

SITE ASSESSMENT

Dewey Elementary School

GENERAL SITE DESCRIPTION

This site is located at 38 Liberty Street in a residential neighborhood adjacent to other local collector streets, Centre Street and School Street, in the City of Concord. The original structure was constructed in the 1890's and has had multiple renovations since that time. The school facility is situated on an approximate 1.1-acre parcel. There is the primary well-defined loop driveway located off Liberty Street to provide access to the main entrance. However, the bus drop-off /pick-up location is at the curb on Liberty Street. There is a staff/visitor parking area located off an access drive from Centre Street. The parent drop-off /pick-up for students is also located at the curb on Liberty Street.

The building is a two-story facility with a basement level also being used. The front entrance is located on the westerly side of the building on Liberty Street. There are several secondary entrances around the building. The building does not comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) at the main entrance and almost every other building entrance. There is a multi-purpose/cafeteria room on the basement level which can be accessible for some activities. There is a no walkway around the entire building perimeter, however, City-owned sidewalks do exist along the streets (Liberty, Centre, and School Streets) surrounding the building. There is a walkway on the southerly side of the building to access the rear parking and paved play space areas. However, the primary pedestrian circulation to the basement level of the building from the street is through the parking area. There is playground equipment on the southerly side of the building, however, no athletic fields exist on the site.

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: A majority of the site is collected into on-site drainage collection systems and discharge to the municipally-owned and maintained storm water collection system. However, some of the drainage along the areas adjacent to Liberty Street flow by sheet flow and are collected via the City storm water collections system, or left for infiltration into the existing soil (i.e. playground area). The on-site drainage system has catch basins in the staff parking area and paved play area on the easterly side of the building. Most of

these catch basins have settled or heaved and require rehabilitation. It does not appear that parking area or the play space areas on the easterly side of the building have any ponding issues, nor was this issue raised by CSD staff. In the areas directly beneath roof valleys, snow and rainwater discharge directly onto the areas where students and staff walk. This is not an ideal situation and should be addressed. It is noted that no observations were made to determine the condition 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. There does not appear to be areas on this site which do not drain adequately and the major drainage issues relate to catch basin inlet grates needing rehabilitation and the roof valley discharge of rainwater and snow to pedestrian paths.

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 northerly side of the building adjacent to the loop access drive and is used for heating fuel storage. Reportedly, no issues are known according to NHDES standards.

Natural Gas: This site is supplied with natural gas from the Energy North. Reportedly, these components are in adequate condition.

ACCESS DRIVES, PARKING AREAS AND TRAFFIC

As noted above, the primary access road is loop driveway entering the site from Liberty Street to the main entrance. The access at the rear of the building consists of a driveway to a combined staff/visitor parking area and adjacent to the play space and playground equipment. Reportedly, there is inadequate and inefficient parking available at this site. The location of the parking area adjacent to the play space creates a congested and safety concern condition. Also, there are traffic concerns at this site due to the close proximity the 5-way intersection of Centre Street, Liberty Street, and Auburn Street. While the bus drop-off/pick-up area provides adequate bus traffic circulation, having the parent drop-off/pick-up area the same area, as well as in close proximity to the playground area, is not ideal situation. It is understood this is necessary with the current configuration due to the limited lot size and street frontage. However, this configuration creates safety concerns for student pedestrians. Reportedly, these traffic circulation patterns have created problems.

The condition of the bituminous concrete pavement for the access loop road and parking areas is in poor condition. Some locations of the parking areas and driveway require rehabilitation, and possibly reconstruction due to the existing conditions. There is additional rehabilitation necessary, particularly with regard to the heaving and settlement around drainage structures. The pavement issue was noted in the 5-year maintenance program with paving rehabilitation slated for 2005.

SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

As noted above, there is an asphalt walkway with along the southerly side of the facility. This walkway from the main entrance connects to the rear parking area via stairs to the lower level parking and play space areas. The pedestrian corridor from the school to residential neighborhoods in proximity to the school is heavily used and is located also located within heavily traveled traffic corridors. The questionnaire provided by the consultant team and completed by CSD staff notes the concern or traffic in the neighborhood, particularly the dangerous intersection near the school noted above. The walkway adjacent to the building appears to be in poor to fair overall condition, except for the areas in proximity to roof valleys and related rainwater/snow discharge.

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, Primex³. This report outlines many recommendations to improve the safety conditions at the playgrounds. Due to the seasonal conditions during our site visit, verification of the safety improvement modifications was not conducted. Reportedly, the primary safety hazards identified in that May, 2003 report had been addressed and the wooden playground equipment is slated for replacement.

MISCELLANEOUS SITE ISSUES

Retaining Wall: A cast-in-place concrete retaining wall exists on the School Street side of the project along the sidewalk. This retaining wall is in poor to fair condition and is slated for removal and reconstruction in the 10-year maintenance program. Several cracks were noted with obvious displacement indicating complete failure may occur under certain conditions.

Bike Racks: There are no bike racks available for this building.

Site Fencing: There is a chain link fence around almost the entire perimeter of the site, except for gates and access drive openings. The fence has some locations requiring maintenance (i.e. new rail, fabric replacement, etc.).

Solid Waste: The dumpster is located on the northerly end of the staff parking area. 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 contracted separately. 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 type of student population, however, any additional building would decrease the already minimal space available for parking and play areas. This is particularly important given the fact that this facility has no gym space and, therefore, outdoor play space is very important. It is recognized this building is located close to White Park, but it is our understanding that the facility should be able to “stand alone” from the perspective of play space. There is a need for additional parking and improved parent drop-off/pick-up area configuration based upon safety concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The drainage issues with regard to drainage structures should be addressed. The drainage-related rehabilitation of structures within the staff/visitor parking area and the paved play area at the rear of the site should be addressed. Consideration should be given to roof runoff and snow in the area of the walkway accessing the rear play space.
2. It is recommended that the access loop drive and the rear parking area on this site be rehabilitated, and possibly reconstructed, due to noted pavement deterioration.
3. As noted above, the parent drop-off/pick-up location should be reviewed. Additional study is recommended to develop a safer solution by providing a better layout for the parent drop-off/pick-up in relation to the bus drop-off/pick-up area. It is recognized the site space is limited, but possibly some alternative may be concluded to reduce safety concerns.
4. Although a majority of the primary safety items have already been addressed, all of the playground equipment issues, as outlined in the Primex³ report, should be addressed to provide safe equipment for the children.
5. 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.
6. The condition of the retaining wall has been noted by the CSD staff and observed in our site visit to be poor to fair. Continual assessment of this condition needs to be made to determine the appropriate time for reconstruction/repair, since complete failure could occur under certain conditions.