

Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Design Review Committee (DRC) Project Update					
Date: Wednesday, October 13, 2021					
Date: Zoom Meeting (online)					
Time: 6:00PM					
Attendees:					
See attached Sign-In List for Design Review Committee, Project Community Representatives and Guests who were in attendance.					
CITY COMMITTEE STAFF					
Josh Morse	Public Buildings Dept.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alex Valcarce	Public Buildings Dept.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CONSULTANTS					
Tom Murphy	NV5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joel Bargmann	BH+A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Melissa Gagnon	NV5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dan Chen	BH+A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Glen Daly	BH+A	<input type="checkbox"/>

Alex Valcarce opened up the meeting at 6:02PM. The intent of this meeting is to provide an update to the DRC with regard to further developments of the new construction design approach, since discussed at the last meeting on 9/08/21. An opportunity for questions and answers was provided following the presentation. The full presentation can be found on the project website: [2021 10 13 NewCAL Design Review Committee \(DRC\) Presentation](#). Highlights of the presentation are noted below.

Project Update

BH+A provided an overview of design development since the last DRC meeting on September 8. It was explained that the focus of this meeting will be to present current massing and exterior treatment concepts. Perspectives of two important “hot” corners have been developed, at Walnut Street and Highland Ave as well as at Walnut Street and Walnut Place.

A schedule was presented for upcoming meetings:

- **October – Massing and Exterior Treatment Concepts**
- November – Exterior Facades, Materials and Landscape Development
- December – Site Plan, Building Plans, Sustainability and Relationships

The following previously noted points were summarized with regard to building siting and organization:

- The most public face of the building will be along Walnut Street, with the prominent corner at Walnut Street and Highland Avenue.
- Along Walnut Place, the building will be set back to avoid creating a canyon effect at what is otherwise a relatively narrow street in a relatively dense residential neighborhood.
- A roof deck over a two story volume overlooks Walnut Street. The design intent is to maintain smaller granular volumes along Walnut Street which straddle a larger three story volume behind.
- Parking access is one way from Walnut Place with one way exit to Highland Avenue. Drop off area is at the rear covered parking area as well as at designated spaces along Highland Avenue.

As previously noted, the following building organization concept was reviewed:

- 1st Floor – Public Spaces (lobby, lounge, administration, multipurpose/dining, kitchen, juice bar, shop)
- 2nd Floor – Programing Rooms (art and program rooms, administration and gym)
- 3rd Floor – Destination Spaces (fitness, game room, walking track and an outdoor deck)

Floor plans were reviewed highlighting entry points and access, multi-use spaces for flexibility, as well as horizontal and vertical building circulation. The lounge is intended to be a large open space for socialization with two way transparency. The second floor has destination programming with the gymnasium as well as two art rooms which can be combined into one 800SF space. The third floor can be accessed via the elevator or stair to the suspended walking track, fitness room and game room as well as an outdoor roof deck. Shading options are being studied for the roof deck.

Perspectives were presented relative to building organization, from the two important “hot” corners at Walnut Street and Highland Ave as well as at Walnut Street and Walnut Place. A canopy is being designed at the corner entry at Walnut Street and Highland Avenue. Articulation of the stair volume is being studied. A perspective was also presented looking back from the Walnut Place, to Walnut Street. As noted, the intent is to pull the building back from the property line along Walnut Place which can be achieved by creating outdoor terraces which are possibly enclosed with repurposed wrought iron fencing from the existing building.

Discussion, Comments and Questions

Following the presentation, Committee members asked questions. A general overview of the Q/A is as follows:

- With regard to mechanical systems, the question was asked whether the intent for units to be located on the roof. It was noted that the roof will be a pitched mansard with a hollow parapet to accommodate mechanical units, including condenser units as well as solar panels where possible. A comment was made that mechanical units can be noisy and close proximity of neighbors will need

careful consideration. Equipment itself will have acoustic properties. The City noise level ordinance of 5 db above the ambient street noise, will be followed and adhered to.

- Sustainability. With regard to glazing, materials and overall design. It was noted that energy modeling is ongoing with the intent to achieve net zero goals. The intent is to present a summary of sustainability findings at the December meeting. Glazing and wall composition are being studied. City noted sustainability goals were developed close to three years ago and the building will push towards net zero using passive house and LEED standards, will be fully electrified, will most likely be VRF with energy recovery ventilation. Solar output will be maximized including solar panels as well as the possibility of a solar car port. From a sustainability standpoint, solar orientation is good. The amount of glazing will be studied in terms of opportunities and challenges.
- Energy modeling. BH+A will share information re: the selected energy modeling platform to ensure accurate VRF modeling is performed. The City will take a hard look at what assumptions are being provided to the energy modeler.
- Proximity of the entry vestibule to the drop off areas at Highland Ave as well as the size of the proposed canopy given anticipated volume of visitors and likely a waiting area for transportation. Additional weather accommodations may want to be provided. It was noted that possible canopy expansion is being studied as well as signage. It was also noted that drop off and pick up areas have not been finalized however both the lounge and library are being designed so visitors can view the outside from inside and can wait for transportation from inside.
- Roof deck programming. It was explained that the roof deck was driven by the program which included discussions about the feasibility of year round use. It was noted that since COVID, there is an increased sensitivity and an appreciation for outdoor programming. The roof deck will provide extended outdoor program area.
- Massing. The possibility of shifting the stair tower back further towards the parking area. This would which bring the exit closer to the parking area as well as further open up the corner. It was noted that the stair is being studied.
- Visual connection between exterior and interior spaces in the parking area. Architectural metal mesh should be considered. This area is being studied to create greater visual transparency.
- Hierarchy and visibility of the main entrance. The entrance needs to be further studied to be more prominent and really “pop” which will help define the corner, creating interest within Newtonville.
- Entrance design. Existing corner tree may be problematic as it continues to grow.
- Stylistically, the building should integrate with the Newtonville neighborhood.
- Massing at the back side of the building. The City is in constant communication with neighbors to the west. To address concerns raised, BH+A will provide a section cut at the back side to study the rear of the building which faces the house on Highland Avenue.

- Exterior materials. Materials and façade articulation are being studied to bring down the scale of the building as well as to open up particular areas, specifically at the corner at Walnut Street and Highland Avenue. Brick, stone and lighter materials are being considered at two story volumes. Intent is to aesthetically detach the stair from the massing of the overall building.
- Public art. Public art is being considered to help break up massing along Highland Avenue.
- Terraces for public use. The building is being designed to meet the needs and interests of the seniors and when the building is not in use, it will be open to the public. It was noted that more outdoor programming is taking place and in the event outdoor programming is in session, public use will be limited at that given time and location.
- Delivery location. The commercial zone which was created during the Walnut Street improvement project, on the opposite side of Highland Avenue, is utilized for large deliveries.
- Embodied carbon. At some point later this fall or early this winter conversations should start. At the same time, the City will be taking a pass to update construction management plan guidelines to help try to control carbon footprint during construction. The primary focus will be to review how embodied carbon can be controlled with building material specifications. A seminar may be helpful.
- Carbon footprint. BH+A shall identify the environmental product declaration of proposed materials.
- Glazing, operable or fixed. It was noted that there would be some areas which would allow for operable windows, which would need to be coordinated with mechanical systems. Operable will be provided where windows are within reach and inoperable where windows are out of reach. Operable windows have become more important during COVID. Combination would be ideal.
- Monitoring system should be considered for windows which are left open when not intended to be.
- Increase visual connection to reception area. Glass area which points to the front of the building. Reception area could be omnidirectional so that it also presents itself to the back entryway. Having three walls open to the lobby may enhance the visual connection. This area will be further studied.

The next Community Update Meeting is scheduled on Thursday, 10/21/21, at 6:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Gagnon

NV5, Inc.

[End of 10/13/2021 Meeting Minutes]

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**SIGN IN****Meeting Date:****DRAFT**

13 October 2021

Place/Room:

Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Name	Initial	Organization	E-Mail
b	a		
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Jini Fairley _____		City of Newton	jfairley@newtonma.gov

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**SIGN IN****Meeting Date:****DRAFT**

13 October 2021

Place/Room:

Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Name	Initial	Organization	E-Mail
Project Community Reps			
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Guests			
Joel Bargman	<input type="checkbox"/>	BH+A	JBargmann@BHplus.com
Dan Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BH+A	DChen@BHplus.com
Glen Daley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BH+A	GDaley@BHplus.com
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Norm Meltz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COA / NewCAL Working Group	
Richard Rasala	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NewCAL working Group	
Joan Belle Isle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COA Chair	
Sue Rasala	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NewCAL working Group	
Fred Lewis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resident	
	<input type="checkbox"/>		

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE		SIGN IN
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