

**NEWTON PUBLIC BUILDINGS SURVEY  
PHASE II – ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**Building Analysis**

**Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School**



Address: 191 Pearl Street  
Year of Construction: 1939

Level of Significance: Moderate

Recommended Treatment Level: Rehabilitation.

## **PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance**

### *Building History*

Lincoln-Eliot Elementary, built in the Nonantum neighborhood in 1939, was one of several school buildings constructed within Newton in the late 1920s through 1930s in response to the rapid population growth the city experienced beginning in the mid-1800s. After World War I, a period of time that saw limited public building construction, the need for new schools had become particularly acute. Eventually, fourteen new school buildings were constructed in Newton between 1921 and 1939 to meet this increased need. Many of these new school buildings replaced older wooden school buildings. The Newton schools constructed during this time period were typically Tudor, Georgian or Colonial Revival in style. The Lincoln-Eliot School is characteristic of the Georgian Revival style and features a two-story, rectangular plan, high basement and slate hip roof with central pedimented entrance and a cupola.

The construction of Lincoln-Eliot School was funded by the Public Works Administration (PWA), a New Deal program designed to provide employment, stabilize purchasing power, improve public welfare, and contribute to reviving American industry. It was created by the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933 and was terminated in 1941, by which time it had become irrelevant. The PWA funded the construction of more than 34,000 projects, including 70% of the new schools and 1/3 of the hospitals built during this time period. The new school building replaced two existing school buildings: The Lincoln School on Thornton Street (constructed 1854 and named for Abraham Lincoln) and the Eliot School on Pearl Street (constructed 1884 and named for the Reverend John Eliot).

The Boston firm Andrews, Jones, Biscoe and Goodell was responsible for the design of the original building. The firm was the continuation of the firm of Andrews & Jacques, established in 1885. Howland Jones, Maurice B. Biscoe (a Newton resident), and Edwin B. Goodell, Jr. were the principals of the firm at the time of the Lincoln-Eliot School's construction. Recent projects of the firm included Alumnae Hall at Brown University's Pembroke College and dormitories at Tufts University.

Two large additions were built on the Lincoln-Eliot School at the side and rear of the original building in the 1960s. The first addition, designed by Carney Goldberg of Boston, was constructed in 1966. The second addition, designed by Thomas J. Sevrini Associates of Newton Centre, was constructed in 1968. The school's original windows were replaced with the existing aluminum sashes in the late 1980s.

### *Level of Significance*

The Lincoln-Eliot School is significant under National Register Criterion A, for its connection to the development of the school system within Newton. The building retains most of its original design features and materials. The two later additions have not greatly altered the appearance of the original structure.

### *References*

- American Institute of Architects. "Questionnaire for Architects' Roster and/or Register of Architects Qualified for Federal Public Works: Andrew, Jones, Biscoe and Goodell, Boston, MA" (April 2, 1947)  
<[http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/Rosters/AndrewsJonesBiscoeGoodell\\_roster.pdf](http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/Rosters/AndrewsJonesBiscoeGoodell_roster.pdf)> (visited 21 November, 2011).
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, "Form B NWT.3607—191 Pearl Street" (1997, 1987).
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, "Form B NWT.3606—225 Nevada St" (1987), 2.
- "Public Works Administration." The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project. George Washington University, Washington, DC.  
<<http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teaching/glossary/pwa.cfm>> (visited 29 November, 2011).

**PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance: Historic Images**



Figure 1: The Lincoln-Eliot School in 1987 prior to the replacement of the original window sashes. (Credit: MACRIS)

## **Part 2 – Description of Historically Significant Features**

### **Exterior Visual Character**

#### *Setting*

- The school is on a south-facing sloped site at the corner of Pearl and Garner Streets. There are two main entrances to the original building, one at the center of the south elevation and one at the center of the east elevation. Granite stairs with concrete landings lead from sidewalk up to the south entry.

#### *Shape*

- Two-story rectangular structure with a high basement.
- Low, 1960s additions are located to the north and west.

#### *Roof and Related Features*

- The hipped roof is clad with slate shingles, including ridge caps.
- A decorative cupola clad with lead coated copper is located at the center of the hipped roof.
- There is a small gable at north and south elevations with wood trim.
- A chimney is located near the northeast corner of the roof.

#### *Openings*

- The regularly-spaced window openings have been infilled with inappropriate aluminum windows. Exterior screens are present at the lower level. The original windows had 12-over-12 and 6-over-6 wood sashes.
- A shallow wood bow window adorns the east elevation.
- A half-round, louvered opening is centered within the north and south gables.
- The south and east entries are set within pedimented limestone porticos. The tall entries are currently filled with a non-original aluminum framed transom and standard-height replacement aluminum doors.

#### *Projections:*

- An angled bay projection containing the south entrance is located at the center of the south elevation.

#### *Trim and Secondary Features:*

- Limestone entrance porticos are prominent features at the south and east elevations.
- Limestone belt course above second floor window at south projection.
- Shaped brick water table transitions to limestone at west elevation.
- Soldier-course brick over steel lintels at windows. Windows have limestone or cast stone sills.

#### *Materials*

- The building exterior is predominantly running bond brick with limestone trim, and a concrete foundation.
- Exterior stairs are granite, with ferrous handrails.

#### *Craft Details*

- Two Tuscan columns and two pilasters support a pedimented roof at each entrance portico. The pediments are detailed differently from one another with one having an arched hood and one having a triangular pediment.
- The top edge of the limestone water table at west elevation retains the shaped profile of the brick water table. The water table steps up at center bay, with shallow raised ornamentation.

## **Interior Visual Character**

### *Individually Important Spaces*

#### Classrooms

- Each classroom typically has a shallow coat closet with set of four pivot doors with hardware for synchronized movement. At least one set of doors is still extant. Many of the removed doors are currently in storage in the basement.
- Each classroom typically has built-in cabinetry next to the pivot doors, consisting of wood framed glass doors at shelves above and drawers below.
- Low cubbies in the walls at many of the classrooms, appear to be related to the original ventilation system.

### *Related Spaces*

#### Corridors

- The walls are finished with glazed ceramic tile to approximately 7' high. The tile has a black tile base and border course of buff brick. Painted flat plaster is located at the upper wall.
- The walls have setbacks for drinking fountains, fire hydrants, and radiators.
- Built-in wood display cases are present in many locations in the corridors.
- Classroom doors have 9-light vision panels 12-pane transoms above. Most of the original doors are still present and in good condition.
- The door to the principal's office is faux wood-grained metal.

#### Stair Halls

- The stair halls are separated from the corridors with metal-framed glazed walls, consisting of a pair of doors with 6 lights each, flanked by 6-pane sidelights and a tall, multi-pane transom. This is typical for the Newton schools of this time period. All such walls have wire glass and bronze hardware; the metal in some stairs is faux wood-grained.
- Metal pan stairs in stairwells with terrazzo treads with metal nosings.
- Stair railings have vertical metal balusters and wood handrails.

### *Other Significant Interior Features*

- There is a tall, arched ornamental guard rail at the south entry.

## Part 2 – Images



Figure 1 (top left): The current main entry is demarcated by a limestone pedimented portico at the southern, narrow end of the historic building, at the top of a large set of exterior stairs.



Figure 2 (middle left): The overall rhythm of single window openings with soldier course brick over steel lintels and limestone sills is interrupted by the shallow bow window at the east elevation.



Figure 3 (bottom left): Many character-defining features visible in this view. Note the glazed partition wall separating the main corridor from the stair hall; the classroom door with transom; the built-in recesses for water fountains and radiators; the glazed ceramic tile and brick at the walls.



Figure 4 (below): Original set of pivot doors at a wide, shallow coat closet, typical in each classroom. The doors have been removed from many classrooms, but are in storage in the basement.

### **Part 3 – Treatment Recommendations**

#### **Preservation Treatment Level**

The Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School is still in use as part of the Newton school system, and as an active school has ever changing programming needs. To enable the school to continue to serve its primary educational function it is recommended that future work be performed according to the "Rehabilitation" Level of treatment outlined in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The Rehabilitation treatment allows for the building to be altered or added to through the construction of additions to support new uses while preserving those portions or features that convey the building's historic character.

The following bulleted list contains an analysis of existing conditions and recommended treatments for the significant features catalogued in Part 2 of this report.

#### **Exterior Recommendations**

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

- Repair all broken leaders and replace all missing leader components. Reattach leaders where loose from the building.
- Severe water staining and efflorescence at south and east entry porticos. Inspect roof, and repair as required. Repoint all joints in the masonry and install weather caps at skyward-facing joints. Repair the areas of water damage at the stucco portico ceilings.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Roof and cupola were not accessible for survey. From the ground the slate roof appears to be in generally good condition. Inspect the roof and repair as required. Replace in kind any broken slates, particularly at the cupola.
- Confirm metals used in roof and drainage elements. Replace gutters and leaders if necessary to prevent galvanic corrosion.
- Survey condition of all steel window and door lintels. Replace severely rusted lintels. Reset and repoint displaced bricks to match existing adjacent brickwork where rust jacking has occurred and where removed to replace lintels. Repaint all lintels.
- Repair cracked limestone units at beltcourse and stepped cracking at brick at south bay projection window.
- Repair cracks in concrete chimney cap.
- Patch area of concrete with exposed rebar at concrete foundation, east elevation. Repair cracked and spalled concrete below non-original basement window, east elevation.
- Paint all wood elements, particularly the area of peeling paint at the south gable. Repair wood elements as necessary.
- Replace missing wood elements at bow window. Reattach all loose elements.
- Remove abandoned ferrous elements (anchors, sleeves, etc.) from the building exterior.
- Scrape free of rust and repaint all ferrous elements, including guard rails and handrails.
- Repair or replace the severely cracked concrete stair landings at the south entrance including replacement of failing previous repairs. Repair cracks in granite thresholds and repoint granite stairs.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- Conduct a thorough survey of window condition, including sash, frame, lintel and hardware. Initial exterior inspection indicates there may be some water infiltration into the vertical mullions, but are otherwise generally in good condition. Evaluate in conjunction with daylighting, ventilation and energy efficiency strategies (beyond the scope of this survey), to prioritize timing of replacement. At the time of next replacement, replace with operable windows matching in appearance to the original windows.
- Repoint masonry 100%.

- Clean building exterior, including:
  - General atmospheric staining at the cupola
  - Biological staining at the east elevation
  - Rust staining below ferrous elements
  - Efflorescence at the entry porticos; below the aluminum windows and at leaking leaders.
- Non-original grilles are present below some windows. Confirm their necessity. Coordinate with HVAC strategy (beyond the scope of this survey) and replacement of windows with operable windows to match original. If grilles are no longer necessary tooth in brick infill to match existing adjacent brickwork.
- Replace modern lamp fixtures mounted to plywood at the entrance portico ceilings with more appropriate fixtures

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Continue regular maintenance of character-defining features.
- Maintain all gutters, leaders and drains to keep clog-free.

**Interior Recommendations**

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Repair damaged plywood veneer at classroom doors and pivot doors. Finish to match existing adjacent door veneer.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- Repair transom above principal's office door and replace missing muntins to bring the transom back to its original appearance.
- Repaint metal stair elements.
- Clean paint smears from the glass at the glazed corridor walls.
- The dropped ceiling at second floor is obscuring the classroom door transoms. The dropped ceilings at the first and second floors obscure the top of the glazed corridor wall. Review the necessity of the dropped ceilings. Remove if not needed

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Continue regular maintenance of character-defining features.