

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: *CM* Crystal Myers, Case Manager

DATE: January 22, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21400: Request for area variance relief to construct an addition to Aidan Montessori School

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following area variance relief pursuant to Subtitle X §1000:

- D § 210- Lot Occupancy (40% max, 44% existing, 47% proposed)

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	2700 27 th St. NW
Applicants	Aidan Montessori School
Legal Description	Square 2109, Lots 92
Ward, ANC	Ward 3; ANC 3C
Zone	R-3
Historic Districts	Woodley Park Historic District
Lot Characteristics	10,397 sq.ft lot at the corner of Woodley Rd. NW and 27th St. NW with public alley on the north and western sides
Existing Use	Private school (approved in BZA 7184)
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding area is primarily residential with mostly rowhouses.
Proposed Development	The applicant would like to construct a front addition to an existing private school building

III. LOCATION



IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R-3	Regulation	Existing	Proposed ¹	Relief
Lot Area D § 202	4,000 sq.ft min.	10,370 sq.ft	10,370 sq.ft	Complies
Lot Width D § 202	40 ft. min.	120 ft.	120 ft.	Complies
Height D § 203	40 ft max	58 ft. 8in	58 ft. 8in	Existing Non-Conformance
Vehicle Parking C§ 701	12 spaces min	12 spaces	12 spaces	Complies
Lot Occupancy D § 210	40% max	44%	47%	Variance Requested

V. OP ANALYSIS

Subtitle X Section 1000 AREA VARIANCE STANDARDS

Exceptional Situation

The school building was constructed in 1964 and approved through a special exception for a private school with up to 240 students. The building is exceptional because it does not meet modern day Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and circulation standards. The requested

¹ Information provided by the Applicant

modest increase in lot occupancy would allow improvements, including replacing the front stairway with an accessible entrance, expanding circulation areas on all floors, and adding or updating classroom-serving restrooms to be ADA-compliant. The subject property is also exceptional in that it is bounded by two public alleys and two streets. Therefore, adjacent land cannot be added to the property to reduce its lot occupancy.

Strict application of the Regulations would result in a practical difficulty

Strict compliance with the Regulations would require all improvements to fit within the school's existing footprint and setbacks. It is not possible to modify the main entrance with ramps or lifts because of insufficient space in the front setback and historic district restrictions. Similarly, without variance relief, making the classroom restrooms and circulation improvements on the upper floors would require eliminating existing program spaces, which are essential to the school's educational mission.

There would be no substantial detriment to the Public Good

Granting area variance relief would not cause a substantial detriment to the public good. The existing building's height and lot occupancy are nonconforming. The proposed addition would comply with all development standards of the R-3 zone except for increasing lot occupancy. It is also designed to be compatible with the surrounding Woodley Park neighborhood. The relief would also not increase student enrollment capacity and should not impact parking. It would allow the school to become more accessible, which would benefit students, staff and visitors.

There would be no substantial impairment to the intent, purpose, and integrity of the Zone Plan

Granting area variance relief should not result in substantial impairment to the Zone Plan. The R-3 zone allows private schools through special exception approval. This relief would allow the approved school building to become more accessible and to better serve the needs of modern students.

VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed and approved the plans.

VII. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

Currently there are no other District agency comments in the record.

VIII. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

ANC 3C filed a report in support of the variance in Exhibit 16.

IX. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Currently there are four community letters in the record, (Exhibits 17, 20, 21, 22).