

**Testimony of Ann Haas about Application Number 17429
by St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School for a Special Exception
to Construct 19 Houses on Theoretical Lots and to
Build a Private Junior High School and High School in a
Residential District, June 13 2006**

My name is Ann Haas. I am the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for ANC3D-09. My single member district includes the St. Patrick's property at 1801 Foxhall Road, along with Foxhall Village, the Georgetown Reservoir area, and Colony Hill.

Overview

The Brady Estate is a large neighborhood property about to be developed. Just up the street, at 2101 Foxhall Road, tree removal has begun on the Phillips Estate. Together development of the two estates will convert 35 acres of a wooded, sloping landscape on Foxhall Road overlooking Glover Archbold Park and Whitehaven Park from green space to six dozen houses and a new private high school and junior high school.

As a result of this development, Foxhall Road will have five traffic lights from Reservoir Road to the Field School. That distance is .6 of a mile.

St. Patrick's new school will add to the seven private schools within a mile of the site. They account for 2600 students and an untold number of faculty and staff. Our neighborhood is not seeking economic development; it is seeking controls on growth. Frankly, we could use some relief.

Already traffic at Foxhall and Reservoir is at an "F" level of service. The joke is "What is worse than 'F'?" People who live on Foxhall Road above Reservoir have difficulty leaving their driveways after 8 a.m. from Monday through Friday. Two more rush hours follow after school and in the evening.

The cumulative effects of the new projects will change our community significantly, adding more cars to what is, except for two short sections, a two-lane residential road, increasing its institutional character, and creating environmental pressures on Federal parkland downstream.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 17429

EXHIBIT NO. 89

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These plans challenge what the Rock Creek West Area Element of the Comprehensive Plan calls “neighborhood conservation.”

Traffic

Thanks to negotiations between representatives of the Foxhall Citizens’ Association and the Friends of St. Patrick’s, the parties have reached agreement on some important aspects of school operations, including traffic.

Right now, Foxhall Road has 19,500 cars a day. Connecticut Avenue, a four-lane major arterial, has 35,000.

Police Captain Paula Edmiston recently commented that traffic, not crime, is what people ask about at citizens’ association meetings in Cleveland Park and elsewhere in Ward Three. In recent months the Office of Zoning has helped address a complaint from a neighbor about cut-through traffic and parking related to Georgetown Day School’s lower school. I have just learned that during the school year MacArthur Boulevard experiences traffic back-ups from Q Street to the Safeway, a mile away.

I applaud the Board of Zoning Adjustment for its order for the Field School at 2301 Foxhall Road. The traffic cap emphasized accountability in the interest of the community. The Board cited density—320 students and 74 staff on a 10-acre site—noting that the figure was “consistent with those of other private schools in the Northwest quadrant of the city.”

St. Patrick’s is seeking more—440 students and 100 staff on 8 acres. St. Patrick’s may already have outgrown its site.

Environmental Impacts

I am concerned about the impact of building a junior high school and high school, gymnasium, auditorium, parking garage, and playing field, in addition to 28 houses on this site. The property drains to the two Federal parklands. Foundry Branch in Glover Archbold Park is a tributary to the Potomac River which, in turn, is a tributary to the Chesapeake Bay.

This project will convert 50 percent of 17 acres to impervious surfaces. As a comparison, the Field School property is 27 percent impervious. I’d like to

see the springhouse and southern dell protected from the 17-foot retaining wall that we understand is planned to prevent erosion.

In its letter of February 18, 2006 to the Board of Zoning Adjustment, ANC3D called for specific conditions for environmental protection in reference to the school. They include preserving in perpetuity the 1.53-acre dell as open land and for wildlife in the form of a binding covenant and easement in accordance with Title 42 of the DC Code, as a part of the real property recordation.

Another condition is that St. Patrick's will treat Whitehaven Parkland as an environmental asset and educational opportunity by working closely with the National Park Service to ensure there is no encroachment on the park during or after construction of the new campus.

Further, the School will be required to work with the Environmental Health Administration to develop storm water management practices to minimize adverse downstream environmental effects.

Conditions on the theoretical Lot Subdivision include establishing a non-disturbance buffer area in coordination with the National Park Service for lots that abut federal park property and protecting the buffer through a covenant recorded in the land records of the District of Columbia.

Other conditions require St. Patrick's arborist to develop an "approved species" plant list in consultation with the National Park Service and to plant trees and shrubs on the approved list in the buffer area; also to use environmentally friendly products to treat weeds, insects and diseases.

Finally, St. Patrick's is required, in consultation with the National Park Service and the District's Environmental Health Administration, to implement best management practices to control erosion and protect the natural drainage channels, Waters of the United States and the adjacent parklands, and modify the four storm water discharges to increase biofiltration and groundwater recharge.

The Field School's storm water management is one aspect that did not perform as expected. I'd like to be sure that the old Brady Estate will not experience similar erosion and flooding. One resident downstream of the Field School had a crevice at the foot of her lot. Runoff filled the crevice

and created a pond that a pair of mallards then moved into and called home! The school, to its credit, resolved the issue by re-grading the site and installing pipes. Water damage fits the description of “otherwise objectionable conditions.” I endorse the environmental actions that the Friends of Whitehaven recommended in its letter to the Chair of the Board of Zoning Adjustment on this proposal.

Private Schools Expansion

On July 14, 2005, the *Washington Post* explored the effects of private schools on residential communities in a story entitled, “Some Schools Have Nowhere to Grow.” The reporter noted that during the last five years at least a dozen schools had either sought to expand their facilities or increase their enrollment. The story cited the National Child Research Center and the Board’s action in saying no to a request for an increase in the student cap. Again, I applaud the Board. The story also mentioned another school that was looking for a satellite campus, having outgrown its first one.

St. Patrick’s may need yet another campus. This is not an unusual situation. The Field School has a second campus, Georgetown Day School does, and so does Rock Creek International School. With 440 students and 100 teachers, St. Patrick’s will be the single largest combined facility in our area. More than 1000 people will come and go each day.

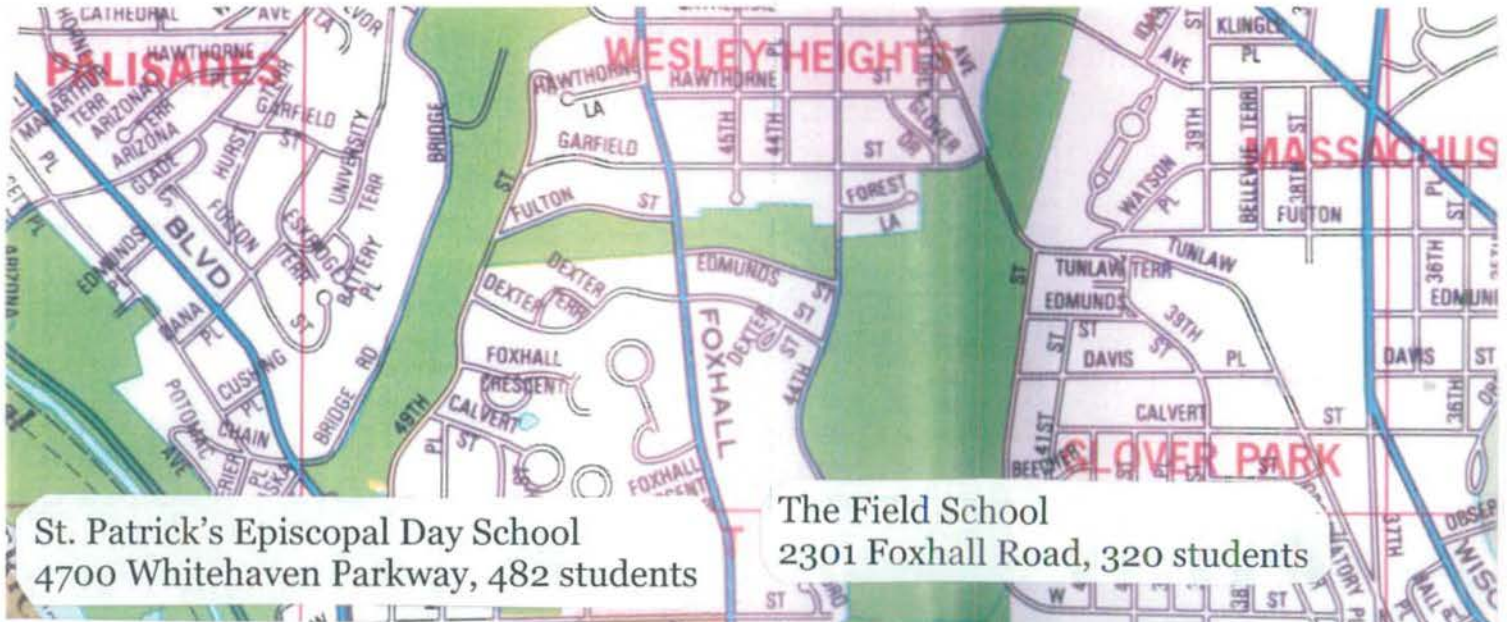
Public Benefits

Finally, the fact that Sibley Hospital is contemplating a significant expansion with a medical office building and, in return, will need to provide benefits for the surrounding neighborhood made me think that it would not be inappropriate for private schools operating in residential districts to do the same. That is, private schools may seek ways to help the community in which, as one philosopher has said, they are guests. Granted, they are not commercial enterprises. They do, however, benefit from an infrastructure provided by taxpayers while enjoying an exemption from taxes that enable the city to operate.

What can St. Patrick’s offer as a contribution to the community? Monitor Foundry Branch in Glover Archbold Park with ecologists and hydrologists from the Center for Urban Ecology? Help the National Park Service clean up Whitehaven Park? Plant trees to prevent erosion and clean the air?

Paint a house or a public building that's in need of attention? Tutor local students? Mow lawns or rake leaves for senior citizens? Invite neighbors to evening lectures by area specialists?

I look for St. Patrick's to demonstrate its commitment to being a good neighbor. I look for ways to forge a partnership in that goal.



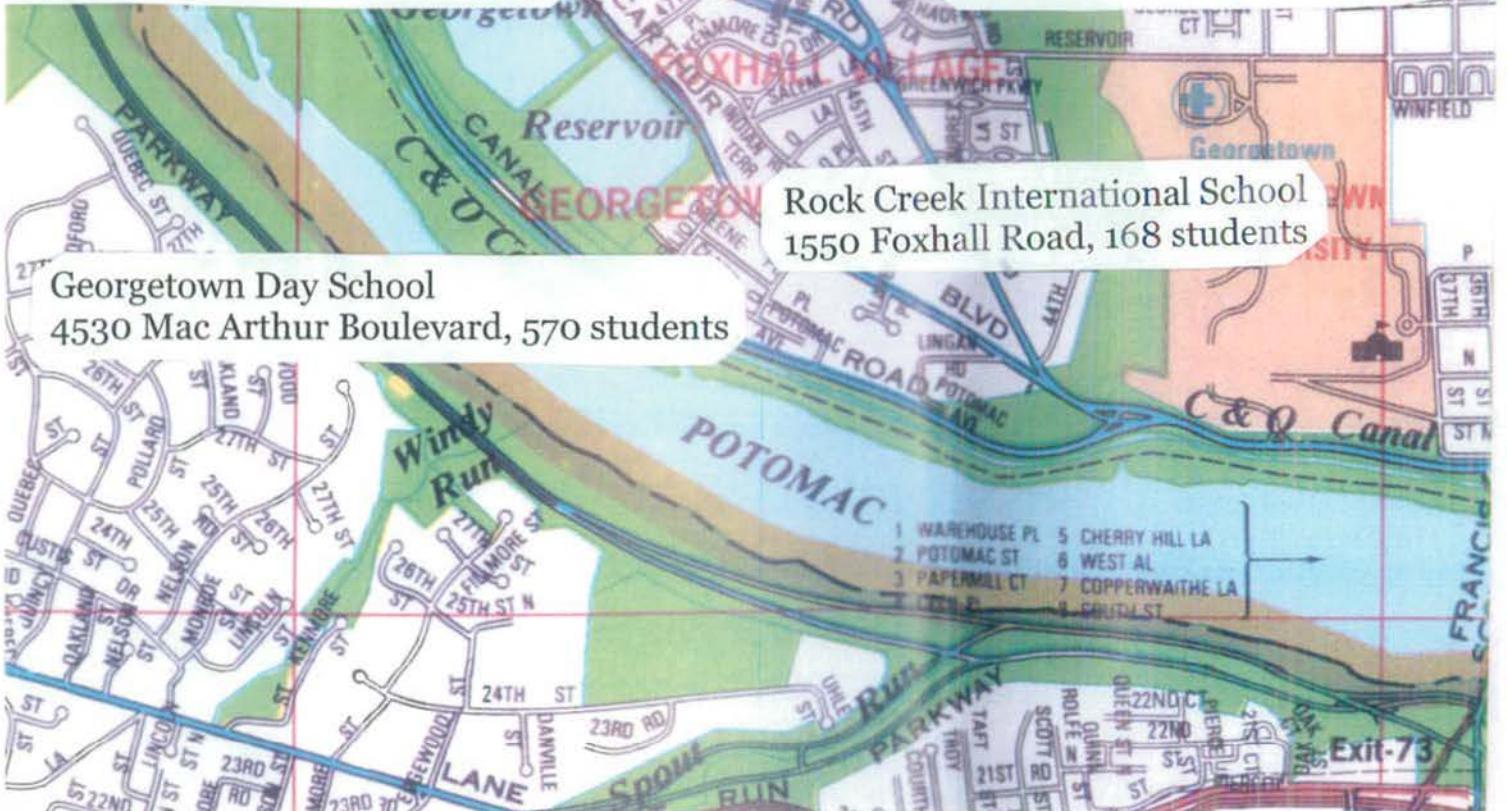
St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School
4700 Whitehaven Parkway, 482 students

The Field School
2301 Foxhall Road, 320 students

Our Lady of Victory School
4755 Whitehaven Parkway, 170 students

The Lab School
4759 Reservoir Road, 310 students

Washington International School
1690-36th Street, 400 students



Georgetown Day School
4530 Mac Arthur Boulevard, 570 students

Rock Creek International School
1550 Foxhall Road, 168 students

- 1 WAREHOUSE PL
- 2 POTOMAC ST
- 3 PAPERMILL CT
- 4 CHERRY HILL LA
- 5 WEST AL
- 6 CUPPERWATHE LA
- 7 SOUTH ST