



Lincoln Eliot School – Design Review Committee Meeting

Design Review Committee Meeting with others in attendance.

Meeting: October 12, 2022 (6:00PM-9:00 PM)

Location: Digital, via Zoom

Attendees

City of Newton: Alejandro Valcarce Stephanie Gilman

Design Review Committee: Maria Leo* Peter Barrer* Carol Schein*
David Gillespie* Jonathan Kantar* Thomas Gloria*
Steve Siegel* Emily Prenner* Ellen Light*
Amy MacKrell* John Mulligan*

School Building Committee: Councilor Maria Greenberg

Arrowstreet Architects: Larry Spang Tina Soo Hoo Daniel Jick
Tora Coursey Sallyann Thomas Farnum

Terralnk: Kellie Connelly Kelly Ashton

Nitsch Engineering: Michelle Callahan

Hill International: Vivian Varbedian Douglas Murray Mark Krikorian

Others: Terry Sauro Daniel Chen

* Denotes Voting Members

The Lincoln Eliot school project was addressed at 7:14PM. ([Link to Presentation PDF](#))

Lincoln Eliot Site Design Updates

Kellie Connelly of Terralnk presented and reviewed landscape design updates.

Changes on the Jackson Rd. side of the site include:

- Fence along Jackson Road for safety
- Three U5/6/7 size soccer fields.
- Seat wall with school signage wall at main entry walkway and sidewalk.
 - <5% slope on entry walkway – no handrails necessary.
- Benches and Bike racks near the bus pick-up and drop-off gathering area.
 - Benches located at the gathering node.
 - Bike racks located adjacent to walkway.
 - 3.5% graded walkway from gathering point to auditorium/cafeteria
 - No handrails necessary

- Open hardscape area adjacent to the new gymnasium.
- Large open playground on a single elevation.
 - 3% sloped walkway along classroom bar from Auditorium terrace to main lobby entry.
 - Playground equipment has not yet been determined.
 - Working with principal, parks and rec, and playground inspector for the city.

Changes on the Walnut Park/Waban St. side of the site include:

*Further development is proceeding to soften sharp lines and to visibly soften various features.

- <5% sloped walkway down to the new lobby entry.
 - Bike racks located alongside the walkway.
- Walnut Park Auditorium Entrance
 - Outdoor teaching area to be located here
 - Furniture and shade features are being studied.
- Bioswale/pollinator garden along the classroom wall on Walnut Park.
- Bioswale/pollinator garden along the main entry walk and driveway on Jackson Park.
- Sledding hill between the playground and field.

Carol Schein inquired about the pollinator gardens.

Kellie Connelly indicated that there is an opportunity along Walnut Park and at the front of the school adjacent to the main entry walkway/driveway.

Carol Schein expressed concerns over maintenance, noting that landscapers maintaining the area could cause damage to the pollinator gardens.

Carol Schein asked if Parks and Rec department was included on talks about the playground.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that playground development is in the works. Stephanie Lapham, Maura Morse, and Parks and Rec are reviewing playground equipment.

Mr. Valcarce added that there is a small group within Newton which has been working with the pollinator gardens. Maintenance and upkeep will need to be discussed with them.

Carol Schein asked if shrubs were being shown along the classroom wall and if they were planted right up against the building.

Kellie Connelly noted that there is 2-foot wide stone drip strip against the foundation of the building for maintenance and air circulation. Ground cover planting located along the wall with ample spacing between the building and plantings. There will be no perennials on the site, all plantings shown are shrubs and ornamental grass.

Councilor Maria Greenberg noted that the most prominent features when walking or driving by the site is the parking lot and the service entrance. Councilor Greenberg asked if there are any landscaping tricks or design elements that can be incorporated to make those elements not the forward-facing aspects of the school.

Kelly Connelly noted that the elevation change of the site provides a long view up to the building which also brings into question the location of the flagpole to draw attention up to the school.

Ms. Connelly added that the main walkway entry area is being developed to be the focal point of the site.

Councilor Maria Greenberg asked if there are going to be plantings along the field side of the main entry walkway.

Kellie Connelly noted there will not be plantings to facilitate access to the field.

Councilor Maria Greenberg stressed to make the entrance the focal point of the school

Alejandro Valcarce noted that the parking lot and driveway have been shifted over to minimize impact on the urban forest area. Further studies at the service area will be performed to provide screening.

David Gillespie noted that due to the placement of the basketball hoop, balls that miss the hoop will go into adjacent areas. Mr. Gillespie wonders if we'll end up with a fence here, and if that is an element that the team wants.

Kelley Connelly noted that the design and equipment of the play area is still being studied by Parks and Rec and the school itself. Ms. Connelly added that they are aware of the issue of balls rolling around and locating large fences.

Mr. Gillespie asked if there are similar conditions at any other locations in the city.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that the basketball hoop orientation can be modified along with further study of incorporating vegetation or fencing to prevent balls from rolling down the hill. The design will need further refinement.

Principal Maura Morse added that the playground at Angiers school has a basketball net that is not fenced in, next to a gaga pit and foursquare.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that the Angiers basketball hoop faces greenspace. Much like Cabot school, if a basketball misses the hoop, it rolls out into the field.

Jonathan Kantar suggested that lighting may be a good way to highlight the front entrance. Mr. Kantar suggests using caution to ensure lights and bollards minimize light pollution. Mr. Kantar also noted that signs should be lit with lights, and carefully considered so it only lights up signage.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that lighting studies and 3d renderings will be performed in the future. Mr. Valcarce added that the site is a natural uphill, so care must be taken to minimize glare.

Stephanie Gilman asked why the sidewalk adjacent to the blue zone along Jackson Rd. was designed to be so wide.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that the Jackson Rd. sidewalk area is a designated blue zone, and is wider to accommodate open car doors, and students exiting vehicles.

Ms. Gilman asked what the width of the sidewalk is.

Kelly Connolly noted the sidewalk is approximately 10ft wide.

Alejandro Valcarce stated the sidewalk should not be wider than it needs to be, but it should be wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, bikers, car doors opening, and people exiting vehicles.

Steve Siegel asked how Arrowstreet is determining how many bikes they are accommodating parking for and if the School and Safe Routes to school were consulted in the decision.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted discussions with the School Transportation Steering Group, Safe Routes to School, and conversations with the previous principal to understand how many students bike to school. Ms. SooHoo added that during the pandemic, more students were riding bikes to school. Estimates were made based off discussions however, the total number has not been finalized yet and data will need to be reviewed. If bike parking needs to be increased Arrowstreet can incorporate it in locations where it makes the most sense.

Steven Siegel inquired about the stadium seating at the cafeteria patio, wondering if a passerby will interpret the stadium seating as seating, or a communicating stair to the landing above. Mr. Siegel also inquired about what types of uses are expected for the Auditorium upper terrace area.

Kellie Connelly noted that the Auditorium upper terrace is directly outside of the Auditorium lobby entry. Stadium seating is also located inside the lobby, allowing inside usage to be transferred to exterior use. Exterior stadium seating can also be utilized for eating lunch, or group activities.

Alejandro Valcarce clarified, stating that further study is needed to refine the stadium seating area.

Alejandro Valcarce noted the existence of bike racks at the Waban St./Walnut Park entrance along with the possibility to incorporate additional bike racks on the Waban St. walkway alongside the gymnasium.

Stormwater Update

Michelle Callahan of Nitsch Engineering presented and reviewed updated Stormwater designs.

Test pit results were presented.

After talks with engineer, soil exploration, test pits, and borings, the infiltration system has been relocated to under the proposed playing field.

- Shallow bedrock under the parking lot area does not provide an opportunity for stormwater infiltration.

Ms. Callahan noted the opportunity to utilize porous asphalt in the parking lot with an under-drain.

Stormwater would be treated and porous asphalt filters phosphorous which would also aid in treatment.

- Shallow bedrock limits opportunities with the parking lot area.

Other updates include:

- Bioswale/pollinator garden location at Walnut Park contains shallow bedrock which could be problematic.
 - May need to be a lined system with overflow drainage.
- Most drainage will be redirected to the subsurface infiltration system proposed under the field.
 - Parking lot drainage cannot be piped into infiltration system under the playing field due to elevation changes.
- Bioretention swale located along main entry walkway cannot be incorporated due to bedrock.
 - Will most likely need to be a pollinator garden.

Michelle Callahan of Nitsch Engineering added that there are a lot of limitations in the parking lot area with regards to stormwater management due to bedrock.

Alejandro Valcarce stated his assumption that there will be reductions to the amount of stormwater discharged into the drainage systems compared to existing.

Michelle Callahan confirmed, noting that there is a net decrease in impervious area. Drainage from the whole roof will also be collected and redirected to the subsurface infiltration system.

Mr. Valcarce noted that the playground rubberized surface is pervious pavement.

Ms. Callahan agreed, adding that it has not been included in the calculations.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that it should be included in the calculations.

Jonathan Kantar asked if the foundation drains for the new addition will be redirected to the same infiltrators.

Michelle Callahan stated that foundation drainage will be picked up and redirected to the subsurface infiltration system.

Mr. Kantar noted that he is working on a project where foundation drainage cannot go into the same system as stormwater.

Ms. Callahan stated she will review and study City requirements.

Stephanie Gilman inquired if additional test pits or borings were planned in the field for the subsurface infiltration system.

Michelle Callahan of Nitsch Engineering noted they are working through it with the Geotech engineer.

Building Design Updates

Interior Design Concept

Design concepts were based off the mission statement of Lincoln Eliot

Tora Coursey of Arrowstreet presented and reviewed interior design concepts.

First concept is inspired by the global diversity of Lincoln Eliot and how that should be celebrated and based off a topography map theme.

- Adaptable spaces for each student body
- Topography themed colors
 - Blues
 - Greens
 - Yellows
- Color Wayfinding for each grade
 - Drew inspiration from and reference Charlie Hopper Designs
 - Contemporary designs based on wildlife prints (shown as example reference graphics)
- Each grade has their own symbolic region to connect with while they are learning about it.
 - Kindergarten – Backyard
 - 1st Grade – Rivers
 - 2nd Grade – Mountains
 - 3rd Grade – Forest
 - 4th Grade – Jungle
 - 5th Grade – Ocean

Sallyann Thomas Farnum of Arrowstreet noted that it is important to connect the spaces to what they are learning and where they are, and where they are going. Ms. Farnum added the importance of color and contrast of colors, and the importance of designing spaces that embrace special needs. Ms. Farnum stressed that things that are recognizable to children, foster learning, and how does the interior design of the project embrace that.

Different themes of design were reviewed.

- Moments of Reflection – “Students are responsible for their own actions”
 - Spaces where students can get away and focus on themselves.
- Self-Expression Through Language
 - Words on the walls, or areas for students to write what they are excited about.
 - Student self-expression is important at this age.
 - Each student body will have an opportunity to participate but it is not permanent.
 - Allows younger, new students to participate.

Environmental Graphics

Examples at King Open Elementary School were presented and reviewed.

- Wayfinding
 - Squares
 - Circles
- Different tones for each place.
- Storytelling with color, texture, shape and form.

Examples of Hildreth Elementary School were presented and reviewed.

Interior building materials examples were presented and reviewed.

Tina SooHoo noted that examples provided are a general starting point. Materials to be used will be studied and reviewed and vetted prior to being presented.

David Gillespie asked how content is curated for environmental graphics and for the history aspect of the interior design.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that Hildreth Elementary School is a great example where community meetings with families, students, staff and the town met to understand what is important to them. More specific to Lincoln Eliot, this wants to be a special place that is unique. Conversations will need to take place to identify what is important.

Ms. SooHoo also noted that the graphics department from Arrowstreet are custom designs. Meetings with community and graphics department identify colors that are coherent and will be carried throughout the school interior and exterior.

Mr. Gillespie stressed to make sure there is enough time allocated for interior design to be the best that it can be.

Sallyann Thomas Farnum noted that embracing the culture of the community is key to make the project successful. Ms. Farnum added that if there is a way to engage the community to find a way to make some of these elements part of the interior and culture, it can define the school and provide a unique design and embrace the community and neighborhood to drive community engagement. Finding the funds or the sponsorship to do it, would be monumental to the school.

Jonathan Kantar stated that he hopes that in the interior design criteria, embodied carbon is considered.

Kate Bubriski noted that embodied carbon is considered during interior design and materials selections.

Councilor Maria Greenberg asked if the color pallet that has been shown is the one that has been decided.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that the color pallet has not been decided. Color pallet shown is preliminary ideas subject to change based on input from the DRC and other groups.

Councilor Greenberg noted that Lincoln Eliot is a multicultural, diverse, school. Reaching out to the neighborhood and communicating their story is very important.

Sallyann Thomas Farnum noted that the idea of topography is relevant because the site is so topographic, but also because it thinks about all the students from all over the world speak different languages. It's also important to think about special needs students to make sure it is a universal design. Ms. Farnum added that younger students in that age group relate to shape and form and has an engagement to that. Design elements should think about how to engage the students and community.

Stephanie Gilman suggested simplified designs to ensure they do not get cut for budgetary reasons.

Principal Maura Morse echoed the sentiment that the Lincoln Eliot community would be excited to contribute to this part of the process and aid in the process of identifying what makes Lincoln Eliot unique and diverse. Dr. Morse noted this is an area for the working group to discuss and provide feedback on what would speak to the community in 2022, and 5/7/10 years from now.

Building Exterior Studies

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet presented existing exterior conditions.

- Warm beige colors masonry.
- Nice textured masonry sprinkled with darker brick.
- New windows.
- Walnut Park entrance with curtainwall and ramp.
 - To be modified with new integrated ramp.
- Chapel and convent to be demolished.

Gymnasium exterior options being studied were presented and reviewed.

- Option 1: Rhythmic grid
 - Similar to existing convent windows
- Option 2: Vertical layout
 - Similar to existing kallwall of classroom bar
- Option 3: "Thick & Thin" layout
 - Similar to existing windows.
- Option 4: "Tall & Short" layout
 - Similar to existing chapel storefront

Materials examples were presented and reviewed.

- Aluminum frame windows & storefronts
- Brick
 - 2 1/4" x 11 5/8"
 - 2 1/4" x 7 5/8"
- Ground face CMU
 - 4" x 16"
 - 4" x 8"
- Split face CMU
 - 8" x 16"
- Kalwall wall system

Exterior renderings were presented and reviewed.

- Intended color pallet is not represented in the renderings.

Amy MacKrell suggested incorporating environmental graphics on the exterior of the gymnasium.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that the design has not progressed that far, however the intention is to tie the colors and concepts of the interior to the exterior.

John Mulligan suggested incorporating some of the dynamic elements from the Waban St./Walnut Park entrance to the stretch of structure between the entrance and the gymnasium. Mr. Mulligan noted that his preference of the third and fourth gymnasium window layouts presented. Mr. Mulligan added that he likes the windows on the corners of the gymnasium at Cabot school allowing parents to see inside.

David Gillespie noted that he likes the double height glazing with canopy separating on the Waban St./Walnut Park entrance. Mr. Gillespie added that he thinks there is a better solution to architecturally direct people to the front entrance on Jackson Road noting; “We can do better than a sign”.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted reducing glass and glazing because of concerns with locating glass walls on the south and west side of the building due to direct sun and glare interrupting activities and functions in the media center.

Steve Siegel suggested studying exterior treatments of the Waban St./Walnut Park entrance elevations.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that this is the beginning of the study. The addition is three elements, and the key is to have the addition be complimentary to the existing, while also drawing attention to the new entrances.

Building Performance

The project is targeting LEED “Certifiable”, however, will not go through the certification process.

LEED Score Card update was presented and reviewed.

- Targeting 50 points based on current design.
 - Points are being given based on components and location of the building.
- 7 credits marked as “maybe” are still being reviewed
- Additional credits for other design features to be incorporated are being studied.
 - Current estimates land somewhere in the LEED Silver to Gold range.

Peter Barrer noted sending an email to Alejandro Valcarce and Joshua Morse about the 60% Design Documents with comments and questions and was hoping to get a resolution on them.

Tina SooHoo noted that she saw the comments and questions.

Vivian Varbedian of Hill International added that Hill International is collecting comments and questions. All comments and questions should be submitted to Vivian Varbedian, Joshua Morse, or Alejandro Valcarce no later than October 21. Hill International will compile responses and distribute to the DRC.

Councilor Maria Greenberg asked for clarification that the project will be following the LEED Certification process but will not be getting LEED Certified.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that the project will not be certified through the USGBC process but will follow the guidelines to be LEED “Certifiable”.

Councilor Greenberg expressed concern that the project will not be certified despite going through the process.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that under the Cities sustainable guidelines the goal is to be at least LEED Silver certifiable. The City can later decide to file the necessary paperwork and fees to be properly certified once the construction phase has started.

Stephanie Gilman asked when comments and feedback for the 60% Design Documents are due by.

Vivian Varbedian noted that Comments are to be submitted by the October 21 due date.

Responses will be distributed ahead of the November DRC meeting. Responses will be reviewed during the next DRC meeting if necessary.

Jonathan Kantar noted his surprise that the project is settling for LEED Silver as the target. Mr. Kantar added that he hopes there is a lot of points in the energy and environment sections and hopes we have the opportunity to discuss it further.

Alejandro Valcarce noted that the project is following guidelines as a minimum and will study additional opportunities.

Tom Gloria noted that there are 2 points available for “Protect and Restore Habitat” and asked if there is space on the north side of the site for capture.

Tina SooHoo of Arrowstreet noted that the space is too small and some of it is square footage based on existing.

Kate Bubriski noted that the area did not meet the criteria for square footage which is why it is under the “No” column.

Discussion of Lincoln Eliot concluded at 9:04PM.

Meeting recording can be found on the project website at:
<http://lincolneliot-necp-projects.com/meeting-recordings/>

The next Lincoln-Eliot Design Review Committee Meeting is scheduled for November 16th, 2022 at 6:00PM via Zoom.