

## **SITE ASSESSMENT**

### **Dame Elementary School**

#### **GENERAL SITE DESCRIPTION**

This site is located at 14 Canterbury Road in a combined commercial/residential neighborhood along a major local collector street near the primary commercial corridor (Loudon Road) for the City of Concord. The original structure was constructed in 1923 and has had multiple additions and renovations since that time. The school facility is situated on an approximate 5.5-acre parcel. The school is also located adjacent to a City-owned recreation/gymnasium facility and athletic fields. The CSD uses these facilities as part of their recreation programs. There is a one-way access driveway having a well-defined bus drop-off/pick-up area and staff/visitor parking lot located off Canterbury Road. In the staff parking, there is an area used for parent drop-off and pick-up. In addition, there is a parking lot associated with the City-owned recreation/gymnasium facility and portion of this parking lot is used for staff parking, as well as an additional parent drop-off/pick-up area.

The building is a single story facility. The main entrance is located at the southeasterly corner of the building at the southerly end of the bus drop-off/pick-up area. The handicap drop-off/pick-up area is also located near the main entrance. There are several other secondary entrances around the building. The building is partially compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) by having accessibility at the main entrance and many other building entrances, but there are some entrances not having at-grade or ramp entrances (i.e. entry into the multi-purpose room). There is a curbed asphalt sidewalk along the access driveway along the bus drop-off/pick-up area. There are asphalt walkways around the southerly side of the building to access the southerly and westerly portion of the site. There is a playground area on the southerly side of the building, as well as pre-school playground immediately adjacent to the westerly portion of the building between the wings. On the westerly side of the site, there is a small paved basketball court and small athletic field.

#### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

##### **SITE UTILITIES**

**Water:** The site is serviced by municipal water. Reportedly, there are no known issues with the water system.

**Sewer:** The site is serviced by the municipal wastewater system. Reportedly, there are no known issues with the wastewater system.

**Drainage:** The site collects storm water runoff by on-site closed drainage systems which discharge into the municipally-owned and maintained storm water collection system or are left to infiltrate into the existing soil (i.e. area near the playground area). The access driveway with the bus drop-off/pick-up area and staff parking area are collected and discharged to the City-owned system in Canterbury Road. There are many catch basins in this system which have settled or heaved and require rehabilitation. The area by the entrance to the access driveway had ponding conditions indicating inadequate collection of storm water in the area. The lawn areas adjacent to the building on the easterly side of the building did not appear to have any major ponding issues and CSD staff did not indicate any problems in these locations. There is a roof leader down-spout near the main entrance which is directed onto the grate of a catch basin. However, this down-spout appears to discharge across the top of the catch basin inlet grate, not in it, and creates ponding and icing conditions. The playground area on the southerly side of the building does not appear to have any ponding issues, nor was this issue raised by CSD staff, but no catch basins were observed in the area. However, the area was still snow and ice covered and structures complete observation of the site was impacted. The small athletic field area on the westerly side of the building did have ponding conditions and some drain inlets were present in the area, but the area was still inadequately graded to drain properly. It appears the drainage from this area discharges towards the Loudon Road area.

It is noted that no observations were made to determine the condition or location of any subsurface drainage system components. Capacity analyses for closed drainage systems were not performed, however, based upon owner provided information, there does not appear to be capacity issues for the existing drainage collection systems. As noted above, there are areas on this site which do not appear to drain adequately with ponding conditions having been created. These ponding conditions are primarily due to improper grade, the presence of low spots, and an inadequate number and/or location of drainage inlets.

**Electric/Telecommunications/CATV:** It appears these utilities are supplied to the site via aerial lines. Reportedly, these components are in adequate condition.

**Fuel storage:** The site has an underground storage tank (UST) located on the easterly side of the main building adjacent to the bus drop-off/pick-up area and is used for heating fuel storage. Reportedly, no issues are known to exist and it is felt that the UST meets minimum NHDES standards.

#### ACCESS DRIVES, PARKING AREAS AND TRAFFIC

As noted above, the access roadway is a one-way driveway entering the site from Canterbury Road before splitting into a bus drop-off/pick-up area and a staff/visitor parking area, with a parent drop-off/pick-up area. In addition, there is a small staff parking area near the southerly end of the access roadway near the main entrances, as well as the parking area for the City-owned recreation/gymnasium facility. Reportedly, there is inadequate and inefficient parking available at this site with staff parking along

the access roadway creating a congested and safety concern condition. While the bus drop-off/pick-up area provides adequate bus traffic circulation to the building entrance, having the parent drop-off/pick-up area within the staff parking area and at the City-owned recreation/gymnasium parking lot is not an ideal situation. It is understood these locations are necessary with the current configuration due to the limited availability of staff parking and small lot size. However, this configuration creates safety concerns for student pedestrians. Reportedly, these traffic circulation patterns have created minor problems.

The condition of the bituminous concrete pavement for the access roadway and parking areas is in fair to good condition. Some locations of the parking areas and driveway require rehabilitation, particularly with regard to settlement/heaving around drainage structures. This issue was noted in the 10-year maintenance program with paving rehabilitation slated.

#### SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

As noted above, there is an asphalt sidewalk with along the easterly side of the facility. This sidewalk from the drop-off/pick-up area connects to a City of Concord sidewalk system near the northwestern corner of the site. There is a pedestrian corridor from the school leading to residential neighborhoods located westerly of the school. This sidewalk system is heavily used and crosses the heavily traveled commercial traffic corridor (Loudon Road). The City of Concord has developed a walking route using painted "dinosaur tracks" to direct the student pedestrians and create a safer environment for the children. The questionnaire completed by CSD staff notes the concern of traffic circulation in the neighborhood, particularly the dangerous Loudon Road intersection near the school. There is also a walkway along the southerly side of the building which access the playground and other play on the westerly side of the facility. The asphalt sidewalk adjacent to the building, as well as other walkways, appears to be in fair to good overall condition, with some transverse cracking.

#### PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

The existing playground equipment is BIG TOYS equipment installed in 1988. A report detailing the playground equipment condition was performed during May, 2003 through the school's insurance provider, Primex<sup>3</sup>. This report outlines many recommendations to improve the safety conditions at the playgrounds. Reportedly, the primary safety hazards identified in that May, 2003 report had been addressed and the wooden playground equipment is slated for replacement in the future.

#### MISCELLANEOUS SITE ISSUES

**Bike Racks:** There are bike racks located to the southerly side of the building. The bike racks appear to be in adequate condition.

**Site Fencing:** There is chain link fencing along the southerly and westerly boundary surrounding the playground area and small athletic field. There is also a chain link fence around the pre-school playground area creating a courtyard. The fence has some locations requiring maintenance (i.e. new rail, fabric replacement, etc.), especially along the boundary with the City-owned athletic field which is currently under construction.

**Solid Waste:** The dumpster is located on the southerly end of the access driveway. The dumpster is not set on a pad. The dumpster also does not have an enclosure.

**Floodplain:** The site is not located within a flood plain zone.

**Snow Removal:** At this site, snow removal is performed by CSD staff. There is limited snow storage available at this site and snow piles were observed during our site visit.

## **EXPANSION AND REHABILITATION OF THE SITE**

There does not appear to be much land available for expansion capability for additional building additions on this site. The play areas seem to be adequate for the current student population, however, any additional building would decrease the already minimal space available for parking and play areas. It is recognized that this building is located close to Keach Park, but it is our understanding that the facility should be able to “stand alone”. There is a need for additional parking space and improved parent drop-off/pick-up area configuration based upon safety concerns.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The drainage issues with regard to drainage-related rehabilitation of structures within the staff/visitor parking area and bus drop-off/pick-up area should be addressed. Also, the down spout configuration near the main entrance should be reviewed to provide a more effective discharge into the catch basin. Also, the development of a more detailed drainage plan is recommended with regard to the grading of the small athletic area by determining the necessary required regrading of this area and placement of additional and/or relocated drainage structures to adequately drain the site.
2. As noted above, the parent drop-off/pick-up area should be reviewed. An additional study is recommended to develop a safer solution by providing a better layout for the staff parking and parent drop-off/pick-up area. It is recognized that site space is limited, but possibly some agreement with the City could be made to review this site with the parking of the recreational facility.
3. It is recommended that the access loop drive and the rear parking area on this site be rehabilitated due to noted pavement deterioration.
4. It is recommended that the sidewalk and walkways on this site be rehabilitated due to noted pavement deterioration.

5. Although a majority of the primary safety items have already been addressed, all of the playground equipment issues, as outlined in the Primex<sup>3</sup> report, shall be addressed to provide safe equipment for the children.
6. The dumpster location should be addressed. A permanent dumpster location with an adequate pad and enclosure should be provided. The current location is not an ideal location because there is not a pad or adequate protection.
7. Snow storage appears to be an issue at this location due to the large amount of areas to be plowed and the minimal areas available for snow storage. While it is an expense, excess snow removal from the site should be performed as often as required.