4838 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC
September 20, 2004

Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA, Director
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW Suite 210 S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application Number 17209: The Parkmont School

Dear Ms. Kress:

We write in support of the Parkmont School's application to continue its special exception for the operation of a private school on Lot 34 of Square 2654, at 4842 16th Street, NW. Our property is directly to the south of that owned by the school.

We supported the original 1989 special exception application from Parkmont's predecessor, the Somerset School; we supported Parkmont's 1999 request to continue its special exception and we continue to believe that this site is suitable for use as a private school. We continue to believe as well that any action resulting in creation of a vacant building at this location poses a significant safety and security risk to the building's immediate neighbors. What's more, large vacant buildings constitute an aesthetic nuisance that detracts from the stable character of this generally residential community. The Liberian Embassy, one block north of The Parkmont School and recently renovated after a decade of vacancy, is eloquent testimony to the impact vacant buildings can have on neighborhoods and how their rehabilitation improves both the perception and the reality of residential stability.

We are professionals who deal daily with land use issues (Roberta is an executive with a residential real estate management and development firm; Fred is a city planner) and we recognize that a private educational institution constitutes one of the few feasible uses under current zoning for this site. The building's size and its current use make conversion back to a residence or to a different institutional use a difficult and expensive task.

In addition, the generally low-intensity use of the site by the school minimizes traffic congestion and other intrusions. This is particularly important to us; our block contains two churches and a religious residence. Two more religious residences (one with a chapel for services), a home used for special events, two more churches and the Carter Barron Ampitheater-Fitzgerald Tennis center complex are located within two blocks of our home. We would find it extremely difficult under these circumstances to support higher intensity use of this site. The modest staff increase contemplated by Parkmont will not, in our view, increase congestion.

BZA
Case No. 17209
Exhibit No. 28

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
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The Parkmont School has been a particularly good neighbor. It carefully maintains its physical facilities and landscaping and has been attentive to our concerns in doing so. We are regularly informed about school events and speak as often with Head of School Ron McClain as we do with any of our residential neighbors. This is as it should be.

We are convinced that the school will keep its commitment to its neighbors and this part of the Crestwood community. We urge the Board to approve renewal of the school's special exception and its parking variance.

We hope the Board finds these comments constructive and that the members consider them carefully during their deliberations.

Sincerely,

Frederick Vernon Boyd

Frederick Vernon Boyd

Roberta A. Ujakovich

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