CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Design Review Committee

PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

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

13 March 2024

RE: Horace Mann Elementary School Addition & Renovation Project, 225 Nevada Street

SUBJECT: Site Plan Review and Approval

Honorable City Council:

On Wednesday, March 13, 2024, the Design Review Committee, DRC, and the Horace Mann School Building Committee, HMSBC met and reviewed the proposed site plans, building floor plans, and architectural schematics dated March 13, 2024, as well as Schematic Design Drawings dated February 20, 2024, as submitted by Raymond Design Associates, RDA on behalf of the Public Buildings Department and Newton School Department for the above referenced project.

The City of Newton is proposing to construct a new 22,000 SF addition to be located directly behind and adjacent to the existing gymnasium. The new addition will allow for additional educational space and grade-level clustering of classrooms with additional educational support spaces, an enlarged cafetorium, and music room. The project will include interior renovations to adjust some existing classroom and educational room sizes and provide a new library space. When completed the school facility will provide a total of 18 general education classrooms, Break-out and/or Project Areas for each grade level, improved special education spaces and will accommodate a design enrolment of 396 to 414 students as previously voted by the School Committee.

The building addition envelope design will comply with the newly adopted opt-in stretch code. Materials will include masonry, metal panel and insulated glass, and will be selected to reduce the embodied carbon of the project. The addition will be all-electric with an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) mechanical system. The design will also allow for future photovoltaic panels to be installed on the roof addition and evaluate potential solar canopies over the staff parking areas.

The new site plan will provide enhanced storm water management systems. The pedestrian access from Linwood Ave. along the existing drive will be improved to provide greater safety with new sidewalks connecting the new playground and fields, rear school entrance and the main entrance on Nevada Street. Existing Staff parking off Linwood Ave. will be improved and the existing modular classrooms will be removed. Nevada Street Parking, Bus Loop, Van Drop-Off/Pick-Up, and Blue Zone Drop-Off/Pickup will remain. A new Building Receiving area will be located off Nevada Street, thereby eliminating the need for delivery and trash vehicles to enter the rear of the site. The site design features include new a Fully Accessible Playground, Hard Surface Play Area, Basketball Court, and Baseball and Soccer Fields and Sledding Hill. Landscape features include an Outdoor Classroom, Pollinator Garden, infiltration areas, and utilizes pervious pavement. Landscaping and trees will be planted throughout the site.

The Design Review Committee determined that the proposed site plan, building floor plans, and architectural schematics are appropriate. The Committee believes that the proposed circulation and placement of building addition and associated site functions are a good solution to a site that presents a challenging topographical landscape. 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 areas of design which are to continue to be developed and evaluated. It is understood that the Public Buildings Department and RDA will continue to work with the DRC, HMSBC, and city staff in the completion of the schematic design phase and all future design phases.

- The design team should continue to take an integrated design approach to the building's design through its mechanical systems, building envelope, floor to floor heights, ceiling heights including the height and extent of glass and glazing, methods of sun control, day lighting, electrical lighting, and sound control. All components should be designed to promote efficient building performance and reduce overall energy consumption, consistent with both its purpose and context. This process should include life cycle cost analysis in the vetting of building systems.
- The design team should continue to strive to meet, or exceed, our sustainability goals. This should include further study and evaluation of on-site PV, and other methods of driving down our energy use intensity, as Newton strives to reduce its' carbon footprint and pushes towards net zero buildings. The building addition will be heated and cooled using no fossil fuels on site. The building addition design and specifications should be developed in a practical manner that facilitates conversion to higher efficiency systems coupled with LCCA to drive our energy intensity down to achieve net zero.
- The new addition roof shall be designed to be solar ready for installation of PV panels.
- The team should develop a site photometric plan to confirm adequacy of exterior lighting, and to ensure that direct glare sources are appropriately cut off in response to the significant grade changes.
- The design team should continue to investigate site conditions to refine storm water management design options. The design team will review options with PR&C regarding proposed tree species, and landscaping plants, including viability and options for landscaping in the depressed area between the gymnasium and parking area on Nevada Street.
- The team will look at adjustments and modification to the existing main entry to improve accessibility and security.
- The design team shall evaluate and present opportunities to introduce natural light into the gymnasium from the northern façade, and interior finishes to improve lighting and sound control in the existing gymnasium.

Sincerely,

Ellen Light, AIA, LEED AP BD+C

Thomas P. Gloria, Ph. D.

Design Review Committee, Co-Chairs

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