



Friday 20 August 2020

Project Number 202547

Town Hall: Project Narrative



Background Scope:

After responding to a Request for Proposal in April of this year, Cornerstone Architectural Group was engaged to perform analytical and design services for Mendham Township. The scope pertained to addressing the current state of Town Hall, and the means to incorporate the programmatic needs of the adjacent Police Department.

Cornerstone met with the mayor and her team to outline the intention of a two-part assessment and feasibility study:

Part I:

Document the existing conditions of Town Hall

Provide a **Property Conditions Assessment Report** - The team was directed to evaluate the premises in accordance with current building code, life safety, and ADA accessibility - flagging building deficiencies, material failure, infrastructure replacement, and other professional recommendations.

Establish a **Budget** - provide a cost estimate breaking down each item as identified in the property conditions assessment report.

Part II:

Design and Test Fit the integration of the Police Department into Town Hall.



Historical Significance

A report created by the CRCG (Cultural Resources Consulting Group) dated 15 October 2008 identifies the historical significance of Town Hall located at 2 West Main Street in Brookside. The investigation included:

- A review of the Brookside Historical District National Register Nomination
- A review of the Historic Preservation Plan element of Mendham Township's Master Plan
- Site specific research pertaining to the subject building and preliminary evaluation of significance
- A review of planning/feasibility studies pertaining to the Mendham Township Municipal Complex

A summary of that document is outlined here:

Brookside is a historic district with "well-preserved domestic architecture," recognized at the State and National level for "numerous single-family dwellings, outbuildings, and artifacts to various water-powered industries which existed in the village between 1780 and 1943..."

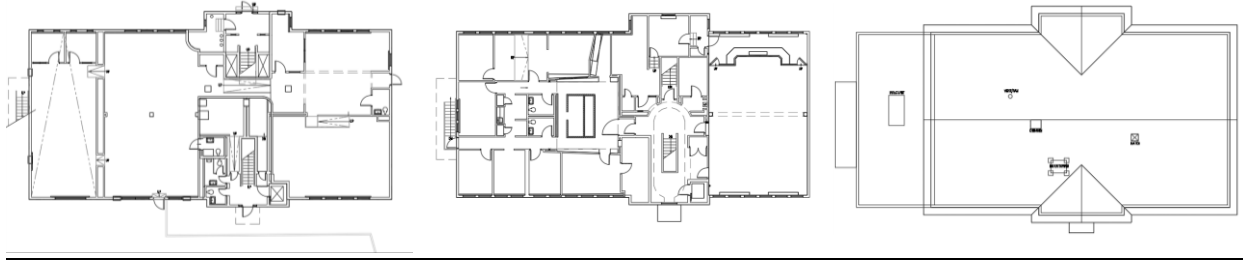
The building in question was constructed to house the Brookside School and opened in September of 1923 (97 years old). It replaced a 1860 Schoolhouse that was subsequently relocated across the street to the southeast corner of West Main Street and Cherry Lane and repurposed as a Community Center.

In 1981 an addition was introduced to the west elevation of the building, expanding the footprint, prior to the building's listing on the New Jersey State and National Register in 1995/1996.

The elements discussed are indeed historic, however they are not consistent with the historic styles celebrated in the district. The building does not fit the description of intended preservation, it is not a single-family dwelling outbuilding, or artifact and there is no discussion of the building in the Historic Preservation Plan indicating that its sole significance lies in its association with the district.

The report states, based upon the research, the building does not appear to contribute to the historical or architectural significance of the district – there is no association with water-powered industry or diversity of 18-20th century domestic architectural styles, but it may be argued that it does contribute to the overall historic development of the Mendham community. The building's exterior largely retains its integrity of original construction but does not appear to exhibit features or elements that would constitute an individual listing from either a historical or architectural standpoint.

It is recommended that the Mendham Township Historic Preservation Committee be solicited for an opinion by the planning board in the review and approval of the proposed changes to any historic resource in the township, though their role is not substantiated by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, especially with regard to the review of municipally owned properties.



Part I:

Existing Conditions and Property Conditions Assessment Report

The building was documented and analyzed, resulting in the identification of the following major deficiencies:

1. The building envelope is failing
 - The building skin shows signs of failure – plaster is bulging, cracking, breaking, and spalling.
 - The roof membrane is failing – tears in EPDM and compromised fiberboard substrate.
 - Windows are single glazed and uninsulated – framing/casing/trim are deteriorating.
 - Soffits, cornices, coping, and flashing at the roofline are damaged – promoting water infiltration.
2. The building infrastructure is reaching a critical threshold of thermal and mechanical deficiency
 - The natural gas boiler in the mechanical room has exceeded its anticipated useful life.
 - Access for removal/installation of infrastructure will be difficult due to clearances/headroom.
 - The first floor has no central air conditioning – window units are residential grade.
 - The second-floor mechanical system utilizes a refrigerant that is no longer in production.

**Note that water infiltration, high humidity, heat, and organic material is a recipe for mold growth.*
3. Liability - Public buildings, set up for township meetings, should be ADA accessible
 - The elevator does not meet ADA requirements.
 - The toilet rooms do not meet ADA requirements.
 - Various floor changes occur within the building exceed the permissible slope or are not ramped.

A property assessment report, was issued by Cornerstone Architectural Group, delivered on Monday 15 June 2020. As a result of this study, the team concluded that the estimated cost for deficiencies to the building, including the major items mentioned above, amounted to **\$2,678,697.48** including contingency, permitting and soft costs.

This budget estimate was strictly for building repairs and reconstruction as necessary to compensate for aging infrastructure and differed maintenance. This budget does not include modification of the existing layout to accommodate a new user such as the police department.



Part II:

The original direction was for Town Hall to be repaired/reconstructed, for the police department to move into the first floor, and for the municipal/administrative offices to remain on the second floor.

Design and Test Fit - Police

Cornerstone Architectural Group met with representatives from the police department to understand the current facility and gather space and personnel requirements/needs.

The current police facility, located across the parking lot from Town Hall, is a converted 1960's split level, residential structure. Departmental needs far exceed the square footage allotment and overflow has pushed into two separate trailers as well as the adjacent fire house. The police do not have suitable facilities to carry out their tasks and cannot continue to function in their current space – as a matter of public safety. Expansion of the existing building is not possible due to flood plain restrictions.

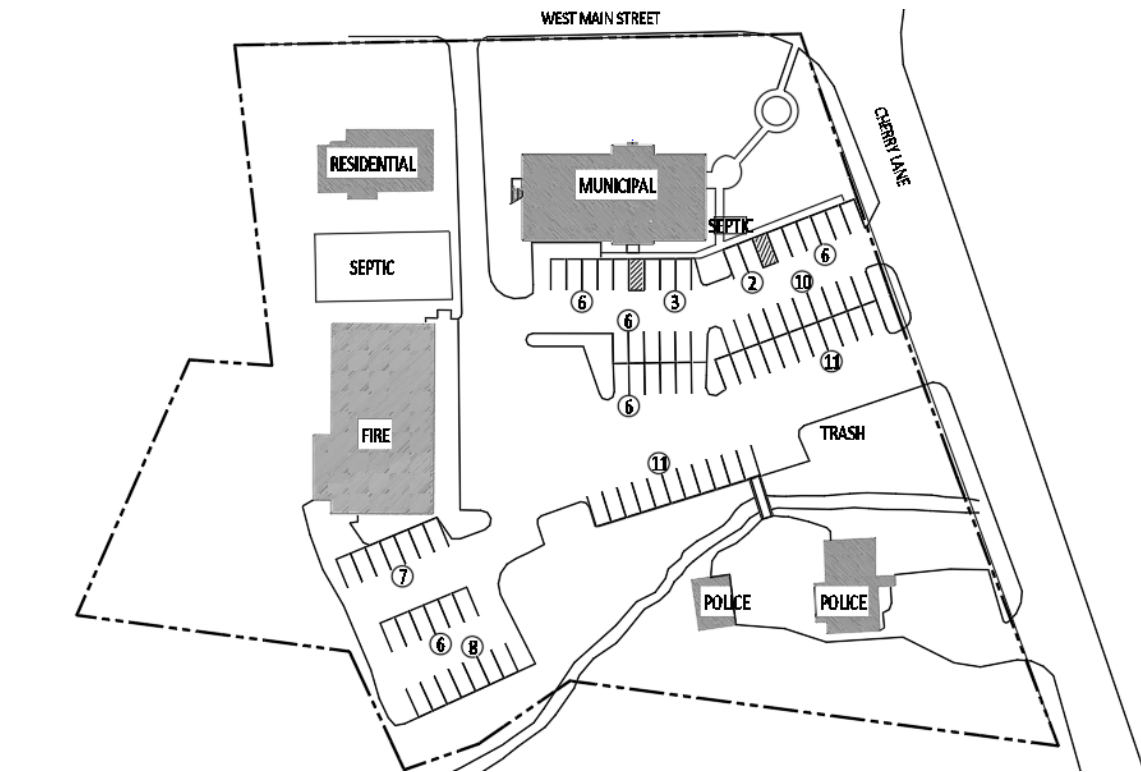
Some of the major deficiencies include:

- Lockers are located across the parking lot in the fire house and do not include shower facilities.
- No female locker rooms are available.
- The existing fire alarm system does not function.
- The evidence room is located in the basement and has flooded in the past.
- Archives are located in an attic crawl space and are difficult to access.
- No public toilet facilities are available.
- Lack of ancillary spaces such as interview rooms, meeting rooms, and training spaces.

If relocated to Town Hall, the police would desire first floor residency for access and logistics – meaning the municipal/administrative offices and meeting room could remain on the second floor but the library on the lower level would need to vacate the premises. A new location would need to be established to house the library.



A series of scenarios have been depicted to address the design and test fit of the township needs.



Base Case Scenario:

The existing Town Hall is repaired/reconstructed based upon the cost analysis provided by Cornerstone. A new library would be constructed on the adjacent residential property (owned by the town) – pad site. The police occupy the first floor of Town Hall with minimal impact on stairs/elevator/Infrastructure. The Municipal/Administrative Offices continue to occupy the second floor of Town Hall as it exists today.

- ✓ The building could remain.
- ✓ The building would maintain its historic significance and be rejuvenated.
- ✓ The existing parking would remain.
- ✓ Septic system would remain.
- The library would be isolated from the main parking lot – high demand for prime parking spaces.
- The library would be isolated from the Brookside Community Club/overflow parking.
- The cost to construct the library would be in addition to any costs associated with this analysis.
- If phased, the police would need to wait for the library facility to be built.
- The police need will not be fully accommodated by the first floor of Town Hall as it exists today.
- The building will continue to struggle with dissimilar floor planes, accessibility, and circulation



Reuse and Expansion

In order to better accommodate the needs of the police department and increase efficiency in the building, a core addition was proposed as part of the repair/reconstruction. The addition would assist in bringing the building up to code, resolve ADA accessibility issues, and connect all parts of the building through new vertical and horizontal circulation paths. The efficiency of the floor plate would allow for accommodation of all the police needs (personnel and spaces) and an improved/expanded layout for the second floor municipal/administrative offices.

Proposed Scenario 'A':

The existing Town Hall is repaired/reconstructed and expanded upon.

A new library is constructed adjacent to the building, on site (presumably on the residential, pad site).

The police occupy the first floor of newly expanded Town Hall - new stairs/elevator/Infrastructure.

The Municipal/Administrative Offices occupy the newly renovated second floor of Town Hall.

- ✓ The building could remain.
- ✓ The existing parking would remain.
- ✓ Septic system would remain.
- ✓ The building would be more efficient with connected floor planes, accessibility, and circulation
- ✓ The police need will be accommodated by the first floor of Town Hall.
- ✓ The project could be phased to allow for incremental cash flow.
- The building would require modification of historic elements but could recreate them.
- The library would be isolated from the main parking lot.
- The library would be isolated from the Brookside Community Club/overflow parking.
- The cost to construct the library would be in addition to any costs associated with this analysis.
- If phased, the police would need to wait for the library facility to be constructed prior to moving.

Cost Analysis

A cost analysis was performed to evaluate this scenario and resulted in a high-level budget of **\$5,382,447.85** including contingency, permitting and soft costs. This lump sum could be broken up into two (or three phases), however the final phase - the police fit out, is estimated at \$3.5m.

This cost estimate includes building repairs/reconstruction, reorganization of building infrastructure, new horizontal and vertical circulation (stair/elevator), an interior gut of both floors, new exterior envelope, new interior layout for both floors, and a \$1m contingency for unforeseen circumstances. This budget does not include the library. These numbers are essentially "New Construction" numbers, despite the fact that it would be a reconstruction project.



Alternative Approach

The overwhelming cost associated with rehabilitation of the existing Town Hall and the inability to house all entities currently inhabiting the site, has led the mayor to redirect the investigation. Cornerstone was asked to simultaneously explore new construction options, and increased scope, that may include the library. When renovation numbers match new construction numbers, a more prudent solution may be to build-to-suit.

New Construction Options:

Cornerstone Architectural Group was tasked with schematic design for a new building that houses the police, library, municipal/administrative, and meeting room requirements. The options look at applying the build-to-suit in various locations across the property with the intention of demolishing the existing building.

Since both the police and library would benefit from a first-floor solution, the direction was to, at least partially, accommodate both with the following criteria:

The police would occupy the west half of the floor plate with +/-5,000 square feet across two floors
The library would occupy the east half of the floor plate with +/-5,000 square feet across two floors
The municipal/administrative offices would occupy +/-3,000 square feet of expanded attic/third floor
The meeting space would occupy +/-700 square feet of expanded attic/third floor

New Construction - Option 1:

Locate a three-story structure on the footprint of the former residential unit.

- ✓ The building could remain until construction was complete, no downtime or temporary space.
- ✓ The existing parking would remain and could be expanded upon.
- ✓ The septic requirements would be shared with the existing fire department septic system.
- ✓ All needs would be accommodated including future growth as it is build-to-suit
- The building would not retain its historic significance.
- The library would be isolated from the main parking lot.
- The library would be isolated from the Brookside Community Club/overflow parking.
- The police would have difficulty with street access/Sally Port – parking/access is one-sided.

This location was undesirable due to vehicular circulation and single-sided access to the building.



New Construction - Option 2:

Locate a three-story structure in front of the existing Town Hall along West Main Street.

- ✓ The building could remain until construction was complete, no downtime or temporary space.
- ✓ The existing parking would remain and could be expanded upon.
- ✓ All needs would be accommodated including future growth as it is build-to-suit
- ✓ The library would continue to utilize the main parking lot
- ✓ The library would remain connected to the Brookside Community Center/overflow parking.
- ✓ The police would have street access for the Sally Port
- The building would not retain its historic significance.
- The site would have no front yard setback – a 3-story obtrusive structure right on the street.
- Construction would be difficult with the existing building directly adjacent.
- A new septic system would need to be established.

This location was undesirable due to scale of the building and proximity to West Main Street.

New Construction - Option 3:

Locate a three-story structure at the corner of West Main Street and Cherry Lane.

- ✓ The building could remain until construction was complete, no downtime or temporary space.
- ✓ The existing parking would remain and could be expanded.
- ✓ All needs would be accommodated including future growth as it is build-to-suit
- ✓ The library would continue to utilize the main parking lot
- ✓ The library would remain connected to the Brookside Community Center/overflow parking.
- ✓ The police would have street access for the Sally Port
- ✓ Direct engagement of the Post Office and Brookside Community Center – forming a procession
- The building would not retain its historic significance.
- The site would have no front or side yard setback – a 3-story obtrusive structure on the corner.
- Construction would be difficult with the existing building directly adjacent.
- A new septic system would need to be established.

This location was undesirable due to scale of the building and proximity to West Main/Cherry Lane.



New Construction - Option 4:

Locate a three-story structure perpendicular to the existing building along Cherry Lane.

- ✓ The building could remain until construction was complete, no downtime or temporary space.
- ✓ The existing parking would mostly remain and could be expanded.
- ✓ All needs would be accommodated including future growth as it is build-to-suit
- ✓ The library would continue to utilize the main parking lot
- ✓ The library would remain connected to the Brookside Community Center/overflow parking.
- ✓ The police would have street access for the Sally Port
- The building would not retain its historic significance.
- The site would have no front yard setback – a 3-story obtrusive structure on a secondary street.
- Construction would be difficult with the existing building directly adjacent.
- A new septic system would need to be established.

This location was undesirable due to scale of the building and proximity to Cherry Lane

– A secondary road for a primary facility.

New Construction - Option 5:

Locate a three-story structure behind the existing building, within the current parking lot.

- ✓ The building could remain until construction was complete, no downtime or temporary space.
- ✓ All needs would be accommodated including future growth as it is build-to-suit.
- ✓ The library could utilize an entrance off West Main Street and create parking in the front yard.
- ✓ The library would remain connected to the Brookside Community Center/overflow parking.
- ✓ The police would have street access, a private/rear entrance and parking behind the building
- ✓ The site would have a large front yard setback – a 3-story structure would not be obtrusive.
- The building would not retain its historic significance.
- Construction would be difficult with the existing building directly adjacent.
- A new location for the septic system may be needed.
- The existing parking would need to be reconfigured and expanded.
- The new building would be constructed directly in front of the fire department.

This location seemed to have merit for a phased move, appropriate setting for the building's scale, and both vehicular and pedestrian circulation.



New Construction - Option 6:

Locate a three-story structure in place of the existing building.

- ✓ All needs would be accommodated including future growth as it is build-to-suit.
- ✓ The parking could remain as is.
- ✓ The library would remain connected to the Brookside Community Center/overflow parking.
- ✓ The site would have a large front yard setback – a 3-story structure would not be obtrusive.
- ✓ The existing septic system could remain.
- ✓ The police would have street access for the Sally Port
- The building would not retain its historic significance.
- The building would be demolished prior to new construction – Occupants would work remotely
- The library would require temporary swing space during construction.

This location seemed to have merit as an appropriate setting for the building's scale and sight lines. Modifications to the site could accommodate vehicular and pedestrian circulation, but temporary/swing space would need to be solved logistically.

New Construction - Option 7:

Locate a one/two-story structure in place of the existing building.

- ✓ All needs would be accommodated including future growth as it is build-to-suit.
- ✓ The library would remain connected to the Brookside Community Center/overflow parking.
- ✓ The site would have 50' front and side yard setback.
- ✓ The library would remain connected to the Brookside Community Center/overflow parking.
- ✓ Direct engagement of the Post Office and Brookside Community Center – forming a procession
- ✓ The police would have street access for the Sally Port
- The building would be demolished prior to new construction – Occupants would work remotely
- The library would require temporary space.
- The existing parking would need to be reconfigured and expanded.
- A new location for the septic system may be needed.

This location seemed to have the most merit as an appropriate setting for the building's scale and sight lines. Modifications to the site could accommodate vehicular and pedestrian circulation, but temporary/swing space would need to be solved logistically.



Development of Scenario 5 and 7

After review of scenario 1-7 with the mayor, Cornerstone Architectural Group was directed to develop the following:

New Construction - Option 5

The three-story structure located in the parking lot behind the existing building

This solution allows for a phased move and unveil the new building during demolition of the former.

A preliminary study of this option shows a single building with a shared lobby/core. Floors one and two offer (2) 2,400 square foot tenant spaces; one on each side of each floor. The police would occupy the west units on floors one and two while the library would occupy the east units. The third floor would offer (2) 1,800 square foot units; one of which could be expanded to 2,400 square feet in order to accommodate the municipal/administrative offices and the other reduced to address the need of the meeting room/overflow and storage. The preliminary layout is perhaps oversized to accommodate the varying needs per floor and could be tightened up to reduce size, cost, and improve flexibility.

New Construction - Option 7

The one/two-story structure with the appropriate scale and placement on the site.

This solution is perhaps the correct solution for the site if logistics of the phased move become moot.

A preliminary study of this option shows a single building with a shared lobby/core. A police wing runs parallel to West Main Street and a library wing runs parallel to Cherry Lane. The building engages the corner and since there is a hierarchy to the circulation, asymmetry is appropriate to the building's form, meaning the police wing and library wing need not be equal – this provides a means to tighten up the layout and reduce size, cost, and improve flexibility. Each entity can balance their program with the allocated budget independently. The meeting space occupies the corner of the first floor engaging the public, uniting the building, absorbing the acute angle created by the street, and offers a terminus to the procession of East Main Street. The second floor accommodates the municipal/administrative offices and, again, is not restricted by square footage of the other areas of the building so balancing program and budget would be independent.



Comparison and Feasibility

Base Case – 15,860 square feet of space – Existing Building/New Library Phased Expenditure, Phased Move, Maintains Historical Building Elements.

Repair/Reconstruct the Existing Building - \$2.7m

Incorporate Bare Bones Police Requirements - \$2.4m

Construction New Library - \$2.8m - \$400 (hard) \$558 (all in) per Square Foot x \$5,000

Total estimated cost - \$7.9m - Total Time Frame – 3 years

Hard Construction Cost/Square Foot – \$341 per Square Foot

Hard and Soft Cost – All In \$/Square Foot - \$497 per Square Foot

Scenario 'A' – 17,235 square feet of space – Addition of Vertical Circulation Towers/New Library Phased Expenditure, Phased Move, Does Not Maintain Historical Elements

Repair/Reconstruct/Expand the Existing Building – \$1.7m

Incorporate All Police Requirements – \$3.7m

Design/Construct New Library - \$2.8m - \$400 (hard) \$558 (all in) per Square Foot x \$5,000 – 1 year

Total estimated cost - \$8.2m - Total Time Frame – 3 years

Hard Construction Cost/Square Foot – \$328 per Square Foot

Hard and Soft Cost – All In \$/Square Foot - \$474 per Square Foot

New Const. - 15,200 square feet of space

Single Project, Temp Space/Logistics, Does Not Maintain Historical Elements

New Construction for Police, Municipal/Admin, and Library

Includes Demolition, Site, Septic

Total estimated cost - \$8.2m - Total Time Frame – 1 year

Hard Construction Cost/Square Foot – \$412 per Square Foot

Hard and Soft Cost – All In \$/Square Foot - \$575 per Square Foot

**All Options Exclude Furniture, Temp/Swing Space, and Moving of People/Assets*

20% Contingency for Existing Building Work - 10% Contingency on New Construction Work

****State Level Library Grant Opportunity**

The New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act plans to reopen with a second round of acceptances for funding applications in the fourth quarter of 2020. As such, Mendham may be eligible to fund up to half of the costs associated with eligible library upgrades, renovations, and/or new construction.



Another Look at Scenario 'A' – Value Engineering

Cornerstone Architectural Group was asked to re-examine Scenario 'A' - the reconstruction and expansion of the existing building, reconfiguring the stairs, elevator, and infrastructure, along with the construction of a new library. The library could be constructed on the existing residential property (pad site) or potentially adjacent to the existing building, in the parking lot, parallel to Cherry Lane, to more closely resemble New Construction Option #7. Cornerstone was tasked with value engineering the project down to a more palatable \$6 million budget, with the understanding that there will be trade-offs from the assumptions used to price the project thus far.

The existing septic system in the front yard of Town Hall will need to be studied by a third party to verify capacity and condition for the modified load. As such, the septic system has been deemed outside the scope of work for the estimated budget at this time.

The window for State grant applications is scheduled to open shortly, offering the opportunity to offset as much as 50% of construction costs associated with library renovation or construction projects. Though the grant is not guaranteed, should Mendham be awarded funds from the state, the relief would offset a substantial burden of library portion of the proposed budget.

The value engineering budget assessment was in progress at the time of this final report, verification of the cost and associated trade-offs will follow but the proposed site plans are reflected below:

