

## Existing Conditions Assessment

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### GENERAL OVERVIEW

Originally constructed in the early 1930's, Memorial Field has seen a number of modifications over the years. Situated on 3.493 acres in the heart of the Borough of State College and the Holmes-Foster Highlands Historical District, this facility is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

While the character has not changed since its construction, several major facelifts have been undertaken and have resulted in improvements to the original facility. While several updates have been made in recent years, the general feel of the facility is one that is outdated and in need of major renovation.

Many of the building systems are facing the end of their useful lives. Although the general upkeep of the facility has been maintained by the District, including painting, cleaning, etc., the effects of weather, time, and use have taken their toll. One recent upgrade, the installation of an artificial turf playing surface, has enabled the facility to be used more frequently than the previous natural grass surface which was compacted and sparse. This increased use only amplifies the need for improvements.

### PARKING

Currently the site offers thirty-eight (38) parking stalls behind the home bleachers to service the Administration Building's District Offices. Of the existing thirty-eight (38) spaces, one (1) is designated as accessible and three (3) are marked for visitors. In its current use, the on-site parking requirement for the Central Office is fifty-two (52) spaces. To supplement parking needs, the District leases a gravel parking lot across West Nittany Avenue from the Administration Building.

Users of Memorial Field utilize the two previously mentioned lots and available public parking. In addition to on-street parking on the local streets, parking is also available in the new parking garage located at the corner of Fraser Street and Beaver Avenue. Another parking garage is located a half block further down Fraser Street.

### ENTRANCES/CIRCULATION ROUTES

While many entrances exist into the facility, there is not a main entry point that is clearly delineated.

Access to the home side of the field is from three points, two of which are open during major events. The first is located along West Nittany Avenue at the southeast corner of the facility. This gate is 6' wide and accommodates bidirectional traffic that traverses the set of stairs inside the entrance. The second location open during major events is

located at the top of the field access drive at the northeast corner of the stadium. This service drive/field access point consists of a double-leaf vehicular gate (approximately 12' wide) with a concrete drive that has a slope of 20% that makes it difficult to navigate on foot. The third entrance to the north side of the home stands is located adjacent to the rear entrance of the Administration Building. This entrance is used for spectators with mobility issues who would like to sit in the home side bleachers and for maintenance staff access. This gate is rarely used.

On the Visitors side of the field, along Fraser Street, there are a number of points of entry to the bleachers. Each bleacher stairway has an entry gate that is staffed during large events. These seven entry points are 3' wide and immediately descend down into the bleachers. In addition, there is an additional eighth gate near the Southwest corner of the field that descends a concrete stair and stone wall to the base of the visiting bleachers and continues down to field level. These stairs, though rarely used during minor events, do allow access for visiting bands to the field.

These eleven points of entry/egress are congested, not uniformly dispersed and do not contribute to keeping the crowd within the stadium during events. In addition, an alternate route exists to gain entry to the field via the entrances into the Administration Building and exiting out of the basement level onto the main access walk on the home side. During most events, this is typically prohibited.

## GRANDSTANDS

These facilities are rapidly approaching the end of their useful lives. In many cases, the bleachers are rapidly deteriorating whether it is the wood seats and walks of the home side, the rolled metal stands on the visitor side, or the structural steel supports of both.

Attached to this document in the Appendix are the Annual Bleacher Assessments for the last three years which outline the condition of the grandstands and identify some of the criteria that the grandstand system is required to meet per the local building code.

In summary of these reports, and as seen in the progression over subsequent years, the grandstands are at the end of their useful life and require complete replacement. The Home Stands have been recommended to be replaced prior to the Visitors Stands due to the significant variance between required loads on grandstands per the International Building Code and the determined allowable stress loads on the wood seat planks that have been utilized.

Per State College Borough Ordinance 176 (March 1, 1937) a 4.0 foot deep by 428.4 foot wide easement was approved to allow for encroachment of the grandstands into the South Fraser Street right-of-way.

## PRESS BOX

The existing press box is also at the end of its useful life. The current structure measures approximately 7'x18' and accommodates the public address announcer, the clock operator, and two booths for media (radio/print). On top of the press box there is additional space for coaches to watch the game and/or videotape the action. This outdated structure is constructed of 2"x4" and 2"x6" pine lumber and painted plywood, and has swing-up plywood windows. The rooftop vantage point requires a difficult climb up a temporary ladder and offers limited protection from the elements with a canopy that is put in place during the sports season.

Adjacent to this structure is an additional 'deck' that was constructed to increase capacity for coaches and video crews as well as reduce the stress upon the aging press box. The complete structure, although painted each year by the Owner, requires complete replacement to comply with code requirements and address general safety concerns.

#### HOME LOCKER ROOM

Currently there is not a locker room for the Home Team at the site. Over the years, there have been many variations on how the Home Team has dressed for their respective event. Some sports teams have dressed at the main locker rooms at the High School and been bussed over to the venue; other teams have dressed in the Fairmount Elementary Building in a converted cafeteria/wrestling room. Still others have used bathrooms at the Fairmount Building or the cafeteria during halftimes. Shower rooms are non-existent and toilet facilities for use before, during or after the game are extremely limited, especially for teams dressing more than 20 players. Lockers do not exist within these spaces.

#### VISITING LOCKER ROOM

The Visiting Team Locker Room operates much in the same way as the home team facilities do. Fairmount Elementary has served as the main locker facility for these teams with limited toilet shower and locker facilities for everything but the smallest of teams. In some instances, larger teams have dressed at the High School and bussed over to the field. In any case, the locker rooms do not lend themselves to a Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association AAA/AAAA Facility.

#### OFFICIALS LOCKER ROOMS

Officials for events are required to use locker facilities in Fairmount opposite the visiting team or dress in the restrooms located within the Administration Building. Neither facility is adequate as gender equity issues require facilities for both men and women officials and a general lack of storage space for personal items. Space is inadequate and shower rooms, toilet rooms and lockers are practically non-existent.

## TEAM ROOMS

Other than rooms that double as a cafeteria, hallway, classroom or gymnasium during the day, there are no dedicated facilities to accommodate additional teams that would utilize the facility. When the facility is in use by multiple teams for multiple start times, the High School Team Rooms are required to facilitate this need.

## TOILET FACILITIES

The toilet facilities are grossly inadequate, outdated, and difficult to access, control, and maintain. With approximately 4,400 seats and additional standing room areas, the stadium is only equipped one Men's Room (with 5 urinals and 2 water closets) and one Women's Room (with 4 water closets) located in the basement of the Administration Building and accessible from the home side only. One drinking fountain is also available to spectators at this location.

During an event, visiting spectators are required to exit the stadium and re-enter on the home side to use these facilities, or they can exit the stadium to use approximately 5 water closets (combined total of men's and women's) located across Fraser Street in the basement of the Saint Andrews Episcopal Church. While the church facilities were utilized for many years without incident, in recent years vandalism has occurred during large events and has strained relations between the District and the church leadership.

## CONCESSIONS

The State College Lions Club has served as the main concessionaire for many years. Equipped with a large trailer mounted concession stand, the main food station is parked in the middle of Fraser Street during large events (football). An auxiliary station is set up beneath the home stands in the storage area to provide limited food service. While no cooking facilities are present, foods are prepared and transported to the stands (tables set up on the pavement) from the main trailer. Access is currently based on a one-way design that moves patrons completely beneath the Home stand and exits at the base of the field access ramp. At that point, patrons are required to climb the stairs into the Home bleachers and cross over the vantage point of the lower seating sections to return to their own seats. This service scenario creates several issues, from food safety (service in a storage area) to accessibility to cross-over between spectators.

## TICKET BOOTHS

There are five ticket offices located outside the facility. Four of the five are stick-built, lean-to sheds; the fifth is a small brick building located at the main home side entrance at the southeast corner of the Administration Building. Each can accommodate 1-2 persons. Three of the five are in acceptable condition; the brick building is in reasonably good condition and the fifth unit is in excellent condition.

## SCOREBOARDS

Currently there are two scoreboards within the facility. The older scoreboard was relocated a number of years ago during renovations to Central Parklet. This scoreboard was used until the artificial turf playfield was installed and Sovereign Bank sponsored the lead gift to install a larger scoreboard in the North end zone. This scoreboard is in excellent shape and should offer a number of years of service to the facility. There are no additional auxiliary scoreboards within the complex such as 25-second clocks for football.

## PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

The public address system is outdated and requires a number of upgrades. There are no mixing boards available for use or wireless capabilities. Pre-programmed sounds are not available. Speaker locations, quantities, and volumes are inadequate during large events.

## UTILITIES

The existing Administration Building is currently served by the following utilities:

- Underground Water (State College Borough Water Authority)
- Underground Sewer (State College Borough/University Area Joint Authority)
- Underground Natural Gas (Columbia Gas)
- Underground and Overhead Electrical Service (Allegheny Power Company)
- Telephone Service (Verizon Telephone)
- Cable Service (Adelphia Cable)

In addition to these services, beneath the northeast parking area on the site is a main trunk line corridor for Verizon Telephone. Also, the Borough of State College utilizes the sinkhole beneath the Home Stands to congregate and reintroduce storm water runoff from throughout the Borough back into the ground. Recently, the Borough has initiated a study, conducted by Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc., to determine the sinkhole capacity to accept storm water runoff and how the storage volume is designed. Amy Story, PE, State College Borough Engineer, is currently awaiting the final version of this report – the preliminary report, entitled *Technical Memorandum – Preliminary, State College Borough, Memorial Field Drainage Report* is attached in the Appendix. Currently throughout the site there are numerous telephone and steel poles that are utilized to convey wires to various uses.

## EMERGENCY ACCESS

The field is accessed by emergency vehicle through a gate at the northeast corner of the field. Emergency vehicles must descend to field level (an elevation change of approximately sixteen feet) via a scored concrete ramp that has a 20% slope and then veers ninety degrees to a level bituminous area for parking just outside the field perimeter fence. As emergency vehicles have increased in size and axle lengths, this entrance has become difficult to maneuver and requires a skilled operator to accomplish this feat. This emergency access point also serves as the main maintenance access point for District equipment as well as Borough vehicles that are used to service and maintain the drains and sinkhole beneath the Home bleachers.

## ADA ACCESSIBILITY

There are no entrances or egress points around the stadium that are fully accessible. The West Nittany Avenue entrance to the Administration Building does provide ADA compliant ramps to access the first floor. However, once on this floor, there are no restroom facilities nor elevators or ramps to gain entrance to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and/or the basement level. None of the ticket centers are available for handicapped persons and accessible seating is essentially non-existent.

As previously mentioned in the Entrances/Circulation Routes section, the third entrance on the Home Side allows spectators with disabilities to enter the stadium and either position a wheelchair atop a set of steps or gain closer access to the home bleacher.

Accessible restrooms are not provided and the facility does not provide those with physical disabilities to have equal opportunity for participation in activities. There is no accessible route to the field level for disabled persons to participate in athletic events.

## ARTIFICIAL TURF

The replacement of the natural turf surface with an artificial SofSport Playing Surface by Hummer Sports Turf in 2003 allowed for the facility to be utilized more frequently by more athletic teams than ever before. The field has markings for the following events:

- Football
- Soccer
- Lacrosse
- Field Hockey

The field is used for junior high, junior varsity, and varsity events as well as limited middle school and community events. The artificial surface has an estimated total life expectancy of approximately 8-10 years. The District has and expects to continue to follow all manufacturer's recommendations and guidelines for field maintenance.

During installation of the Sofsport Playing Surface, Hummer Sports Turf ceased operations as an artificial turf installer; as such, any warranty issues or repairs to this field will require the contracting of a third-party to make such repairs.

#### LIGHTING

The field lighting and electrical service were replaced in 2005. The lighting scheme is sufficient for any upgrades that may be required, although some adjustments may be required depending upon future enhancements to the stadium venue. The lighting is mounted on metal poles that were replaced as part of the upgrade.

The new electrical service was located in the existing electrical rooms that are located beneath the stands on each side of the field. With the ongoing flooding concerns associated with the complex and the low elevation at which these rooms are sited, a potential hazard exists during flooding to these two rooms. Current water level markings that have been placed by District staff and electricians who installed the electrical panels indicate that these panels have experienced flood levels that would overtake their existing heights. Because of the space constraints that exist in these rooms, the panels were installed at the highest level possible which appears to be too low to prevent flooding of this equipment from reoccurring.

#### FENCING/HANDRAILS

Fencing throughout the facility varies in quality, materials and condition. The street frontage portions (Fraser Street and West Nittany Avenue sides) of fencing are wrought iron and have been maintained by periodic painting in a black color. Many posts that are connected to the concrete and stone retaining walls have fasteners that have disintegrated. Portions are twisting due to the roll and push of the retaining walls to which they are attached. Rust is prevalent throughout and is causing blistering of the multiple paint applications.

Throughout the remainder of the facility chain-link fencing has been used in various heights and for various purposes. Portions of fencing have been used as traffic control and access control while other areas use mesh to eliminate safety hazards along pre-existing handrails that are either too low to comply with code changes, or eliminate opportunity for pass through between rails. The Central Parklet edge of the field has a 6' high green, vinyl-coated mesh mounted to galvanized metal posts. The back side of the facility and the majority of chain-link mesh throughout the venue utilize galvanized (silver) chain-link fabric. Depending upon the location, this galvanized material has been mounted to steel posts that are painted black, silver or green or mounted to structural supports that are green. There is a lack of consistency between materials as many of these meshes have been added over the years as safety concerns have arisen. Additionally, as part of safety concerns, additional handrails have been added that do not match or complement surrounding materials. Handrails also consist of green, black and silver painted steel as well as aluminum handrails.



## LANDSCAPING

Landscaping on the property is limited, partially due to space constraints and in part to maintenance issues. The large embankments to each of the field have been planted at times throughout the history of the field – in their current state they have been left to their own volition where crown vetch, turf grass and an assortment of weeds predominate.

Several areas have large trees, up to 50' high, growing in planting areas between retaining walls. Many of the trees have grown to the point where maintenance of the field has become an issue with leaves, needles, seed pods and cones littering the field and storm inlets surrounding the venue. Street trees along West Nittany Avenue contribute to the view of the Fairmount Avenue Building. There are no street trees along Fraser Street.

The trees at the corner of Memorial Field and Central Parklet along Fraser Street are beginning to push on the retaining wall in this corner. Several large trees have been removed in recent years along this side of the field while upgrades to Central Parklet have made the view from this location into the stadium quite pleasing. There are some large existing trees at the parking lot at the back side of the Administration Building but other than some maintained lawn areas, there is insignificant landscaping in this location. Surrounding the Administration Building there are some yews, viburnum and English ivy and a flowering dogwood.

## RETAINING WALLS

The retaining walls are as much a part of the venue as the field itself. While it is difficult to assess the condition of retaining walls made of natural stone, there are several observations that were made during site visits.

The original stone walls have been repaired over the years by repointing of the mortar in various locations throughout the facility. Because these walls utilized large stones up to 24"+ in depth, it is difficult to repoint all but the surface of the stones. In areas where inspection is possible, the majority of interior mortar appears to have deteriorated to the point where it is consistent with sand. Many areas appear to be held together only by the weight of the stone and the forces of gravity. Several areas are showing extreme lateral pressure and are beginning to push or roll. Other areas that have been repointed appear to be in reasonably good condition while some areas show significant deterioration.

The retaining wall at the rear of the visitors side stands is built with cast-in-place concrete. This wall shows significant deterioration as it is beginning to push on the bleachers and move and roll towards the field.

With the installation of the artificial turf field, several large sections of original stone retaining wall were replaced with cast-in-place concrete walls faced with a 4" thick veneer of cut limestone capped with precast concrete coping.

### STORAGE FACILITIES

Storage in the Memorial Field facility is provided in an open-air area beneath the Home stands. The shed-type metal roof and the fencing and retaining wall beneath the stands allows for a secure area to store maintenance equipment for the District as well as fertilizer, seed, field infill, sand, etc. There is also a small storage shed at field level at the base of the ramp that is used for various storage purposes. The Administration Building, while offering several storage closets/rooms, currently provides little or no storage for the stadium.

### BUILDINGS AND OTHER STRUCTURES

The Administration Building was constructed in 1924. It is a two story masonry building equipped with a walk-out basement. The total square footage of the building is approximately 15,000 square feet.

Constructed of stone and brick masonry, the building still has the original single-pane wood frame windows. These windows are in poor condition and should be replaced. The roof consists of a built-up roofing system and shingles that were installed in 1986. Many of the interior finishes are original and in need of repair or replacement including doors, paneling, plaster, tile, and carpeting.

Mechanical systems are outdated and are nearing the end of their useful lives having been last updated in 1965. Indoor air quality is considered poor and the current system is lacking compared to current code standards.

The Plumbing systems are outdated and present functional concerns. Restrooms are available only in the basement; 50/50 solder was typical during the period of construction and could result in lead contamination of the building's water system. A water softener does not exist and the sewage ejection pumps serving the building should be replaced. The building is not sprinkled.

The Electrical Service enters the building via overhead service. The main distribution and service entrance were upgraded in 1995 to accommodate technological requirements. There is no emergency generator present. The PA system, sound system and lighting systems are outdated and in most cases do not fully comply with current standards and codes. The data system is a more recent fit-out that is surface mounted and exposed and/or stapled to walls and ceilings. The building does not currently have a lightning protection system.