



Design Review Committee
PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
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Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

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

16 June 2022

RE: Newton Center for Active Living – NewCAL, 345 Walnut Street, Newtonville

SUBJECT: Site Plan Review and Approval

Honorable City Council:

On Wednesday, June 15, 2022, the Design Review Committee, DRC, met and reviewed the proposed site plans, building floor plans, and architectural schematics dated June 15, 2022, as submitted by Bargmann, Hendrie + Architype Architects (BH+A) on behalf of the Public Buildings Department and Senior Services Department for the above referenced project.

The City of Newton is proposing the design of a new 33,000 SF facility to replace the current Senior Center located at 345 Walnut Street in Newtonville to meet the needs and interests of Newton's older adults.

The Design Review Committee determined that the schematic design and site plans are appropriate. The Committee believes that the proposed circulation and placement of building and associated site functions are a good solution to a site that presents challenges based on the requirements of the program and the urban setting of the site. 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 Public Buildings Department for Site Plan Approval. The DRC identified the following areas of design which should continue to be evaluated through the Design Development Phase.

- 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 application of passive house principles, 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 will be heated and cooled using no fossil fuels on site. The design team will continue to work with the Design Review Committee and City of Newton to analyze the embodied carbon of the various design elements, striving to minimize our embodied carbon footprint as much as possible.
- All facades of the proposed building should be refined to address concerns regarding massing and buffering of the building from the abutting properties.

- Include in the photometric analysis the building light spillage from interior sources and minimize direct and indirect impacts to the abutters. This study should also include analysis of existing offsite light sources to ensure we are not providing more light than is necessary.
- Evaluate the use of exterior pavers and develop an exterior surfacing plan that promotes a universally accessible and durable design, and a welcoming facility.
- Continue to study the design of the cupola and the stairwells and their relationship to the architectural details of the building design.
- The traffic and parking study and recommendations should be completed and presented to the DRC to ensure that the site plans work well with the site distribution, pedestrian safety, including drop off / pick up and Rideshare programs.
- The details of how the existing historical elements and fixtures like the Connick stained glass windows shall be presented to the DRC to allow for review and comment.
- Study options to limit glazing along the lower perimeter of the walking track and the stairwells.

Sincerely,



Ellen Light, AIA, LEED AP BD+C



Peter J. Barrer

Design Review Committee, Co-Chairs

CC: Joshua R. Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operations Officer
Maureen Lemieux, Chief Financial Officer
Jayne Colino, Director of Senior Services