April 26th 200

Geoffrey H. Griffis
Chairperson, Board of Zoning Adjustments
441 4th St. NW. Second Floor
Washington, DC. 20001

Dear Mr. Griffis,

As an heir to 3204 Highland Place, NW, I lived directly across the street from NCRC from the ages of 12 to 20, and, intermittantly, during short visits to my parents, thereafter.

Throughout that time, living across from the National Child Research Center has been an unending irritation to my entire family, due to endless traffic, blocking of our driveway & street, & numerous cases of vandalism. (On one occassion, my father caught the culprit in the act, & she paid him immediately for the damages to his car. My father's car was damaged numerous times, my brother's car was damaged twice, as was mine, & I still have a scratch from one end of the van to the front which is no more than two feet from the ground....)

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16976
EXHIBIT NO.209A3

When I was attending American University, I stopped driving to school + chose to walk, mostly because of the bottlenecks of traffic that would occur in front of our house, keeping my car trapped in the driveway.

Later, I took a job that began at 10 AM, in part to avoid the erratic nature of the traffic in front of the house. Watching parents sharing coffee in the middle of the street while dropping off their children is a memory I shall never forget. While they enjoyed their lattes, the street was at a standstill. Since then, many improvements were made in managing traffic, which helped enormously, but the enrollment increased. Now, it is proposed that enrollment will double, AGAIN.

Is it not a basic law of physics that two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time? How, then, can a vastly over-crowded school on a narrow winding road effectively double its enrollment without disturbing the neighborhood even <u>more</u>?

We are opposed to this expansion because not only are the property values already adversely affected by NCRC's presence, but the quality of life on Highland Place will become even more uncomfortable to the point where we may have no other option but to sell the house.

It was my intention to buy the house from my family, but I will certainly not do it if NCRC expands. Any chance of quiet enjoyment of the house and of the street will no longer be possible.

It is outrageous that, after 40 years of living on Highland Place, we should be bullied into moving/selling by an organization which relentlessly thinks only of its expansion + profits, all the while pretending it is "little House on the Prairie".

Additionally shameful are the DC Govt. agencies, which are sitting on their hands, while the vast majority of our neighbors,

proposed expansion of NCRC.

This represents many dozens of families, who have, over decades, paid among the highest taxes in the city all the while suffering endless potholes + limited services without major complaint.

We have all rallied to this cause because it is too much. Over the years, we have bent over + bent over + bent over + now we cannot do it anymore.

This is a shocking example of what happens when revenue takes precedence over the rights + rightful expectations of DC residents + their families.

My neighbors who have valiantly taken on this fight to protect Highland Place, will continue this fight, because they are fighting for maintaining the quality of life of our neighborhood. They should be commended + supported.

For years there has barely been parking available for residents & guests & almost none for workmen.

If the one-way parking plan is approved, we would have a serious parking problem of our own, because we share a driveway with our next-door neighbor, Kate Marshall at 3208 Highland & we would be driving against traffic to park there. Even though the Marshalls have almost exclusively used the driveway over these many years, this would no longer be possible if street parking is curtailed any further.

To recapitulate, it is my understanding that most of our neighbors are opposed to this expansion proposal of NCRC's.

We are shocked by the bravado of its owners & their relentless insistance of going against our wishes, dismayed by the huge sums of money that are being used to bully their way through our opposition, and dismayed by the DC Govt. & its agencies

which should be protecting + championing our CAUSE instead of bowing to the political wishes of those who do not live in our Neighborhood, did not grow up there + who do not care what happens to the Area once they pick up their children and go home.

After all, it is precisely because they do not live there themselves that they are so callously oblivious to our plight.

But what of the zoning board? What is your excuse for ignoring + neglecting us? What of the transportation dept?

It is painfully obvious that NCRC is exercising a gross abuse of power over its perceived weaker neighbors. Perhaps they feel that their superior resources of time + money + political saavy will win the day for them.

What is also obvious is that NCRC has no concept of what it means to be a Considerate Neighbor in Cleveland Park.

Highland Place was an oasis of calm, peace + tranquility in the heart of the city. This expansion proposal will, effectively, turn it

into little more than a moving parking lot!

When that happens, perhaps all our neighbors should symbolically pay for ~~the space of~~ a single parking space instead of paying our real estate taxes!?!

Only at that point would the DC Govt. see the error of having supported WRC against us.

But by then, the damage would have been done.

Therefore, now is the time for the backpedaling & doublespeaking to cease.

There is still time to stop this proposal, now & for the future.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Sincerely,

Counselo Newman

Counselo Newman
(202) 277-9181

April 28, 2003

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St. NW Suite 201
Washington, DC 2001

RE:
Case 16970 Square 2072 lot 30

Dear Mr. Griffis:

The current NCRC expansion plan is completely inappropriate to our neighborhood. Its proposed physical facility will triple its current square footage and thereby dominate the landscape on both Highland Place and Ordway Street. At the present time, the school's increased enrollment is creating dangerous vehicular and pedestrian problems for all of us residents on Highland Place, Ashley Terrace and Ordway Street. The proposed expansion of over 8000 square feet and student and faculty increases will exacerbate an already dangerous situation.

We are long-time residents of Cleveland Park, having lived on Ordway Street from 1972 until 1979 when we moved to our current home at 3415 Ashley Terrace. We have lived harmoniously with the school these many years but the nature and the intent of the school has changed in the past five years. Their expanded facilities and expanded curriculum and programs are causing enormous traffic congestion for both pedestrians and residential vehicles. We can no longer navigate OUR neighborhood streets with ease and safety. The whole neighborhood should not have to alter its way of life just to accommodate the expansion of NCRC which is unwilling to compromise its plans and which has exceeded its enrollment cap for years.

The DC DOT's recent recommendation that Highland Place become a one-way street, westbound, as suggested by NCRC, is ill-conceived for the following reasons:

1. It would block direct egress to Connecticut Ave for Ashley Terrace and lower Highland Place. The only route would be west on Highland, to 33rd, to Newark

2. For the above reason, it would further increase traffic in front of NCRC as Ashley and lower Highland would have to go past NCRC confronting school traffic from multiple drop-offs during the day, increasing an already congested and dangerous situation.
3. Traffic would further increase on Newark Street
4. During snowy and icy weather residents of Ashley and Highland could not approach their homes from 34th Street except by driving the Newark hill which is often impassable and dangerous. Currently flat Highland Place provides a safe route from 34th Street, avoiding the hills of Newark.
5. It would eliminate right and left turns off of 34th Street onto Highland. Residents and others would have to turn at Newark and 34th Streets, already one of the most dangerous and accident-ridden intersections in the city. Traffic here should not be increased.
6. It would adversely affect the routes of all residents, deliveries, mail carriers, construction workers, yard maintenance, trash pick-up, and other businesses which serve our neighborhood.

NCRC occupies one lot in the neighborhood and with its current enrollment and facility it disproportionately dominates the neighborhood. **ITS PLANS FOR EXPANSION WILL ONLY INCREASE THE PROBLEMS WHICH WILL MORE SERIOUSLY AND ADVERSELY IMPACT OUR PROPERTY. AS PROPERTY OWNERS AND NEIGHBORS WE CANNOT TOLERATE THE CURRENT PROPOSED EXPANSION PLANS OF THE SCHOOL. WE URGE YOU TO VOTE AGAINST THE ZONING VARIANCE.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Leslie and John Oberdorfer

Cc: The Honorable Kathy Patterson

Mr. Andrew Altman
Director, Office of Planning

Leslie Oberdorfer
3415 Ashley Terrace NW
Washington, DC 20008

January 26, 2003

Dear Tersh,

I am dismayed by the vote of the HPRB on the development of NCRC. If one of us residents in the Historic District of Cleveland Park proposed to double the size of our current houses, we would be voted down so quickly, it would make our heads spin. This is exactly what NCRC is planning to do. Regardless of the merits of the design, NCRC is proposing to double its size to allow for increased enrollment (which is already above the allowable level) and further increase the traffic and congestion caused by the programs at the school.

You led the neighborhood in our efforts to preserve and protect its unique place in the city. It is very disappointing to know that you have now condoned and encouraged major institutional development right here on Highland Place.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Ms. McWood:

Our family has lived in Cleveland Park since 1972, for seven years, first on Ordway and currently at 3415 Ashley Terrace. Our son went to NCRC and had a wonderful experience there. The school has previously been a very good neighbor and an asset to the community.

The recent growth in numbers of students, staff, curricula, and program activities has altered the nature of the school and its relationship to the neighborhood. There has been a demonstrable increase in traffic throughout the day as the school has expanded its programs. Driving on Highland Place and Ordway Streets has become hazardous and often impossible.

The school is now proposing to further increase its academic programs and to double its physical facility and add additional students and staff. These additions will further add an unbearable traffic and parking burden and create a new structure that will crowd the property on Ordway Street and Highland Place.

We are so fortunate to have a beautiful natural setting which has been historically designated. This proposed physical and programmatic addition is out of scale to the neighborhood and will greatly diminish the quality of life here in the neighborhood as well as compromise the safety of residential pedestrian and vehicular traffic. For these reasons we strongly oppose the changes advanced by NCRC.

Sincerely,

Leslie and John Oberdorfer
3415 Ashley Terrace, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Roberts B. Owen
3122 Newark Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20008-3343

May 2, 2003

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Suite 201
Washington DC 20001

Re: Case 16970, Square 2072, Lot 30

Dear Mr. Griffis:

My home is at 3122 Newark Street, N.W., Washington DC 20008 – which puts me in the same immediate neighborhood as the National Child Research Center on Highland Place. In fact, I walk past the Highland Place entrance to NCRC virtually every day and have personally observed, with great dismay, the continual traffic congestion created by NCRC's complicated pick-up and drop-off arrangements. These arrangements have been a major headache for the entire neighborhood for years, and I am distressed to hear that it is now being proposed that NCRC be permitted to expand its student body and create even greater traffic congestion than has existed in the past.

Frankly, I am hard pressed to think of any public interest that would be served by a BZA approval of an expansion of NCRC. Some private interests would be well served, primarily the interests of the affluent families from suburban Maryland and Virginia who, using their expensive commuter vehicles, have for many years been creating serious traffic headaches for all of the local residents including myself. I submit, however, that traffic conditions have reached the point where the interests of these out-of-town suburban families should be subordinated to the interests of the people who live in the neighborhood. The families and properties of the neighbors have been adversely affected for too many years already, and I strongly oppose any further increase in the volume of NCRC students and traffic. I urge you to vote against the zoning variance that NCRC now seeks for its expansion.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Owen
Robert B. Owen

Pamela and Robert Pelletreau
3220 Highland Place, NW
Washington DC 20008-3231
Tel: 202-363-8517
Fax: 202-363-0736
ppelletrea@aol.com; rpelletreau@aol.com

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW Suite 201
Washington DC 2001

April 26, 2003

Re: Case 16970 Square 2072 lot 30----Proposed NCRC expansion

Dear Chairman Griffis,

On May 6th the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) will hear the request of the National Child Research Center, a private pre-school, for a variance to enable it to build a second principal building on a single lot. We live directly across from the school and have done so since 1971. A school that we considered an asset on buying our house is rapidly becoming a liability. A treed and inviting playground, generously open to the neighborhood outside school hours, has become heavily concreted and lost many trees. The current enrollment requires multiple delivery and pickup cartrips over the period of the school day. The DOT has recognized the danger to children and residents and proposes, as the "least worst" alternative, the transformation of Highland Place into a one way street. Given that transformation, DOT has apparently removed its earlier objection to the expansion of student body and staff.

We are strongly opposed to any further expansion of student body and accompanying staff. An expansion will exacerbate the problems of vehicular pollution and noise, expand trash pick-ups, impact parking. We are NOT opposed to NCRC's better accommodating its existing student body. It is a fine school with a fully diversified student body and has until the past few years been a neighborhood presence in which we all took pride. We hope that the BZA will, through refusing the requested variance, send the school back to the drawingboard to work on more modest modifications that will enable it to continue to provide a first-class preschool experience without a further enrollment increase.

Please feel free to share this letter with other members of the BZA. As members of the Cleveland Park Neighbors we will be represented by counsel on May 6th but thought our personal, voter, tax-payer views should also be expressed directly.

Very truly yours,

Pamela D. Pelletreau

Robert H. Pelletreau

Pamela and Robert Pelletreau
3220 Highland Place, NW
Washington DC 20008-3231
May 5, 2003

Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning
801 North Capital Street NE
Washington DC 20002

FAX: 202-442-7638

Dear Mr. Altman:

We live at 3220 Highland Place, directly across from the National Child Research Center. As "Neighbors" we are represented before the Board of Zoning Adjustment by counsel. However, we write to inform you directly that we fully support the letter sent you by Susie Taylor. Highland Place has physical limitations. We oppose the proposed expansion of NCRC and have written the BZA asking that they refuse the requested variance.

Very truly yours,

Pamela D. Pelletreau Robert Pelletreau

March 15, 2003
Pamela and Robert Pelletreau.
3220 Highland Place, N.W.
Washington D. C. 20008-3231
Tel: 202-363-8517; Fax: 202-363-0736
ppelletrea@aol.com---rpelletreau@aol.com

Mr. Ken Tangherlini, Director
DC Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street N.W.
Washington DC 20009

Re: Traffic Impact of Proposed NCRC Expansion

Dear Mr. Tangherlini:

The National Child Research Center (NCRC) is directly opposite our house at 3220 Highland Place, N.W. The Center is requesting an expansion of children and staff and construction of a new building. Your department has recommended against approving the expansion because of the increase in traffic it will bring to a residential area that is already suffering from the impact of NCRC-related traffic, parking and vehicular pollution.

NCRC is proposing modifications of the rejected traffic plan in order to gain the support of the DOT. The "Cleveland Park Neighbors", a group of which we are members, is firmly opposed to the expansion and to ANY increase in NCRC-related traffic and parking in the neighborhood. Many homeowners share or are without driveways and have no option to on-street parking for themselves, their guests and visitors and the inevitable workmen. NCRC's creeping expansion within the finite space it has always shared with its Cleveland Park neighbors seems to have accelerated in the last few years and is steadily eroding the immediate neighbors enjoyment of their property and crowding out their reasonable use of Highland Place and its already limited parking possibilities.

The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) will be considering a revised application from NCRC on May 6th. The DOT had two representatives at the last meeting, February 25, prepared to testify against the expansion. We hope the Department will continue to hold firm and would welcome a visit from you or your representative on any normal school day.

Very truly yours,

Pamela D. Pelletreau Robert H. Pelletreau

cc: Kenneth Laden, Associate Director for Transportation Planning
Colleen Smith, Ward 3 Neighborhood Transportation Planner
Nancy MacWood, ANC

Mary W. Poole
John W. Poole
3125 Newark St NW
Washington DC 20008

May 5, 2003

Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning
801 North Capitol St. NE
Washington DC 20002

By Facsimile: (202) 442-7638

Dear Mr. Altman:

Your office's apparent support for NCRC's expansion proposal heightens our concern that one of the District's serious problems may be the mindset of some of its elected and appointed governors that Washington is really a place for people to use, not a place to live. The city has been losing population for decades and is supposedly trying to reverse that trend. Protecting and increasing quality of life for residents, surely a paramount goal for any city, would seem to be an overwhelmingly important goal for ours. Yet quality of residential life appears to count for little when weighed against the desires of private schools to expand.

While the city's population has been declining, its private school enrollments have been increasing, because the private schools, unlike public ones, serve many people who don't live in the District. NCRC is a good example: as it grew, it abandoned its historic role as a neighborhood nursery school; it now frequently rejects neighbor applications. Many of its students now don't live in the city. And as vans and SUVs became more popular and carpooling diminished, traffic in NCRC's Highland Place neighborhood has become such a serious safety problem that the Department of Transportation says it isn't sure it can be fixed. The Department's recently proposed attempt at a partial solution, to convert a particularly secluded residential street to one-way traffic, would undeniably adversely affect not just people who live on Highland Place and Ordway Street but those on Newark as well.

The existing situation and the District's proposed (partial) solution for it seem to be just what good planning was supposed to prevent.

Sincerely,

Mary W. Poole
John W. Poole

3125 Newark St NW
Washington DC 20008

April 23, 2003

Mr. Daniel Tangherlini
Director
District Department of Transportation
2000 14th St., N.W. 6th Fl.
Washington, D.C. 20009

Re: BZA Application No. 16970 (NCRC expansion)

Dear Mr. Tangherlini:

I was impressed with the conscientiousness and fairness of the two representatives from your office who came out to interview our neighbors about this matter a few weeks ago. So I was very puzzled and disturbed by the letter DDOT sent to the Board of Zoning Adjustment on April 14 in which it backed off from positions it took in a letter to that same agency on February 5 of this year. The new letter doesn't make sense.

In DDOT's February letter, your agency pointed out that, even without the additional expansion that NCRC now proposes, because of factors such as past expansions of school enrollment, the increased use of large vehicles to transport children and decreases in car pooling the existing traffic situation around NCRC gives rise to serious safety concerns. Your letter added that the proposed expansion would exacerbate the existing dangerous situation, that it "will have an adverse impact on parking supply [and] will create dangerous and otherwise objectionable traffic conditions and increase vehicular volume on neighboring streets." Your new letter confirms that the existing situation is cause for serious concern and more or less concedes that you don't yet know how to fix it. The letter asserts that DDOT has evaluated four possible options or solutions and has concluded that none of them will provide a "complete" or "ideal" solution to the existing problems. It rejects three of the options and says only that it is "strongly considering" a fourth, though it concedes that that one won't address at all some problems such as blocking of driveways and running stop signs. Then, though it hasn't even made a firm commitment to implement any option to alleviate the existing problems, DDOT reverses its earlier opposition to the proposed expansion and apparently gives it a go-ahead stating that it does "not anticipate that the resulting increases in traffic [from that expansion] would significantly worsen traffic conditions in the neighborhood". I didn't think agencies were supposed to do things like that.

The new letter sidesteps and discards Option III, the one option that is supported by the neighbors –cutting traffic by means such as decreasing enrollment or otherwise reducing vehicle trips. Without making an effort to assess the likely impact of such steps, DDOT simply dismisses this proposal on the grounds that only the BZA has the authority to limit the school's enrollment. That's true, but irrelevant. DDOT does have the authority—and the duty—to furnish information to the BZA so as to identify traffic safety problems and identify and fully evaluate possible solutions. For reasons one can only speculate about it has declined to make such an evaluation of the most obvious solution, and the only one that might avoid serious burden on the neighborhood.

Bruce/Sallie FYI

3125 Newark St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008-3344
966-8329

April 17, 2003

Mr. Kenneth Laden, Associate Director
Transportation Planning and Policy
District Department of Transportation
2000 14th St., N.W.
Washington. D.C. 20009

Re: BZA Application No. 16970 (NCRC)

Dear Mr. Laden:

I was present at your meeting with our neighbors at the Kaufman's house on Highland Place a few weeks ago. I thought your time was limited and that you had a good and sympathetic grasp of our concerns so I forewent offering two comments. That was a mistake.

I am very disturbed by the last paragraph of your April 14, 2003, letter to the Director of the Office of Zoning which states that you do not anticipate that traffic conditions in our neighborhood "would significantly worsen" if NCRC were to go ahead with its proposed expansion. It is my distinct recollection that more than once during our meeting at the Kaufman house you told us that your ongoing study was directed only at present traffic conditions in our neighborhood and you were not assessing or soliciting comments on the impact of any proposed expansion. Now it appears that you did make such an assessment with little, if any, input from our neighborhood. As you may or may not know, the NCRC proposal would greatly expand the school's development offices and meeting and counseling facilities and contemplates a large auditorium-sized room to accommodate gatherings of over a hundred parents or other visitors. Thus the proposal's potential to aggravate the present congestion and parking problems in our neighborhood

involves far more than just drop-offs and pick-ups for ten children. I don't see how you could have obtained sufficient information or done the necessary analysis to support the assertion that you have made, and I ask you, in fairness, to withdraw the last paragraph of the April 14 letter.

Secondly, it's not clear that you appreciate the extent of the "burden" that would be impose d by your favored Option IV which would, among other things, lead to more inconvenience and dangerous U-turns on Newark Street. When using the car, my wife and I almost invariably depart and return to our Newark Street house via 34th Street using Highland Place eastward on our return. The alternative, which we rarely use, is a tricky and dangerous U-turn at the intersection of Highland Place and Newark. Contrary to your statement that the burden of Option IV would be solely on the residents of Highland Place there would be a very annoying burden on people like us as well.

Finally, I simply don't understand how you can conclude that the most desirable option is one which places all the burden, and a heavy one, on our neighborhood and none on a nursery school whose focus is increasingly on serving residents of other parts of the metropolitan area.

Sincerely,

JP

John Poole

May 2, 2003

To: Andrew Altman
202-442-7638

From: Dorothy Rich
3301 Newark St. NW

Re: NCRC Expansion Proposals
Vote- No.

It is my understanding that your office has received many letters "in support of the school."

As a longtime educator, I am in support of schools BUT, this expansion for NCRC is not workable.

How many letters have you on your desk from property owners directly pp be impacted by this project?

I would surmise that you have few. Many of the letters may be coming from out of the neighborhood, even out of the District.

As an official of the District of Columbia, it is my expectation and that of my husband's , and we are longtime residents (since 1958) that it is your primary responsibility to be concerned about the District and its residents.

If you are planning to do a count of your letters pro and con this project:

Count only those letters pro that come from the immediate neighborhood homes and citizens being impacted by the NCRC plans.

Count only those con from those who are immediately impacted by the NCRC campus plan.

Lets be fair. I am all for good schooling. 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 its responsibilities.

Call me if you want more details.

Dorothy Rich- 202-362-6772
3301 Newark St. NW

Bill Adler & Peggy Robin

3409 Ashley Terrace, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-686-9132 • 202-244-7531 (fax)
probin@adlerbooks.com

May 8, 2003

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
RECEIVED
2003 MAY 12 PM 1:06

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

RE: Case No. 16970 Application of the National Child Research Center

Dear Chairman Griffis:

As neighbors of NCRC and parents of former NCRC students, we believe that NCRC is an asset to our community and that the school's request to build additional classroom and play space should be given careful consideration by the BZA.

However, we are deeply concerned about the increased traffic that NCRC will bring to the surrounding streets if it is allowed to increase the number of students and faculty. We believe that NCRC has not presented the community with a workable traffic plan that does not impede access to residents' homes on Highland Place and Ashley Terrace, NW.

We are deeply concerned about and strongly opposed to the proposal to make Highland Place, NW a one-way street. Despite the long car line at NCRC, with Highland Place being a two-way street, cars leaving Ashley Terrace and lower Highland Place currently have the option of bypassing the NCRC car line. If Highland Place is turned into a one-way street, Ashley Terrace and lower Highland Place residents will have no choice but to drive past NCRC during the NCRC pickup. As you can see from the enclosed photograph, which was taken on February 24, 2003, all it takes is a snowstorm—or a delivery truck, service vehicle, illegally parked car or some other obstruction—to completely block Highland Place during NCRC's car line. As long as Highland Place is two ways, cars can avoid those obstructions; if Highland Place is turned into a one-way street, then there is no way to exit Ashley Terrace or lower Highland Place.

There is no question that turning Highland Place into a one-way street would have a significant adverse impact on the neighborhood. We believe that the BZA should not approve NCRC's request until NCRC presents a viable and sensible traffic management plan—one that doesn't worsen problems for the neighbors. In other words, NCRC needs to take its plan back to the drawing board.

Sincerely,

Bill Adler and Peggy Robin

✓ Enclosure

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 181



NCRC car line, Highland Place, NW - February 24, 2003

No space to get around car line. Residents of lower Highland Pl. & Ashley Terr. can still exit by driving east on Highland, but would be blocked in if Highland Pl. were made one-way.

re: NCRC Preschool Expansion Case

Bill Adler & Peggy Robin
3409 Ashley Terrace, NW
Washington, DC 20008
Voice – 202-686-9132 Fax – 202-244-7531
Email – probin@adlerbooks.com

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2003 APR -3 PM 2:30

April 2, 2003

By Fax and US Mail

16970

Mr. Ken Laden
Associate Director
District Department of Transportation
Government of the District of Columbia
2000 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Laden:

We are writing to object in the strongest terms to any proposal to change traffic patterns around the NCRC preschool that would remove parking on Highland Place or make Highland into a one-way street.

To give a brief background to this statement, let us start by saying that at the outset of the NCRC expansion case, we were leaning somewhat toward the NCRC side (Bill, with some notable reservations about increasing the enrollment and Peggy, with far less hesitation about the overall impact). We were both hopeful that NCRC would be able to work successfully with the neighbors to reduce traffic problems. We would have characterized ourselves, on the whole, as supporters of the school.

However, after observing the give-and-take between the parties from the sidelines, we have, quite regretfully, come to the conclusion that NCRC, under its current administration, is not interested in reaching a reasonable compromise with its neighbors. Once the school began to lobby for removal of residents' parking on Highland Place to expand its carpool access, it was as if it is contending that the main purpose of Highland Place is to serve the school; it seems not to matter to the school where the residents' cars would go. We, like many of the homeowners of this area, have only a shared driveway with our neighbor. We already compete for the space in front of our home with many others who have no driveways or who work at the school.

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 12A

We react to the possibility of these changes with shock; it strikes us as a hostile act against the neighbors. On the other hand, we conjecture that the school may not seriously expect to have these requests granted, but has asked for them in the expectation that the neighbors will immediately object. In that case the school can say, "Well, we tried to advance a plan to alleviate the bottleneck on Highland Place, but the neighbors were against it. They're against anything we propose, and there's no pleasing them."

But that just isn't true. We *have* been pleased to have NCRC as a neighbor, even as it expanded steadily over the years. We sent our own children there. We recognize what a jewel it is. And we want it to continue to be so – in its low-scale, low-key neighborhood setting.

What we don't want is to see any increase in traffic without a plan to channel that traffic that works for the school and does not impose unusual hardships on the people who need to get in and out of their houses. The one-way plan and the removal of parking spaces are just the *opposite* of a workable plan.

Having said all that, let us add that we still have not lost hope of a compromise that might suit both the neighbors and the school. But the first thing the school ought to do is back away from any talk of removing residents' parking spaces or turning Highland Place into a one-way street.

Sincerely,

Peggy Robin & Bill Adler

cc: Board of Zoning Adjustment
ANC 3-C
Cleveland Park Neighbors
Ms. Colleen Smith, Ward 3 Neighborhood Transportation Planner

RITA M. RODRIGUEZ
3075 Ordway St., NW
Washington, DC 20008

Tel.: 202-363-2342
Fax: 202-363-9672

E-mail: RMRodriguez1@juno.com

September 17, 2002

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

Dear Ms. MacWood,

My husband and I reside at 3075 Ordway St., NW, directly behind NCRC's small school house. Our daughter spent two years at NCRC, graduating from kindergarten almost 20 years ago. I have sympathy for NCRC's wish to enhance their program. Never the less, I oppose their plans to expand by increasing enrollments by 10--15 students, doubling the square footage of their school, and adding six more teaching/administrative positions.

My objections are based on my awareness that what was a neighborhood school with most students walking or arriving in Volvos, has become a metropolitan premier preschool with waves of SUVs barreling down a busy small street, Ordway. As part of this process, the parents have harmed driveways, damaged approaches, and added to safety concerns for anyone exiting their home on foot or by car during three or more busy rush periods for the school.

NCRC proposes to build a very large non-residential structure in this Historic District, a new "carriage house" with a large brick wall creating a massive facade of brick eliminating any view of sky and light across our street. Light is further reduced with the very large proposed addition to the back of the main house and a new 1-2 car garage in place of the current tool shed. NCRC would not need this second new building but for the proposed expansion.

An institutional campus does not belong in the historical residential neighborhood. Rather, this proposal seems a natural "aspiration inflation" of an educational institution. NCRC wants to add students, have smaller classes, and to do that it wants (not needs) more space. All together, I believe the school is doubling its floor space. At some point, the school ought to consider another campus if it wishes to expand.

Sincerely,

Rita M. Rodriguez

cc: John Welsh

FREDERICK B. ROONEY
3050 HIGHLAND PLACE
WASHINGTON, DC 20008

June 9, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Griffis:

You have before your Board an application for a variance from the National Child Research Center. I write to ask that you not grant the variance or a special exception to build another principle building.

NCRC as it now exists presents many traffic problems for our neighborhood. The lines of cars waiting to drop off or pick up the children often fill the entire length of the street, making it difficult for residential traffic to use the street, blocking driveways, and polluting the air with exhaust from engines that sit running while the cars wait in line.

NCRC has not improved the traffic conditions since it was so ordered by the BZA in 1998 (when it presumably had only 108 students). Now it says 171 students are enrolled.

If traffic was adversely impacting the neighborhood in 1998 with 108 students, and even more seriously impacting the neighborhood in 2003 with the 171 it now has, why make it possible to add even more students and traffic to a situation the school has been unable to solve?

We residents of Cleveland Park count on your good judgment to deny NCRC's application to expand.

Sincerely,

Frederick B. Rooney

Frederick B. Rooney

Cc: Andrew Altman
Kathy Patterson

Mark Rosenman, Ph.D.

3023 Newark Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008-3342
(202) 363-7015 Voice/Fax
(202) 841-0607 Cellular
mark.rosenman@verizon.net

May 23, 2003

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

RE: Case 16970 Square 2072 Lot 30

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I am writing to register opposition to the desire of the National Child Development Center (NCRC) to significantly expand its facilities in Cleveland Park so that it might increase the numbers of children it serves. As I know you have heard from others, the existing enrollment size already violates a cap agreement attendant to a previous zoning matter. NCRC, at its current enrollment and staffing levels, creates very real traffic problems, even hazards, in this small residential neighborhood. The proposed plan to modify traffic patterns on Highland Place in order to accommodate NCRC's desires will also exacerbate parking difficulties in the neighborhood, which at times are quite severe, a point to which I am particularly sensitive because our house has no off-street parking.

There is no compelling reason why NCRC needs to expand at its current site nor inherent right to do so, particularly given the very real damage it will do to the quality of life for long-term District residents and homeowners such as my wife and myself, and for so many of our neighbors. Growth for the sake of growth ought not be treated as more of an imperative than the request of area residents that the Board of Zoning Adjustment honor a sense of preservation as as much of a compelling social good.

I respectfully ask the Board to deny the exceptions to zoning policies that NCRC requests.

Sincerely,

Mark Rosenman

cc: Councilmember Kathy Patterson
Andrew Atlman, Director, Office of Planning

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2003 MAY 28 PM 4:13

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 185

Bruce

From: <MurphySheehy@aol.com>
To: <brucebeckner@earthlink.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2003 8:32 AM
Subject: Re: Fw: Hearing tomorrow

Here is the letter that I faxed to Mr. Altman yesterday: FYI & CC'd to council & zoning people...

May 6, 2003

Mr. Andrew Altman, Director
District of Columbia Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 4000
Washington, D. C. 20002

Dear Mr. Altman,

I was glad to meet and talk with you at the Boasberg's garden party on Sunday. Having been an early supporter & fund-raiser for Mayor Williams, I know of his commitment supporting cohesive neighborhoods. I was pleased with the opportunity to talk to you about the issues surrounding the expansion of National Child Research Center in our community

My husband and I have been long time supporters of NCRC as a small pre-school in our neighborhood and although none of our four children attended there, we donated the use of our 1878 home for an early house tour fund raiser for the school. We have been quite appalled by the deception and expansion that the school has undertaken in recent years and feel they have gone so far beyond the"neighborhood school" concept that allowed them the initial variance to be smack in the middle of an historic residential neighborhood in the first place. Their continued flaunting disregard for every special exception and agreement makes the application for any type of expansion a travesty.

As you advised me in our conversation, the traffic problem is a major concern. Since I live on Newark Street, I can attest to the congestion that is created at delivery and pick up times at the two intersections of Highland Place and Newark and the horrible back up at the intersection of Newark and 34th St. when I sit behind cars that have pulled out of Highland with Maryland and Virginia license plates waiting to cross or turn on to the constant traffic of 34th Street. The recent suggestion of turning Highland into a one way street is ridiculous. There will still be the same number of cars and congestion that the DOT report initially found to be hazardous. As a tax paying resident of the District of Columbia for almost 30 years, I resent so many concessions being considered for an institution that does not pay taxes or contribute in any way to the financial well being of our city and that has obviously, through their own underhanded decisions, decided to

expand beyond their neighborhood site. They should move to another location where they would be free to become as big as they wish. Perhaps to the suburbs where a great percentage of their students reside.

I commend you on your many achievements to enhance our city and was delighted to be invited to the groundbreaking for Tivoli Square next week. I feel that our city's uniqueness is the balance between new projects to save and revitalize historic sites and commitment to protecting the existing family neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Pat Murphy Sheehy
2941 Newark Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

CC: Mayor Anthony Williams, Councilmembers, Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Ms. Jerrily Kress, Mr. Kenneth Laden, Ms. Nancy MacWood, Mr. John Welsh

Anne P. Shelburne
3083 Ordway Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
(202) 364-0425

Ms. Nancy McWood
Chair–ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Re: National Child Research Center (NCRC)

Dear Ms. MacWood:

I write as a resident living directly across the street from the school at 3083 Ordway Street. Over the last six years, I have witnessed first hand the traffic problems associated with the school. I have witnessed the school's obvious disregard time and again of the neighbors' interests. I can fully appreciate the startling visual impact of a newly constructed institution in the current space.

I believe the Ordway Street neighborhood is already overburdened with traffic problems even with the school's current enrollment, and thus do not believe the school should be permitted to expand the number of its students. Such expansion would add to an already difficult and hazardous traffic situation on Ordway Street.

(1) Ordway is an exceptionally busy two-way street in Cleveland Park. It is the confluence of a number of competing uses of the neighborhood and street that already makes for a particularly hazardous traffic situation: the street is used by Cleveland Park residents and their guests, by people visiting the restaurants and theater on Connecticut and Wisconsin, by people using Ordway as a thoroughfare between Wisconsin and Connecticut and 34th/Reno Road, by parents bringing and picking up children from NCRC and other nearby schools and churches, and by emergency vehicles from the nearby fire and police stations. The combined effect of all these uses makes for an already dangerous traffic situation on Ordway. Throughout the day, time and again, day after day, I see this: cars parked on both sides of Ordway, cars (almost always when I see it connected with NCRC) turning in driveways, children and people in the road (running/chatting), cars and trucks coming in both directions, cars screeching to a stop. I am struck time and again by the tremendous chaos and the very real potential for danger. In addition, parking is already so scarce during the morning NCRC rush hours that vehicles are crammed into legal and illegal parking places up to the edges of our driveways and often poking into our driveways. Backing a car out of one's driveway, and often under these circumstances, is a blind adventure. I am quite reasonably fearful of backing my car out of my driveway into this hazardous "soup." NCRC –morning, noon, afternoon, and often at night and on weekends as well– contributes very significantly to the traffic problems on Ordway.

(2) Over the years, many of the NCRC school parents have been inconsiderate of the property and residential interests of the nearby residents. My personal experience is that parents routinely and one right after the other drive into and back out of my driveway morning, noon and afternoon–and from time to time in the evenings and weekends as well–to turn around instead of driving around the block. They have even from time to time parked in my driveway for a significant period of time to drop off or pick up children! These turns have not only destroyed property and been annoying, but have created very real hazards and chaos for those of us who live nearby, and for the children themselves. Other acts – dropping and failing to pick up trash, damage to flowers and the curb – combine to contribute to the wear and tear of the neighborhood. If the school has made an effort to ask parents to not turn in driveways and to otherwise be more respectful of nearby residents, I can attest there has been rampant disregard of any such request–and thus no reason to believe the situation will improve in the future. If the school has not made this point to the parents, it demonstrates the school's callous disregard for the neighbors safety and residential interests. Finally, over the years I never once saw any school "monitor" on the street, with the exception that only in the last few weeks has the school put someone from time to time on an irregular basis at the drop-off station. From my vantage point across the street, I cannot say, however, that the presence of a monitor ameliorates the traffic and safety issues on the street.

(3) Ordway street parking for residents is simply not available during parts of the day due to NCRC parking and drop-offs and pick-ups. In addition, the school quite often has events in the evening. At these times Ordway street parking is not available for residents returning from work in the evening.

(4) I have witnessed a number of accidents at the intersections of Ordway and 34th and Newark and 34th–and have seen many more after the fact. My own car was struck three times over the last year while parked on Ordway in front of my house–twice, the side mirror was knocked off, once the entire front was demolished by a car coming down the hill. This is not to say people associated with the school caused the accidents or hit my car–although in two cases, I do not know who is responsible for damage to my car. It is, however, relevant to point out that with a narrow road, cars parked on both sides, lots of traffic and congestion–these kinds of things are happening–and the addition of more students could only make the traffic situation worse.

Finally, the school has proposed massive additions to its existing physical structure. The visual impact of a new institution facing Ordway would be not only unattractive when set among the other houses on the street, but completely inconsistent with this historical and residential neighborhood.

I urge the ANC to recommend that the NCRC expansion be denied.

Sincerely,

Anne P. Shelburne

Timothy Seldes and Susan R.Shreve
3319 Newark St. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20008

June 2, 2003

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 West 4th Street N.W. #
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Case 16970, Square 2072

We have lived on the North East corner of 34th St and Newark since 1987. For many years it was the frequent scene of destructive car accidents. Recently, new lines were painted which have, to a great extent, solved the problem. The proposal to change Highland Place to a one-way street may cause the problem to return. In addition, the disruption of tranquil Highland Place in exchange for a small addition of students for the school seems a bad bargain and an unreasonable burden on the residents of Highland Place. Every effort should be made to keep it a quite, pleasant residential area.

The balance surely should be for the many residents rather than one school's desire to expand.

Cordially,

Timothy Seldes and Susan R. Shreve

September 18, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chair, ANC 3C
3417 Woodley Road NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Nancy,

When Jeff and I began the process of looking for houses in 1978, we fell in love with Cleveland Park because it was a wonderful neighborhood, much like a small town, one in which people knew each other. We could walk to stores, restaurants, schools, to visit with neighbors, and we could continue to have just one car and live in the heart of DC.

When Josh was two and we started looking at nursery schools, we applied both to the Gan at Adas Israel and to NCRC because we live equidistant between the two schools and we could walk him to school. We spent many happy hours at the NCRC playground, playing with other neighborhood children, whose families also walked to the school.

In the last few years, however, much has changed about NCRC and our relationship to the school. As you may remember, NCRC undertook a massive playground renovation and expansion that brought with it trucks, increased traffic and construction debris to our quiet street.

Since that time it seems as though the population of NCRC has changed dramatically as well. Now every day there are large numbers of SUVs parked, not even near the curb on Ordway Street, with mothers and babysitters running across the street to take children to school. Rarely do I ever see anyone walking to the school; instead the pattern seems to be one child per SUV and flagrant disregard of traffic on the street. I drive very slowly up and down the street, afraid that, at any time, someone will come flying across the street with a small child in tow, running before they look to see if anyone is coming in a car.

The NCRC proposed expansion would wreak further havoc on our neighborhood – it would bring with it major amounts of construction equipment, it would change the the landscape of Ordway Street, it would further increase traffic, and it would not, as far as I can tell, bring any benefit to the neighborhood, or to families living here. Thus, I hope the ANC will oppose NCRC's request, and retain, as much as possible, our small town neighborhood, and our ability to walk and enjoy living in the middle of the city in a wonderful residential neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Margaret Siegel

May 4, 2003

Andrew Altman
Director; Office of Planning
801 North Capital Street, SE
Washington, DC 20002

RE: Proposed NCRC Expansion

Dear Mr. Altman:

I have owned and lived in the house at 3067 Ordway Street NW since 1992, directly across the street from the main building of the National Child Research Center (NCRC). I am writing you to express my strong opposition to the proposed expansion of NCRC enrollment, staff, and facilities, as initially announced in February 2002 and subsequently revised in presentations by the Center. While NCRC has been a valuable, esteemed and long-established school in the Cleveland Park neighborhood, historically serving the pre-school needs of the neighborhood children, the current school board and director have re-defined an expansive mission for the institution as a regional model center, primarily serving children outside the neighborhood and exceeding the carrying capacity of this historic neighborhood to absorb the density of people, buildings, traffic and activities without destructive consequences to its unique character.

The NCRC proposal would result in the construction of two large institutional buildings with connecting walls and a major northward expansion of the main Victorian residential building, that are out of scale in this residential community and present a massive presence on the streetscape on Ordway Street. One of the buildings would be a garage structure with maintenance equipment and functions directly facing on Ordway Street. The expansion would also threaten the open green space that was a factor in the original historic designation of this neighborhood because of its natural beauty and the preservation of original forested land on residential property between branches of Rock Creek Park. I ask that the ANC reject the planned expansion of NCRC as proposed and the the Historic Preservation Review Board subject the NCRC proposal to no less stringent criteria than those applied to other residential structures in the Cleveland Park Neighborhood. The proposed expansion would affect the residential environment of all the surrounding neighbors on Ordway Street, Highland Street, and 33rd Place and have a substantial impact on Newark and 34th Streets as well through increase in traffic and parking throughout the day.

Traffic, parking and safety have been an issue in the streets surrounding NCRC for years, have become worse in the recent past, and would be expected to deteriorate further if the proposed expansion of enrollment, staffing, activities and facilities were allowed. The current level and speed of traffic along with the concentration of parkers loading and unloading of children with inadequate staff

supervision on a substandard street without adequate curbs, sidewalks, crosswalks or signs represents a dangerous situation. Property damage to cars, drives, and walls of surrounding neighbors is already a regular occurrence. The efforts of the school administration to address these problems have been inadequate and short-lived. These problems occur not only on weekdays through the school year, but in the evenings for various meetings, on weekend for private parties for school patrons, and during the summer when the school runs a camp program. I have attached a proposal to the NCRC board for their support that I presented at a meeting with DC government representatives earlier this year.

The NCRC has provided various explanations for their perceived need for expansion of enrollment and facilities, including safety of the children and comfort of the staff, the necessity of which is questionable given that the school has operated in its current facilities comfortably and safely for over seventy years. NCRC currently enrolls approximately 168 students and has 37 staff, but has a certificate of occupancy for only 120. It proposes now to expand by an additional 15 student and 6 staff after vociferous objection in several community meetings to even larger expansion. The impact is even greater since so few students now live in the neighborhood and therefore walk to the school, so that the traffic increase is magnified beyond the simple enrollment numbers. If the current space is too small for the current enrollment and staffing, it is not sensible to increase enrollment and staffing, then nearly double the floor space, and expect that future school boards and directors will not need and wish to further increase enrollment to finance this large expansion.

In the process of proposing this expansion, the board and director have heard but apparently only partly listened to the deep concerns and strong objections of the majority of Cleveland Park neighbors, particularly those in the immediate vicinity of the school, that the expansion would have a deleterious effect on this unique historic neighborhood. If NCRC wishes to remain in Cleveland Park, it must accommodate the limits of the historic residential character of the neighborhood. If it feels that expansion of enrollment, staffing and facilities are essential for their desired programs, it should seek a more suitable site that can accommodate those desires.

There has been a regrettable pattern of disregard by NCRC of its neighbors and the laws and regulations of the District of Columbia over the years. In 1994 NCRC proceeded without HPRB approval or appropriate building and licensing permits and without discussion with the neighbors to cut down mature trees, build a new playground, alter the historic carriage house and build a large concrete deck and unsightly chain link fence. Construction noise, dirt and traffic were a burden throughout the summer, including some weekends, and continued until someone obtained a stop work order. At that point the school authorities met to reach some agreement over the work and landscaping with some neighbors. In 1998 NCRC was disingenuous in representing to the Board of Zoning Adjustment and to the neighbors that they had no intention of increasing enrollment or building new facilities. Yet within approximately one year, NCRC began its strategic planning process that within only 4 years violated their own commitment to the neighborhood and the government. While NCRC has presented architectural drawings at several community meetings they have not been fully forthcoming in writing with regard to the dimensions and size of proposed building expansion. Now they say they do not have a specific plan but want agreement on the concept in development. I believe that the ANC and

HPRB should carefully review NCRC compliance with previous agreements with the city and the neighbors, as well as any covenants on the deed to the property, before approving any further development or expansion of enrollment. There certainly should be no agreement to any development which does not contain a firm written covenant that would limit further growth of NCRC since the board and director change and do not appear to act as though they feel bound by the agreements of past school authorities.

Sincerely,

Stuart Sotsky MD
3067 Ordway Street NW
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 966-5552

Stuart M. Sotsky MD
3067 Ordway Street NW
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 966-5552
dcdoc@verizon.net

September 22, 2002

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

RE: Proposed NCRC Expansion

Dear Ms. MacWood:

I have owned and lived in the house at 3067 Ordway Street NW since 1992, directly across the street from the main building of the National Child Research Center (NCRC). I am writing you to express my strong opposition to the proposed expansion of NCRC enrollment, staff, and facilities, as initially announced in February 2002 and subsequently revised in presentations by the Center. While NCRC has been a valuable, esteemed and long-established school in the Cleveland Park neighborhood, historically serving the pre-school needs of the neighborhood children, the current school board and director have re-defined an expansive mission for the institution as a regional model center, primarily serving children outside the neighborhood and exceeding the carrying capacity of this historic neighborhood to absorb the density of people, buildings, traffic and activities without destructive consequences to its unique character.

The NCRC proposal would result in the construction of two large institutional buildings with connecting walls and a major northward expansion of the main Victorian residential building, that are out of scale in this residential community and present a massive presence on the streetscape on Ordway Street. One of the buildings would be a garage structure with maintenance equipment and functions directly facing on Ordway Street. The expansion would also threaten the open green space that was a factor in the original historic designation of this neighborhood because of its natural beauty and the preservation of original forested land on residential property between branches of Rock Creek Park. I ask that the ANC reject the planned expansion of NCRC as proposed and the

the Historic Preservation Review Board subject the NCRC proposal to no less stringent criteria than those applied to other residential structures in the Cleveland Park Neighborhood. The proposed expansion would affect the residential environment of all the surrounding neighbors on Ordway Street, Highland Street, and 33rd Place and have a substantial impact on Newark and 34th Streets as well through increase in traffic and parking throughout the day.

Traffic, parking and safety have been an issue in the streets surrounding NCRC for years, have become worse in the recent past, and would be expected to deteriorate further if the proposed expansion of enrollment, staffing, activities and facilities were allowed. The current level and speed of traffic along with the concentration of parkers loading and unloading of children with inadequate staff supervision on a substandard street without adequate curbs, sidewalks, crosswalks or signs represents a dangerous situation. Property damage to cars, drives, and walls of surrounding neighbors is already a regular occurrence. The efforts of the school administration to address these problems have been inadequate and short-lived. These problems occur not only on weekdays through the school year, but in the evenings for various meetings, on weekend for private parties for school patrons, and during the summer when the school runs a camp program. I have attached a proposal to the NCRC board for their support that I presented at a meeting with DC government representatives earlier this year.

The NCRC has provided various explanations for their perceived need for expansion of enrollment and facilities, including safety of the children and comfort of the staff, the necessity of which is questionable given that the school has operated in its current facilities comfortably and safely for over seventy years. NCRC currently enrolls approximately 168 students and has 37 staff, but has a certificate of occupancy for only 120. It proposes now to expand by an additional 15 student and 6 staff after vociferous objection in several community meetings to even larger expansion. The impact is even greater since so few students now live in the neighborhood and therefore walk to the school, so that the traffic increase is magnified beyond the simple enrollment numbers. If the current space is too small for the current enrollment and staffing, it is not sensible to increase enrollment and staffing, then nearly double the floor space, and expect that future school boards and directors will not need and wish to further increase enrollment to finance this large expansion.

In the process of proposing this expansion, the board and director have heard but apparently only partly listened to the deep concerns and strong objections of the majority of Cleveland Park neighbors,

particularly those in the immediate vicinity of the school, that the expansion would have a deleterious effect on this unique historic neighborhood. If NCRC wishes to remain in Cleveland Park, it must accommodate the limits of the historic residential character of the neighborhood. If it feels that expansion of enrollment, staffing and facilities are essential for their desired programs, it should seek a more suitable site that can accommodate those desires.

There has been a regrettable pattern of disregard by NCRC of its neighbors and the laws and regulations of the District of Columbia over the years. In 1994 NCRC proceeded without HPRB approval or appropriate building and licensing permits and without discussion with the neighbors to cut down mature trees, build a new playground, alter the historic carriage house and build a large concrete deck and unsightly chain link fence. Construction noise, dirt and traffic were a burden throughout the summer, including some weekends, and continued until someone obtained a stop work order. At that point the school authorities met to reach some agreement over the work and landscaping with some neighbors. In 1998 NCRC was disingenuous in representing to the Board of Zoning Adjustment and to the neighbors that they had no intention of increasing enrollment or building new facilities. Yet within approximately one year, NCRC began its strategic planning process that within only 4 years violated their own commitment to the neighborhood and the government. While NCRC has presented architectural drawings at several community meetings they have not been fully forthcoming in writing with regard to the dimensions and size of proposed building expansion. Now they say they do not have a specific plan but want agreement on the concept in development. I believe that the ANC and HPRB should carefully review NCRC compliance with previous agreements with the city and the neighbors, as well as any covenants on the deed to the property, before approving any further development or expansion of enrollment. There certainly should be no agreement to any development which does not contain a firm written covenant that would limit further growth of NCRC since the board and director change and do not appear to act as though they feel bound by the agreements of past school authorities.

Sincerely,

Stuart Sotsky

Stuart Sotsky MD
3067 Ordway Street NW
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 966-5552

Louise S. Steele
3100 Newark Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20008

June 9, 20003

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

Dear Mr. Griffis:

This letter is in reference to the changes proposed by the Board of Zoning Adjustment, case 16970, for the traffic on Highland Place NW.

I have lived in the neighborhood for 50 years and the ~~National~~ Child Research Center has been a good neighbor. But making Highland place a one way street and banning parking during school hours strongly favors the school over the homes that existed before the school was established. The traffic and parking patterns proposed, increases in the school

Population and facilities transforms the school into an institution functioning on an inadequate piece of property at the expense of the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Louise S. Steele
3100 Newark St nw
Washington DC 20008

3218 Newark Street, NW
Washington, DC 2008
September 19, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chair
Advisory Neighborhood Committee 3-C
3417 Woodley Road, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Ms. MacWood:

I am Virginia Stern. My husband, Robert Stern, and I have lived in Cleveland Park since 1963: first at 3312 Highland Place NW, than, after a short time away from D.C, at 3311 Highland Place NW, and since 1976 at 3218 Newark Street, NW. We have raised our four children here and now welcome our grandchildren. In these almost forty years we and our children have participated actively in the neighborhood, including the Cleveland Park Club, the Macomb Street Playground, the John Eaton School Block Parties, and the Cleveland Park Library.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed expansion, in enrollment and buildings, of the National Child Research Center (NCRC) on Highland Place.

Every weekday morning I walk to the Cleveland Park Metro which I take to work. I walk via 33rd Place, Highland Place, Ashley Terrace, down the short-cut stairs to Ordway Street and Connecticut Avenue. I know the neighbors in every house that I pass, their gardens and their pets. If I leave at 8:30, I must weave my way around the cars delivering children to NCRC. The drivers have little if any consideration for pedestrians on a residential street. They park illegally, back up without watching, leave on their motors while stopped. If I depart as late as 8:50, the drivers heading for the school are late, and they speed down Highland Place and come to screeching halts. In short, **the traffic has become intolerable** (and I am not even home to experience a repeat performance for the afternoon sessions).

The attitude of the school parents obviously reflects the attitude of the school board and administrator: our school is the best and our children are the best and the neighbors are merely a backdrop for our own growth. The school administrator tells the neighbors (in many, many meetings, all of which I have attended) that they will become a "model school." This seems to mean that the children need to ride bikes inside a new mock-Tudor garage on rainy days. I am an educator and always thought that good schools were judged by the quality of their teaching staff. This has never been mentioned at the meetings.

Our four children and all our neighbor children grew up riding their bikes and playing street hockey on Highland Place and 33rd Place. It is no longer possible for our grandchildren to ride bikes on these streets because of the danger of NCRC drivers. Our own son, Mark, attended NCRC in 1967-68. However, I would not want our

grandchildren to go to the school now. Its focus is aggrandizement. Its parents practice poor citizenship, by assuming their own schedules are more important than traffic laws. And, as I look out my front window and walk past every day, I consider them a model of **a bad neighbor.**.

Please do not allow the expansion of enrollment and buildings.

Sincerely,

Virginia W Stern

Virginia W. Stern

Robert L. Stern
3218 Newark Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

September 21, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chair
Advisory Neighborhood Committee 3-C
3417 Woodley Road, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Ms MacWood:

A Crown Jewel of Cleveland Park Turns into an Abscess

For many years, there was a kinder, gentler NCRC here: a lovely, skilled preschool that was comfortably integrated in the Historic District of Cleveland Park and served that population. The school was one of the attractions for moving into and staying in our neighborhood. My wife, four children and I have lived here for 39 years in total, at the current address and previously on Highland Place.

Over the last decade or more, NCRC distanced itself further and further from the neighborhood. NCRC's clientele today is parents and children from all over DC and environs. Now, less than 10% of those served are from within our Historic District.

At a public meeting, hosted by NCRC in February of 2002, NCRC made known to its neighbors, for the first time, its long term growth plan. Clearly, that plan had been evolving for months, if not years, but silently to us. The February meeting was the start of a series meetings that NCRC offered to its physical neighbors; each consisted of vague, imprecise, loose, even deceptive declarations of NCRC's growth intentions by its board members, staff executives, architects, planners and fund raisers. Only on the surface was there any display of concern for the interests and rights of its neighbors. Subtly, in the subsequent "meetings with the neighbors", there was a pervasive attitude expressed by the NCRC people along the lines: " yes, we know there may be inconveniences to you but we'll do what we can to

limit our impact on your street traffic, the remaining green space, the invasion of the privacy of your properties, new dangers to pedestrians, reduction of available street parking, concern about surface water flow, concern for external appearance of the new construction, a variety of encroachments on neighbors, traffic delays, etc., etc."

NCRC's GENERAL ATTITUDE WAS AND IS: OUR SCHOOL'S GROWTH IS CLEARLY FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHATEVER HAPPENS TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

Probably, the most distressing aspect of this emerging threat to the quality of life in our neighborhood is the repeated waffling about the "new enrollment numbers." Recall that NCRC's occupancy was limited in 1998 to 120 students; somehow that has become construed as 168 students. Now, NCRC is proposing, first, a growth of 19 students and which was then pulled back to "15 or so." Teacher addition was proposed at 6, later revised to 5 plus 2 part-time teachers. Whatever dimensions of the growth plan are presented, no part STANDS STILL. Above ground, underground and so on -- no matter. Our attitude has evolved into: how can these NCRC people be trusted. AND NOW WE JUST DON'T TRUST THEM!

To summarize, a friendly, attractive jewel in our historic district has become an abscess, a foreign body, that has to be contained. WE RESPECTFULLY ASK FOR YOUR HELP IN CONTAINING AND CONSTRAINING NCRC.

Sincerely yours,



Robert L. Stern

◊ Lou Stovall ◊
3145 Newark Street, NW • Washington, DC 20008
(202) 966-4202

June 9, 2003

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

CASE 16970

Dear Mr. Griffis,

I am opposed to the proposed expansion of NCRC for the following reasons:

1. Since 1973, the ever-increasing enrollment and staff of NCRC and the lack of an adequate car-pooling plan has caused increased traffic on these residential streets.

2. 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.

3. I am not asking for a ruling to hold NCRC to their prevailing occupancy permit, of which they are currently in violation, but to hold them to their status quo with no additions on their grounds or alterations to our streets.

4. I take caution to say the proliferation of education-based expansion throughout our community has reached alarming levels.

Sincerely,



Lou Stovall

2945 Newark Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

September 22, 2002

Dear NCRC:

I live along the path where your parent body travels to the School every morning. Since the 1980's, I have been aware of the increased traffic to NCRC. In recent years, the traffic is noticeable ~~is~~ speedier and greater in number. I noticed frequent running through the stop signs at Highland and Newark.

I frequently walk and use the facilities of the Cleveland Park Club. Four new buildings and further loss of trees will be detrimental to the quality of life to anyone using the Cleveland Park Club. Therefore, I am opposed to this building project.

Sincerely,

Patricia H. Svoboda

Bascom D. Talley III and Susan K. Talley
3320 Highland Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008

June 15, 2003

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
Re: Case 16970

Dear Mr. Griffis:

We write regarding the application for a variance for the proposed National Child Research Center' s new construction. This is a project that we do not support. In fact we strongly urge you to reject this application.

NCRC plans a building of institutional proportions. Apart from the issue of whether it is a second principal building on a single lot, it does not belong in a historic, residential neighborhood. People from all over the city and elsewhere walk Cleveland Park's narrow streets enjoying the architecture and the ambiance of this peaceful and quaint Historic District.

Currently, the traffic generated by NCRC already creates a neighborhood hazard. When NCRC is in session, traffic jams, parking problems and fast moving cars change what is otherwise a quiet, safe street, into a rather hazardous roadway which is dangerous to the well being of neighborhood residents as well as the children and adults involved with the school.

Allowing significantly more space to be constructed will surely result in more students that will in turn lead to more cars and more traffic. Cleveland Park, particularly Highland Place and Ordway Street, cannot absorb the added cars and traffic which will most surely result with any increase in the NCRC student body. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Bascom and Susan Talley

cc: Andrew Altman
Kathy Patterson

Susan B. Taylor
3301 Highland Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008

May 4, 2003

Mr. Andrew Altman
Director, Office of Planning
801 North Capital Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
By Facsimile

Dear Mr. Altman:

My family and I have lived in our home on Highland place for ten years. I have been involved with child advocacy for all my adult life. I was on the Steering Committee for, and have been very active in, a partnership program between my church and the 1994 kindergarten class at an elementary school in Petworth. The partnership program began ten years ago and continues with the '94 kindergarten group of children as they advance through high school, college, and/or vocational training. The partnership is now known as "STEP/I Have a Dream". I have been extraordinarily involved in the schools, both public and private, that my children have attended. I am a Board member of a nursery school that has a nationally recognized special needs inclusion program. Before I retired in 1993 to become a full time mom, I worked in commercial real estate development at the Kaempfer Companies. Notwithstanding my background and my commitment to institutions that advance the needs of children and their families, I oppose the current expansion plans at the National Child Research Center (NCRC).

It is important to review the history of NCRC's relationship with its neighbors because it will explain why we are where we are. NCRC and neighboring residents had lived in relative harmony for 73 years. Recently, that relationship has deteriorated. In the last two years it has been severely compromised by distrust.

In 1994, NCRC rebuilt its playground and playhouse. In the process, it removed numerous mature trees, added concrete sidewalks and decks, and altered the doors and windows of the playhouse. It did not seek any of the necessary permits for this work. Neighbors were upset and contacted the center. The appropriate District permitting agencies were contacted. Affected neighbors and the center worked out an agreement by which NCRC committed to replant trees and add additional landscape features to restore some of the visual green space it had destroyed. The current plans will obliterate all of the restorative work NCRC committed to at that time.

In 1997, NCRC placed notices on its property announcing its plan to appear in front of the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) to increase its Certificate of Occupancy from 90 to 120 students. Neighbors were alarmed and many of us contacted the center. When I called NCRC, I was told that the request was merely a formality to align District licensing and permitting requirements. The center assured the neighborhood that no changes in the maximum number of students would occur. The Acting Director sent a letter to the neighbors describing NCRC's current conditions and future plans (Attachment A).

Only because the neighbors were assured by NCRC that its enrollment would not increase, did the neighbors support the Center's 1997 application. We took the student enrollment figures provided to us by NCRC (108), as fact. Instead, the neighbors shifted their focus from concern about a possible expansion, to seize an opportunity to remedy NCRC's intolerable traffic. We had experienced a gradual but persistent increase in traffic generated by the center. District Agencies and Civic Associations affirmed our concerns. A number of traffic mitigating responsibilities were incorporated into the 1998 BZA Final Order. There are two critical elements to this process. First, the BZA Order was set for a period of 8 years; a length of time decided on specifically to evaluate the efficacy of the traffic mitigating conditions. Second, every entity that reviewed NCRC's 1997 application did so using a figure of 108 for enrollment. NCRC has subsequently stated that its enrollment at the time was 168. All of the evaluations were based on figures that were approximately thirty percent lower than NCRC's actual numbers.

Despite NCRC's commitment to its neighbors in 1998, four years later it announced its plan to expand. The current expansion plan includes the addition of ten students above its 2002/2003 enrollment of 171. It wants the right to an annual 2% enrollment "fudge factor", raising its potential enrollment to 185. It includes 6 additional staff members above its current staff of 38. And it includes the construction of approximately 9,000 square feet, doubling the size of its existing facility. The additional space would enable NCRC to ultimately add 50 more students. If you understand the history, it is easy to understand why neighbors are united in their opposition to NCRC's expansion as proposed (Attachment B). Our support in 1998 is now being used as the basis for NCRC's case for its right to expand.

As I read through the Office of Planning's (OP's) supplemental report dated May 4, 2003, the two critical issues cited were 1) the uniqueness of the NCRC property and 2) a District Agency created adverse impact by requiring NCRC to separate its proposed new building from an existing structure. NCRC's proposed new building will destroy the very unique qualities in the property's topography that OP describes as unique. Have you looked at the plans? The first story of the new building will be covered by dirt and grass. There will no longer be a hillside sloping down from Highland Place to Ordway Street. And the visual line from Highland to Ordway will be obliterated. A passer by on Ordway Street will see only a two-story wall.

As to OP's second concern, it is my understanding that Mr. Callcott recommended that NCRC separate the buildings to conceal the massive quality of the structure, he did not require it. And, even if the two buildings were connected, I believe there would still be a compelling argument that a second principal use structure would exist on the lot. The existing playhouse has never been permitted a use other than as a caretakers cottage. In fact, NCRC renovated the building in 1994 and converted into a second principal use building.

Further, OP has a mandate to monitor the relationship between institutions that operate as special exceptions in residential neighborhoods and the residents. Part of this monitoring responsibility is to ensure that Ward Three's "most outstanding characteristic...low density, stable residential neighborhoods" be preserved and protected. (Comprehensive Plan 14 D.C.M.R. § 1400.2(a)(1)). My neighborhood is not being protected. In fact, the conditions created by NCRC make our

streets "unsafe" (Attachment C). And the "solution" proposed by DDOT will imperil a quality of life that the residents have enjoyed for 100 years. NCRC has created the adverse impact and unsafe conditions. There are simply more vehicles traveling to and from its facility than the adjacent streets can absorb. NCRC does not have to expand to continue its excellent programs, it wants to.

Lastly, OP's report does not consider the scope of NCRC's services. In addition to operating a childcare facility, NCRC hosts several weekend events throughout the year, and operates a summer camp. The impact on the neighborhood is 11 months out of the year and numerous weekends.

This is not a situation in which neighbors have been unwilling to accept inconvenience, or even adverse impact, from an institution's presence. This neighborhood has accepted adverse conditions created by NCRC for a number of years. And it has done so because the neighbors cherish the center and what it provides to young children and their families. But now we are in a nightmare. NCRC claims there are no legal limits to its enrollment. NCRC claims it can place 120 students on its campus at any given time. The 8-year traffic evaluation period placed by the 1998 BZA Order to protect residents from institutional adverse impact, has been superseded by NCRC's current application to expand. Existing traffic conditions are not merely adverse; they are "unsafe". The "solution" to the current unsafe conditions proposed by The Department of transportation (DDOT) is to make Highland Place and 33rd Place one way. That solution will place additional adverse impact on the neighborhood and the residents will bare the sole burden of this impact (Attachment D). DDOT's efforts to remedy an unsafe situation should not reward an institution that has exceeded its operating permit and, in the course of it, effect a change on those of us living here that causes additional burden.

It appears that District Agencies are not seeing the complete picture of NCRC and its neighbors. The Cleveland Park community spent so long convincing the District Government that the traffic on a residential Street, 34th Street, should not adversely impact the residents so that commuters from Maryland could get to their work places more easily. Now, residents on tiny streets adjacent to an early childhood development center are being told that the quality of their lives must be severely diminished so that families commuting to the center can get there more easily. This doesn't make any sense. It appears that OP is willing to sacrifice a stable residential community so that a preschool can expand. NCRC has created the overcrowding that exists on our streets. NCRC wants to expand beyond what its location can tolerate. The "solution" is for NCRC to bear responsibility and reduce the number of vehicles associated with its operation. It certainly should not be allowed to expand. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Susan B. Taylor

Cc: Mr. Dan Tangherlini
Mr. Geoffry Griffis
Ms. Kathy Patterson

Susan B. Taylor
3301 Highland Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 244-7731

September 20, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chair-Advisory Neighborhood Commission
3-C
2737 Devonshire Place, NW
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Ms. MacWood:

My name is Susan Taylor. I live at 3301 Highland Place, NW, two doors away from the National Child Research Center (NCRC), which is allowed as a special exception in my residential neighborhood. I have lived here for nearly ten years. I am a Co-President of the Cleveland Park Club, which is a social club (also allowed as a special exception), and adjacent to NCRC. I am also a current Board member of St. Columba's nursery school, located in a residential neighborhood and allowed as a special exception. These experiences have given me a unique insight into the relationship between residential-based institutions and their neighbors. I am opposed to NCRC's expansion and I would like to tell you why.

I believe a residential community can reap substantial benefit from having an excellent early childhood education center within its boundaries. But such an institution bears certain responsibilities toward its neighbors. As an excepted use, it must be clear and specific whenever it seeks changes in its operation. For example, in early 2002, St. Columba's decided to apply to offer an afternoon class in addition to its morning program. Our Certificate of Occupancy allowed us to have a certain number of children in our building at any one time. Our hours of operation would not change. The Board notified the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and sought a modification to its special exception. We wanted to be specific and clear that, while the number of children on site at any one time would not change, our enrollment would increase. We recognized that a positive working relationship with our neighbors required that all concerned parties understand we were expanding our program. There was no

neighborhood opposition and the ANC unanimously and unconditionally supported our application. We appeared in front of the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) and our application was unanimously and unconditionally approved.

As a Co-president of the Cleveland Park Club, I also recognize the same responsibility in being the steward of an institution, specially excepted to operate in a residential neighborhood. The Club has, on several occasions, modified its operations to accommodate the concerns and needs of its neighbors. At times these modifications have been to the financial detriment of the Club. But our Board has recognized the essential ingredient for a positive working relationship with its neighbors is clarity and specificity.

On the other hand, during the time I have lived as a NCRC's neighbor, I have witnessed a gradual and persistent expansion of their program. In 1994, NCRC undertook a major refurbishment of its grounds. I understand that they did so without benefit of appropriate notification or permit approval. They removed numerous trees, erected permanent play structures, added concrete sidewalks and stairs and poured a large blacktop area.

In 1998, NCRC sought the neighborhood's support in its application to increase its Certificate of Occupancy from 90 children to 120 children. The school characterized the need for the increase as "a technical matter". They explained that the school was licensed to hold more than 90 children and indeed had more than 90 children. The number on the license and the number on the Certificate of Occupancy had to align. The school represented to the neighbors, to the ANC and to the BZA that the "total number of children" would be 120, that there would be no change in the operation of the school and that there would be no new construction on the property. Even with these representations, the neighbors were cautious in their support. There was considerable concern that the traffic generated by NCRC's size was already having an adverse impact. Much testimony was given at the ANC meeting and at the two BZA hearings. The result was approval for NCRC's application by the BZA with specific conditions regarding traffic. The Summary Order was specific and clear about NCRC's responsibilities.

Since BZA's approval in 1998, some conditions have been met. The District Government erected new no parking signs. Two years ago, NCRC began putting out traffic cones in the no parking areas to keep the parents and childcare providers from parking despite the signs. But there was no real appreciable effort on NCRC's part to meet the 1998 conditions until after NCRC announced its plans to expand last February. And despite more changes made this school year, I witness traffic infractions every day.

Notwithstanding the representations made in 1998, the neighborhood has learned that NCRC's "total number of children" is 171, not 120. Approximately 100 students arrive at the school each morning. Most of these children leave around midday. Another group of children arrive in early afternoon. The afternoon program has a total enrollment of approximately 100 students. The school has added an "after school" program. They allow private birthday parties on the premises on weekends. The school has been neither clear nor specific about this gradual expansion. The adverse impact on the neighborhood has actually increased since 1998, not decreased as intended by the ANC and BZA conditions.

Now NCRC has determined that its needs have changed since the representations it made in 1998. It seeks to further expand its program by building in excess of 10,500 new square feet on its property and to enlarge its "total number of students" by 15 and its staff by 6. But since 1998, my neighborhood has experienced continued adverse impact as a result of NCRC's gradual and persistent expansion of its programs. A special exception is granted for a finite period of time so that a neighborhood has an opportunity to evaluate the impact of the exception. NCRC's impact is already adverse. Its working relationship with its neighbors is not positive because NCRC has not been clear or specific about its program. I urge the ANC to oppose NCRC's plan to expand.

Very truly yours,

Susan B. Taylor

Cheryl L. Tennille
2950 Newark Street N. W.
Washington D. C. 20008

June 17, 2003

Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street N.W. #201
Washington D.C. 20001

Re: Case 16970

Dear Mr. Griffis,

I have lived on Highland and Newark for 25 years during which an overriding concern was and is the ability of fire trucks to get to our fragile and flammable turn-of- the century homes in case of an emergency. This necessity is currently severely compromised by the day long traffic insurgence from NCRC staff of 32 plus 7 part time and 171 students. These numbers when added to normal neighborhood commerce leave the pathways to our homes frequently impaired. At best fire trucks would, by definition, be delayed if a need arose during the ever expanding pick-up and drop-off periods from 7:30 am to as recently clocked 5:19 pm.

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Tennille

Reeve and Jane Vanneman
3071 Ordway Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

May 2, 2003

Andrew Altman
Director; Office of Planning
801 North Capital Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Altman:

This letter is to register our very strong objection to the proposal by the National Child Research Center (NCRC) to expand its physical facilities and increase enrollment and staff.

We have owned our house and lived in it since January 1993. We live directly across the street from NCRC and face the NCRC property between the main house and the playhouse.

We have major objections to NCRC's proposal, including: hours of operation during the academic year, special events and conferences on weekends and evenings, and NCRC's summer camp, as well as its proposal to build a large new classroom building and a large new maintenance building on Ordway.

The situation with the existing enrollment, staff and activities on the NCRC property is intolerable. The numbers of children, faculty and staff and others who come to the property have oversaturated the neighborhood with congested traffic, illegal parking, and noise. NCRC has not met the conditions that this Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) imposed in the 1998 order, and the situation has deteriorated over the last several years.

We have been required, for more than one year now, to spend a substantial amount of time and effort in opposing the NCRC project. The neighbors who live near NCRC are virtually unanimous in opposing this project.

Recently, the Department of Transportation issued a report that suggested that Highland Place be made one-way to accommodate NCRC's expansion project. To us, this suggestion makes absolutely no sense, because in our view, the only way to solve the existing dangerous and hazardous traffic and other conditions would be to reduce the traffic and parking generated by NCRC. To allow NCRC to build a large new campus, which would inevitably result in future additional increases in enrollment, staff and activities (including NCRC's desire to host conferences) is simply intolerable in this residential neighborhood.

We will address several specific points:

1. Illegal parking, traffic and safety issues

While the major entry to NCRC presently is on Highland Place, the size of the NCRC population and its faculty, staff and visitors, causes congestion which overflows to Ordway Street. There are serious parking and traffic problems on Ordway Street. We observe these problems almost every weekday morning, the special events on weekends, and NCRC's increasing use of the property during evening hours past 5 pm (which is not permitted by the 1998 order).

Cars often turn around in the middle of Ordway Street, which is a narrow, residential street. Cars drive up on our yards. Cars park illegally close to our driveways, making it dangerous to attempt to drive out of our driveways. Sometimes, cars park and block our driveways altogether. When service persons or contractors come to our house to perform work, it is frequently difficult for them to find a parking place or they risk getting a parking ticket.

Also, parents and caregivers often take the children out of the cars on the street side of Ordway, and walk the children in the street itself to get to the stairs leading to the nursery school property, or, they attempt to exit NCRC property on the NCRC stairs between parked cars and then walk in the street to their parked cars. NCRC staff continue to park their large vehicles close to the steps to the property, which means that it is extremely dangerous for children and others to exit the steps in a safe manner. These are clearly unsafe practices. During the summer months, families, or older children walking on their own, walk, or sometimes drive and park, to get to the swimming pool at the Cleveland Park club, a facility near the nursery school; there is added congestion caused by NCRC's operations during the summer months.

At present, there are simply too many NCRC people in cars — whether it be parents or caregivers, faculty and staff, or others visiting the property, for Ordway street to handle safely and legally. The difference between when NCRC is in session and when it is out of session is dramatic.

2. Noise

NCRC asks permission to double the size of the main house, and construct a new large classroom building — both of which would be located very close to the property lines of the neighboring homes and across the street from Ordway homes. The noise from the air handling units on these commercial-size buildings would be objectionable. The capacity of the air handling units required for the large new classroom building on Ordway Street would inevitably result in noise levels that would be objectionable to Ordway Street neighbors toward the west end of the nursery school property and across Ordway Street as well. We frequently like to leave our windows open, even in the summer months, to catch the breezes and enjoy the fresh air, but if the BZA approves NCRC's application, we would be faced either with loud commercial air handling units or having to close our windows and run our air conditioning system to block out the noise of

NCRC's proposed buildings.

For special events on the weekends, NCRC has used sound amplifying systems, which include loud music and announcements over a public address system for several hours on weekend days. (Again, the 1998 order limits the hours of operation Mon. - Fri. from 8 am to 5 pm, with no authority for special events on weekends.) It is unlawful for NCRC to use public address systems in a residential neighborhood. The noise is very loud for residents on Ordway Street, as well as Highland Place, and sometimes keeps us from going outside to enjoy our yards and the quiet of the weekends. This noise is also highly objectionable because it disturbs our peace and quiet on weekends; on more than one occasion, one or both of us were not able to take a rest on the weekend because of the sound amplification or other noise from NCRC's special events.

3. Loss of light and sight lines

Our third point relates to the light that Ordway street residents will lose were this board to approve this project. All the neighbors on Ordway Street who face the NCRC property will face a massive facade of buildings.

NCRC proposes to build a massive wall of buildings that we would face across virtually the entire length of NCRC's property. Ordway Street at the east end is downhill from the NCRC property; the main house and existing small bike shed are up on a steep grade.

NCRC proposes to build a new, very large maintenance building, at the east end of the property. The proposed size and use of this maintenance building are of a size and use not typically associated with a residence, and this new building, with its associated maintenance uses, would literally be in our faces.

The proposed expansion of the main building, deep into the property toward Ordway street, next to this maintenance building, would cut off virtually all light from those houses on our side of Ordway Street, including our house. Because NCRC would cut down trees for these buildings, the visual effect of a mass of buildings would be even more severe.

NCRC also proposes to build a 14 foot wall west of the existing playhouse, with fencing to top the wall, and, in addition to that wall, a very large classroom building. Our neighbors immediately to the west of us, up Ordway street, would also lose their sight lines all across Ordway.

4. History and pattern of broken promises by NCRC

The NCRC boards come and go frequently, given the young age of the children. In the process, NCRC leaves behind a string of broken promises to the neighbors.

We were directly involved in the 1994 situation – NCRC undertook a massive

construction project during that summer. The nursery school cut down many very large mature trees, re-did the playground, and engaged in a major renovation of the playhouse, all without even applying for any of the necessary DC permits. NCRC did not seek approval from the HPRB or from any other DC agencies for building permits for its changes to the playhouse – which involved constructing a very large concrete deck, into the property itself and another large wood deck on the west end of the playhouse. For this work, NCRC also constructed an illegal, gravel driveway on the west end of the Ordway street side, and installed an unsightly chain link fence - a driveway and chain link fence which the nursery school intended to keep permanently on site for future use for deliveries and other functions. Aside from being illegal, the construction phase was a nightmare for the residents that summer, with the noise, traffic, dust, congestion, and disruption to our lives.

Toward the end of the summer, when a neighbor learned that NCRC had absolutely no permits for the work, the DC government issued a stop work order. The then-present NCRC board met with the neighbors; the board agreed to remove the chain link fence, take out the driveway, install a grassy raised embankment with permanent landscaping, and install a long, low, wood fence with open slats, so that the Ordway street neighbors would have light and air and an unobstructed view towards Highland Place. At present, the landscaping has matured and there is a vista between Ordway and Highland, connecting the neighbors.

Now, NCRC wants to break that commitment to the neighbors, by proposing to build a large new classroom building, connected to the playhouse by a 14 foot high wall which will be topped with some kind of fence. Each new NCRC board seems to have a new mission, driven by new ambitions. In the process, NCRC completely disregards prior commitments to the neighborhood. This is simply an intolerable approach to the neighbors, many of whom have lived here a long time and many of whom intend to remain here a very long time.

In summary, NCRC's present operations – during the academic year, its special events on weekends and also during the evenings after 5 pm, and its summer camp program – have already saturated the neighborhood with objectionable traffic and parking and noise. The new buildings would virtually eliminate our sight lines from Ordway Street, and increase substantially the intensity of use on the school property.

We respectfully request that you recommend to the BZA that it deny the NCRC's application.

Reeve and Jane Vanneman
3071 Ordway Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008