



Memorandum

Subject: Allowable Building Height

Project Name: Camden Rockport Middle School

Date: October 6, 2017

The current home of the Camden Rockport Middle School on Knowlton Street has served as an active school site since 1920. At present, the Mary E Taylor Building and the CRMS gymnasium exceed the current height restrictions for the Village Zone. The current ordinance specifies that the maximum building or structure height within the current zone is 30 feet above the average existing grade. The current height of the Mary E Taylor building is 41 feet and the gymnasium is 31 feet.

The new middle school is planned to be a three story building on the back side where the academic wing is located. The preferred design results in a building that is 35' high at its tallest point, which is lower than the existing structure. The current plan utilizes the significant grade change between the entrance to the site and the lower fields to minimize the impact on the residential portion of Knowlton Street.

To meet the current 30 foot height restriction, the rear classroom wing of the building would need to be lowered, resulting in stairs within the main corridor. These stairs will make the corridor more difficult to monitor, make accessibility more challenging and increase the overall construction cost of the project. By increasing the allowable height for a school in this ordinance, the building will best meet the educational needs of the community without impacting the character of Knowlton Street. In fact, the building will be lower than what has existed there for nearly 100 years.

Efforts have been made to limit the impact on the visual landscape on Knowlton Street through the design of roof lines and the exterior façade as well as placement on the site. These include:

- Pushing the building back from Knowlton Street
- Placing the taller portions of the building at the rear of site, away from the residential area
- Utilization of more traditional residential architectural styles on Knowlton street