

Garden Street School

This Was Then . . .



What Could it Be Now?

A Study on Adaptive Reuse

HUDSON VALLEY

PATTERN FOR PROGRESS

Garden Street School

Brewster Central School District

... an Adaptive Reuse ...

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Section 1: Introduction

In August 2012, the Village of Brewster commissioned Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress to analyze and provide several options for the potential adaptive reuse of the Garden Street School. The analysis also included the collection of existing reports and documents associated with the school. Additionally, there were site visits conducted with three potential developers. Various representatives and staff from both the Village of Brewster and Brewster Central School District assisted Pattern researchers during the site visits and were available for questions. It is critical to mention the site visits conducted by the developers to date were conducted for exploratory concepts and idea gathering purposes only. The developers have not gained or obtained any privileged information, insight or knowledge that will provide them with any advantage during a formal request for proposal, if conducted by the school.



The Garden Street School (GSS) was constructed in 1925 with additions in 1939. The Brewster Central School District (BCSD) received a Building Condition Survey conducted by KGD Architects for all the school facilities. Based upon the results of this study, the Board of Education accepted the report and determined a Long Range Planning Task Force be formed to make formal recommendations regarding the future of the facilities with a special emphasis on the Garden Street School (GSS). Pursuant to an analysis of available information it was determined that the school building be closed based upon the following elements:

1. The welfare of the students and staff of the BCSD
2. The community's ability to financially support the BCSD
3. The age, condition and size of the facilities in the BCSD
4. Enrollment trends, both past and projected
5. Input from a broad range of stakeholders and expert opinions, where deemed advisable

In June 2012, the Garden Street School was closed.

Adaptive Reuse

In order to further explore this project, it is critically important for the individuals and groups reviewing this document to have a clear and full understanding of Adaptive Reuse. The Garden Street School building and grounds lends itself to an Adaptive Reuse based upon the existing conditions and current status of the facilities.

Adaptive Reuse refers to a process of changing the prior use of a building to a new use while keeping a majority of the buildings architectural integrity and historic features intact. When the original use of a structure changes or is no longer required, as with older buildings from the industrial revolution, architects have the opportunity to change the primary function of the structure, while retaining some of the existing architectural details that make the building unique. In local communities, unused schools, industrial building or hospitals have been adapted for reuse as housing, centers of arts and culture, retail stores or offices. Adaptive Reuse, when used in terms of school building, is also known as “repurposing”.

Older downtown’s and areas where community anchor buildings are located, like Brewster, need Adaptive Reuse projects to help revitalize their communities. The adaptive reuse of the GSS project allows a community to keep its character while providing new business and/or residential opportunities for the citizens of that community. The careful rehabilitation of a building, along with a good return on investment, is key for a successful project. It is a sensitive process where a group of interested parties will come together to work on a project. Often, the result is a win-win for all groups involved. The Garden Street School represents an incredible opportunity for an Adaptive Reuse project.

There are many benefits to an adaptive reuse, which can be successfully implemented in rural, suburban, and urban areas. There may be savings in retrofitting vs. new construction, depending on the age of the building and its condition. The existing structure is already in place, which saves the cost of excavation, foundation, footings, and erection of the structural system.

The Adaptive Reuse of the GSS may also aid in the preservation of the Village of Brewster’s heritage and history. Depending upon the ultimate use of the building and grounds, there may be opportunities to secure Federal, state and/or local funding, if available. The location of GSS is ideal for creating an anchor project that can be a catalyst for the revitalization of the Main Street, connection to the train/mass transit system and enhancing the possibilities of building a walkable community. The Adaptive Reuse of the school also opens the possibilities of creating new jobs and economic development opportunities or the creation of either market rate or workforce housing. The building and grounds also lends itself to the “repurposing” as an educational center and commercial development for the performing arts, theater and film. The project may also result in a mixed use and combine elements of any or perhaps all of the concepts.

However, there are impediments and barriers to development and implementation:

- Initial community and neighborhood opposition to a change such as mixed use, mixed income housing or a project that may result in an appearance of competition to the Main Street may cause delays in the project's implementation
- Environmental concerns with issues related to hazardous materials like lead paint and asbestos
- Building code and accessibility issues along with replacing or changing mechanical systems may be cost prohibitive
- Zoning laws or ordinance may prohibit the proposed use—requiring a use variance or other type of special zoning

Section 2: Demographics and Statistics

The demographics have drastically changed in the Village of Brewster over the past 10 years, according to Census 2000 and Census 2010. The Village has witnessed a dramatic increase in the Hispanic and Latino population and changes in the number of housing units and use.

The Hispanic and Latino population has increased by 92.8% from 2000 to 2010, while the Non Hispanic and Latino population decreased by 28.3%. Today, the Hispanic and Latino population represents 56% of the total village population.

The village observed a 9.1% increase in the number of housing units during the last decade. There was a 22 unit increase in the number of occupied units and an increase of 58 vacant units. Simultaneously, the number of renter-occupied units increased by 5.7% and owner-occupied decreased by 6.73%. A healthy community is defined, in part, as having a homeownership rate of 66%. The village has a home ownership rate of 22.5% as of Census 2010. The average household size has increased in both owner and renter-occupied housing units.

TABLE 1:					
Category	Census 2000	% of total	Census 2010	% of total	% change 2000 to 2010
Population	2162		2390		+10.54%
Non Hispanic	1468	67.9%	1052	44%	-28.33%
Hispanic or Latino	694	32.1%	1338	56%	+92.79%
Total Housing Units	881		961		+9.1%
Occupied	840	95.3%	862	89.7%	+2.62%
Vacant	41	4.7%	99	10.3%	+141.46%
Owner-Occupied	208	24.8%	194	22.5%	-6.73%
Renter-Occupied	632	75.2%	668	77.5%	+5.7%
Average HH Size (Owner)	2.65		2.77		4.52%
Average HH Size (Renter)	2.48		2.72		9.67%

Census Data and Population Projections

The following chart represents the Census data on population broken down by age cohort. The chart also includes the projections of population by age cohort, according to the Cornell University Program on Applied Demographics. It is important to be cognizant of these projections for purposes of long term planning. The projections indicate that Putnam County is aging at a very rapid pace. In fact, from 2010 to 2040, Putnam County will see an increase of 7,193 persons age 65 and over, which is an increase of 51.75%. According to these projections, Putnam County is also losing its' younger generation. The age cohorts of 5 to 14 and 15 to 24 will see a decline of 5.16% and 10.06%, respectfully. The projected student enrollment for Brewster Schools shows a decline over the next 7 years. The total enrollment for the 2010 school year was 3,421 and the projections indicate the enrollment will decline by 358 (10.46%) students by 2019.

TABLE 2:							
CENSUS DATA				CORNELL POPULATION PROJECTIONS			
Age Cohort	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	% change 2010 to 2040
0 to 4	6,478	6,621	5,108	5,228	5,276	5,173	1.27%
5 to 14	11,582	14,747	13,847	12,575	13,184	13,132	-5.16%
15 to 24	11,328	10,010	11,982	11,081	10,539	10,777	-10.06%
25 to 44	29,739	30,733	24,147	26,560	27,392	26,689	10.53%
45 to 64	17,239	24,487	32,209	31,330	28,967	30,224	-6.16%
65+	8,319	10,197	13,899	17,094	20,828	21,092	51.75%
TOTAL	83,941	95,745	99,710	102,471	104,507	104,816	5.12%

Real Estate and Rental Data

Like many counties throughout the Hudson Valley Region, Putnam has suffered a decline in the median sales price of single family and condo sales. At the height of the real estate boom the median sales price in 2006 was \$410,000. From 2009 through 2011, the 3rd quarter median sales price of single family home was flat and then dropped by 3.9% in 2012. The condo sales show no apparent trends, however, the price has declined by 25.2% since the 3rd quarter of 2011 and the number of sales has also declined. Inventory of both single family and condo has steadily declined. The historically low interest rates and low home prices are not significant enough to affectively increase consumer confidence to drive the real estate market higher. Additionally, increased scrutiny and strict underwriting criteria exercised by lending institutions have put a damper on sales. The lack of job growth and concerns of job security have also negatively affected the real estate market. Anecdotally, it would appear, on a micro level, the number of sales and pricing is more robust in areas where public and mass transportation is available, and communities are walkable and include amenities such as retail, cultural activities, entertainment and places for social gathering.

Table 3: Putnam County – 3rd Quarter 2012

	Median Sales Price			
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Single Family	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$317,000
Condo	\$215,000	\$179,500	\$224,000	\$167,500

	Number of Sales				Listing Inventory			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
Single Family	159	132	145	191	894	964	937	841
Condo	27	10	15	16	141	122	131	104
Total	186	142	160	207	1035	1086	1068	945
		-23.7%	12.7%	29.4%		4.9%	-1.7%	-11.5%

As indicated in Table 1, according to the Census 2000 and Census 2010, an extremely high percentage of the Village’s housing stock is rental (77.5%) as opposed to owner occupied (22.5%). A majority of the rental properties in the village are privately owned. However, there are some affordable housing units that have been constructed or rehabilitated with federal and state capital subsidies. Additionally, rental subsidy programs are utilized by some of the residents. A survey of existing non-subsidized rental units indicated a very low vacancy rate (<5%) and typical monthly rents in the following ranges for each size unit:

- Studio: \$850 to \$950
- 1 BR: \$775 to \$975
- 2 BR: \$950 to \$1,750
- 3 BR: \$1,500 to \$2,200

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually publishes maximum income limits and rents, which are associated with affordable rental housing projects and programs. The most widely used rental housing subsidy is known as the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which is tenant based, not project based. Under this program, HUD assists the family with a rent subsidy that is paid to the landlord, but is “portable” with the family. There are other rental assistance programs that are associated with a building, which are known as project based. The table below provides information on the various income levels for Putnam County.

Table 4: FY 2013 Area Median Income Limits						
% of Area Median Income	Family Size					
	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person
30% Very, very Low Income	\$22,150	\$25,300	\$28,450	\$31,600	\$34,150	\$36,700
50% Very Low Income	\$36,900	\$42,200	\$47,450	\$52,700	\$56,950	\$61,150
80% Low Income	\$48,100	\$55,000	\$61,850	\$68,700	\$74,200	\$79,700
100% Median	\$73,800	\$84,400	\$94,900	\$104,400	\$113,900	\$122,300

It is critical to point out that not all subsidized units fall under these specific rents or annual incomes, but they are the most typical. The following table details the maximum amount of rent (FMR's) under the HUD Housing Choice Voucher Program. There are a number of HUD programs, which all carry specific guidelines for maximum rents.

Table 5: Fair Market Rents				
OBR	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
\$1,191	\$1,243	\$1,474	\$1,895	\$2,124

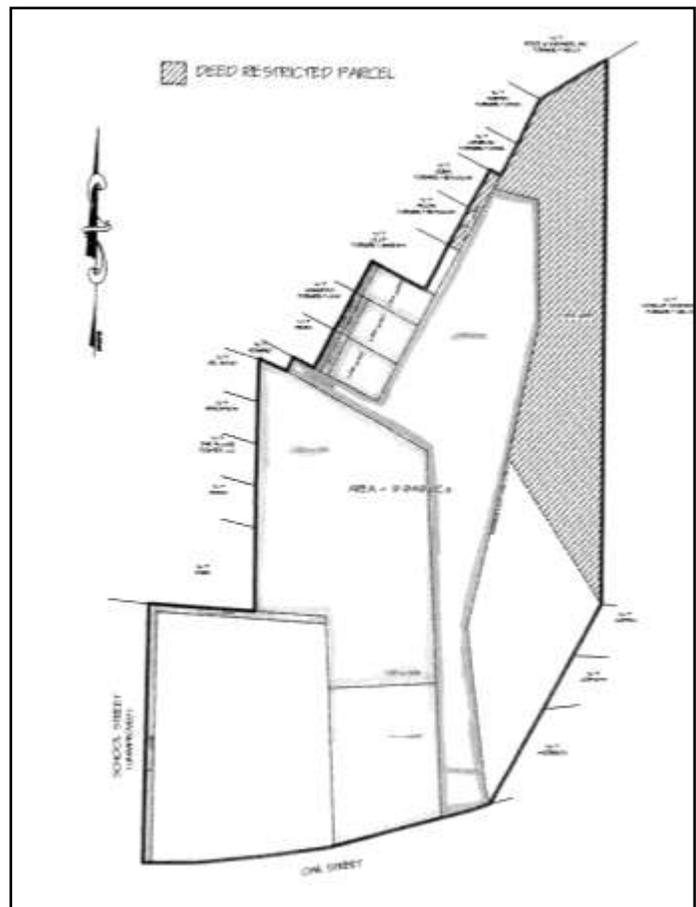
Section 3: Challenges

As discussed in the Introduction of this report, there are barriers and impediments with an adaptive reuse project. There are many challenges specifically associated with the adaptive reuse of the GSS building and grounds. The following narrative will address the deed restrictions, environmental and building components, zoning and financial concerns.

Deed Restriction:

Based upon the review of the deeds and the survey of property provided by the Brewster Central School District, a deed restriction exists on part of the school land (Appendix 1). The parcels of land associated with the deed restrictions appear to be located at the northern tip and northeastern side of the property. As a matter of background, there were 15 legal parcels that have been assembled throughout the years that now encompass the entire GSS property.

The deeds recorded specifically on two of the original parcels have very specific language associated with the use of the land, maintenance of fencing and maintenance of the natural grade and topography in relationship to the athletic fields. The larger 1.63 acre parcel may only be used for school purposes and may not be conveyed separately from the GSS property. The smaller parcel (~120'x15') must be used for school park and playground purposes. The restrictions also include specific language that prohibits the building of structures on the property.



There are legal ways to remove or lift deed restrictions from a property, which must be further explored by either the school district or the end user/developer if the land in question is utilized for other purposes. In order to remove or lift the restrictions, the Board of Education would need to find all heirs to the property and gain their consent. This report does not recommend or offer any legal advice or opinion on the removal of a deed restriction.

Environmental And Building Components:

The Brewster Central School District commissioned a number of inspections for the GSS, specifically, a Building Conditions Survey and an Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) inspection. These inspections were completed by professional architects and environmental firms.

There were AHERA field inspections conducted in February, March and April of 2010 by the Louis Berger Group, Inc. Based upon these inspections, the school was found to contain friable Asbestos Containing Building Materials (ACBM), non-friable ACBM and/or suspect materials assumed to be ACBM, which is fully documented and submitted in the AHERA Inspection Report and Management Plan submitted to the Brewster Central School District on July 20, 2010.

In 2010, KG & D Architects completed a series of inspections required and mandated under NYS Education Law to be completed every 5 years. The inspection is conducted under the assumption that the building will remain in use as a public school and must meet Uniform Code and Public School Building Inspections, Safety Rating and Monitoring. The items addressed in this report may or may not be relevant depending upon the ultimate end use of the building. However, the building systems, components and environmental concerns must all be addressed and mitigated. As a result of the inspections, the following items were found to be in need of work and contributed to the overall building condition rating of unsatisfactory, which were due to the age of the building:

- Electrical Infrastructure - distribution panel in basement is original; problematic for access & servicing
- Water & Heating Water Distribution - Piping throughout building is beyond its expected useful life
- Hot Water Generation – Existing domestic water system is beyond its useful life
- Ventilation – The building was designed with a central ventilation system which was abandoned to address subsequent fire codes and does not currently possess operable mechanical ventilation
- HVAC Control System – existing system is beyond its expected useful life

Other Identified Needs included:

- ADA Accessibility - The building does not meet current SED standards for an ADA accessible route to all major program spaces
- Smoke Zones – Several open stairs do not meet current SED standards for corridor and stair separation
- Safety Glazing - Upgrades to interior safety glazing from wire glass

The Brewster Central School District completed the following projects since 2005:

- Emergency call boxes added near playing fields
- Energy Grant Work
- Fire alarm upgrades
- Boiler replacement

The existing floor plans are attached in Appendix 2.

Financial

The analysis for the adaptive re-use of the Garden Street School also includes a calculation of the amount of taxes that would be charged on the building and grounds, if not tax exempt. The property is currently tax exempt; however, in a letter dated February 1, 2013 from school board counsel to the Village of Brewster, "As long as the District owns the property it will remain tax-exempt regardless of whether the Board demonstrates that the building and grounds are being used under an exempt purpose. Section 408 of the Real Property Tax Law states that "all real property owned by a school district...shall be exempt from taxation"." The current 2012 Assessment is \$3,470,000 for 20 Garden Street and the adjacent parcel, 22 Garden Street, is assessed at \$655,000. The following are estimates based on the existing assessment and current rates. The current tax rates per \$1,000 of assessed value for the Fire, Town, County, School and Village would result in an annual tax liability for each taxing district detailed in the table below. The property would have an estimated annual total tax bill of \$148,170, which is \$12,347.50 per month.

Table 6: Assessment and Taxes						
Taxing District	Rate/\$1,000 of assessed value	20 Garden St.		22 Garden St.		Total Combined Tax
		# of 1,000's	Annual Tax	# of 1,000's	Annual Tax	
Fire	\$0.46	3470	\$1,596.20	655	\$301.30	\$1,897.50
Town	\$1.70	3470	\$5,899.00	655	\$1,113.50	\$7,012.50
County	\$2.71	3470	\$9,403.70	655	\$1,775.05	\$11,178.75
School	\$27.00	3470	\$93,690.00	655	\$17,685.00	\$111,375.00
Village	\$4.05	3470	\$14,053.50	655	\$2,652.75	\$16,706.25
Annual Tax	\$35.92	3470	\$124,642.40	655	\$23,527.60	\$148,170.00
Monthly Cost:			\$10,386.87	+	\$1,960.63	\$12,347.50

The Brewster Central School District is holding debt, portions of which are associated with capital improvements to the Garden Street School. According to the most recent analysis from the Brewster Central School District, there is \$1,687,326.16 of outstanding bonds due.

Additionally, in order for the Garden Street School to remain in good condition and not deteriorate, the building must be maintained. There are monthly expenses associated with this maintenance such as heating, cooling, and security and grounds maintenance – such as snow removal and lawn

care. At this point, the school does not have a cost, since the school was just closed in June 2012, associated with general maintenance, security or repairs that may occur.

The school developed a utility cost schedule associated with the building; however, due to billing cycles, some costs represent consumption in part when the building was occupied.

Table 7A: Utility Costs – occupied

Utility	Dates	Cost	Approximate Monthly Budget - rounded
Sewer	Aug 2011-July 2012	\$6,531.00	12 months @ ~ \$545
Water	Apr 2011-June 2012	\$15,269.98	15 months @ ~ \$1,020
Electric-building	5/4/11-5/2/12	\$36,586.87	12 months @ ~ \$3,050
Electric-Street lights	5/1/11-4/30/12	\$118.00	12 months @ ~ \$10
Natural Gas	5/4/11-5/2/12	\$18,490.06	12 months @ ~ \$1,540
Fuel Oil	7/1/11-6/30/12	\$19,001.40	12 months @ ~ \$1,585
	Total Utility cost	\$95,997.31	Approx. Monthly: \$7,750

Table 7B: Utility Costs – vacant except for the electric and gas

Utility	Dates	Cost	Approximate Monthly Budget - rounded
Sewer	Aug 2012-Jan 2013	\$2,464.00	5 months @ ~ \$495
Water	July - Dec 2012	\$780.09	6 months @ ~ \$130
Electric-building *	5/3/12-12/4/12	\$4,556.74	7 months @ ~ \$650
Electric-Street lights *	5/1/12-11/30/12	\$49.97	7 months @ ~ \$7
Natural Gas *	5/3/12-12/4/12	\$2,593.19	7 months @ ~ \$370
Fuel Oil	7/1/12-present	\$0.00	\$0
	Total Utility Cost	\$10,443.99	Approx. Monthly: \$1,652

* two months occupied and 5 months vacant

The monthly utility costs for each line item was extrapolated based upon the costs incurred during the time period as described in the “Dates” column. For example, sewer charges in Table 7A were incurred over a 12 month period, thereby resulting in a monthly cost of approximately \$545, while occupied. For purposes of establishing a monthly utility cost for the building as vacant we are projecting the costs to be approximately \$2,500, which takes into account the service fees for the utilities to be connected and keeping the heat at an acceptable level to deter any maintenance issues as a result of the cold weather.

Therefore, the district may spend an estimated \$30,000 on an annual basis for utilities alone. Additionally, if the tax exemption is lost, the school district will incur another \$12,350 per month, as detailed in Table 6. Again, these costs DO NOT include snow removal, grounds maintenance, security or repairs. The cost of insuring the property was not included in these calculations, which only adds to the overall expenses to carry the building. The longer the school building and grounds

remain vacant, regardless of the continued maintenance; the building's condition will slowly deteriorate over time, thereby increasing the overall cost to the district.

Funding Resources

Funding for Adaptive Reuse is predicated upon the end use of the building and the ownership structure. Some funding sources offer incentives, grants or low cost financing if the property is owned, not leased; however, long term leases may be an exception. Adaptive Reuse of schools has often attracted funding when the building is used specifically for low to moderate income housing. Certain funding is only offered to not for profit developers and end users. Depending upon the costs, especially when factoring in environmental issues and acquisition costs; deep grant subsidies, tax incentive programs and low interest loans are necessary in order to make a project economically feasible. Green Building and Sustainable Designs represent enormous benefits to an adaptive reuse for which there are incentives and grants as well.

The state and federal government have a variety of funding sources that are utilized for projects of this nature and magnitude and are typically for housing. The state issues requests for funding through the Unified Funding Application and the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) on an annual basis in addition to some individual program requests for funding. Many of these grant and incentive programs are administered through the New York State Office for Homes and Community Renewal (HCR).

There are other state agencies that may be utilized for housing and other community development projects through the CFA process. As part of the Governor's Regional Economic Development Council initiative, the CFA is an easy-to-use online application for accessing state resources currently available from multiple New York State agencies and authorities. In 2012, there were twelve State agencies that made funding available through the CFA process, including: Empire State Development Corporation; NYS Canal Corporation; Energy Research and Development Authority; Environmental Facilities Corporation; Homes and Community Renewal; New York Power Authority; Department of Labor; Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Department of State; Department of Environmental Conservation; Department of Agriculture and Markets; and Council on the Arts. Application materials can be accessed through www.nyworks.ny.gov. The CFA timeline is different each year. In 2012, for instance, the CFA round opened in early May and was due in mid July. The 2013 CFA round has not been announced as of the date of this report; however, it may be announced at any time.

It is recommended that the Village examine the opportunities associated within the 2013 CFA for the GSS adaptive reuse project. In order to best position the project – it is further recommended the RFP process be initiated immediately.

The energy efficiency, sustainable designs and green building grants and incentives are typically offered through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). Once a developer is selected for the project and the final use is determined, the funding resources are

typically applied for by the entity that owns or controls the property; however, in some cases the local municipality may be the applicant.

Disposition or Lease of an Asset

The Brewster Central School District came to a decision to close the Garden Street School by the close of the school year, June 2012. The district does not have a predetermined end use or alternate use of the school building and grounds. The school district must adhere to the regulations and laws of the New York State Department of Education regarding the disposition or leasing of the buildings and grounds. Based upon a letter dated February 1, 2013 from school board counsel to the Village of Brewster, "Because the District is organized as a central school district, a sale would be subject to a permissive referendum under Section 1804[6][c] of the New York Education Law. In order for a vote of the residents to take place, at least ten percent (10%) of the qualified voters of the District must present a petition to the Board requesting a vote no later than thirty (30) days after the Board votes to approve the sale. The lease of the unneeded school property is governed by Section 403-A of the Education Law. Please see Appendix 3 for excerpts to provide some guidance, but does NOT represent the entire process and/or procedure, nor is this an interpretation of the laws and regulations governing either disposing of or leasing the school building and grounds. Appendix 3 contains excerpts from New York State Education Law § 402 Sale of Former Schoolhouse or Site, § 403-A Leasing of School Buildings and Facilities and Section 1804[6][c] Board of Education; election; powers and duties.

Existing Zoning

The property is currently zoned as R-20 [Amended 12-2-2009 by L.L. No. 4-2009]. The permitted uses are detailed in the following excerpt from the Village of Brewster Zoning Code. The property is adjacent to a residential single family neighborhood zoned as Single Family and the parcel to the east is zoned as Conservation. To the south of the property is an area zoned as Business 3. The Village has indicated a strong willingness to work in conjunction with the school district and the developer with zoning changes and a potential variance.

§ 263-7. R20 District (Residential)

- A. Allowed uses. Within any R20 District, no building, structure, lot or land shall be used for any purpose other than the following and their normal and customary accessory uses, except as provided in Subsections B and C:
 - (1) Single-family dwellings, either detached, semidetached or attached.
 - (2) Cluster.
- B. Allowed accessory uses. Within any R20 District, the following accessory uses shall be allowed:
 - (1) Private garages or private parking areas providing a minimum of two parking spaces pursuant to § 263-18.

- (2) Home occupation/professional offices.
- C. Special exception uses. Within any R20 District there are no special exception uses.
- D. Height. No building or other structure shall exceed a height of 35 feet or 2 1/2 stories plus basement, whichever is less.
- E. Lot and yard requirements. Within any R20 District, no building or structure shall be erected nor any lot or land area developed unless in conformity with the following requirements:

Requirement	Measurement
Minimum lot area	20,000 square feet
Minimum lot width	100 feet
Maximum lot coverage	15%
Open space requirement	5,000 square feet per dwelling unit
Minimum yards:	
Front depth	25 feet
One side width	20 feet
Both sides total width	40 feet
Side yard abutting a street on corner lot, width	25 feet
Rear depth	40 feet

- F. Floor area ratio (FAR). Within the R20 District, the floor area ratio shall not exceed 0.10.
- G. Density. If detached single-family dwelling units are constructed, they shall not exceed a density permitted by the lot and yard requirements of this section. If the units are attached single-family units, the density shall not exceed 2.5 dwelling units per acre. This additional density is permitted to encourage the clustering of town homes in this zone.
- H. Signs. Signs shall conform to the requirements of Chapter 199 of the Code of the Village of Brewster.

Section 4: Local Ideas

The local media has published news articles in the Southeast Brewster Patch. The following is a compendium of local ideas that were received through the media, email and blogs:

- *Will the building be sold for the financial benefit of the school district or will it be rented out?*
- *What about a community center for our kids? We need some evening activities that are free or low cost, keep them out of the Danbury mall!*
- *Remember that it's zoned R20. R20 is residential use. Garden Street School, is a preexisting, non conforming use of the parcel as "education."*
- *In my hometown an old school like this was renovated into low-income apartments for the elderly. I think this would be perfect for Garden Street, too.*
- *Senior housing or a senior center that offers lunch and daily activities Brewster/Southeast does not offer anything for our seniors. They should look into what towns like Pleasantville offer. Pleasantville's program offers hot lunches M-F with activities from approximately 10-3 such as exercise classes, crafts*

and Movies. I believe its funded partially or totally by NYS. It would also be a great place to volunteer in our community.

- *Putnam County Office for the Aging has a lunch program in Carmel. There is free transportation for seniors who need it. Yesterday I drove by shortly after lunch and saw more than a dozen people enjoying the fresh air playing Bocce Ball, Shuffle Board or just sitting in the Gazebo. I think a duplication of programs would be a waste. However, I believe more affordable housing for seniors is need. I hear it is next to impossible to get an apartment at the Marvin Avenue apartment complex.*
- *I was thinking rental art studio space, the way I have seen done around New England with old factories and mill properties. But then I read the senior apartment idea and that sounded good too.*
- *It should be continue education that offers classes.*
- *It must be something education based in order for the property to retain its tax free status.*
- *Let it go on the tax rolls. God knows the Village and town could both use additional income.*
- *Outside of Boston there is an old church that was transformed into condo's. The exterior of the building remained intact but the interior was completely redone and is actually pretty high-end. Maybe providing some higher-cost apartments will help guide the village toward reaching its potential*
- *Crafts Center.*
- *How about "market rate" rental apartments or "upscale" condominium residences? The Village does not need any more low income housing. It would probably be a costly conversion but it would be a great shot in the arm to the Village to put this structure back on the tax rolls.*
- *I agree! Back on the tax rolls.*
- *I think luxury senior housing would be a great idea. Seniors use fewer services (such as schools, garbage pickup, police intervention) but will enhance the community. It's a win-win situation for the Village of Southeast.*
- *I want the land and building to return to the tax base in the Village. I like the idea of high end condos.*
- *Large industrial style loft units with the first fiber connection in Putnam for the horde of young (though not as young as we used to be) technology professionals already living in Brewster/Southeast who mainly telecommute and occasionally use Metro-North into Manhattan. They need faster internet and a large studio workspace. Industrial style would minimize the cost to fix up too.*
- *There are also the large fields behind the school that could be turned into the 'Brewster Mountain Biking Park Extension' of the awesome Putnam bike path.*
- *I would like to see it become apartments or condos. White Plains Battle Hill School became condos years ago...how about a multi use building so that some space could be art studios. The proximity to the village and the train make this a wonderful place for upscale residential/office condos or apartments.*
- *Definitely housing of some type. Careful thought will be needed. Low income or luxury shouldn't be the only options. There is a middle class market in all age groups that is always ignored. The accessibility to the train is great. Also everyone will have parking.*
- *While I agree that condos or high end apartments would be great additions to Brewster, I am not sure what kind of "draw" they would create since the village itself needs so much work. If the building could retain its educational role as a place to house continuing education classes (perhaps art-based), art studios, or audio-visual media studios, it would add to burgeoning art culture in the village (I am thinking of a place like northern Westchester center for the arts). As for the grounds, perhaps they can finally be used for the pool the village (and the town of southeast) so desperately needs.*
- *Why not a startup incubator? Small / Large affordable space for entrepreneurs to gather and interact. Fast connections, accessibility to transportation, etc. You can't ask for a better spot. You might also find money -coming back- into the community.*

- *I'd like to see whatever it is aimed at young professionals. Brewster already has senior and low-income housing and plenty of beautiful single-family homes for the wealthy. It's the up and coming twenty- and thirty-something's who need a place to live and/or work that's affordable and convenient to transportation. I wouldn't mind apartments, condos, studio space, or some combination thereof. Brewster is trying to re-brand itself as an arts town, and young artsy types are often the first to move into places that are, shall we say, a little worse for wear and clean them up.*
- *I think the former school could also make an ideal place for offices. We could use more businesses in Brewster, not more restaurants and retail outlets but real businesses that create high-paying jobs.*
- *As for the grounds, a pool or a community garden would be nice.*
- *YMCA, pool, gym, track, maybe even rooms for rent not sure though. High end rent here in the VOB?? Not sure whose knocking on our doors here, but I'm not sure if high end renters want to be here, I'd love them to move into the area too, but haven't heard the phrase, hey I'm looking to move into those new high end condos in Brewster hmmm, ever. I live here and we love it, but we are unique, like are neighbors. Frankly if nothing happens to it, that's fine with me, love to play ball there and use the playground without getting harassed by the school now.*

In addition to the comments received via blogs and emails, there have been additional phone calls, conversations and other comments received informally that suggest housing for seniors or high end condominiums are very desirable. There were also additional comments that suggested performing arts, film and culture would create a positive impact on the community. Finally, private development resulting in a taxable property is viewed as highly desirable for recurring revenue benefitting the Village, Town, County, special districts and the school district.

Section 5: Recommendations

The adaptive reuse of the Garden Street School represents an incredible opportunity for both the Village and the Brewster Central School District. Prior to providing a set of recommendations and options for the adaptive reuse of the Garden Street School, it is important to understand there is a process the school district must follow. As described earlier in this report, there are state laws that must be adhered to for the disposal of or long term lease of the school. Additionally there are deed restrictions, existing zoning and environmental hurdles to clear. Therefore, it would be in the best interest of the school and the village to work in conjunction and in a collaborative manner to establish the most productive foundation and set of circumstances to insure the project moves expeditiously and intelligently.

The longer the Garden Street School remains vacant and unused, deterioration will begin to show even with regularly scheduled maintenance. Furthermore, as the building and grounds remain unused, there is the strong likelihood the property will become blighted, a public security issue and will continue to be a financial burden to the school district.

Request for Proposal

In addition to this report, we have simultaneously created a sample Request for Proposals (RFP). The process of establishing and following a formal RFP will provide a level and unbiased playing field to draw in developers who are best suited for this project. Prior to issuing the RFP, it is recommended a set of criteria for ranking and rating the responses be established. In reviewing potential development proposals, the following criteria are among those that may be considered:

1. The experience and the financial and organizational capacity of the developer in successfully planning and completing development projects of similar size, scope and with the potential of historic value, on time and within budget.
2. The market and financial feasibility of the project and the ability to secure necessary public and private financing.
3. Project readiness and feasibility of the proposed project schedule.
4. The public benefits that would be provided by the project, including the proposed acquisition or long term lease conditions and the estimated increase in tax base.
5. Overall quality of the submission and adherence to the proposal content requirements.
6. Related previous experience with adaptive reuse projects.
7. The extent to which the historic nature and value of the school would be preserved and enhanced by redevelopment plans.
8. Degree of “green” building techniques and energy efficient construction.

The school district and Village may, in its sole discretion, expand or reduce the criteria upon which it bases its final decisions regarding selection of the development team or developer for this site.

It is also recommended an Adaptive Reuse Review Committee be established, which would include a representative(s) from the following entities:

1. School District Administration
2. School Board
3. School District Bond and Legal Counsel
4. Village Board
5. Zoning Board
6. Planning Board
7. Village Administration
8. Community Representative

The Adaptive Reuse Review Committee would review proposals received through the RFP process. Some or all of the proposers may be requested to present their proposals to the review committee. The review process should occur according to the schedule as described in the attached RFP. The review committee would then make a recommendation as to which proposal and developer best meets the evaluation criteria. The goal should be to have a recommendation before the school district board on or about July 1, 2013. However, this timeline may need to be adjusted, pending the outcome of new funding opportunities through the State as discussed earlier in this report.

Pursuant to the selection of a development proposal the school district board and staff would proceed to negotiate with the selected developer the terms of the proposed acquisition or lease. The school district should reserve the right to reject any or all proposals or parts of proposals, to negotiate modifications of proposals submitted, and to negotiate specific work elements with a proposer into a project of lesser or greater magnitude than described in this RFP or the proposer's reply.

Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) Process

Another key recommendation to expedite the project - the school district, along with the Village, should seriously consider completing a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) to expedite the process and demonstrate a commitment to fast-track this project. Many communities have completed a GEIS for various projects in the past.

Most projects or activities in New York State proposed by a state agency or local government that might have significant environmental impacts require an environmental review in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 617.10(a) of New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regulations. Please see Appendix 4 for more the specific excerpt. SEQRA requires all state and local government agencies to consider environmental impacts equally with social and economic factors during discretionary decision-making. A draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for the adaptive reuse of the Garden Street School should be developed to assess and disclose the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of the project.

SEQRA defines a GEIS as "an entire program or plan having wide application or restricting the range of future alternative policies or projects." The GEIS process begins by assigning a lead agency that is responsible for determining whether a GEIS will be required, and if so, for its preparation and filing. The lead agency for the GSS project should be the Village of Brewster.

After assigning the lead agency, the next step of the GEIS process is for the lead agency to make its determination of significance. The lead agency determines whether the proposed action will, or will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

The next step in the GEIS process is scoping. SEQRA defines scoping as the process by which the lead agency identifies the potentially significant adverse impacts related to the proposed action that are to be addressed in the draft GEIS, including the content and level of detail of the analysis, the range of alternatives, the mitigation measures needed, and the identification of non-relevant issues. Scoping provides the preparers of the GEIS with guidance on matters that must be considered and provides an opportunity for early participation by involved agencies and the public in the review of the proposed action.

The next step is to write a Draft GEIS. The format of a Draft GEIS includes a concise description of the project and environmental setting, and a statement and evaluation of the potential significant adverse environmental impacts, cumulative impacts, alternatives, and mitigation methods. A public comment period is available immediately following the completion of the Draft GEIS. This gives the public an opportunity to review the Draft GEIS and provide comments via email, mail, and/or verbally at public outreach meetings.

The Final GEIS includes responses to comments and any changes in the Draft based on the response to comments or other new information. When the final GEIS is completed, a notice of completion must be prepared, filed and published. Following issuance of the final GEIS, all involved agencies submit their Findings and final decision on the action.

All SEQRA documents and notices, including but not limited to, EAFs, negative declarations, positive declarations, scopes, notices of completion of an EIS, EISs, notices of hearing and findings should be made readily accessible to the public through the Village's website and made available upon request. (Source: Nassau County)

It is paramount to include Walkable Community Design Standards in the redevelopment of the school, which the Village, to its credit, has already incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. Connections to the residential neighborhood, train station and the Main Street District are critical to the success of the project, regardless of the end use. The end use should also be complimentary to the existing businesses on the Main Street. If the school is to be utilized for retail space, it is important not to draw consumers away from the existing businesses, but rather create an attraction for additional pedestrian traffic so as to promote the entire village.

Concepts

The Garden Street School lends itself to a variety of adaptive reuse opportunities. Research has been conducted, information gathered and analysis completed of existing local data, demographics, statistics, environmental issues, deed restrictions, zoning and the responses from the local community. In order to explore concepts and possibilities even further, site visits were conducted

with three potential developers in late summer and early fall of 2012. These site visits resulted in suggestions and ideas of potentially increasing the size of the building by constructing an additional floor, extending the footprint of the building and enclosing the courtyard space. Clearly, these options must be further examined by structural engineers and architects prior to making any decisions.

Regardless of the end use, the property, if possible, should contribute to the local tax base. Currently the property does not contribute to the local taxes, as noted and detailed earlier in this report. The amount of the contribution (tax) depends upon the end use and the ownership structure. In some cases, the taxes are based upon revenue and cash flow derived from the building and in other cases, there is a Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). There are various NYS Real Property Tax Laws that will need to be further examined, again, based upon the end use, ownership structure, financing and cash flow of the project.

According to the *Dictionary of Real Estate Appraisal*, Highest and Best Use may be defined as the reasonably probable and legal use of vacant land or an improved property, which is physically possible, appropriately supported, financially feasible, and that results in the highest end value. The purpose of this report is not to provide the highest end value of the vacant building and grounds, but it is to provide potential concepts for the re-purposing of the property. Therefore we have developed the following compendium of concepts for the Garden Street School.

Regardless of the end use, it is important to ensure Green Building Techniques and Energy Efficiencies are utilized in the adaptive reuse of the building. The project should consider including Geo-thermal heating and cooling, solar panels to offset electric consumption, green roof and the installation of high efficiency windows and doors.

Concept #1: Affordable Senior Housing

The property lends itself to affordable senior housing based upon the existing market, future demands and potential capital resources available for the renovations of the building. Therefore, housing may be the most viable use of the property. The size of the building, including the potential for additional square footage to be gained through construction, allows for a sufficient number of units to be built. Although termed as affordable rental housing for seniors, the project should include a mix of incomes, which would provide a balance of units and be more competitive in the current market.

The design and layout will take advantage of the views, which will aide in the marketability of the units; however, the building, if enlarged, should not interfere with the existing view shed from GSS. The parcels that include deed restrictions would remain as green space, unless determined by the developer to be required for additional units. The property would also be linked directly to the Main Street and Train Station with lighted pedestrian pathways.

The financing for a project of this type is typically layered with a multitude of grants, tax credits and loans. These resources are primarily from the state and have very specific requirements and

deadlines. Additionally, this type of development and the procurement of the necessary financial resources are specialized. Furthermore, the funding is very competitive; therefore, the timely issuance of an RFP and subsequent selection of a qualified developer with a solid track record is critical for the success of the project. The completion of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement would also greatly enhance the chances of success.

A site visit and tour was conducted by two private developers, the Kearney Group and Lettice Construction. This does not indicate any preference toward either of these developers, nor does this provide any type of bias. Rather this was done to highlight any issues with the potential redevelopment of the building.

Concept #2: Film Production Studio and Performing Arts

In the fall of 2012, we were contacted by representatives from Demian Pictures, a motion picture production company. In November, we toured the school with Demian Pictures and were provided with ideas and concepts for their redevelopment plans of the school. The representatives from Demian Pictures were also joined by the owners and operators of the Seven Star School of Performing Arts, a local dance company from Brewster.

The concept and primary use of the building would entail a full service, film production studio. Additionally, the renovations of the building would include space specifically for the Seven Star School of Performing Arts. The classrooms would be renovated into studios, the cafeteria would be used to serve employees and possibly students and the gymnasium/stage would be a multi-purpose area for performance and as a venue for film production and filming. Part of the renovation and build out process would also include the construction of a sound stage where the current playground is located.

The building would be renovated according to green and sustainable design standards to create a LEED certified facility. The project is anticipated to create 50 new jobs and become a catalyst for additional jobs associated with the performing arts. The synergies created from the collaboration between a professional film production studio and a local professional dance studio creates opportunities for new ancillary businesses for the Main Street.

The representatives from Demian Pictures, at the time of the site visit, showed great interest in securing the building under a lease. However, their long term goal is to purchase and renovate the entire structure. The studio would take care of every aspect of the production of a film, which may include, but is not limited to the development of a script, financing, pre-production, managing contracts, post productions facility, screening room, editing rooms, sound stage and a music studio. The concept would include developing a strong relationship with the Brewster School District, which may include the creation of internships and special educational programs to enhance the high school curriculum. It also could allow for other nearby districts to avail themselves of the facilities.

In addition to the developer's concept and ideas, we recommend the developer fully explore the creation of new partnerships with performing arts schools in New York City. Based upon proximity

to New York City and the relationship that already exists with the Seven Star School in Brewster, the performing arts center concept appears to be feasible and should be further explored.

Additional Concepts:

There are many other potential concepts for the Garden Street School. The Village of Brewster, in partnership with the school district, should discuss these concepts internally. The RFP should be distributed to as wide an audience as possible, including a mailing directly to some of the institutions listed below. Additionally, the RFP should be sent to the Putnam County IDA for their input and distribution to potential developers.

Many of the concepts listed below are structured around educational purposes. The building and grounds have always been used for educational purposes, the layout and design of the building supports the use and the use appears to be consistent with the deed restrictions.

The housing concept, as described above, is specific to affordable housing for seniors; however, this property also lends itself to condominiums or high-end, market rate rentals for professionals working in NYC who utilize Metro-North. There may also be a mix of some rental apartments developed for individuals renting space within the building for “work space”.

Again, the proximity to the NYC market and connection via Metro-North position the school very well for an adaptive reuse. There are many uses of this property that may be combined to maximize space, design and uses that are synergistic. For example, if the property is utilized for the performing arts, ancillary businesses may be established within the building. Additionally, due to the proximity of the property to the adjacent rail to trails connection, outdoor activities may add an attractive element to an educational center or to housing. Here are four additional concepts:

1. Creation of a local Charter School or Private Boarding School
2. Satellite campus of a 4-year college institution such as New York University, Fordham, Columbia, Syracuse University or a SUNY extension
3. Establish a satellite campus for the Culinary Institute of America
4. Development of a business incubator for the upper floors and utilizing of the cafeteria for a catering/restaurant training facility
5. Assisted Living Facility