Cleveland Park Neighbors' Statements in Opposition to Planned NCRC Expansion

1. **Henry Little and Lydia Mendoza – Ordway Street, next to planned new building**
2. **Reeve and Jane Vanneman – Ordway Street, directly across from NCRC**
3. **Steve Hunsicker – Ordway Street, directly across from NCRC**
4. **Anne Shelburne – Ordway Street, directly across from NCRC**
5. **Rita Rodriguez – Ordway Street, directly across from NCRC**
6. **R. Bruce and Sallie R. Beckner – Highland Place, adjacent to NCRC**
7. **Gaylord Neely – Highland Place, adjacent to NCRC**
8. **Linda Badami – Highland Place, adjacent to NCRC**
9. **Laine Shakerdge Kaufman – Highland Place, across the street from NCRC**
10. **William and Dandridge Ince – Highland Place, across the street from NCRC**
11. **Stephen and Barbara Haas – Highland Place, across the street from NCRC**
12. **Susan Taylor – Highland Place at 33rd Place**
13. **Paula Atkeson – Highland Place**
14. **Ana Tejblum Evans -- Ashley Terrace**
15. **Rives Carroll – Ashley Terrace**
16. **John and Leslie Oberdorfer – Ashley Terrace**
17. **Virginia Stern – Newark Street at 33rd Place**
18. **Margaret Siegel – Ordway Street**
19. **Leonard Chanin – Ordway Street**
20. **Nancy Harter – Newark Street**

Many other neighbors signed a petition in opposition to the planned expansion of NCRC. Those petitions will be presented to the ANC on Monday.

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 316
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.316A1

Henry P. Little
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September 19, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chairperson of ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Place, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20008

and,

Mr. John Welsh
Member, ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Place, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20008

Subject: National Child Research Center (NCRC) proposed expansion

Dear Ms. MacWood and Mr. Welsh:

I am enclosing for your review a letter I sent earlier this month to Susan Piggott, the Director of NCRC, expressing my wife's and my strong opposition to NCRC's proposed expansion. As I mentioned in my letter, we lived immediately adjacent to NCRC on Ordway Street for 14 years, and we intend to return to our home there in the not too distant future.

NCRC's proposed expansion would greatly compromise many of the qualities which make Cleveland Park one of the nation's premier national historic districts. We applaud NCRC's mission--indeed in 1984-1995 our youngest son attended the school. However, we strongly oppose NCRC's current direction, which suggests a seemingly blind insensitivity as to the impact its expansion will have on the historic Cleveland Park neighborhood. The conversion of the school, currently comprised of a lovely historic home and adjacent "playhouse" and wooded playground, into a campus complex consisting of four buildings, would despoil both the historical and architectural context within which NCRC currently is situated. NCRC's expansion plans, if indeed essential to the furtherance of its important educational mission, suggest to me that NCRC would be better served by moving is facilities to a locale more suitable for such an ambitious, expanding enterprise.

In addition to the inappropriate nature of NCRC's proposed expansion from historic and architectural standpoints, greatly enlarged NCRC buildings inevitably mean greatly increased enrollment, with concomitant increases in traffic congestion, safety hazards, physical damage to nearby residential properties, and noise. My wife and I know firsthand how significantly NCRC's ever growing level of activities over the years we lived there increasingly impacted, in a negative manner, the neighboring Cleveland Park community's historic and residential qualities. Laudable though NCRC's educational mission is, my wife and I do not believe NCRC's proposed expansion would serve the community well. It is for this and the other reasons mentioned above that my wife and I ask you, as Chairperson and member of ANC 3C respectively, to oppose NCRC's proposed expansion.

Respectfully yours,

Henry P. Little

cc: Bruce Beckner, 3225 Highland Place, N. W., Washington, D.C. 20008

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September 6, 2002

Ms. Susan Piggott
Director
National Child Research Center
3209 Highland Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008-3299

Dear Ms. Piggott:

My name is Henry Little, and my wife Lydia Mendoza and I own the house immediately adjacent to NCRC at 3220 Ordway Street, where we lived from 1984 until 1998 and where we intend to return to live within the next few years. Currently the house is rented.

My reason for writing pertains to NCRC's plans for the expansion of its facilities. While Lydia and I currently live in San Francisco, we have been following as best we can from afar the discussions members of the Cleveland Park community have been having with you and other officials of NCRC. Given our current understanding of NCRC's plans, my wife and I very strongly oppose NCRC's proposed expansion.

Our reasons for opposing NCRC's plans are several. First, we believe that with enlarged enrollment at NCRC the traffic on Ordway Street, a street where the NCRC-related traffic problems historically have been considerable, would increase significantly, causing even greater safety and noise challenges. Second, we believe that the scale of the proposed expansion is completely at odds with the historic, neighborhood character of Cleveland Park, a historically significant residential community.

We understand and appreciate the mission of NCRC, a school which our youngest son Christopher Little attended in 1984-1985 and which has been an important, valued member of the Cleveland Park community, as it has been of the broader Washington, D.C. community. What we find so objectionable, however, is not only NCRC's expansion plans themselves, but also the approach NCRC has taken in pursuing its expansion plans, both currently and in the early 1990s.

I recognize that you were not part of the school when in the early 1990s (I believe) the terrace and new play structures were constructed adjacent to the Playhouse. What I recall about that phase of NCRC's expansion was that it was undertaken without NCRC first having secured the requisite permits, and without any significant consultation with its neighbors. It was only after Kel Ginsberg, who then lived across the street from NCRC on Ordway Steet, my wife and I, and other of NCRC's neighbors objected to the lack of landscaping, and the like, that NCRC both took its neighbors' interests and concerns into account and secured the needed permits.

Similarly, what appears to be happening, again, is that, without taking into account sufficiently the community's concerns NCRC is proceeding apace with expansion plans which if implemented will have enormous deleterious impacts on the Cleveland Park community. It's one thing to convey the impression one is listening. It's another to hear what others are saying. Our sense is that, while pretending to listen, NCRC's representatives are not hearing what the vast majority of the members of the Cleveland Park community, particularly its closest neighbors, are saying, which is: our neighborhood, our community, our safety, is important to us, and we insist that NCRC factor into its plans these values adequately.

I have worked for a non-profit organization, The Nature Conservancy, for nearly thirty years, and Lydia has worked for non-profit health clinics serving Latino families for almost twenty years. We both understand the importance of realigning an organization's programs and plans to more effectively pursue its mission. We commend NCRC for endeavoring to enhance its efficacy in pursuit of its highly important mission. Indeed, if NCRC's strategic vision calls for greatly increasing the number of children it serves, then expanded facilities might well be necessary. What does not follow so logically is expanding those facilities on Highland Place and Ordway Street in Cleveland Park. If NCRC deems it absolutely essential to expand it facilities in pursuit of its mission, I would urge NCRC to look to another locale, where such an expansion could be accommodated more appropriately .

As an adjacent landowner, my wife and I ask that NCRC provide use with:

1. Its complete drawings for the proposed expansion illustrating, among other things, the visual impact the expansion would have on its Ordway Street and Highland Place neighbors.

2. A clear reasoning as to why NCRC could not relocate to a new site which could more appropriately accommodate an enlarged NCRC facility.

3. A notice of upcoming hearings, meetings, and the like, at which NCRC will discuss its expansion plans both to the Cleveland Park community, and to the necessary permitting agencies from which it must secure approval before proceeding with its building plans.

In closing, I would like to note that one of the greatest challenges those of us working in the conservation field have faced over the past quarter century has been explosive rural sprawl, particularly in the American west, which has fragmented and otherwise despoiled so many of our country's signature wild landscapes. It is precisely because these landscapes are so beautiful, so

biologically rich, so pristine that we are drawn to them, only to spoil them with our affection and attention. Similarly, Cleveland Park, a vibrant residential community of great architectural and natural beauty, is one of our nation's signature national historic districts. The very reasons that make Cleveland Park so special, to the NCRC community as well as to Cleveland Park's residents, should not be the reasons which lead to its despoliation. I understand why NCRC would wish to remain in Cleveland Park. However, if NCRC absolutely needs to expand greatly, then expand greatly it should--elsewhere. NCRC, I believe, has an obligation, indeed a responsibility, not just to its mission, but also to the community within which it is situated. That obligation, that responsibility, requires NCRC, while vigorously pursuing its mission, to respect the Cleveland Park community's values and sense of place as well.

Sincerely,

Henry P. Little

cc: Bruce Beckner

September 18, 2002

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

Dear Ms. MacWood:

We own the house at 3071 Ordway Street, directly across from NCRC. We have lived there since January 1993, and plan to live there for many years to come.

We write to explain our strong opposition to NCRC's plans for the proposed expansion of its enrollment, staff, and facilities. Jane has been part of the negotiating committee of the Cleveland Park Neighbors and is fully conversant with the issues, as they were first raised last February 2002 when NCRC first informed the neighbors of NCRC's proposed plans for expansion and new construction.

We have several reasons for opposing NCRC's plans.

First, we believe that with enlarged enrollment at NCRC and an increase in staff, the problems with traffic on Ordway Street caused by NCRC would increase significantly, causing even greater safety and noise challenges. Traffic and parking problems caused by NCRC have long been an issue on Ordway Street, and the problems have become worse in recent years. The problems occur not only on school days (which have been extended into later in the afternoons), but also on some weekends and evenings, with special school events and/or when the school rents out the property for birthday parties.

Second, in our view, the scale of the proposed expansion is completely at odds with the historic, residential character of the area, a historically significant residential community. NCRC proposes to build two new institutional buildings - one very large carriage house with classrooms and other space, and a second garage structure to house maintenance equipment and serve as a maintenance work area. In addition, the combination of the proposed new carriage house, large high brick wall between this new building and the existing playhouse, and a new 2-car garage structure, on the hillside across from us, would create a massive facade of building facing those of us who live on Ordway Street.

The credibility of the entire historic designation process is challenged, when, as in our situation as a homeowner, the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) denied our request to install a small, non-obtrusive and flat skylight on the front of our house (which would have been hidden for at least 9 months of the year under the tree canopy of the tree in our front yard), but at the same time consider permitting NCRC to add two new institutional buildings - to create a campus - in the heart of the historic, residential neighborhood.

Third, we view NCRC's most recent proposal as a continuation of a complete disregard for its neighbors and our concerns, as well as the District of Columbia rules and regulations which govern NCRC and its operations. In the summer of 1994, NCRC spent the entire summer cutting down trees, building its new playground, and making substantial changes to the playhouse (addition of French doors, large concrete pad and large deck), all without any permits from the HPRB or the appropriate building and licensing permits. The summer was a nightmare for those of us who live nearby, because the construction noise and dust would start around 6-6:30 am and go late into the afternoon, and sometimes on weekends. Toward the end of the summer, someone applied for and secured a stop work order. It was then that the school negotiated with the neighbors, and we learned that NCRC intended to retain the ugly chain link fence facing Ordway that it had installed during the construction, to serve as a driveway for deliveries and other entries. Rather than be subject to severe enforcement action, NCRC agreed to create a permanent raised embankment on Ordway (to the west of the existing playhouse) so that no vehicles could enter, consult with the neighbors on the materials for appropriate low wood fencing, and plant permanent landscaping (which is maturing). It appears that no written agreement was signed. It is apparent now, however, that NCRC, with a new board and school leaders, feels no hesitation in breaching the school's prior agreement with the neighbors.

In addition, as others will tell you, in 1998, NCRC was disingenuous, at best, in informing the neighborhood of its intentions with respect to the certificate of occupancy. NCRC represented to the neighbors and to the Board of Zoning Adjustment that there would be no increased enrollment and no new construction, yet within approximately one year, NCRC initiated its long-range strategic planning which has resulted in this current proposal for a significant expansion of enrollment and a major building project.

As you can imagine, based upon these and other events in the past, the neighbors have absolutely no trust in NCRC's word, written or otherwise.

NCRC's disregard for the neighbors also manifests itself in other ways. NCRC creates substantial offensive noise as an institution that a residence in this neighborhood would not create. Virtually every school morning around 8 am, for approximately 20-30 minutes, NCRC maintenance staff use a very loud blower, to clear away chips and leaves. The noise really disturbs the peace and quiet of the mornings, and is a constant irritation.

Finally, we object strongly to the manner in which NCRC has presented its plans to the community. To date, we have no firm and accurate data on the proposed footprints and/or outer and inside dimensions of the expanded main house and new buildings. Further, NCRC initiated action to the Architectural Review Committee without any notice to us. Similarly, while NCRC had promised last spring that we could meet with its traffic consultant, no such meeting has been scheduled to date.

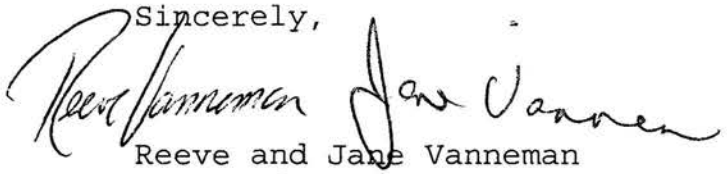
What appears to be happening, again, is that, without taking into account sufficiently the community's concerns, NCRC is proceeding at a fast rate with expansion plans. If these plans are approved and implemented, they will have terrible adverse effects upon the Cleveland Park community, in terms of architecture, design, scope, traffic and noise impacts.

We understand and appreciate the previous mission of NCRC, and have always enjoyed seeing and hearing little children at play. NCRC has been an important, valued member of the Cleveland Park community. We strongly object, however, to NCRC's expansion plans and NCRC's history of broken promises. We have no reason to trust NCRC's present statements that it has no plans to expand further. Given recent comments by various NCRC board members, if the proposed expansion is approved, we fully expect that, in a few years, with a new NCRC board and perhaps new director, NCRC will come back again asking for additional increases in enrollment.

As property owners who live across the street from NCRC, we request that the ANC deny NCRC's proposed expansion.

Thank you for your consideration of our objections to NCRC's proposal.

Sincerely,



Reeve and Jane Vanneman
3071 Ordway Street, NW
Washington, D.C.
(202) 537-1853

cc: Bruce Beckner

Steven R. Hunsicker
3083 Ordway St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 364-0425

September 19, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chair -- Advisory Neighborhood Commission
3-C
2737 Devonshire Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

Re: National Child Research Center ("NCRC")

Dear Ms. MacWood:

I have lived on Ordway St. for over 20 years. For approximately 13 years, I have lived in my home at 3083 Ordway St., N.W., across the street from NCRC. Because of the location of my home, I have a real appreciation of the importance of NCRC to the neighborhood, including the value of the NCRC open space. I also have real experience with the adverse impacts of traffic and parking congestion that have plagued NCRC's nearby neighbors to an increasing extent over the recent years.

I am strongly opposed to NCRC's proposed expansion as inconsistent with the historic preservation of the residential site and neighborhood. In addition, the dramatic expansion proposed by NCRC would exacerbate existing adverse impacts of traffic and parking congestion.

Moreover, as set forth in further detail below, the NCRC proposal is inconsistent with commitments made by NCRC to the ANC in 1998 and with conditions recommended by ANC to the Board of Zoning Adjustments ("BZA") and subsequently incorporated in the BZA special exception granted to NCRC. NCRC has failed to comply with its commitments to the ANC as well as the conditions incorporated by the 1998 BZA special exception. Approval of the NCRC expansion proposal essentially would reward NCRC for its non-compliance, and would send a counterproductive message that there is little if any need to comply with commitments made to the ANC and neighbors or with conditions imposed by the BZA.

I have attached the following relevant materials from NCRC's 1998 special exception proceedings to this letter for your reference:

1. BZA Decision Date: January 21, 1998, Summary Order of the BZA on NCRC Application;

2. List of owners of property within 200 feet of the NCRC notified of public BZA hearing;

3. ANC March 25, 1998 report to BZA regarding the application of NCRC for a special exception and variance;

4. April 1, 1998 transcript of the public hearing before the BZA;

5. ANC April 29, 1998 letter to BZA setting forth NCRC's developed traffic and parking mitigation plan for inclusion as conditions to the BZA special exception; and

6. BZA Decision Date: May 6, 1998, Summary Order Upon Rehearing.

I apologize for the resulting length of this submission, but I believe a clear understanding of the 1998 proceedings is important to an evaluation of the NCRC expansion proposal that has been presented to the ANC. The 1998 proceedings, and an experience with NCRC in 1994, demonstrate that NCRC has failed to honor the spirit or the letter of its commitments to the ANC and the neighbors, the conditions to its zoning authorizations, and, in the 1994 instance described immediately below, any obligation to seek prior authorization before undertaking significant construction on its site. Consequently, many of the neighbors, including myself, simply do not believe that NCRC will live up to any undertaking to mitigate the adverse impacts of its proposed expansion. In this respect, NCRC's actions have spoken louder than its words.

I was first involved with NCRC expansion issues in 1994. In summer 1994, NCRC initiated significant construction on its existing playhouse and playground area, including the cutting down of many mature trees, and the construction of a large deck and concrete pad, all without benefit of regulatory permits or substantial prior consultations with neighbors. As I recall, not until NCRC received a stop work order from the city did it evidence any meaningful willingness to acknowledge the resulting controversy or to discuss a resolution with the neighbors. At that point, facing enforcement action and unable to proceed with its plans, NCRC agreed to abandon certain features of its plans, including the retention of a driveway off of Ordway St. that was being used for access to the construction site. NCRC also agreed to install permanent landscaping along Ordway St., including trees and bushes that have since matured. In return, the neighbors agreed not to push for further remedial or enforcement action by the city.

Although NCRC has not shared the details of its current expansion proposal, the sketches I have seen indicate that NCRC wants to do away with this landscaping and replace the neighbors' view from Ordway St. with a large new institutional building on the northwest portion of the site along Ordway St. This new building appears to be two or three times the size

of nearby residences on Ordway St. Further, the new building would be connected visually with the existing playhouse by a wall along Ordway St. with a fence required on top to protect the children from falling over the wall. Consequently, the street level view of the NCRC site would be altered from open space to a solid, sizable wall of institutional construction. In effect, the site would be transformed from residential in character to a permanent institutional campus. These aspects of the NCRC expansion proposal, as well as the construction of any new driveway or drop-off lane that NCRC may again have in mind as part of its expansion, would be inconsistent with its 1994 agreement with the neighbors, contrary to the residential nature of the neighborhood, and contrary to the preservation of precious open space in the Cleveland Park historical area. As evidenced by the April 1, 1998 transcript of the public hearing on NCRC's special exception application, after the 1994 experience, NCRC recognized that the construction of a driveway would "interfere with both the historic and residential character of the remainder of the property since it would require taking down trees." See attachment 4 at p.19. The same significant interference with both the historic and residential character of the property that NCRC threatened in 1994 and recognized in 1998 will result if NCRC goes forward with its expansion project.

I also am familiar with NCRC's special exception proceeding before the BZA in 1998. At the time, NCRC described the matter before the BZA as merely a "technical matter." NCRC took the position that it needed the BZA special use exception to comport with its existing license to operate a childcare facility, and represented to the BZA that it was not intending to do any construction whatsoever or to increase the number of children or staff. See attachment 4 at pp.10-12. NCRC made similar representations at the time to the ANC and the neighbors. NCRC represented to the ANC that it "is not intending to do any construction, nor is it intending to increase the number of students from its current enrollment or to change its operation in any other way." See attachment 3 at p. 1. These commitments, as well the active and positive participation of the ANC, reduced the apparent need at the time for neighbor opposition at the BZA. I also note, however, that the list of owners notified of the public hearing at the BZA does not include certain of NCRC's closest neighbors, including the Beckners and Taylors on Highland Place. See attachment 2.

NCRC's commitments to no new construction or increases in the numbers of children or staff were important because it was recognized at the time that traffic and parking congestion was already having an adverse impact on the neighborhood. Despite NCRC's assurances of no foreseeable growth, neighbors, ANC and the BZA were concerned that the existing traffic congestion needed to be addressed. Accordingly, the following steps were taken:

First, the BZA placed a cap on NCRC enrollment by specifying a condition that "the maximum number of children shall not exceed 120." See attachment 1 at p. 2. It should be noted that this condition was not a reference to the number of children that could occupy the

building at one time, i.e., it was not a certificate of occupancy that is determined by other agencies based on square footage of buildings and other factors. Rather, it is reference to enrollment, which is more directly related to the traffic and parking impacts that were matters of concern to the BZA.[1] Current NCRC enrollment is well in excess of the maximum number of children specified by the BZA as a condition to NCRC's special exception and would increase under its proposed expansion.

Second, the BZA concurred with ANC's recommendation of a required traffic and parking mitigation plan to be developed and implemented by NCRC. As recognized by the ANC's April 29, 1998 letter to the BZA, the BZA required the development of such a plan by NCRC working with ANC and the neighbors before the Board issued its final decision. See Attachment 5.

Third, the NCRC, in consultations with neighbors and the ANC, developed a list of conditions that would comprise its mitigation plan. Those conditions are set forth in the ANC's April 29, 1998 letter to the BZA. See Attachment 5. The ANC conditions specify several traffic and mitigation steps to be implemented by NCRC. The final condition recommended by the ANC letter states:

> "8. The special exception will be limited to an initial period of eight years. This will enable neighbors to testify on the efficacy of those measures, should adverse impacts resume."

The purpose of this condition was further explained by the ANC's April 29 letter:

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[1] Any argument that "the maximum number of children" refers to a maximum occupancy at any one time, rather than a cap on enrollment, makes no sense. The concern of the ANC, neighbors and the BZA over increasing traffic impacts (see transcript of BZA hearing, attachment 4, at pp. 24-29) are much more meaningfully addressed by an enrollment cap rather than a limit on occupancy at any given time. Increasing traffic impacts would not be addressed by a condition that could be construed as permitting multiple populations of 120 young children during the day, e.g., in separate morning, mid-day or afternoon sessions. This is not to say that NCRC currently enrolls 360 children (the actual current enrollment is reportedly about 170) or that NCRC secretly intends to enroll 360 students in its expanded facility. The point is that given the concern about increasing traffic impacts in 1998, it is not credible to suggest that when BZA set a maximum limit of 120 children, it intended to specify a condition that could be construed as allowing the potential additional traffic and parking congestion of multiple populations of up to 120 children, so long as there were no more than 120 children in occupancy at one time.

> This is a compromise [from the 5 year term recommended by the ANC's March 25, 1998 report] the school can live with: on the one hand NCRC does not want to have to go through the expense of another hearing (a hefty filing fee plus legal representation); on the other hand neighbors want the ability to ensure a reconsideration of these conditions should problems reoccur. See attachment 5 at p.3.

The BZA adopted these conditions in its decision dated May 6, 1998, including the condition that "Approval shall be for **EIGHT (8) YEARS**." See Attachment 6.

In sum, NCRC undertook an obligation to operate under the 1998 special exception pursuant to several conditions, including a limitation on the maximum number of students, intended to mitigate the adverse traffic and parking problems that were already affecting the neighborhood. During that period, NCRC represented that it planned no new construction, no enrollment increase and no change in its method of operation. And, after no more than 8 years, if NCRC had not meaningfully addressed the adverse impacts that had already been experienced ("should adverse impacts resume"), it faced the potential modification of its special exception or the conditions thereto, including the potential reduction of the maximum number of students allowed below the 120 maximum specified in 1998.

The present significance of the 1998 proceedings action is clear: NCRC should not be allowed to eliminate the 8 year term of the 1998 special exception, including the neighbors' ability to reconsider the conditions to the special exception, and to disregard its commitment to no new construction, increase in enrollment or change in operations. At a minimum, NCRC must first demonstrate that it has complied with the 1998 conditions and that the adverse impacts of traffic and parking congestion identified in 1998 have in fact been mitigated and have not resumed.

NCRC cannot meet this burden. Prior to the development of its expansion plan, and the recognition that it would again face the neighbors, ANC and the BZA, NCRC made little or no effort to comply with many of the conditions of the BZA order that comprise the traffic mitigation plan that NCRC itself developed. Only now do we observe notices to parents concerning traffic and parking policies, and NCRC staff monitoring drop-off and pick-up points. Moreover, there is no dispute that NCRC's current enrollment exceeds the 120 maximum specified by the BZA. In any event, the adverse impacts of traffic and parking congestion have not been mitigated since 1998. In fact, the impacts have gotten worse, notwithstanding any recent efforts of NCRC to act like it has addressed the issue. It is simply beyond dispute that NCRC has failed to comply with conditions of the 1998 BZA order and that the adverse impacts

addressed by the ANC and the BZA in 1998 have not merely "resumed" they have continued unabated and have increased.

For all the reasons indicated above, the NCRC expansion project is inconsistent with the historical and residential character of the neighborhood and would further increase the adverse impacts of traffic and parking congestion that the neighborhood has experienced since 1998. NCRC also has failed to comply with its commitments to the ANC and the neighbors and the conditions to the 1998 special exception. Consequently, I urge the ANC to recommend that the NCRC expansion project be denied.

Very truly yours,



Steven R. Hunsicker

Attachments

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

RITA M. RODRIGUEZ
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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

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

September 21, 2002

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

Dear Chairman MacWood and Mr. Welsh:

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

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

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

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

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

Let me explain:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

R. Bruce Beckner

Sallie R. Beckner

Sept. 20, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacWood
Chair, ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Pl. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ms. MacWood:

This letter is a request for your prompt and firm rejection of the National Child Research Center's proposed expansion plans. I live in and own the house next door to NCRC to the East of the school. I feel very fortunate to live in this neighborhood and value it deeply.

Together with Newark Street, 33rd Place, and Ashley Terrace, Highland Place is the heart of the Cleveland Park residential historic district. The area loosely bounded by these streets embraces a noteworthy concentration of old and notable houses within the historic residential district. No doubt this is why a photograph of an unusual old home across the street on Highland Place was chosen to promote the Smithsonian Resident Associates Cleveland Park Walking Tour: the fall schedule just arrived in my mail a few days ago.

Yet the special quality of this residential district is not about grandness. As a neighborhood we enjoy a diversity of turn of the century architectural styles and variations in scale from home to home. What is shared and alike is that each and every antique structure is a home – beloved and lived in.

The fact that these gracious old structures are still homes means that the neighborhood is stunningly quiet, an oasis in a busy city. The magical quality of this area is further drawn by the old growth of trees and shrubs preserved and nurtured along with the homes. I have often observed first time or infrequent visitors to the neighborhood expressing visible or audible awe at finding themselves here.

The city preserves and protects this quiet historic residential district for its natural beauty, exceptional architectural history, and residential character. I believe that NCRC's proposed plan to transform their "home" into a four building institutional campus is in flagrant violation of the laws and intentions that create and protect this historic neighborhood.

When I bought the house at 3207 Highland Place ten years ago, I was, of course, aware that a nursery school was in business next door. I understood NCRC to be a neighborhood school that happened to be in a lovely old house. I was at peace – for a while.

I have seen NCRC encroach on the neighborhood and misuse its exceptional status bit by bit. In 1994 over the summer NCRC built a gigantic playground which blanketed much of its hitherto green and natural area. Active neighbors managed to block the opening of a school driveway by agreeing not to challenge what were perceived as illegal actions on the part of the school (such as the building of the playground). There were feelings of betrayal: the landscape was completely altered, trees were felled, green was eradicated. I was saddened.

About four years ago some kind of exception was made and traffic mushroomed. A just barely manageable traffic situation on narrow and quaint Highland Place became chaotic, hectic and frustrating during school hours. NCRC's location is at the coming together of two narrow non-through streets, a dead end point, in effect, which easily becomes a pile up of parked and waiting cars.

More recently, NCRC revamped its AC system, installing very large and very noisy HVAC units just below my bedroom window and just to the side of my front porch. The porch is not very usable any more – the units are too loud to enjoy conversation there.

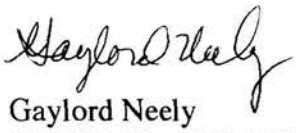
And now... what is proposed is even more totalistic destruction of the school's beautiful property; additions of some 15 students and at least 6 staff – adding many additional cars to area traffic and parking (with student body and staff sizes promising to multiply at the school's whim); doubling the school's size in square footage; adding contrived new buildings, rooftop AC units, an elevator; massive excavation of the land I share with the school for an underground addition (threatening the structural integrity of my more than 100 year old home). I am appalled, and I am angry.

These proposed changes do not in any way fit into residential standards or guidelines for historic preservation. They would not allow me, my family or my neighbors to experience quiet enjoyment of our homes and neighborhood.

If the school wishes to stay in our neighborhood, I believe it must respect our community, architecture, commitment to natural beauty, and quiet streets. Let it once again become a nursery school in a house. Alternatively, NCRC should relocate to another locale which is commercial, on a main artery, and where expansion is appropriate.

I very much appreciate your taking the time to read and consider this letter.

Sincerely,



Gaylord Neely
3207 Highland Pl. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

September 17, 2002

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

Dear Ms. MacWood,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"...to encourage adaptation for current use"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Best wishes,

Linda Badami

Linda Badami





September 17, 2002

Nancy McWood
Chair, ANC 3C

Re: NCRC's proposed expansion

Dear Ms. Wood,

Our family lives directly across the street from NCRC's playground on Highland Place, and were very fortunate to have our sons, now ages 7 and 8, attend the school for five consecutive years. It's a wonderful school, one that truly *lives* its mission statement. We love the school, the staff does an excellent job teaching, and my husband and I were very involved.

With that said, I am *strongly* in opposition to NCRC's expansion plans which propose to more than double their square footage, and increase the number of cars by about 40 per day, for *now*.

1. Traffic, parking and safety issues:
Highland Place is a quaint, narrow street, with a dangerous blind curve in the middle of it, directly in front of NCRC's entrance. Thirty-third Place, is parents' means of egress to Newark Street which leads to34th Street (Reno Road). It is a narrow street which has parking on both sides of the street, thus allowing only one line of moving traffic. So, it's essentially a one way street that changes directions, depending on the direction of the first driver that approaches either end. It's hectic and crazy during school hours. The line up of cars on Newark Street, to turn onto 34th Street in the mornings in particular, extends half way down the block, with long waits because it's well known that the corner of 34th and Newark is treacherous.

2. Proposed enrollment increase
There are approximately 168 families each academic year, and 37 staff people. Allowing for some walkers, and some car poolers, that means there are approximately 153 cars, driving on our narrow Highland Place, or Ordway Street, and/or trying to park every week day. NCRC proposes 15 more students and 6 more staff—for now. That will add approximately 20 additional cars, twice a day—again, allowing for carpooling and an occasional walker—and not counting additional part time staff who come and go—to the narrow streets that make up the heart of Cleveland Park's Historic District.

It is impossible to imagine that NCRC, in proposing to more than double its physical space and create a school campus, essentially, is not going to gradually add more and more students and staff, and exacerbate the traffic, parking and safety issues which are already barely tolerable.

This proposed plan will be completely detrimental to the residents of Cleveland Park, and to the nature of the Cleveland Park Historical District. Please vote against it.

Sincerely,

Laine Shakerdge Kaufman

Ms. Nancy MacWood
3-C Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner
3417 Woodley Road
Washington, DC 20008

September 18, 2002

Dear Ms. MacWood,

We hardly know where to begin our observations about NCRC.

Our most intimate contact with the school ended in 1977 when our children "graduated" and went off to kindergarten. In those days and for many years afterwards we were very happy to have the school **across the street from our house.** We enjoyed seeing neighbors as they walked the children to school and hearing the cheerful voices in the playground during the middle of the day.

That, however, has now changed. We see very few walkers and lots of cars. The traffic problems on both Highland and Ordway have now reached chronically irritating proportions. The potential for disruption occurs several times daily (8:30-9:00am, 11:30-12:00m, 12:30pm, 3:30-3:45pm, and 5:00pm). Now, because the school day has been extended to include before and after school care, the voices in the playground are more numerous and are heard all day long.

Numbers and size of vehicles are the root of the traffic problem. The number of students and extended hours of operation are at the root of the noise problem.

Since we can not tell parents what kind of car to drive, or where they can park, or what qualifies as an emergency, or that we don't care if they are late to work, we can only ask that the numbers not be increased.

In 1998, the history of which I am sure you know, we were too trusting and now we have a serious problem. A neighborhood rebellion, in fact. It's sad, because we used to have good relations with the school.

Zoning laws should protect a residential neighborhood from being overrun by institutional building and expansion. Especially a neighborhood with a preservation designation. There is no convertibility to residential in a school building, and allowing it to go up would make the protection promised under the zoning exception meaningless.

Please do not support the expansion of NCRC.

Sincerely,

3224 Highland Place
Washington, DC 20008

William K. and Dandridge L. Ince

Barbara Brinton Haas
3200 Highland Place NW
Washington, DC 20008

September 14, 2002

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

Dear Ms. MacWood:

We have lived at 3200 Highland Place NW (south side of the street, within 200 feet of the NCRC property line) for approximately 18 years.

In 1997 and 1998 we participated with a group of neighbors to address -- with NCRC representatives -- problems resulting from NCRC traffic which were negatively impacting Highland Place NW, 33rd Street, and Ordway.

In the five or so years leading up to our activities in 1998, traffic problems had been steadily increasing. Parents, caregivers, and school bus drivers were blocking our driveway. The drivers were double parking while waiting to drop off or pick up students, sometimes for 20 – 30 minutes. When we asked these drivers to move to allow us to get out of the driveway, we were verbally abused and treated rudely. One driver left her car directly blocking our driveway and announced "don't worry, I'll be right back" as she went to the school office. As we are sure you will hear from other neighbors, there were numerous additional problems which we will leave for those who are more directly impacted to describe.

The neighbors – in a good faith effort – approached NCRC to try to resolve the problems. We were assured that our concerns would be addressed during our meetings with the NCRC director and board members. We participated in several meetings at NCRC to air the issues. With others, I attended ANC meetings and testified at a BZA hearing (April 1, 1998) in order to have my concerns placed in an official record. All of us who testified were assured by NCRC that the situation would be addressed and that they wanted to be good neighbors. We expected them to live up to their commitment to us including – among other things - sanctions to deter errant drivers (i.e., I suggested fines which could be put into a scholarship fund).

To date, 4 years later, all we've seen are some large white lines painted on Highland Place where drivers are supposed to stop in order to prevent blocking driveways (often ignored), and a dozen or so ugly orange traffic cones which are put on the street each morning and left out until the end of the day (also often ignored). Copies of notices/reminders about "rules" which have been sent home from NCRC with the

children have been sent to us. There have been some additional changes made by the school for pick up times, but overall we have had no relief.

We love having the school near our home, however, what was created to be a school for neighborhood children, appears to be evolving into a big business. We have no problem with NCRC's desire to continue to expand, but Highland Place is an inappropriate location for what they want to do.

NCRC now plans to double the size of their physical facilities. We are being told that they don't plan to significantly expand the student body but their presentations are inconsistent and contradictory. What is their mandate? Why should they be allowed to expand and further negatively impact the neighborhood?

The proposed expansion is not for the accommodation of local neighborhood children, is not for social benefit to the community, and does not provide any unique services. Rather, it appears to be for increased profit and influence - at the expense of the historic and architectural integrity of the community, and with further traffic, congestion and risk to the children as well as the neighbors.

There is virtually no support for this project in the neighborhood even though many of the families previously supported the school and sent their children there. This is due to the track record of unfulfilled promises and assurances, with a continuing lack of consistency or candor in our efforts to negotiate with them.

We are adamantly opposed to any expansion of any existing buildings, we are adamantly opposed to any new facilities being constructed on the NCRC property, and we are adamantly opposed to any expansion of the student body

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Barbara B. Haas

Stephen S. Haas

cc John Welsh

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

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

September 12, 2002

Dear Ms. MacWood:

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Dr. Paula Atkeson

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

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

September 16, 2002

Dear Ms. MacWood and Mr. Welsh:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully yours,

Ana G. Tejblum Evans

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

September 18, 2002

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

Dear Ms. McWood,

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

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

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

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

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

I urge you to recommend against NCRC's plan.

Sincerely,

Rives Carroll

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

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

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

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

September 20, 2002

Via e-mail

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

Dear Ms. MacWood:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Leonard Chanin (signed)
Leonard Chanin

cc: Ms. Susan Piggott
NCRC

September 20, 2002

Nancy MacWood
Chairman of ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Place NW
Washington, DC 20008
namacwood@aol.com

John Welsh
Single-Member District Representative of ANC 3C
2737 Devonshire Place NW
Washington, DC 20008
oxbo@starpower.net

Dear Ms. MacWood and Mr. Welsh:

Our family has lived in Cleveland Park for 32 years. We have seen the community evolve from a quiet neighborhood to one that has become much nosier and busier given the growth of the city. Reno Road became a thru-way for those coming into the city to work. Our streets have become full of large trucks servicing the many establishments which have come to the area and going to the Giant on Wisconsin Avenue. The metro came and brought us growth on Connecticut. Many large developers sought to make money by trying to build on McLean Gardens, Tregaron and the Park and Shop area of Connecticut Avenue, but the people who live in Cleveland Park worked long and hard to keep this area a neighborhood and a viable community which is valuable to Washington DC in the families and residents it brings to the city.

I am writing to you in regards to National Child Research Center's (NCRC) proposal for growth. They now want to expand their class room space by adding onto their historic building and adding other buildings to their less than one acre property. Those additions would create an entirely different school in the middle of a totally residential neighborhood and one that is also historical. The school will be too large: too many buildings on the property; too large an enrollment, with increased school hours each day, and with many more cars bringing and picking up children in several daily sessions (before school care, morning session, after noon session, and after school care). NCRC has existed for many years with their present buildings and campus and has historically attracted a balanced ratio of families sending their children there from the neighborhood, from Washington DC and from surrounding areas.

I know NCRC well as Alexa, our daughter, attended the school in the early 70's, I did substitute teaching at the school during that time. I was on the

Board of Directors for four years and I was on the committee to find candidates for a new director. The Board chose Emily Mac Cormack to be head of the school. Among the many reasons Emily was chosen was her expertise with children; her abilities to financially manage an institution (she had been Director of the Brick School in NYC); she was able to attract families and have a strong enrollment; and she viewed NCRC a school with a beautiful historical property, good facilities and that the school had very good relations with the neighbors and with the other private schools in the city. Emily's tenure continued all of this.

Since Emily retired, NCRC's Board of Directors and the school have not had as good relations with the neighbors. They have been evasive and somewhat secretive in some of the actions they have taken, such as asking for an increase of enrollment to 120 students, even though the city certified their classroom space for a smaller number. The school still sends out letters to neighbors advising them of the beginning of school and of large events they will hold on weekends. But this type of communication, though very nice and appropriate, is not as important as the communications to the neighbors about the important actions the school already took in enrollment and plans to take on their expansion. These have not been communicated well and are usually last minute. Now they are trying to rush the approval process through ARC, ANC and BZA to thwart the neighbors. They have been evasive about their school's larger enrollments, which were against regulations during one point in their recent history; and about the buildings they plan to build - what they look like, what the square footage will be of both their new buildings, what square footage would be left in playground space, and the additions to their historical main classroom. At the recent ARC meeting, where NCRC presented the school building plans, they were addressed questions from the audience. They did not answer some, skirted around others and to others said they did not have the answers with them and took so long in trying to figure out dimensions, that the ARC said there was no more time and that NCRC must bring that information to the upcoming ANC meeting. The architect also said the drawings were "only conceptual". The drawings presented at the ARC were very different from the ones given out in the spring. No drawings were given out to the neighbors at the ARC meeting, so it was difficult to grasp the entirety of their plans. It was interesting to note that the architect seemed to have borrowed from what The National Cathedral School (NCS) did and buried the NCRC building so as to make it look smaller. Possibly this was done, because NCS was successful in expanding their school and their architectural plan passed the ARC, ANC and BZA. NCS, unlike NCRC, has much more land on which to put such a structure.

Looking at NCRC's largest proposed new building from Ordway street, it has both a two story above ground section they call "the carriage house" and an attached one story building whose front is a stone wall with a door and windows in it, the back being buried in the hill on the other side and the

top a playground. The total structure looks squeezed in and stretched out along Ordway street. The architect kept saying at the ARC presentation that half of the building would be underground. Yet the drawings portrayed a building that would be one story on Ordway Street, which makes it two stories above the street level if one takes into consideration the hillside. Also the architect did not have the fence drawn on the plans which will need to be around the top of the one story building which is to be a playground. That fence will make the building/playground section of the new building even taller from Ordway and for the homes next to and across the street from NCRC. These homes will look into the building and into the air-conditioning and other mechanics which are to be in the roof of the building, which also may be noisy day and night. When you look at the NCRC property from Ordway, as the architect and school are now portraying what they would build, it looks like a jumble of odd buildings running along the property line. There is a Tutor building/Carriage House (no architecture in the immediate neighborhood is similar to what they plan), with a long stone wall one story high containing a door and windows (not Tutor style), and then a small space between this structure and the 50's two story "playhouse" which rises tall from the hillside and has yet different building materials. Since NCRC is going to put an addition on the back of the large historic building where the major portion of their classrooms are, one will also be able to see that building from Ordway with it's new long all glassed enclosed in porch. Also one will also be able to see the new large two story "bike shed" that will be right on the property line. It will become as someone said, a campus with many assorted styles of buildings and structures. It will no longer be an attractive property with a lovely old building and playground in the heart of the most historic area of Cleveland Park.

I have been told that Susan Piggott, the present Director of NCRC, when accepting that position, told the Board that she expected to expand the school. She apparently came in wanting to change the school. It appears that the school no longer wants to serve many in the neighborhood or even Washington DC, but instead draw many of their students from Virginia and Maryland, from families who want their students to then go onto Washington DC private schools.

It is important to note that NCRC's property is located on a windy, narrow cul de sac, Highland Place. Most schools in the city and most of the private schools are located on major streets (Wisconsin Avenue, Reno Road, Cathedral Avenue etc) where there is good access and egress and plenty of room for the many cars of teachers, administration, other staff and parents. This is not the case at NCRC. The roads leading to the school are small and built for neighborhood traffic only. Many children live on the street. Many other children from the neighborhood visit those children and all of them play there. Those children also walk to and from other schools in the neighborhood using Highland Place and surrounding streets at the same time NCRC parents

are driving their children on Cleveland Park Streets, on Highland Place and on Ordway to drop off and to pick up their children. While the school is in session many children walk to the Cleveland Park Club near NCRC. Many neighbors walk back and forth from their houses, walk their dogs, and also walk to the Cleveland Park Club. Cleveland Park is a place where neighbors know each other, walk to each other's homes, to stores on the avenues, and as I said their children walk to schools and to visit each other. Every time a school or a non profit in Cleveland Park wants to add or enlarge buildings on the property they already own or wants to buy property to put up buildings, the community is eroded.

Right now many parents in the greater Washington area are clamoring to get into private elementary, middle schools and high schools in Washington. NCRC is a "feeder" school to such schools. It appears that NCRC wants to become bigger so that they can attract more of these families. But it is at the expense of quality of life for those in the neighborhood when NCRC sets such goals for themselves and when they do not take into consideration the surrounding neighborhood.. NCRC no longer has many parents from the neighborhood on their Board of Directors, the teachers do not live in the area, and most of the children do not live in Cleveland Park or even the surrounding neighborhoods. If NCRC believes that it is extremely important for them to expand for their incoming children and families, then they should sell their historic property and find a suitable property to build the larger premier state of the art nursery school, which will admit children who whose parents want them to go onto the area's private schools. With the sale of the Cleveland Park property and what they want to spend developing their present location, NCRC should be able to find something elsewhere which to meet their needs. Lowell St. moved from Cleveland Park in order to expand, as have other schools.

I regret that NCRC is no longer a compatible neighbor and that they feel they must overbuild the property they have. Please vote no to what NCRC is presenting to the ANC.

Sincerely,

Nancy G. Harter.