William T. N. Farquhar
2901 34th Street, NW.
Washington, DC 20008

May 31, 2005

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

Re: Application # 17320 – St. Albans application for fields and arts center

Dear Sir or Madam:

The BZA should grant the special exception requested by St. Albans to build a performing arts center and to renovate its athletic fields.

My interest. For 12 years, I have lived at the corner of 34th and Garfield Streets, across the street from the fields and tennis courts. I am also a part of the St. Albans community, although I will not be a St. Albans parent when construction begins.

The fields proposal is a significant improvement over the present fields. The current view from both 34th Street and Garfield Street is of an unkempt berm topped by a dismal retaining wall. This is an undignified sight for both neighbors and visitors. On Garfield Street, I often talk with tourists and visitors coming from the National Zoo or the Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan Metro station; they clearly consider the present situation to be an uninspiring first impression. The fields proposal will create a terraced effect and an appropriate base for views of the Cathedral; it will also allow for better maintenance of the area. Also, the proposed landscaping will frame textured views of the Cathedral, which squares with the intentions of Frederick Law Olmstead, who designed the Close.

The proposed buildings have minimal effect on aesthetics or sightlines. Because the proposed classroom addition will be an extension of the current "New Building" and because the proposed arts center will be underground, sightlines of the Cathedral from street level will be undisturbed. St. Albans deserves credit for agreeing to pay the extra expense of an underground building in order to preserve the sightlines of the Cathedral and the sense of openness on the Close.

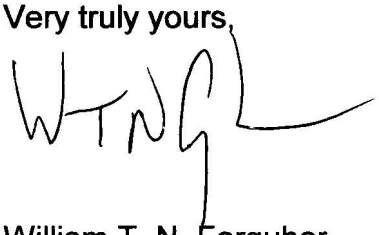
St. Albans has been responsive to neighborhood concerns in developing these plans. St. Albans has made significant changes in its proposal in response to neighbors' concerns, including lowering the tennis courts on the corner of 34th and Garfield Streets, changing the landscaping around the perimeter of the project, and even making changes within the Close, such as the treatment of Pilgrim Road. As both a neighbor and a member of the St. Albans family, I am happy to see this overall responsive attitude and hope that it will continue through the construction phase of the project.

BZA
Case No. 17320
Exhibit No. 26

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17320
EXHIBIT NO. 26

If you have any questions or comments, you may reach me at (202) 337-7146 or by e-mail at **WFarquhar@aol.com**. Thank you for listening to my view.

Very truly yours,



William T. N. Farquhar