The Friends of Tregaron Foundation, Inc.
3101 Macomb Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008

December 1, 2003

BY HAND DELIVERY

Ms. Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA
Director
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application of the Washington International; BZA NO. 17082

Dear Ms Kress:

Enclosed please find the original and twenty copies of a letter to BZA Chairman Griffis regarding the above-referenced matter. The School's application will be presented at a public hearing on Tuesday, December 9, 2003 at 1 p.m. If possible, I would like to testify on behalf of the Friends of Tregaron Foundation, Inc. at this hearing.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hestitate to contact me at 202-362-9595 or bjlepard@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Bonnie LePard

Bonnie LePard, President of the Board
Friends of Tregaron Foundation, Inc.

BZA
Case No. 17082
Exhibit No. 32

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17082
EXHIBIT NO. 32

The Friends of Tregaron Foundation, Inc.
3101 Macomb Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008

December 1, 2003

BY HAND DELIVERY

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application of the Washington International; BZA NO. 170821

Dear Mr. Griffis:

On behalf of the Friends of Tregaron Foundation Inc., I am writing regarding the Washington International School's application for a special exception to adjust authorized staff levels to current levels. This matter will be before the Board of Zoning Adjustment on Tuesday, December 9, 2003 at 1 p.m. at a public hearing.

The Friends of Tregaron Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is the protection and preservation of the historic Tregaron Estates. The Friends of Tregaron is a community based group that has existed for over 30 years and has more than 500 members dedicated to protecting a national treasure, the Tregaron Estates, its historic buildings and important surrounding landscape. This 20-acre estate runs through Klingle Valley Park and abuts Klingle Road on its southern border. Tregaron is adjacent to Rock Creek Park on its eastern side and Macomb Street on it northern border.

Tregaron, originally known as "The Causeway," was built in 1912 and was designed by Charles Adams Platt, the premier architect of country houses in this period. The landscaping surrounding the buildings was designed by Platt and a renowned landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman. The original 21 acre parcel was divided into two lots in 1979, the same year that the entire property was designated a DC landmark.

After Tregaron Estates became a DC landmark, the Washington International School purchased approximately 6 acres in the northwest portion of the site. The 1979 subdivision resulted in no barriers or alterations to the landscape, which remains a unified whole, a complete historic site. The Tregaron Estates is not only an Historic Landmark in the District of Columbia, the entire 21 acres was listed on the National Register of Historic Sites in 1990 and it is also located in the Cleveland Park Historic District, thereby giving the property three levels of historic protection.

Over the years, the Friends of Tregaron have tried very hard to have an amiable relationship with the Washington International School. As the School's daily activities and expansion plans have a very direct impact on the neighborhood and the historic Tregaron Estates, the Friends have followed and often been involved in WIS's proposed changes. For example, in 1997 when WIS proposed building a large arts and athletics building, the Friends of Tregaron engaged in negotiations with the School that resulted in a contract pertaining to the use of the new building. As the Friends works hard to maintain good, open and supportive relationships with the School, our organization testified in favor of the modified arts and athletic building before the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

One disturbing fact was revealed in 1997 about the Washington International School. It had increased its student enrollment from the allowed 350 students to 425. This creeping enrollment had been going on for some years without proper approval. In the process of obtaining BZA authorization to build its arts and athletic center, WIS was granted the right to increase its maximum enrollment to 425 students (a number already in attendance at the Tregaron campus).

The Friends of Tregaron continues to be concerned about the large number of students attending these fragile historic buildings and its beautiful landscape, not to mention the impact on the residential community by the large amount of vehicular traffic in a congested neighborhood. Currently, WIS uses Macomb Street as its entrance to the property. As you know, Macomb Street is a major thoroughfare for commuters and emergency vehicles and is used by families transporting children to more than five schools in the neighborhood. At 8 a.m., the street is nearly a parking lot.

Now the Washington International School is once again seeking a special exception to the existing zoning regulations. Once again the School has grown in size without approval. This time, WIS has increased the number of faculty and staff from the allowable limit of 70 up to the existing number of 92. Once again, the "School is unable to explain when and how it exceeded the [staffing] level set forth in the [1997] BZA Order." (Washington International School's BZA Application filed on September 11, 2003, page 2.) The School is now bringing a total of 517 people onto Tregaron Estates every day -- not counting visitors and commuting parents. That's about 100 more than the School initially promised – a 25% increase.

Once again, the Friends of Tregaron is put in a difficult situation. As the Washington International School also tries to work with the Friends and the community, the Friends wants to maintain good relationships. Over the past few years, WIS has done a good job of communicating with the neighbors (largely through the Friends of Tregaron) and has been responsive to concerns we have raised. We have tried to be gracious, overlooking many infractions and recognizing that a school comes with kids, noise and traffic.

While we recognize that our large organization could object to the modified staff and faculty number (as we could have to the enrollment actually reflecting reality), the

Friends of Tregaron is not going to be unreasonable. Stripping the School of 22 faculty and staff would be an extreme hardship – just as disallowing 75 existing students (and their tuitions!) would have been six years ago.

But as we have communicated to WIS Head Richard Hall, the Friends of Tregaron does not want to see the creeping increase in students, faculty and staff to continue. The historic site and the neighborhood cannot safely take growing numbers. There are members that would argue that having more that 500 people on Tregaron is already too many. As the School looks to any future plans it must understand that the Friends of Tregaron will not look the other way again. In this competitive academic environment, WIS must not be tempted to grow mysteriously and later seek approval for its increases.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to be heard on this matter that affects the important historic Tregaron Estates.

Sincerely,

Bonnie LePard

Bonnie LePard, President of the Board
Friends of Tregaron Foundation Inc.

cc: Mr. Richard Hall
Mr. Jacques B. DePuy, Esq.