



Design Review Committee
PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
Ellen Light and Peter Barrer, Co-Chairs
Joshua R. Morse, Commissioner
Telephone (617) 796-1600
FAX (617) 796-1601
TTY: (617) 796-1089
52 Elliot Street
Newton Highlands, MA 02461-1605

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Honorable City Council
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

2 May 2019

RE: Newton Early Childhood Program Project

SUBJECT: Site Plan Review

Honorable Council:

The City of Newton is proposing to renovate the existing former Horace Mann School at 687 Watertown Street to accommodate the Newton Early Childhood Program, NECP. The NECP program will be relocated to 687 Watertown St. to allow for the renovation of 150 Jackson Road which will become the future site of the Lincoln Eliot Elementary School.

On Wednesday, 1 May 2019 the Design Review Committee, DRC, met and reviewed the proposed site plan for the NECP project as presented by Arrowstreet on behalf of the Public Buildings Department and Newton Public Schools.

The renovation of the existing building will include interior modifications to meet the programmatic needs for additional classroom space, individualized learning spaces, OT and PT programs, other educational and support spaces, and transitional assistance space for newly enrolling students and families. Interior modifications will also include building code required upgrades, accessibility upgrades and a new three stop elevator.

The proposed project site includes the existing school site and existing abutting playground area to the north. The proposed site design features a new entry plaza which connects a proposed new school entrance directly to Albemarle Road. The project will remove the existing modular structures and, in their place, will provide a new access drive and school transportation van loading area. This drive will also provide emergency access and egress. Other site improvements include an accessible ramp which connects the building to new play structures located in the adjacent area to the north and new accessible parking spaces on Albemarle Rd. directly adjacent to the new entry plaza. Site work also includes electric service upgrades, new landscaping and the project will meet the applicable requirements of the Rivers Protection Act, Wetland Protection Act, 301 CMR10.00 and the Newton Conservation Commission. Parking requirements for the project will be accommodated by the existing on-site parking lot, existing parking on Albemarle Rd. and adjacent city streets.

In its review and discussion of the proposed site plan, the Design Review Committee concluded that the proposed additional parking area shown along Watertown Street was not essential to the program given that the parking needs for the project can be accommodated with the existing on-site and surrounding parking spaces. Therefore, as a condition of the Committee's approval the proposed parking area will not be included in the project. Through the design review process several site plan alternatives were studied. The DRC concurs that the proposed site plan, excluding the additional proposed parking, is appropriate and meets the programmatic requirements for the NECP project.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the project be presented for site plan approval. In accordance with Section 5-58 of the Revised Ordinances, this letter is to petition the City Council on behalf of the School Department for Site Plan Approval. The DRC identified the following conditions of its approval which will continue to be evaluated and refined by the design team and City throughout the design process:

- The project will re-use existing infrastructure and systems to the maximum extent feasible.
- The project will provide envelope improvements as feasible.
- The project will evaluate opportunities to incorporate PV.
- The project will continue to pursue sustainability initiatives, reduce project energy consumption and embodied carbon, and reduce fossil fuel consumption.

- The project will continue to refine and address all parking, traffic, and site circulation challenges.
- Develop the landscaping and site lighting plans to minimize the impact to the abutters and neighborhood.
- The project will continue to work with the City's Parks and Recreation Department to facilitate the installation of playgrounds.

Sincerely,



Ellen Light, AIA, LEED AP BD+C



Peter J. Barrer

Design Review Committee, Co-Chairs

CC: Joshua R. Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operations Officer
Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. David Fleishman, School Superintendent
Liam Hurly, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Administrative Officer