, more indoor play space, and more office space. Reasonable increase in the size of the already existing large house and the playhouse could suffice. The proposed carriage house, as well as the other additions, is inappropriate for a residential historic district and on a lot wedged between two narrow streets, neither of which is conducive to large-scale traffic patterns for drop-off, pick-up, and parking.

We neighbors have invested a great deal of time, money, and years in our houses and neighborhood. That attention and care are good reasons why NCRC likes its location. It benefits from our efforts. Whereas we plan to stay for many more years, the board, families, and staff at NCRC are transient by nature. Those making decisions about the growth of the school today may easily be gone in a few years. We are left with the results.

I urge you to recommend against NCRC's plan.

Sincerely,

Rives Carroll

Rives Fowlkes Carroll
3405 Ashley Terrace, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

October 26, 2002

To: ANC 3C Commissioners

By now you have heard many concerns from neighbors about the proposed physical expansion and enrollment increase at National Child Research Center. I am adding my point of view as of one of the six founding members of the CPHS in1986, as a tour guide of the historic Cleveland Park neighborhood for the Smithsonian, and as a neighbor who lives near NCRC.

I have lived in Cleveland Park for 28 years, 18 on Ordway Street and 10 on Ashley Terrace, so my family and I have been in close proximity to NCRC for nearly three decades. Our children enjoyed playing and going to camp there. NCRC has graciously opened their playground to neighbors.

My first experience with NCRC's negative impact on the neighborhood was with the lack of driver and pedestrian safety caused by the large number of cars, the long carpool line of idling cars, and the congestion, back-ups, and double-parking. This magnitude of traffic on such a small narrow residential street is dangerous. Several times a day, it makes the street a one-way-only street, as there is not enough width for two cars to pass. At times the double parking and idling make it impassable. This street isn't even wide enough for two full-width sidewalks. In fact, in front of the school, the limited width allows for a narrow sidewalk on only the school side of the street. Traffic, however, is only one of the concerns.

Another concern is a potentially more permanent disruption to the neighborhood. **Increasing the institutional nature of the NCRC property is incompatible with both the original plan of The Cleveland Park Land Company that created this historic neighborhood and with the intent of today's residential Historic District.**

I want to share some of the details and background I've learned about Cleveland Park and the house that is now NCRC. As you know, Highland Place is at the heart of the original suburb called Cleveland Park. This suburb was the first to be developed by John Sherman and his wife Ella Bennett Sherman beginning in 1895. Their company, The Cleveland Park Land Company, developed what was called the "Queen of Washington Suburbs" that consisted of Newark, Highland, Ashley Terrace, and the lower part of Macomb. The Shermans were capitalizing on the access to these hills made available by the streetcars that began to run on Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues in 1890 and 1891. Because of the success of this streetcar suburb, the surrounding subdivisions, Oak View, Cleveland Heights, and Connecticut Avenue Highlands became known as Cleveland Park also.

John Sherman built not only houses, but with his paternalistic approach, he built a community. He built a meeting lodge and streetcar waiting room where our library is today. It burned one February night in 1912 as the Boy Scouts had not properly extinguished the fire in the fireplace. He built a police and fire station on Newark at the end of 33rd Place. Notice how unusual and decorative the remaining frame for the firebox at that corner still is today. And he built a stable. He planned to locate the stable on Ordway near Highland and 33rd Place, but the neighbors objected to the flies and odors, so it was constructed behind houses on lower Macomb.

Two of those neighbors were Bates and Lisette Warren, a lawyer and his wife, who lived at 3209 Highland Place, currently NCRC. Their house was the first brick house in Cleveland Park and the only one for a long time. Built by Hunter and Bell in 1905, it sold for $18,000. This Georgian Revival house was constructed with black glazed bricks typical of the James River houses before 1750 when the burning of hickory wood was made illegal in order to protect the disappearing hard wood trees. The black glaze was the result of the brick being close to the heat of a hickory wood fire. Bates Warren was interested in real estate and built the garden apartments on Porter Street, The Cleveland Park, in 1924-5 and the Tilden Gardens on Connecticut Avenue in 1927-30, both within our Historic District.

The building that houses NCRC was and is unique in the neighborhood. It was a home and sits amongst houses that are currently homes, with the single exception of the Cleveland Park Club. As an institution, NCRC has adapted well for many years to an old house and narrow residential streets. However, its institutional function and plans for growth are becoming incompatible with its quiet residential location. **It would be an avoidable mistake to increase the institutional appearance and size of the school by doubling its square footage and adding yet more people and cars**. In 1963, the school made a similar proposal that was rejected.

This street is not the right place for a large school that seems to continually want to grow. Highland Place was not built for carpool lines. In the 1800's it was the alternative route for horses and buggies that had to avoid the muddy and uneven ravine (what today we affectionately call "the dip") on a dirt path (now Newark Street) and therefore chose the high land.

I urge you to recommend against the NCRC proposal to increase their enrollment and enlarge their space that will destroy a valued piece of Washington's past and present.

Sincerely,

Rives Carroll

Leonard Chanin
3057 Ordway Street
Washington, D.C. 20008

September 20, 2002

Via e-mail

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chair
ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Place
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ms. MacWood:

I am writing with regard to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C ("ANC") meeting scheduled for Monday September 23, 2002. In particular, I am writing with regard to the proposal by the National Child Research Center ("NCRC") to expand its facilities and enrollment. My wife and I, and our children, live across the street and a few houses down from the NCRC.

We have two concerns about the current plan by the NCRC to expand its facilities and enrollment. First, from the information NCRC has provided to its neighbors, it seems clear that the increased enrollment will bring greater traffic problems to the neighborhood. Second, we believe the current expansion plans of the physical facilities would dramatically change the "look" of the neighborhood, and would not be in keeping with the historic character of Cleveland Park.

We appreciate the mission of the NCRC and would not be opposed to a reasonable approach that might accomplish NCRC's needs. However, the details of any plan should be thoroughly discussed in advance with the neighbors, to allow those most affected by any changes to raise legitimate concerns and to enable NCRC to try to address those concerns. To date, NCRC has shown great reluctance to pursue this course of action. For example, we understand that NCRC has had discussions with the D.C. Department of Transportation about establishing a "cut-away" lane on Ordway Street to use as a drop-off point for students. This matter has not been discussed with neighbors, and appears to be contrary to statements made to neighbors.

As a result of a lack of openness about its goals and plans, and the failure of the NCRC to include members of the neighborhood in the discussions

and decisionmaking process about the facilities and possible street changes, many neighbors are opposed to NCRC's plans. In light of the failure of NCRC to integrate the neighbors in its decisionmaking process, we also are opposed to the current NCRC expansion plans and urge the ANC to vote against any such requests at the present time.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter. My work telephone number is (202) 887-8778.

Sincerely,

Leonard Chanin (signed)
Leonard Chanin

cc: Ms. Susan Piggott
NCRC

March 6, 2003

Mr. Kenneth Laden
Associate Director for Transportation Planning
DC Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street, NW – Seventh Floor
Washington, D.C. 20009

Re: NCRC Proposal to Expand

Dear Ken:

On behalf of the Cleveland Park Neighbors ("the Neighbors"), I want first to thank you and the other members of the DCDOT staff for the level of your interest and involvement in these NCRC-related issues. Clearly, your department is asking the right questions and showing concern about the right issues, and we are all very grateful for that. It is our sincere hope that, out of the process that you have initiated, the streets of our neighborhood will become safe and sane again.

Procedural Background

On January 28, 2003, NCRC filed a document with the Board of Zoning Adjustment entitled "NCRC Transportation Management Plan: 2002-2003." This document was in support of and attached to NCRC's application to expand its NCRC facility and to increase the size of its student body and staff. The Board provided that Management Plan to DCDOT on February 3, 2003. On February 5, 2003, the Department issued a Memorandum to the Office of Zoning stating that "DCDOT does not support the application as currently proposed." Thereafter, you wrote a letter to NCRC listing a series of concerns about traffic and safety and, in that letter, invited a response from NCRC. In response, NCRC submitted its Proposed Modifications to Transportation Management Plan ("Proposed Modifications").[1] On March 4, 2003, representatives of the Neighbors and of NCRC met with you and members of DCDOT's staff to discuss the NCRC Proposed Modifications. At that time, we

[1] The Neighbors received a copy of that document on March 3, 2003.

gave you our preliminary reactions to NCRC's Proposed Modifications. We are grateful for the opportunity to submit these additional thoughts.

Introduction

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the Neighbors' reaction to NCRC's Proposed Modifications which have been submitted as amendments to NCRC's initial Traffic and Parking Assessment. While the narrow focus of the meeting and this discussion is traffic issues in our neighborhood resulting from NCRC, I believe it is important not to lose sight of the larger context in which that discussion takes place. That context is that NCRC is sited in the middle of an exclusively residential neighborhood between two residential streets that were designed to handle the traffic generated by the intended use of the property that they serve – individual residences. A "child development center" like NCRC is a different and inconsistent use, and one that generates much more vehicular traffic and parking demand than a residence would in the same place. Given that, under zoning law a special exception permitting such an inconsistent use will be granted only if it does not adversely affect the neighborhood, it seems to me that the relevant question is what, if anything can ameliorate the impact of NCRC-generated traffic and parking demand *without adversely affecting the neighborhood.*

Our reactions to and comments on NCRC's Proposed Modifications appear below in two parts: First, we present our view that NCRC's Proposed Modifications will have no meaningful impact on the current situation in the neighborhood; and Second, we present our opinion that NCRC's Proposed Modifications will not address the "dangerous and otherwise objectionable traffic conditions" that the Department found would be created in the event NCRC's plan of expansion were approved. [2]

NCRC's Recent History with the DCDOT

Before turning to NCRC's Proposed Modifications, however, we would suggest that, as the Department reviews all of the NCRC-related transportation issues, it should keep the following facts in mind: On March 27, 1998, the Department of Transportation reviewed and approved NCRC's application for a child development center with 108 children and 28 staff.[3] See Attachment 1.

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[2] DCDOT February 5, 2003 Memorandum to BZA ("DCDOT Report) at p. 4.

[3] Kenneth Laden, Acting Administrator, was the author of the Department's March 27, 1998 report which concluded, with respect to NCRC's request for permission to increase the size of its student population from 90 children to

The Department of Transportation *never* considered and *never* approved any application from NCRC for a child development center with 171 children and 38 staff,[4] which is NCRC's current size. NCRC has never received regulatory approval from the Department of Transportation for its current size. This means that (1) for the past five years, NCRC has been operating at a level well beyond that which the Department of Transportation approved in March 1998; and (2) the Department has never been consulted about and has never opined on the impact of an institution of NCRC's *current* size on the immediate neighborhood.

For that reason, the Neighbors believe that it would be irresponsible for the Department to take NCRC's current enrollment as a given and attempt to design measures aimed at ameliorating harsh and objectionable effects of a population size that has never been approved by this Department. Rather, the Neighbors believe that the Department should adopt a different baseline and determine what additional level of traffic – over and above that resulting from a population of 108 or 120 evaluated and approved by the Department in 1998 – can be accommodated by the neighborhood *without adverse effects*.

There is no reason why the current discussion about measures to ameliorate unsafe and objectionable traffic conditions should begin as if the school's current size of 171 children and 38 staff is fixed in stone. If reducing the flow of traffic to and from the NCRC property is essential to produce safe and sane traffic conditions in NCRC's immediate neighborhood, reducing the number of students, faculty and staff authorized to use the facility is surely a measure that must be considered.

The reality is that the Department of Transportation never blessed NCRC's current size, and there is nothing to prevent the Department from opining that (a) the current traffic problem in the neighborhood is directly attributable to the current size of the population that uses NCRC's property, and (b) one way of addressing that problem would be to reduce the size of that population.

Current Conditions

Based on the Department's Report of February 5, 2003, the Department has a good understanding of the current situation. DCDOT February 5 Report at

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108: "From a transportation standpoint, no additional traffic impact will result from this proposal."

[4] "The school currently has a staff of thirty-eight persons . . ." Technical Memorandum, O.R. George & Associates, Inc. at p 14.

pp.2-4. The Cleveland Park Neighbors believe that the current situation is unsafe, and that the streets that provide outside access to the NCRC site cannot handle the traffic and parking requirements generated by 171 students and 38 staff. The northern side of Highland Place, where parking is permitted, becomes a parking lot used heavily by vehicles associated with NCRC during the school day – parking for faculty and staff, parking for parents and consultants and visitors to the school, parking for parents dropping off and picking up their children at various times during the day. The westbound driving lane of Highland Place – which is used throughout the day for dropping off and picking up children – becomes NCRC's private driveway during school days. During several of the pickup and drop-off times during the day that lane is simply unavailable for through traffic – forcing through traffic in both directions to share a single lane which should be used exclusively for eastbound travel on Highland Place. The fact is that Highland Place simply cannot handle the number of vehicles that NCRC's presence forces on to this stretch of the street.

Moreover, our consultant's studies and direct observation show that one-half of the students are not dropped off at the school by their parents or caregivers; rather they are driven to the school by parents or caregivers who park as close as they can to the school building and then walk their children up to the entrance.[5] The existing sidewalks are simply not large or extensive enough to handle this volume of pedestrian traffic, especially traffic that includes toddlers either on foot or in strollers. Indeed, 33rd Place, around the corner from the school and a location used by many "park and walk" parents, has no sidewalks at all. As a result, the bulk of the parents walk their children in the streets. The conditions are insane and unsafe precisely because NCRC has exceeded the maximum enrollment and staff levels considered by the Department of Transportation in 1998.[6] It seems to us that any solution to restore safety to neighborhood streets must address both the obstructed westbound lane of travel on Highland Place and the presence of large number of parents/caregivers "parking and walking" willy-nilly on Ordway Street, Highland Place, 33rd Place and elsewhere who cross busy streets in mid-block (Ordway), and who walk in the middle of the street in the absence of adequate sidewalks (Highland Place and 33rd Place). NCRC should be required to end

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[5] This, incidentally, produces a variety of illegal and unsafe driving misbehavior by parents and caregivers, such as U-turns, illegal parking, backing up against the flow of traffic and stop sign running.

[6] We also believe that the current population using the NCRC property exceeds the numbers approved by BZA No. 16307 on March 3, 1999, but that is a different issue.

this dangerous practice by its parents, as other institutions that accept pre-school children have.[7]

We welcome DCDOT's efforts to ameliorate the current situation, and we were gratified to see that, in its February 5 report to the BZA, the Department of Transportation urged NCRC (1) "to coordinate with DCDOT's Curbside Management Division to review existing regulatory signage and identify areas for improvement" and (2) "to coordinate with DCDOT Traffic Services Administration to develop a safe circulation plan for the drop-off and pick-up of children."[8]

Proposed Modifications for "Existing Operation on Highland Place"

Of the eleven measures that NCRC proposes to deal with the existing situation, only three involve any change in the current traffic patterns.[9] Indeed, if one compares NCRC's latest proposal with the various iterations of its traffic plans since 1998, one can see that the school advances the same proposed solutions to the problems over and over. Regrettably, five years' experience and direct observation of current conditions shows that these solutions do not work. In our view, none of the new changes contemplated would have any appreciable effect or impact on the current situation. Only one of NCRC's proposed measures holds out hope for a reduction in the number of vehicles coming into the neighborhood, and that measure – increased use of public transportation by the staff – even if wildly successful would have a marginal impact at best.

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[7] For example, the Lowell School, on Kalmia Road off 16th Street, expressly prohibits parents from "parking and walking" their children to the school and requires all parents who do not live within walking distance of the school to use the pickup/drop-off queue. Lowell's youngest children are pre-kindergarten age, the same age as some of NCRC's children.

[8] In its February 5 report, DCDOT made recommendations aimed at improving the current situation, urging NCRC to "coordinate with the DCDOT Curbside Management Division to review existing regulatory signage and identify areas for improvement, and [with the DCDOT Traffic Services Administration to develop a safe circulation plan for the drop-off and pick-up of children under existing conditions in regards to staff level and student enrollment." DCDOT Report at p. 4.

[9] During the March 4 meeting with the Department of Transportation, the Neighbors suggested that the admissions process – which involves visits, tours, interviews, etc – could be scheduled at non-peak times during the school day rather than at the times they are currently scheduled which overlap with peak pick-up and drop-off times. NCRC agreed to this proposal.

The Neighbors' comments on each of these three proposed measures are as follows:

> "NCRC will stagger arrival of students by scheduling the start of classes at approximately 10 minute intervals between 8:25 and 8:45 a.m."

This measure would have no impact whatsoever on the current situation. In fact, while it has not advertised the fact, it appears from neighbors' observations, that NCRC has, for the past several months, staggered class start times in the morning. Moreover, according to NCRC's own traffic expert, "unfavorable traffic operational conditions" occur between 8:20 a.m. and 8:40 a.m., and it is the "restriction of carpools to an approximate ten minute period prior to the 8:35 a.m. opening that contributes to an undesirable level of "peaking" and accumulation of vehicles in the vicinity of the school's entrance." Technical Memorandum at p.14. Adjusting the class schedule so that classes do not all begin at the same moment but are staggered at ten minute intervals over a half hour period of time that coincides precisely with the current "peaks" does not begin to address the question.

Moreover, our consultant's study shows that NCRC-related traffic peaks, not in the early morning when children are arriving at NCRC, but in late morning when children are being picked up from the morning session and other children are arriving for an afternoon session. The NCRC proposal fails to address this situation because, while it may be possible to control class start times, it is impossible to control precisely when parents arrive to collect their children and take them home.

> "NCRC will use its entire frontage along Highland Place as queuing space for carpool operation, thereby doubling the existing amount of queuing space from 4 to 8 cars."

As an initial matter, this proposal requires imposing a significant burden on the neighborhood for NCRC's benefit. NCRC's characterization of the proposal as the use of "its frontage" is misleading. What is being proposed for use for NCRC's exclusive benefit is a public street, not NCRC property. This plan would require eliminating existing parking on Highland Place in front of the NCRC playground between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to make it available as "queuing space." It reduces available street parking, even as NCRC's parents, staff and consultants add to the parking demand in the neighborhood. There are six houses on the south side of Highland Place, across from this proposed extension of the NCRC drop-off zone, the residents of which would suffer significant adverse impact from implementation of this proposal. Those six houses have a total of three off-

street parking spaces among them. For the remainder of their parking needs, those residents of those houses must use the street. The current parking spaces in the proposed expanded "queuing space" and approximately two legal parking spaces in front of the residence at 3225 Highland Place (next door to NCRC) *are the only available street parking for the residents of those six houses, their guests and the tradespeople serving them.* Thus, implementing NCRC's proposal would effectively deny residents of six houses on Highland Place essential street parking. This is clearly a burden to the neighborhood.

At best, this measure would speed up the pace of the queue because more cars (8) would be able to drop off and pick up their children at the same time than can do so currently (4). This measure would have no impact on the number of cars coming to and leaving from Highland Place. At best, it would only change the current structure of the process on Highland place, i.e., from a static queue where parents park their cars on the north side of Highland Place and walk their children to NCRC side by side, to a moving queue where parents wait their turn in their cars and move forward to the front of NCRC where they can drop-off and/or pick-up their children. (This process is emphatically not a "car pool operation." Because the children are so young, the number of car pools actually delivering and picking-up children at NCRC is a very small number relative to the overall size of the student population.) The most one can say for this idea is that it might reduce one dangerous condition – the large number of parents who "park and walk" – while increasing another – the length and duration of the pickup/drop-off queue; and it does so at great cost to the neighborhood.

> "NCRC will provide its staff increased financial incentives to use public transportation."

This measure is the only "proposed modification" that has any theoretical possibility of reducing the number of vehicles traveling to and from NCRC. Even if wildly successful, this measure would have only a marginal effect. There are currently 38 faculty and staff at NCRC. According to Ms. Piggott, 25% of the faculty and staff already rely on public transportation to travel to and from NCRC. While the effect of such incentives is a matter of speculation, even if the financial incentives contemplated in this proposal were to produce a doubling of that number – which would be a 100% increase in the number of NCRC faculty/staff using public transportation – the result would be to reduce the number of vehicles traveling to and from NCRC by a total of nine. Any reduction is worthwhile. This measure, however, is simply inadequate as a solution to the problems identified.

Proposed "Future Changes"

None of the three measures identified in this section would materially improve the current situation. Adding ten children (which would bring the total enrollment to 181) and maintaining the right to add four more (which would bring the total enrollment to 185) will only exacerbate the current situation. Adding faculty and staff has the same effect.

The Neighbors believe that the current situation is so intolerable as to warrant a reduction in the population permitted to use the NCRC property. Putting that issue aside for the moment, the Neighbors also believe that it would be irresponsible for DC regulatory authorities to authorize NCRC to expand its population before testing and determining the impact of whatever measures the Department of Transportation adopts in its effort to make the neighborhood traffic situation safer and saner. We insist on this because we already have been down the path of ineffective traffic management plans – since 1998 – and NCRC's latest proposal adds little to the past NCRC plans which are proven failures.[10]

A final point: There is no way that NCRC can implement any of its proposed modifications before Fall 2003. Of necessity, a period of time will be required to observe and to evaluate the impact of these new measures. If those measures are unsuccessful and do not have the desired effect, it makes no sense to make the problem worse by having already authorized an expansion in the size of the population using the NCRC property. Surely the Department of Transportation would be well advised to withhold approval of NCRC's plan to expand its facility and its population until such time as it is possible to judge whether the measures that we are discussing – and that NCRC may be implementing – have or have not been effective at solving the problems identified.

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[10] It is worth remembering that, even for the modest requested NCRC enrollment increase from 90 to 120 that the Board of Zoning Adjustment approved in 1998, uncertainty about the effectiveness of NCRC's traffic management plan led the Board to grant NCRC's request for only eight years in order for the neighbors to come back and revisit the proposed expansion, should NCRC traffic's adverse impact on the neighborhood continue unabated.

Conclusion

The Department of Transportation identified two issues in its February 5 report to the BZA:

As to the first, "What measures might ameliorate the adverse impacts that currently flow from the heavy traffic that travels to and from NCRC?" While the Neighbors support the idea of making sensible adjustments in the way that children are delivered to and picked up from NCRC, the Neighbors also believe that the single most significant measure would be to reduce the population of students and faculty that currently use the property.

As to the second, "Will NCRC's proposed expansion have an adverse impact on the neighborhood?" the Neighbors believe that there is nothing in the list of NCRC's Proposed Modifications that would warrant a change in DCDOT's position. In the words of the DCDOT report, "The proposed new construction and subsequent increase of staff and enrollment at the subject site will have an adverse impact on parking supply, will create dangerous and otherwise objectionable traffic conditions and increase vehicular volume on neighboring streets." The Neighbors further believe that DCDOT should not even re-examine NCRC's application until such time as the proposed measures aimed at ameliorating the adverse impact of traffic on the neighborhood have been implemented, tested and proved effective.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory Craig

Cc: The. Hon. Nancy MacWood
Maureen Dwyer, Esq.

September 30, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood, Chair
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3-C
2737 Devonshire Place, NW
Washington, D.C.

Re: **NCRC Plan to Expand**

Dear Ms. MacWood:

I am a Cleveland Park neighbor who is critical of NCRC's proposed plan to expand its facilities and to increase the population that uses that facility in the future. I attended the ANC meeting that dealt with this subject last Monday evening (September 23). I did not speak, but I have thoughts about some of NCRC's arguments that I would like to share with the Commissioners.

Argument #1: The ARC concluded that the design of NCRC's proposed new structures are perfectly consistent with the historical character of the neighborhood.

When considering whether the NCRC proposal is historically appropriate, the ANC should not limit its analysis to whether the bricks, windows, roofs and porches of the proposal fit in -- visually and physically -- with the rest of the neighborhood. The ANC's role should not be limited to that of an appellate court reviewing the narrowly-based judgments of the Architectural Review Committee. There are many other factors to take into account when considering the history of the neighborhood.

Because of the sheer magnitude of the NCRC proposal and because such a major expansion will necessarily have an impact on the character of the surrounding neighborhood, the issue of whether the NCRC proposed new buildings are historically appropriate does not lend itself to traditional ARC-style analysis. In other words, the ANC's historical analysis should not be limited to, e.g., whether the additions "look" as if they belong in the neighborhood; whether the new windows, doors, porches and roofs have been designed to appear as if they were built in 1895; 1905 whether the new structures are visually consistent with the other houses in the neighborhood. These questions are always important of course and can be dispositive. In this case, however, the size of the proposed expansion of the

institution carries serious implications for the historical character of the neighborhood.

Put another way: If NCRC were proposing to sell off a corner of its lot to allow a new 6000 square foot stand-alone residence to be constructed on that location, that would be one thing. But NCRC's proposal is to double the size of its physical plant. This kind of institutional expansion, occurring in the heart of one of the most historically significant and interesting neighborhoods in the District of Columbia, is inconsistent with that neighborhood's history and will have an adverse affect on that neighborhood. For that reason, I believe that the ANC should consider whether such a dramatic expansion of what began as a small neighborhood pre-school is so inconsistent with the history of the place and is so out of scale with the rest of the neighborhood that the proposal flunks the history test as well as the zoning test.

I presume that the founders of NCRC, when it first began some seventy-five years ago, had to approach the D.C. regulatory authorities of the time and had to seek permission to use a residence as a school in what otherwise would be an exclusively residential neighborhood. The variance that was granted at that time was probably based on the consideration that NCRC would be small, and that it would, with few exceptions, serve the families living in the neighborhood. I can hear the argument:

> "This kind of an institution – a small neighborhood school – will enhance this special residential neighborhood. It will not detract from it or damage it. And given the fact that the school will be small and filled with children from the neighborhood, using a residence in this fashion will not be out of character with the history of this most beautiful part of Cleveland Park."

One can fairly assume, I think, that, had the D.C. regulatory authorities of that time been confronted with a proposal to have a facility of 18,000 square feet serving over 180 students and 25 staff members, those authorities would have rejected the proposal on historical as well as zoning grounds – even if the architecture was impeccable. There is little doubt that, seventy five years ago, the regulatory authorities would have concluded that such a proposed use of the property is completely inconsistent with the historical character of what, up until that time, had been an exclusively residential neighborhood.[1] It is fair to assume that NCRC was given its original variance based on the assumption that, given its location in the middle of a block in the heart of Cleveland Park, NCRC would and could never be anything more than a "small neighborhood school."

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[1] It should be remembered that almost twenty five percent of the student body comes from outside the District, meaning that 45 NCRC students commute to the school from Maryland and Virginia. Most of the students who attend NCRC are driven to school.

Of course, this analysis is fully supported by what happened in 1963 when the DC authorities rejected NCRC's plan to expand the student body to a population significantly smaller than the current population. And it also explains why NCRC appears not to have been fully forthcoming with the DC authorities in 1998 as to the actual number of people – students in the morning and students in the afternoon and teachers and staff – using the facility every day.

My only point is that the NCRC proposal under consideration simply does not lend itself to the traditional bifurcated analysis: i.e., first, let's look at the way the building appears to see if it fits in visually with the historical character of the neighborhood; then, let's look at the use and zoning issues. With respect to the NCRC proposal, it is the magnitude of the proposed new facilities and functions -- 9000 square feet of new building space plus twenty new bodies coming and going -- that will damage the historical character of this small but precious slice of Cleveland Park.

Argument #2: NCRC is an excellent institution, and it must be allowed to pursue its mission.

This argument, in particular, irritates the Cleveland Park neighbors because there is no group of people that is more committed to excellence in education than this group. The argument is laden with emotion, and it has no logical content. No one begrudges NCRC's desire to improve its physical plant. No one is against NCRC building a room where faculty can meet without being bothered. No one wants to deny children the right to run around inside. All that -- and more -- can be accomplished without adding 9000 square feet to the physical plant or increasing the enrollment. NCRC wrote the specs for the expansion, and those specs describe a facility that would serve at least an additional 36 students and a dozen new teachers and supporting staff. There is nothing about NCRC's mission that requires it to educate 200 students as opposed to 120 students. I know of no evidence to suggest a smaller population of pre-school students is necessarily less excellent than a large population. There is overwhelming evidence that an over-sized population – in these circumstances – will do and already does enormous damage to the surrounding neighborhood.

Argument #3: NCRC has leaned over backwards to meet with the neighbors and to scale back its proposal

It is true that the architectural plans that NCRC presented to the ANC on Wednesday night are considerably more modest than the plans that were originally presented to the neighborhood last February. And the NCRC is to be congratulated for recognizing – after learning about the intense opposition within the neighborhood – that those original plans were so outlandish as to be wholly

indefensible. It is also true that, with respect to NCRC's proposed increase of students and staff, NCRC has reduced that proposed increase on different occasions (maybe more). According to my recollection, NCRC's originally proposed an increase of nineteen additional students and a dozen staff. NCRC later reduced that proposal to fifteen. During NCRC's presentation to the ARC on September 18, NCRC further reduced its proposal thirteen. When addressing the ANC on September 23, NCRC said it was now only proposing an increase of ten students.[2] It is true that NCRC"s most recent position represents a reduction of almost fifty percent in the size of its proposed expansion in enrollment. [3]

There are, however, two things to be said about the issue of enrollment:

First, many of us believe that the size of the population using the NCRC facility is already too great, and that NCRC grew to its current size by pulling the wool over the eyes of the regulatory authorities. Many of us believe, along with Andrew Hamilton, that the path to true excellence at NCRC would be to reduce, not increase, the size of the population using the facility. Many of us believe that, if NCRC truly believes that the ideal size of a pre-school is larger than the 171 students currently using the NCRC facility, NCRC should go somewhere else.

Second, many of us believe that the total size of the population that comes into the neighborhood -- every morning and every afternoon -- to use the NCRC facility is the single most important issue in this whole dispute. Certain neighbors communicated this specific concern to NCRC early on in the process. Moreover, these same neighbors told NCRC that, <u>if NCRC would agree to a legally enforceable cap on the student/teacher population at the current level</u>, these parents would find a way to support renovation of NCRC's facility.

That proposal was rejected. Many neighbors believe that NCRC has ambitiouis plans to increase the size of the student/teacher/staff population, and that the ultimate increase will be considerably more than NCRC acknowledged at the ANC meeting on Wednesday night. It may not be next year. It may not be the following year. But increasing the student population – and the revenue base -- is the objective.

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[2] It is simply untrue to claim that NCRC has been consistent in the size of its proposed increase to the student enrollment, that the number has "always" been ten.

[3] The rationale has always been the same: i.e., that NCRC needs to reduce the size of its existing classes but then needs to fill out the two new classes with new students.

Argument #4 The traffic congestion on Highland Place is only twenty minutes in the morning and twenty minutes in the middle of the day.

My understanding is that this claim is inaccurate, that traffic to the school begins – for "the early-birds" – well before the school day begins at 8:30 a.m, and that traffic from the school continues – for departing teachers and staff – well after the school day ends at 3:30 p.m. There is total gridlock at the peak hours, and the peak hours are increasing -- in the length of time that the gridlock blocks the street, and in the frequency of gridlock during the day.

Simply put, there are too many people coming and going from NCRC currently. No matter how conscientious NCRC may be in its efforts to manage the traffic, the neighborhood cannot handle the population of commuters. No matter how energetic NCRC may be in its efforts to enforce basic traffic rules for drop-off and pick-up, there will always be some who violate those rules.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my views.

Sincerely yours,

Gregory B. Craig

Ana G. Tejblum Evans
3428 Ashley Terrace, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Ms. Nancy MacWood, Chairman
Mr. John Welsh
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C
2737 Devonshire Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008

September 16, 2002

Dear Ms. MacWood and Mr. Welsh:

I am writing with respect to the proposed expansion of NCRC. Ashley Terrace is a dead end street of eight houses, an offshoot of Highland Place. My family has lived on Ashley Terrace for ten years. In the course of my research, I found copies of letters written by the previous owners of our house expressing opposition to the expansion of NCRC in 1963. What was true then is true now.

Highland Place is a narrow street, with a narrow sidewalk on only one side. It has barely room enough for two lanes of traffic. If there are cars parked on the North side of the street, traffic is slow and torturous. At present, NCRC parents use Highland as a driveway four times a day: in the morning, twice around noon, and in the early afternoon. At these times the street is inaccessible to the residents' cars. The school attempts to control the traffic with varying success, but we cannot let the children play in the street (even in the summer!) because we cannot trust the skills of parents and caregivers who turn from Newark into Highland at excessive speeds, often with a phone or coffee cup in hand. It is an extremely dangerous situation.

NCRC has circumvented all attempts to control traffic through enrollment. For many years they operated a school for 168 children, while they had a special exception for a school with only 90 children. In 1998, under pressure from licensing authorities, they applied for a special exception to operate a school for 120 children. The record is clear that this was a misrepresentation of the truth to the BZA, as evidenced in the transcript of the hearing, and to the ANC, as is evident from the letter submitted to the BZA by then ANC Commissioner Phil Mendelson. Is it any wonder that some members of NCRC's board were extremely upset when neighbors obtained copies of the school's directories and counted 168 children!

Highland Place is also the heart of the Cleveland Park Historic District. We have received this designation because of the value to society of preserving an area with distinctive residential, commercial, and institutional structures. In the wisdom of the developers of Cleveland Park at the turn of the century, each of these uses was relegated to the appropriate area, based on ease of circulation. That is why John Eaton Elementary School was built on 34th ST, and the commercial strip is on Connecticut Ave. If a

nursery school is to be located in a residential street, it should conform to the strictest criteria for residential architecture. The current administration and board of NCRC would have us believe that a 7,000 square foot structure, with an HVAC system on the roof is a "carriage house" and therefore acceptable. This makes a mockery of the process of historic preservation. We are not seeking to preserve bits of ornamental detail on building façade. We want to retain the feeling of a residential area, the beauty of a streetscape which is made up of houses and their surrounding green space.

I hope you will join the residents in opposing the requests for expansion of the school, and in so doing, preserve the fragile beauty of our neighborhood.

Respectfully yours,

Ana G. Tejblum Evans

3318 Ordway Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

May 6, 2003

Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning
801 N. Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
Via Facsimile: (202) 442-7638

Re: NCRC

Dear Mr. Altman,

As NCRC neighbors and Ordway Street residents for almost 20 years, we are writing in strong opposition to NCRC's expansion plans for several reasons.

Traffic: During the last decade, noise and congestion have increased as a result of NCRC. The school's efforts to address these issues since they unveiled their expansion plans in February 2002 have been unsuccessful. **We are now shocked to learn that the City is proposing to change adjacent Highland Place to one-way and eliminate on-street parking because NCRC has grown too large to be accommodated on our neighborhood streets.**

Size: NCRC envisions almost doubling the current 10,000 sq. ft. size of their facilities to permit them to add up to 14 students to their current 171 student population. They have been unable to explain the necessity of this desired expansion of buildings and population to the satisfaction of our neighborhood. **NCRC also appears to have misrepresented its population to the BZA during a previous appearance before this group and BZA has declined to enforce its previous order.**

Historic preservation: The construction of a new two-story classroom building, a new maintenance building, and a significant expansion of the historic house will diminish this very important element of our historic district. **Alarmingly, they propose to grow from a school located in an historic house to one located on a campus.**

The Office of Planning is uniquely qualified to understand the harm this school's expansion will do to our community. Please do not support this proposal.

Sincerely,

Marc Fetterman

Nancy Fetterman

3318 Ordway Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

September 22, 2002

Nancy MacWood, Chair
ANC-3C
2737 Devonshire Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008
Via e-mail: nmacwood@aol.com

Dear Ms. MacWood,

As an NCRC neighbor and Ordway Street resident for almost 19 years, I am writing in strong opposition to NCRC's expansion plans for several reasons.

Historic preservation: The construction of a new two-story classroom building, a new maintenance building, and a significant expansion of the historic house will diminish this very important element of our historic district. The reduction of mature trees and open space, begun by NCRC a decade ago, will further erode the character of our neighborhood.

Size: NCRC envisions almost doubling the size of their facilities (from 10,720 sq ft to 21,109 sq ft) to permit them to add at least 15 students to their current 168 student population. They have been unable to explain the necessity of this desired expansion of buildings and population to the satisfaction of our neighborhood. We have recently learned that they misrepresented their population to the BZA during their last appearance before this group. They have expanded to three sessions each day and we understand that additional evening programs are contemplated.

Traffic: Noise and congestion have increased, our driveways are more frequently blocked, students appear to be put in jeopardy as they are rushed to school, and those driving students to school seem less willing to be respectful of our neighborhood. The school's efforts to address these issues since they unveiled their expansion plans last February have been unsuccessful.

NCRC has become less responsive to our community during the past two decades. They have failed to keep commitments made to our neighborhood and our City. Alarmingly, they propose to grow from a school located in an historic house to one located on a campus. Please vote against this proposal.

Sincerely,

Marc Fetterman

cc John Welsh, via e-mail: oxbo@starpower.net