4915 Ashby Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
April 3, 2005

RECEIVED
2005 APR 13 PM 4:37
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ZONING

Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W.
Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application of St. Patrick's Protestant Episcopal Church, Application Number 17300

To the Board:

We are neighbors of the St. Patrick's School located at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard. We live within 200 feet of the school. We oppose the school's request to increase the number of students by 50%, from the current 40 to 60.

St. Patrick's expansion has become a yearly occurrence in our neighborhood. This is in addition to its daily school and maintenance activities, summer and holiday construction, renovation and maintenance, and its quarterly meetings with neighbors. St. Patrick's is like the guest who is always under foot, constantly in demand of attention, and does not know when to leave.

Building Upkeep

While in some respects the school has tried to be a good neighbor since school actually commenced, it is nevertheless an institution functioning in a residential neighborhood. Increasing its student body by 50% will cause more wear and tear on the facility, necessitating more maintenance, upkeep and renovation. As it is, renovation is still not complete. Neighbors have yet to deal with future noise and pollution caused by planned summertime projects like landscaping, water drainage, parking lot repaving, and other odds and ends not yet finished from the original construction. Although school is not in session in the summer, the school's presence is still very much felt. By necessity, an increase in the number of students will mean more wear and tear on the facilities and, therefore, more frequent and massive upkeep projects than if the current student limit is maintained. Based on past experience with the school, we cannot enjoy our residences while such construction activity takes place.

Traffic

Although we are mostly pleased with how the student traffic situation has been handled to date, there is no way to ensure it will be handled successfully in the future, especially with a 50% increase in the number of students. The school will have to monitor and manage a 50% increase in the amount of student-caused traffic. Presumably, there will also be some increase in the amount of faculty and staff trips to and from the facility.

BZA
Case No. 17300
Exhibit No. 30

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17300
EXHIBIT NO. 30

Noise

We can set our clock by when students arrive and depart by bus. They do make their presence known to say the least. We recognize that this cacophony is natural for students that age, but we do not look forward to a 50% increase in the number of screaming voices and the extra time that will be needed for them to arrive and depart on buses. Although it occurs every day when school is in session, it is still startling when the screaming and yelling intrudes on whatever one is doing.

We also hear students at lunchtime when they play in the parking lot. Yes, they do play in the parking lot that faces Ashby Street. Currently, this lasts for one lunch period. We are concerned that a 50% student increase will mean a lengthening of the student lunchtime play period in the parking lot and an increase in the corresponding noise. School representatives have been inconsistent on this issue. At one of the quarterly meetings, we were told that the increase in students would necessitate an extra lunch period. But at the ANC meeting, school representatives said, if we understood correctly, that there would be no such extra period. What is not in question, though, is there will be an increase in noise.

We add that the children screaming and yelling during lunchtime play period on the front/side lawn is quite audible in the normally quiet woods of Battery Kemble Park behind the old Discovery Creek Conduit Road Schoolhouse at 4954 MacArthur Boulevard, about a block away from the St. Patrick's facility. Curiously, this noise has not been as much of a problem at our house on Ashby Street, probably because the school building blocks some of the sound. However, a 50% increase in the number of students would likely become more of an intrusion at our house, to say nothing of the noise audible in the normally quiet woods.

Trash

While there has been a marked increase in trash blowing around the neighborhood since the school moved in, other than cigarette butts tossed out of a window of a car parked in front of our house while the occupant waited to enter St. Patrick's one afternoon, we cannot say for certain that the increase is caused by the school. Contrary to what school officials may think, we do not constantly monitor school activity, so we have not observed where the increased amount of trash originates. We just know there is more of it since the school arrived.

Walking Between Campuses

We are aware that the school is also petitioning to allow students to walk between its two campuses. We note that the Board's February 14, 2005 notice makes no mention of this request. At various meetings, though, school representatives have discussed the proposal to allow late students to walk to the MacArthur Blvd. campus after checking in at the Whitehaven campus. There was never any mention of allowing students to walk from the MacArthur Blvd. campus at the end of the

day, and we are unclear on what circumstances would necessitate this change. That being said, we have no objection to the proposal to allow walking between the two campuses as long as school personnel monitor the circumstances closely to avoid abuse and take appropriate action if abuse does occur.

Thank you for your consideration. We expect to be corresponding next year when the school seeks something else.

Sincerely.



Howard Fenton and Nora Carbine