ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3C
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS • CLEVELAND PARK • MASSACHUSETTS AVE. HEIGHTS
MCLEAN GARDENS • WOODLEY PARK

Single Member District Commissioners
01-Dia Black; 02-Deborah Jane Lindeman; 03-Stephanie Zobay
04-Avram Fechter; 05-Bruce Beckner; 06-Trudy Reeves
07-Sheila Hogan; 08-Vacant 09-Nancy MacWood

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June 7, 2005

Ms. Carol J. Mitten
Chair, Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application #17320 by St. Albans School on Behalf of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation

Dear Ms. Mitten,

At a special meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C on June 6, 2005, at which a quorum of 5 of 8 members was present, the Commission considered the special exception application of St. Albans School (#17320). The special meeting was advertised in the Northwest Current, the Cleveland Park listserv, and on ANC 3C's web site, and as required by law, the specific agenda was included in the notices. After a presentation by school representatives and public comments, the commission voted unanimously (5-0) to oppose the application. The basis for our opposition is laid out in the attached resolution (2005-037).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application and for giving the position of ANC 3C great weight in this matter. If you have any questions, please call me at 966-5333 or nmacwood@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Nancy J. MacWood
Chair, ANC 3C

cc: Maxine Brown-Roberts
David Baker, St. Albans
Kate Cullen, Washington National Cathedral
George Idelson, CPCA
Lois Orr, CP Historical Society

BZA
Case No. 17320
Exhibit No. 35

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17320
EXHIBIT NO. 35

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RESOLUTION 2005-037

Regarding St Albans BZA Application for a Special Exception

Whereas the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) is authorized pursuant to 11 DCMR 3104 to grant special exceptions to the zoning regulations when in its judgment the BZA finds the special exception 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; and

Whereas the Zoning Regulations stipulate a series of conditions pursuant to 11 DCMR 206 that determine whether a private school shall be granted a special exception to locate in an R-1 District; and

Whereas 11 DCMR 206.2 provides that a private school shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions; and

Whereas 11 DCMR 206.3 requires ample parking to accommodate teachers, students, and visitors likely to come to the site by car, and the minimum requirement is defined in 11 DCMR 2101.1 as 2 spaces for every 3 staff members plus either 1 space for each 20 classroom seats or 1 for each 10 seats in the largest auditorium, gymnasium or area used for public assembly, whichever is greater; and

Whereas the minimum number of parking spaces that St. Albans School must provide is 160, but more spaces will be needed if that is determined to be insufficient to accommodate teachers, students, and visitors likely to come to the campus; and

Whereas St. Albans School has 568 students and 133 faculty and staff; and

Whereas St. Albans School is seeking the special exception to build an 18,000 sq. ft. addition to connect two of their existing buildings, and this structure will accommodate 7 new classrooms, 5 new faculty offices, administrative offices, a bookstore, and student social spaces; and

Whereas St. Albans School also proposes to build a partially underground 39,000 sq. ft. Performing Arts Center consisting of an auditorium for 650 people that converts to a theatre stage, orchestra pit and seating for 350 people, 7 small music practice rooms, 1 large music practice room, a theatre classroom, 6 faculty offices, and 3 large classrooms; and

Whereas St. Albans has not indicated how intensely this facility will be used nor has the School committed to requiring all associated parking demand to be accommodated on the Close; and

Whereas the special exception application further requests authorization to reconfigure and enlarge the existing athletic fields and spaces, which currently contain 10 tennis courts, a baseball field, a football, lacrosse and soccer field, a track, and a practice field; and

Whereas the athletic plan includes the demolition of 177 trees, which necessitates a detailed landscape plan that will restore wherever possible the spaces and perimeter with hard wood trees, as well as understory plantings, so that adjacent and nearby neighbors will have a visual and sound buffer to the increased intensity of use and the terraced design of the spaces surrounded with chain link fence; and

Whereas the proposed expansion and reconfiguration would include a football stadium with seating for 600 people that will also be used for soccer and lacrosse; a baseball diamond with seating for 200 people that will be used as two large practice fields in off-season; a 6-lane track; 8 tennis courts; and an additional practice field; and

Whereas St. Alban School has stated that the new athletic spaces will allow them to have simultaneous interscholastic games, as well as to have multiple simultaneous practices, which the School is unable to do currently based on the overlapping nature of their field space; and

Whereas St. Albans School states that 1 or 2 Independent School League games will be played on the fields "virtually every day" from September 1 to November 15 and from March 1 to May 15, and that multiple games will "normally be played back-to-back rather than simultaneously"; and

Whereas the residents who live near St. Albans have notified the School and ANC 3C repeatedly over the span of many years that they are unable to find parking near their homes due to the parking patterns of St. Albans students, parents, faculty and visitors; and

Whereas St. Albans School has not developed a student/faculty/visitor parking policy in reaction to the complaints of neighbors, but proposes to create one for the Fall '05 that would continue the practice of allowing parking in the neighborhood but would require that their students display a sticker; and

Whereas the proposed athletic field reconfiguration and expansion will result in an increase in intensity of use due to the simultaneous or back-to-back League games, the daily use of the facilities for interscholastic competition, and the concurrent team practices, most of which the School does not have the ability to do currently; and

Whereas this increased intensity of use will exacerbate the parking issues and create new traffic issues in the neighborhood; and

Whereas St. Albans School has not been successful in requiring visiting team buses, visitors, or outside users to park on the Close, and they have been unwilling to commit to resolve this problem and the student/faculty/parent parking in the neighborhood; and

Whereas St. Albans School will not require all parking generated by their activities and uses to be on the Close once the new parking garage is built, even though the Cathedral Foundation presented the parking garage as resolving the problems associated with school parking in the neighborhood, nor establish concrete interim procedures to address the concerns and issues raised by neighbors; and

Whereas St. Albans School has been unwilling to curtail the use of its facilities by outside users even though neighbors have urged them to do so based on noise, litter, parking, and hours of use that impact their quality of life; and

Whereas St. Albans School agreed to enter into negotiations with the ANC, neighborhood organizations, and neighbors to develop a Usage and Parking Agreement but these meetings, which are continuing, have not resulted in an Agreement:

Be It Resolved that Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C opposes the St. Albans School BZA application. ANC 3C finds that

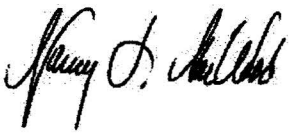
1. St. Albans School has not satisfied 11 DCMR 206.2 because the noise, number of students, and other conditions, including trash and hours and intensity of use, are objectionable to adjoining and nearby property owners and are likely to worsen with the increased intensity of athletic field use, the type of use and capacity of the new Performing Arts Center and the unrestricted outside usage contemplated by the School;

2. St. Albans School has also not satisfied 11 DCMR 206.3 because by their own admission the minimum required parking spaces of 160 spaces is inadequate to meet their parking demand. The School currently provides 154 spaces on the Close with the School's unmet demand being satisfied in the neighborhood. The practice of using the neighborhood streets has caused great hardship on neighbors who must circle blocks and cannot park near their homes. The School has also stated that whatever additional spaces they can access in the new parking garage will also be inadequate to meet their demand. Additionally, the School has refused to commit to a policy that includes

enforcement to guarantee that visitors to the athletic fields or proposed Performing Arts Center will park in surface spaces on the Close or in the new garage;

Be It Further Resolved that ANC 3C will support a request from St. Albans School that the BZA proceedings be postponed to allow more time to negotiate a Usage and Parking Agreement with ANC 3C and neighborhood organizations, and that if the BZA grants a postponement and an Agreement that addresses the issues enumerated above is completed the ANC 3C will reconsider the School's BZA application;

Be It Further Resolved that ANC 3C authorizes the Chair, or her delegate, to represent the ANC on this matter.

Attested by  Chair, on June 7, 2005

Nancy J. MacWood

This resolution was unanimously approved by a vote of 5-0 by ANC 3C at a publicly noticed special meeting on June 6, 2005, at which a quorum of 5 of 8 members was present.