

SITE ASSESSMENT

Sylvester Elementary School

On December 21, 2001, staff of The Berkshire Design Group, Inc. visited four Hanover Schools campuses in Hanover, Massachusetts. The sites included in the investigation were Hanover High School, Sylvester Elementary School, Salmond School and Curtis School. The purpose of the visit was to visually assess the condition of the sites and associated infrastructure. This preliminary site assessment has been prepared after a course of interviews, site visits and investigation of local municipal records.

The following is a summary of our conversations, observations and additional research to date relative to the Sylvester School site:

LOCATION

The existing Sylvester School is located in Hanover Center, and the vehicle/bus access is from Rockland Street, (Route 139). The Centre Elementary School is located on the abutting parcel northerly of the site and the Centre Elementary School has access from Silver Street, however there is no vehicular connection between the two schools. The south side of the parcel abuts Rockland Street. There is a residential lot on the westerly corner of the parcel. The Town Park is located to the north and east of the school.

SITE SOILS

Research of Board of Health records indicates that the soils on site are granular fine to medium sandy soils with some cobbles. There were no apparent wetlands on the site or adjacent to the site. There were obvious outcrops of ledge/boulders on the site, which would be a factor in any proposed construction activities for the site.

PLAYING FIELDS:

The project site abuts the Town Park and the Centre School, however there are “little to none” play activities at the Sylvester School. There are several “outdated” swings located on site. There is also a large boulder/ledge outcrop directly north of the paved play area surrounding the school and according to interviews conducted on site, the children often use this area as a playground. There is a fenced in “wooden playscape structure” adjacent to the site, however, since this structure is located on the public park land, it is accessible and used by the community, thereby making it difficult for the school staff to utilize it for the students. As such, the student body rarely uses this playscape as a part of the normal curriculum.

The campus is connected to the Center School via a paved walkway, and the students often traverse this to utilize the core facilities in the Centre School building.

ACCESS, PARKING AND CIRCULATION

The site has three points of access. The most westerly drive is designated for busses entering only and this drive accesses a large paved area that is used as a play yard and bus access. Busses exit this area by circling around the north side of the building and exiting along the front, (easterly) side of the building, which is used by all exiting vehicles. The staff/public enter the site through the one-way “in only” most easterly drive. The two easterly drives converge at the front door of the building at a rotary traffic circle, which serve as a drop off loop in front of the school. There is parking along the northern end of the loop, directly in front of the school, and along both sides of the most easterly drive.

In general, the number of parking spaces as currently on site are inadequate. During the normal school day, the daily traffic spaces are inadequate, however, during the parent drop-off / pickup periods, there is an extreme shortage of parking.

MASSACHUSETTS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, (MEPA):

An Environmental Notification Form (ENF), for this project may be required to be submitted to the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency, (MEPA). A site visit will be conducted by MEPA and a Certificate from the Secretary of Environmental Affairs will need to be issued by MEPA, stating that the project whether or not the project will require the filing of an Environmental Impact report.

SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas, (2000-2001 Edition) was checked and it was determined that the site is NOT located within an area designated as a “Priority Habitat of Rare Species”, nor is it located within an “Estimated Habitat of Rare Wildlife and Certified Vernal Pools. (There is a certified vernal pool on the map near the site, however it appears to be well outside of the school property)

AQUIFER PROTECTION ZONE

After reviewing the Town of Hanover zoning maps, and local zoning by-laws ,(Section 6.850 through 6.880), it appears that the Sylvester School is located near a Aquifer Protection Zone. Prior to beginning any work, a determination should be made with local officials as to the exact location of this line as it appears that the aquifer boundary line may run along the Sylvester and Center School site boundary lines or the eastern most portion of the site may be within that zone. The impact associated with this zone is primarily two-fold:

1. If any work is proposed within this zone, a Special Permit is required to be obtained from the Planning Board.
2. There are specific performance requirements associated with any work within this zone. These are primarily concerned with design of parking areas and septic systems. All of these designs must satisfy the requirements of the local Department of Public Works and the local Board of Health.

This aquifer protection district is a local by-law, and although the state encourages the local communities to enact local bylaws protecting the aquifers, there are no state permits required due to encroachment into this district.

SITE UTILITIES

Water: The site is serviced by municipal water. Mr. Conant was not aware of any past problems with either the water.

It is highly recommended that a fire flow test be conducted as soon as possible so that any unforeseen problems with the water can be addressed early in the design/decision making process.

Heating Fuel: The building is currently heated with municipal gas. The site was previously served by buried oil tanks, but those tanks were removed in the early 1990's, according to then current environmental guidelines.

Sanitary Sewer System: The site is serviced by an on-site sanitary sewage disposal system. A new leaching system was installed in 1997. The new system has a 6000 gallon septic tank. If the school has any science laboratories, then an industrial waste holding tank, (commonly referred to as a "tight tank"), would also need to be permitted and installed.

NOTICE OF INTENT - WETLANDS:

Based upon a cursory review of the site, it does not appear that wetlands are on or adjacent to the site. There is a certified vernal pool located on the species map, however this appears to be well away from the Sylvester School.

In any case, if any work is proposed within 100 feet of any wetland, or within 200 feet of any perennial stream, then an application would be required to be filed with the local Conservation Commission.

DRAINAGE:

The site is currently served primarily by closed drainage systems in the immediate vicinity of the school buildings and drives. The storm water from the closed drainage systems has not presented a problem on the site in the past.

If the proposed project will significantly increase the amount of impervious area, then the design must include provisions to comply with the new DEP policy on stormwater management. The policy requires stormwater quality management as well as attenuation of any peak flow rates. This may require the construction of retention/detention basin(s), stormwater treatment chambers, and/or water quality swales. Typically stormwater management ponds are not desirable on a school. It would be advantageous to minimize any increase in impervious area. Any modification to the project will still entail improvements to

the stormwater quality, which typically require as a minimum additional catch basins with 4 foot sumps.