

Michael Driscoll School

Strategic modifications breathe new life into an aging school building



Built of four major additions over the last 90 years, this K-8 elementary school building, although in generally fine shape, suffered from weak identity and unclear utilization of its spaces. By directing the resources available for limited renovations to a few discreet but interdependent projects, the design team was able to make significant changes in the way the buildings are navigated and used.

Features

- Building signage, planters and benches incorporated into a new accessible ramp helps to clearly define the iconic front entrance
- Wood built-in furniture, screening partitions and child scaled spaces create intimate cafeteria 'dining rooms'
- Aluminum replacement windows with high thermal performance glass compliment the architectural character of the various additions

Recognition

- 2008 Award for Design Excellence – Honor Award, Boston Society of Architects/AIA



Design Solution

The need to provide accessibility to the front and rear of the school, in conjunction with locating a new elevator, was used as an opportunity to establish two of the multiple competing entries as the ceremonial 'front doors'. New signage, seating, plantings, a canopy, and lighting were employed to reinforce the new identity.

The mandate to improve the aesthetics of the existing cafeteria became the impetus for rethinking the space as the new heart of school activity. By subdividing the space into three interconnected dining rooms, the institutional feel is mitigated while still allowing larger and varied functions to happen. A new sloped ceiling system conceals existing utility lines and maintain a feeling of height in a previously basement-like space.

Other improvements include new high performance operable windows, new bathrooms, state of the art technology infrastructure upgrade, and ventilation improvements.

JLA Role
Lead Design Architect, Architect of Record

Personnel Jonathan Levi FAIA, Project Designer/Partner-in-Charge; Matthew LaRue AIA, Project Architect

Client Town of Brookline

Location Brookline, MA

Size 96,000 sf

Construction Cost \$2,800,000

Construction Complete 2006

