

Brigham Academy Reimagined CDBG Planning Grant Interim Report October 2022



**Bakersfield, VT
September 6, 2022**

Context and goals

In 2021 the Town of Bakersfield applied for and was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$45,000.00. The purpose the grant is to provide funds for planning purposes to assess/evaluate the viability of preservation of the academy building, the potential alternatives for the re-use of Brigham Academy and the economic impacts of preserving and revitalizing Brigham Academy. The grant proposal identified the challenges and goals/desired outcomes of the CDBG planning process. They are as follows:

1. Identify potential uses of the Brigham Academy building through an in-depth Market Study that identifies potential uses of the building, not limited to housing and or community center.
2. Determine “structural” integrity of the Academy Building--Structural Engineering.
3. Determine the Brigham Academy “site” capacity for septic infrastructure--Civil Engineering.
4. Determine the requirements of the *Vermont Department of Historic Preservation (DHP)*, for both Architectural and for Historic Tax Credit purposes--Architectural Historian.
5. Determine architectural/design capacity for preservation and reuse of the building, based on inputs from variety of studies described above—Architect.
6. Identify and strategic partnership to ensure success of the project’s transition from “planning phase” to “implementation phase”.
7. Identify additional funding mechanisms (grants, etc.) to ensure that the project successfully transitions from “planning phase” to “implementation phase”.

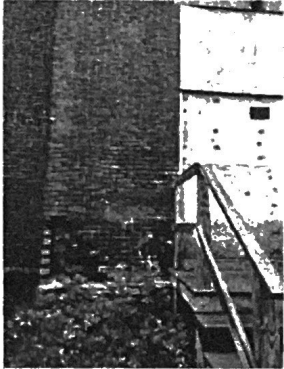
Current State of the Project

The status of the “planning” phase of Reimagining Brigham is as follow:

1. **Market Study: COMPLETED** (Doug Kennedy Associates) Study is available in the Town offices. The conclusions suggest that some portion of Brigham Academy be re-purposed to one and two bedroom apartments. Additional uses may include space for existing Bakersfield Town Library and/or Historical Society, or space for the creation of a Community Center with kitchen and meeting area.
2. **The Structural Engineer: IN-PROCESS** (Jared Waite, Waite & Waite Engineering) Site visit is complete. The final report has not been submitted. The general verbal conclusion is that the structure will need to be reinforced in order to accommodate International Building Code (IBC) requirements for residential and assembly uses. The requirements can be achieved in the “implementation phase”.
3. **The Civil Engineer: COMPLETED** (Trudell Consulting Engineers) Site visit completed, four test pits were dug and an in-depth soils analysis was performed. The report is available. Conclusion is the site capacity is sufficient to support the uses the **Market Study** indicated.
4. **Department of Historic Preservation: ON-GOING** Caitlin Corkins visited the site and indicated verbally that some aspects will need to be preserved for the project to be eligible for Historic Tax Credits. It is the architect’s and Architectural Historian’s assessment that preservation requirements can be achieved while satisfying programmatic elements indicated in the **Market Study**.
5. **Architecture: ON-GOING** (Paul Dreher-Dreher Design) Preliminary design studies/drawings have been developed. The preliminary design documentation supports all of the above finding and conclusion.
6. **Identify Strategic Partnerships: ON-GOING** Currently the Brigham Reimagined Project has partnerships with Northwest Regional Planning Commission, Paul Dreher-Dreher Design, Preservation Trust VT (PVT), Franklin County Industrial Development Corp (FCIDC,) and Vermont Housing Conservation Board (VHCB.)
7. **Identify Funding Mechanisms: ON-GOING** Multiple funding sources have been identified. However, the project team has applied for additional grant funds from VHCB Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) for assistance with “Fund Mapping”.

Additional Concerns

1. **Brigham Academy building degradation:** In general, the building is, at an increasingly rapid pace, falling into disrepair. For example, the façade of the building (brick veneer) is crumbling. Additionally, the wood (structural) frame in various locations is experiencing extreme rot (see photos below.) This must be addressed in the near term.



2. **Ownership structure:** At this point the ultimate ownership structure is unclear, it will be a some variant of a public/private partnership, that needs to be determined and partners identified. To some extent, this concern will be addressed in the "Fund Mapping" exercise; however, it will be an ongoing concern.

Conclusions

The CDBG Planning grant is progressing on schedule, the outcomes are positive and proceeding as described in the CDBG Planning Grant application. The primary outstanding concerns that will need increased attention are the degradation of the building and the ultimate ownership structure.