Before the Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia

In the matter of	:	
The Roman Catholic Archbishop	:	
of Washington	:	
(St. Thomas More Parish)	:	Application No. _____
	:	
Applicant	:	

SATISFACTION OF THE SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS STANDARDS OF 11 DCMR §§ 3104 AND 204

The proposed application requests relief to construct a gymnasium/youth center as an accessory building to an existing church and private school in the R-5-A District. Pursuant to 11 DCMR § 350.4, any use permitted in the R-4 District is permitted as a matter of right in an R-5 District subject to the requirements of §§ 353 and 410 which sections are inapplicable in this case. Ultimately, the Zoning Regulations refer the Applicant back to the uses permitted as a matter of right in the R-1 District. 11 DCMR § 201.1 (b) permits a church or other place of worship in the R-1 District. In addition, 11 DCMR § 351 states that accessory buildings are permitted in an R-5 District which includes any accessory building permitted in R-4 Districts under § 331. Ultimately, the Zoning Regulations refer the Applicant back to the accessory buildings permitted in the R-1 District. 11 DCMR § 204 allows accessory buildings in the R-1 Districts incidental to the uses permitted in the chapter which include a church. The application fully satisfies the standards for special exception relief for accessory buildings in the R-5-A District, pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 3104 and 204.

3104.1 The Board is authorized under § 8 of the Zoning Act, D.C. Office Code § 6-641.07(g)(2) … to grant special exceptions, as provided in this title, where, in the judgment of the Board, the special exceptions will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps, subject in each case to the special conditions specified in [Title 11 DCMR].

According to the Zoning Regulations, the R-5 Districts are General Residence Districts designed to permit flexibility of design by permitting in a single district all types of urban residential development if they conform to certain requirements. In addition, the R-5 Districts also permit the construction of those institutional and semi-public buildings that would be compatible with adjoining residential uses and that are excluded from the more restrictive Residence Districts.

In this case, the Applicant proposes to build a gymnasium/youth recreation center that would serve the church and school, as well as the surrounding neighborhood. This center will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps as it

BZA
Case No. 17215
Exhibit No. 9

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17215
EXHIBIT NO. 9

will be located in the more flexible R-5 District and will serve to enhance the community in which it will be located. The site for the gymnasium/youth center is located in the Highland South community of Congress Heights neighborhood in Ward 8. The site is surrounded by apartment buildings, single family homes and row houses, including public housing facilities. The 2000 census tract information reveals that the neighborhood contains the city's highest level of welfare recipients, the lowest level of adult education, the lowest level of school literacy and the highest poverty rates. This center will not affect adversely the use of the neighboring property, but rather will provide a stable venue to enhance the recreational, educational and social experiences of the area's at-risk youth. As this project has received broad-based public and private support, the Applicant submits, almost in partnership with the District of Columbia government, that the placement of the center in this underserved community will greatly enhance the surrounding neighborhood.

204.1 The following building shall be permitted as accessory buildings in R-1 Districts incidental to the uses permitted in this chapter:

...

(c) other building or structures customarily incidental to the uses permitted in R-1 Districts under the provisions of this chapter.

The Applicant proposes to build a gymnasium/youth center on its almost 6.5 acre campus which already includes a church, a school, a rectory, an old rectory and a storage facility. The new building will be subordinate to the main building which is a church and school. Additionally, the use of the center will be incidental to the primary use of the campus as a church and school. A gymnasium/youth center is generally associated with a church and school which serves its parishioners and students as well as its surrounding neighborhood and community. This center will be available to the community when not in use for the church and school. The parishioners and students, for the most part, are residents of the neighborhood.