



To: Greensboro Town Meeting Update  
From: Patrick Shattuck  
Subject: Greensboro Housing Update  
Date: 5 March 2024

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Please find below updates on RuralEdge’s feasibility analysis for new housing opportunities for Greensboro.

When RuralEdge began discussions with Greensboro about this opportunity, we provided a narrative outline of what we anticipated for necessary feasibility work and a development timeline. Much of this was shared at the 2023 Greensboro Town Meeting. RuralEdge has been working with Evernorth, our development partner, for the better part of the last year to investigate, in depth, the feasibility of a new housing development at the site of the current townhall. We have provided periodic updates on our work to the Selectboard and in February presented our findings to the Selectboard.

In this memo, I have included a summary explanation of the level of investigation that has been completed. Following that, I have broken out our original assumptions compared to what we have determined is feasible. In all, RuralEdge and Evernorth have spent about \$35,000 on this assessment.

During the feasibility analysis, we took an in-depth look at the structure, including environmental testing and engaging a design team of engineers, architects, and historic preservation consultants to evaluate the building and plan for its adaptive reuse. Septic design and capacity were significant components of the redevelopment plan. A market study and appraisal for the current structure were procured.

As originally discussed at the 2023 Greensboro Town Meeting, feasibility was expected to take about a year, followed by a year of funding applications, and then a year of construction. Based on our current findings, we are on schedule with this timeline. It is anticipated funding applications would be completed by late 2024 with a goal of starting construction early in 2025. Construction is expected to take one year with occupancy in early 2026. Total development cost is anticipated to be just under \$10 million.

In all, RuralEdge completed an investigation of the existing septic system and evaluated the site for capacity to serve up to 24 residential units and additional community space. This included evaluations of surrounding parcels for wetlands, and coordination with a contracted archaeologist, as the Division for Historic Preservation identified the site and surrounding areas as potentially archaeologically sensitive. Historic Preservation consultant Polly Allen (of Craftsbury) was retained to perform the necessary Historic Preservation reviews and coordinate with the Division.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed which identified the need for a Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment due to the presence of an underground fuel storage tank on the site and the use of the rear lot for recycling which in 2016 had a CFL-related incident reported to the State.

We tested the building for asbestos, lead, and PCBs, and while all were found, levels were found to be manageable and appropriate sums for remediation have been included in the scope of work.

We published two RFPs for architectural services and ultimately received only two responses. We selected Banwell Architects of Lebanon/Quechee. They have diverse experience and we have worked with them previously in Newport on a project that combined historic preservation with new construction. While this development is now 12 years old, it continues to be called out by City officials as “the type of housing they want” and has performed remarkably well.

From Banwell’s design, we engaged Bob Peeters of Peeters Construction Consultants Inc. to provide a cost estimate. Bob has a long history in the construction industry and is a NEK resident. Since he remains actively involved in the family construction business, he is up to date with current pricing and is a great asset to the development team.

Our original assumptions surrounding the school building are stated in the bullets below, followed by the conclusions that resulted from our investigation.

- The current building could be configured into 12-16 units.
- Ample space exists at the rear to construct a connected, accessory building with 6-10 additional units that would complement, but be viewed as separate from the historic school building.

RuralEdge, working with Evernorth and a development team that includes Banwell Architects from Quechee, VT/Lebanon NH, has developed a preliminary schematic design for the schoolhouse that includes 20 units: 8 one-bedroom, 10 two-bedroom and 2 three-bedroom units. Given the historic integrity of the building, we have worked closely with the Division for Historic Preservation to make sure that the proposed plans not only meet their requirements and are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, but also meet high efficiency and sustainability requirements.

- RuralEdge would pursue a mixture of unit configurations aimed at the current and anticipated market in Greensboro, to include accessible and adaptable smaller units suitable for area seniors and those living with disabilities complemented by two and three-bedroom units suitable for couples or families. A variety of income restrictions would serve a diverse resident base.

As stated above, we have included 20 units in total providing a mix of 10 one- and two-bedroom units on the primary level (which is fully accessible) with those units all either accessible or adaptable. Proposed income mixes range from units affordable to households as low as 50% of area median income up to 80% of area median income. Rents would range from \$833-\$1387 including all utilities. This income mix is consistent with entry level positions at area employers and with income brackets identified within the market study. Ultimately, incomes could go as high as about \$75,000 for a family of four. The market study supports this mix and cites both the dramatic increase of more than 100 new jobs created in Greensboro/Craftsbury over the last 8 years as well as the fact that only 13% of those working in Greensboro live in Greensboro.

- A Focus on both historic preservation and energy efficiency would be of paramount importance to the project.

A big challenge in dealing with the historic school is the preservation of the interior tin surfaces. In consultation with the Division for Historic Preservation, it was determined that it would be preferential to minimize the disturbance of interior tin and instead insulate from the exterior, using rockwool insulation and installation of custom milled wooden siding and shakes to match those existing. All trim would be replicated, and windows brought forward onto the new exterior plane with trim reveals to match the existing. The new structure would follow more standard new construction methods and the exterior cladding would utilize hardboard surfaces to minimize ongoing maintenance.

- RuralEdge would create community spaces inside and outside the building, including the opportunity for community gardens.

A primary focus has been on maintaining the public green triangle at the front of the building. This would be landscaped and the paving at the front eliminated. There would be lots of opportunities for raised and accessible garden beds in this area. Too, access to the present school would be maintained at the rear of the site. Common areas will include a community room, multiple laundry rooms, individual storage rooms, public restrooms and an office for property management presence and the coordination of services including SASH.

A part of the investigation included looking at the former Grange Hall for the potential reuse as a new town office. While not impossible, and we made sure to plan for septic capacity in our investigation, the limitations of that building for any sort of public use potentially make that building's renovation for public offices cost prohibitive.

As a result, we have not included any housing in the lower level of the current townhall building and have acknowledged that we believe the current space occupied by the town offices could be reconfigured, improved and separated from any housing component, allowing the town offices to remain there, but eliminate the ongoing cost of owning and maintaining a large, outdated building as part of the town expenses while also adding the property to the tax rolls.

- RuralEdge would provide services onsite, including SASH (Support and Services at Home) available to elderly and disabled residents of both the building and the larger community.

This has been planned for: an onsite office for service coordination has been included in the design.

- The redevelopment would convert a tax-exempt property to the tax base; all RuralEdge properties pay property taxes.

Proformas anticipate an annual tax contribution of more than \$20,000 for this building.



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