June 29, 2004

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chair
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, Suite 210 South
Washington DC 20001

BZA Case #17149

Dear Mr. Griffis:

As homeowners within 200 feet of the Sidwell Friends School (SFS) campus, we submit written comments to convey our concerns regarding the planned renovation at SFS and the proposed Construction Management Plan.

1) **We OPPOSE Student Drop-off on ~~Quebec~~ 37½ St**: SFS should not be allowed to drop off ANY students on 37th Street as the traffic situation is currently at gridlock and the only relief will be to ban all student drop-off on 37th Street, not just 5th & 6th Grade Middle School students as is being proposed. We support the position of ANC3F that ALL traffic should be off our residential streets. To date, Sidwell has not been able to control its own traffic and our streets are dangerous and clogged during morning drop-off and afternoon pickup, as well as at times of sports and other events, making backing out of our driveway nearly impossible and very unsafe. This constant traffic from drop-offs and pickups is noisy, pollutes our neighborhood and adversely affects our property which we have owned for nearly 29 years.

2) **We OPPOSE any overflow parking**: We support the position of both ANC3F and ANC3C which would require SFS to provide on-campus parking for ALL students, teachers, and visitors. The 2nd tier to the proposed garage would, we hope, enable all SFS students, teachers and visitors to park on campus. As homeowners on Quebec Street at 37th Street, we oppose the Department of Transportation's position that allows any overflow traffic to park on our residential streets, first on Quebec Street, then on 37th Street. We already have too much traffic on our narrow streets. A family car was damaged several years ago by a SFS student driver backing into a parking space across the street from our home and cars parked on these streets are frequently sideswiped.

3. **We REQUEST Proposed Landscaping Plans:** We have not yet seen detailed landscaping plans for the entire campus renovation project. As adjacent homeowners, we agree with the recommendations of both ANC3F and ANC3C that there should be plantings to screen the Middle School and new gym from neighbors.

However, on the side of the campus where we live, we do not know what plans SFS has to improve the campus borders along 37th Street and Quebec Street. Our current view across Quebec Street is of a tall concrete wall topped by a chain link fence which creates an objectionable impact upon our property. During this campus-wide renovation project, the perimeter should be landscaped attractively to minimize the austere look of the current boundaries, as has been done successfully in other NW area school renovations. Creating a buffer along 37th Street and Quebec Street in the form of a green screen is something we have been politely asking SFS officials to do for over twenty years without any result.

4. **We OPPOSE Lighted Tennis Courts:** This issue has surfaced unexpectedly and late in the application process and we have only recently become aware of it. However, if this proposal is true, we oppose ANY night lighting of the SFS tennis courts just as we have consistently opposed night lighting of the Phoebe Hearst Public Tennis Courts at 37th and Quebec Streets, diagonally across the street from our property. The glow from night lighting of tennis courts on Wisconsin Avenue or at any location on the SFS campus is a condition that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of our adjacent residential property and we would find it extremely objectionable. We are also curious as to why SFS has never advised us directly that they even contemplated this change to campus renovation plans and allowed us find out on our own. We believe that a

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more neighborly approach, and one in keeping with the spirit in which we have been meeting with SFS officials these past months, would have been to advise us that this was under consideration.

5. **We OPPOSE increasing student enrollment**. The current enrollment cap is 780 but SFS had 800 students this past year (2003-2004). We agree with ANC3C that the parking garage must be completed and there must be successful demonstration of the transportation management plan for one year before we will support any increases in student enrollment.

6. **We SUPPORT Demonstration of a transportation management plan**. The current traffic situation surrounding the SFS campus is one of gridlock at certain times of the day and presents a safely issue to those of us living across the street from the campus. SFS has never successfully monitored or controlled its own traffic and is apparently unwilling to create enforcement and penalties for violation of school policies. We agree with both ANC3F and ANC3C that there should be a one-year demonstration of the implementation of their plan.

Sincerely,

Joseph and Frances Lowenstein

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