



Lincoln Eliot School – School Building Committee Meeting

School Building Committee Meeting with the Design Review Committee and others in attendance

Meeting: January 11th, 2022 (6:00 PM-8:00 PM)

Location: Virtual, via Zoom

Attendees

School Building Committee (SBC):	Emily Prenner* Kathleen Shields* Rajeev Parlikar* Joshua Morse*	Liam Hurley* Johnathan Yeo* JJ Kazakoff-Eigen*	Danielle Morrissey* Maria Greenberg* Rebecca Grossman*
Design Review Committee (DRC):	Peter Barrer* Robert Hnasko* Maria Leo* David Gillespie* Steve Siegel*	Ellen Light* SingNing Kuo* John Mulligan* Jonathan Kantar* Andrea Kelley	Thomas Gloria* Carol Schein* Ambrose Donovan* Amy Mackrell*
City of Newton (CoN):	Alejandro Valcarce		
Arrowstreet Architects (AST):	Tina Soo Hoo	Daniel Jick	
Hill International (Hill):	Vivian Varbedian	Duclinh Hoang	
Others:	Brad Seamans Tegin Teich	Pam Wright Tamika Olszewski	Terry Sauro Stephanie Gilman

* Denotes Voting Members

Liam Hurley commenced the January 11, 2022, Newton School Building Committee meeting at 6:01 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for December 14, 2021

The minutes for December 14, 2021 will be approved at the next meeting.

Lincoln Eliot - Renovation and Addition Conceptual Options Review & Vote for the Renovation and Addition Preferred Option

Joshua Morse reported the goal of this meeting is to review renovation and addition conceptual options and vote on the renovation and addition preferred option. Mr. Morse noted the selected option can be modified and a combination of two similar options is possible. An importance was place on avoidance of major changes to the site or building configuration such as moving the gym from left to right side of site, circulation, play spaces, parking will keep evolving as the design is continually being developed.

Arrowstreet presented addition/renovation options and noted the design options with the highest grade per the criteria matrix was Option 1, Option 1v3, and Option 2.B.

Discussion ensued.

Rajeev Parlikar suggested it would make little sense to demolish portions of the building if it was determined the spaces could be renovated. Mr. Parlikar noted the cafeteria, auditorium, and storage areas were all identified as usable space and felt comfortable removing all of “Option #3” versions from consideration.

Kathleen Shields noted her preference for Option 2.B and expressed that a double-loop van and bus pick-up and drop-off within a larger parking area is desirable, as well as a play space that is accessible from both ends of the building. Ms. Shields likes the field placement along Jackson Road with the adjacent blue zone abutting the main entrance driveway. Ms. Shields expressed concern over visitor usage of the service/loading area despite it not being a designated blue zone.

It was noted that the service entrance could be isolated to prevent use as a blue zone.

Councilor Maria Greenberg noted her preference for Option 2.B and expressed concerns about shared parent and visitor use of the service loop and community impact of designating van pick-up and drop-off being located on Waban St. Councilor Greenberg liked the angled Gymnasium and Lobby structure that seems to provide for a more welcoming entrance and plaza area and to keep the existing Cafeteria, Auditorium and Storage area. Councilor Greenberg expressed concern about the location of the Main Entry with a proposal to utilize the second entrance depicted at the end of the Gymnasium. Arrowstreet, suggested that utilizing the second entrance on the end of the gymnasium could provide easy entry on bad weather delays but it is preferred to have the main entry located at the admin area to provide oversight of visitor access.

Emily Prenner stated her preference is for Option 1v3 combined with some elements of Option 2.B. She noted that van use is predominantly for Special Education Students and prefers having the bus and van pick-up and drop-off areas in the same location as a more equitable and integrated solution. Ms. Prenner is in favor of the angled gym concept and a more contiguous play space and greenspace area to aid in providing open sight lines for easier recess management and student monitoring. Ms. Prenner noted she is not sold on renovating the existing Chapel and believes the visitor parking/service area be designated as a dedicated receiving and loading area.

Andrea Kelley expressed that her preferred option is Option 1v3 and agrees with the points brought up by Ms. Prenner. Ms. Kelley noted there could be a benefit to utilizing the receiving and loading area as occasional visitor parking for public events. Ms. Kelley also shared her preference for having the bus and van pick-up and drop-off in a single location as it would help minimize and move traffic off Waban St. and Walnut Park.

Jonathan Yeo shared the opinions of Ms. Prenner and expressed his desire for a combination of Option 1v3 and Option 2.B. Mr. Yeo expressed that he would like to further investigate a redesign of the van and bus loop to reclaim more parking spaces. It was also suggested to explore a building configuration based off Option 1v3 that includes demolishing the Chapel.

Rajeev Parlikar noted that at Franklin and other Elementary Schools in Newton, he has observed students utilizing a full basketball court as two separate half basketball courts and expressed it would be preferred to incorporate a full-size court. Arrowstreet responded noting that as the site plan is refined, outdoor play space, hardscape location, and what elements are to be incorporated will be explored in the next phase of the project.

Rajeev Parlikar stated that he prefers the building configuration from Option 2.B combined with the Parking lot set up of Option 1v3. Mr. Parlikar noted that the Loading and Receiving area is existing and would make sense to continue use as a loading zone rather than visitor parking. Rajeev noted a hybrid of Option 1v3 and Option 2.B is preferred.

Liam Hurley noted working with the elevation change of the Chapel may be problematic and the pros and cons of keeping the pre-existing chapel will be explored. Mr. Hurley expressed that a new Admin and Entry area is preferred as most of the structure is pre-existing.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that the Chapel is part of the second floor and aligns with the second-floor classrooms. Located below the Chapel is the mechanical and storage areas that currently aligns with the first-floor classrooms. Ms. Soo Hoo noted that the existing chapel would need significant work to be utilized as a functional space. Ms. Soo Hoo added that the Gymnasium is half a level lower than the first-floor classrooms.

Joshua Morse stated that the Chapel will most likely be demolished and re-orienting the gym provides more challenges to preserving the Chapel.

Stephanie Gilman stated that keeping the Chapel would make future additions more challenging, whereas new construction provides more options to work with a fresh design.

Ellen Light stated she would like to see a combination of Option 1v3 and Option 2.B. Ms. Light expressed her preference for the new lobby area forming a “knuckle” between the existing and new structures, stating it could be more suitable for future additions. Ms. Light noted that if renovation of the Chapel was going to be a challenging and large project it should not be pursued.

Peter Barrer agreed with the opinions shared and expressed concern over the topology of the field showing a slightly sloped playing surface hoping it can be resolved as the design matures.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that the entire site has a slope that must be considered, however, the playing field will be a predominantly flat area with a slight slope for drainage. The drainage from the hill located between the field and playground areas will be studied.

Johnathan Yeo suggested coordinating with the Parks and Recreation Department to identify and meet the acceptable field specifications.

Thomas Gloria expressed concerns over the complexity and challenges of renovating the existing Chapel and thinks it should not be considered. Mr. Gloria noted that there is a weak argument to saving the chapel in order to reduce carbon footprint over the life of the building, stating demolishing the chapel provides more options and flexibility.

Joshua Morse mentioned the potential opportunity to repurpose the existing foundation systems of the Chapel, to boost embodied carbon, are to be explored further in the Schematic Design phase. Mr. Morse noted that if consensus is reached on demolishing the Chapel it could ease potential design issues for Arrowstreet.

Councilor Maria Greenberg stated she had no issue with demolishing the Chapel. Councilor Greenberg is in favor of a full-size basketball court. Councilor Greenberg also expressed concerns over drainage in the field to ensure it does not get flooded due to the slope above and suggested working with city engineers to ensure the field does not get flooded.

David Gillespie noted that if the existing Chapel is demolished, design problems become easier to fix.

Steven Siegel shared concerns about design challenges, complexity and limitations associated with combining old and new construction. Mr. Siegel expressed concerns over acclimating children to walking across traffic lanes when coming off the bus and asked that student safety considerations be explored with a suggestion to merge the bus and van loop into a single lane.

Joshua Morse noted the Transportation Groups support of Option 1v3 with some tweaks.

Councilor Rebecca Grossman shared Mr. Siegel's concerns over having children cross the traffic lanes and was in support for a combination of Option 1v3 and Option 2.B. Councilor Grossman noted she would like to investigate the cost benefit analysis of the preferred option.

Ms. Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet, added that there will be a median that would separate the bus and van loop and is currently exploring the options of a low fence or low wall to guide the children towards the crosswalk.

Brad Seamans inquired about the number of buses currently servicing the school. Mr. Morse responded there is currently one bus but potentially two buses moving forward. The plan is to have capacity for three buses to allow for future growth, as well as support for an expected increase in the number of vans servicing the school.

Tegin Teich inquired about integration of the future city park with the school field/playground space. Mr. Morse responded the urban forest as a tremendous opportunity to utilize the space and tie it in programmatically into the site. Mr. Morse shared the possibility of designating the area as an outdoor classroom, although, quick drop-offs in the topology must be taken into consideration. Mr. Morse stated it is not an ideal area for children to utilize unsupervised, though it could be used as a "destination nature walks" similar to what is located behind Countryside Elementary School.

Tamika Olszewski briefly shared an idea to incorporate a covered outdoor space that can be utilized year-round for programmatic and community needs. Ms. Olszewski stressed importance of considering multiple uses of the site. Joshua Morse noted that topology creates some challenges that open unique opportunities to utilize the space and further investigation will be completed by Arrowstreet to identify locations for outdoor classrooms with shade coverings and/or extended overhangs.

Councilor Maria Greenberg inquired about the topology on the Walnut Park side of the building, along with opportunities there for outdoor learning and community use. Mr. Morse responded preliminary options have been explored and further development to follow.

SingNing Kuo expressed concerns over the amount of pavement utilized in the bus and van loop and suggested combining two lanes into one.

Joshua Morse shared conversations with the Transportation Department that indicate the entrance to the van and bus loop is too wide and shrinking the entrance will be explored. Mr. Morse noted its best to defer the conversation to the Transportation Department to speak about challenges and considerations.

Stephanie Gilman noted that preliminary conversations indicate a desire to narrow the bus and van loop to one lane for each.

Maria Leo expressed concerns about blue zones being located on one side of Jackson road. Mr. Morse responded the project team will do a transportation study to identify blue zones and review the drop and go blue zone for older children potentially on adjacent streets.

Rajeev Parlikar suggested the need for blue zones on both sides of Jackson Road to support bi-directional traffic. Mr. Parlikar added that access for emergency and maintenance vehicles should be explored.

Jonathan Yeo proposed a site layout closer to Option 2.B with some elements of Option 1v3 for the design team to keep studying.

Joshua Morse provided a recap of the elements for the preferred option.

- Option 2.B with vans and buses off of Jackson Road similar in configuration to Option 1v3.
- Continued study of site configuration of hardscape and greenspaces.
- Study service entrance area to limit and control traffic.
- Explore entrance off of Waban Street and Walnut Park to offer flexibility to the lobby
 - Provides options for entry in inclement weather for walking students

A straw vote of the Design Review Committee was unanimously in support of a preferred option that was a combination of Options 1v3 and 2B.

Steve Siegel asked the Building Committee to continue to study the bus and van loop to maximize student pedestrian safety from bus/van to main entrance, and to try and minimize the hardscape. The Building Committee confirmed that these items would continue to be studied during the site planning process.

Joshua Morse read into record the seven conditions to approve the preferred option of a combination of Option 1v3 and Option 2.B. The following conditions were placed on the Lincoln Eliot School Building Committee Vote:

1. Minor changes to the exact location of elements such as the gym are acceptable and will be the product of further design refinements as part of the schematic design process leading up to Site Plan Approval.
2. The final configuration of the bus, van, and parent drop-off, "blue zone(s)," shall continue to be refined while working with the community, transportation staff, and Safe Routes to Schools, and will be complimented with the Newton School Committee Transportation Guidelines.
3. Pedestrian and bicycle access routes, and sight lines will continue to be studied and developed as needed to maintain student safety and encourage walking and biking to and from school.
4. Landscape, hardscape, and site lighting design will continue to evolve during the schematic and design development phases.

5. The final onsite parking totals have not been established but will be a product of a reasonable parking plan that leverages offsite parking within a reasonable distance from the site and that does not create a hardship on the neighborhood.
6. The design of the building and site, including any off-site improvements, will focus on utilizing universal design and will create a welcoming barrier-free school project.
7. The schematic design floor plans shall evolve to not only meet and exceed the school program, but to do so in a way that promotes inclusion, grade clusters/pods, and optimizes programmatic adjacencies.

VOTE: Councilor Maria Greenberg made a motion to approve the preferred option of a combination of Option 1v3 and Option 2.B with the conditions as outlined by Mr. Morse. Seconded by Emily Prenner. The building committee voted unanimously with ten members in favor of the preferred option.

The School Building Committee adjourned the meeting at 7:23 PM.

Details of this meeting can be found on the project website at <http://lincolneliot-necp-projects.com/>.

These notes will become part of the project record as written.