



EPA's Brownfields Success in New England

• Land and Community Revitalization •



SOUTH BERWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY, SOUTH BERWICK, MAINE

PROPERTY DETAILS

Address: 29 Young Street South Berwick, ME 03908
Size: 2.10 acres
Former Use: Former St. Michael's Church
Contaminants: Asbestos, lead-based paint, universal hazardous wastes, mold
Current Use: Municipal library
Owner: Town of South Berwick

PARTNERS

Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC);
 Maine Department of Environmental Protection (ME DEP);
 Town of South Berwick; Friends of South Berwick Public Library

Motivation for Redevelopment: Located on the southern New Hampshire border, the town of South Berwick, Maine has transformed a former church into their new public library. Though the town has had a library since 1878, they never found a permanent home for their collections until now. This central location, which is adjacent to an elementary school and in the heart of the town's downtown district, was a perfect fit.

Additionally, the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC) saw this project as inspirational for other small towns looking to revitalize their downtown centers and incite community involvement. While the SMRPC normally funds mill-type properties for brownfields revitalization, this project presented a unique opportunity to attract investment and deter sprawl, ultimately making improvements extending beyond the site's remediation.

Property History: Based upon available historical information, the site was first used as agricultural land prior to 1887. Between 1887 and 2008, the Roman Catholic Church served the town in this location. In 2008, the Church moved to a new spot and left the site vacant. The rectory was moved to a nearby parcel and will serve as housing potentially. Site investigation found that the church building, rectory, and garage were originally constructed with asbestos-containing siding. During the time of vacancy, the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system (HVAC) was turned off which resulted in significant mold growth. Additionally, all painted interior and exterior surfaces contained lead paint. Mercury-containing fluorescent light tubes and thermostat switches, PCB-laden ballasts, and batteries containing heavy metals, were found throughout the three buildings.

Project Results: A portion of EPA's revolving loan fund (RLF) award to SMRPC in 2007 turned into a subgrant of \$200,000 to the Friends of South Berwick Public Library for cleanup activities. All asbestos-containing waste, lead-containing paint, universal waste, and mold-impacted materials were removed and disposed properly. All other building materials were cleaned and coated with anti-fungal primer.

FUNDING DETAILS

Assessment and Cleanup
SMRPC Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund
Cleanup Subgrant: \$200,000
SMRPC Brownfields Assessment Grant: \$32,416
Town of South Berwick: \$77,318
Building Addition and Renovation
Friends of South Berwick Public Library
Capitol Campaign: \$1,000,000
Town of South Berwick: \$2,051,061
Additional Leveraging
Rectory: \$300,000
Pre-project consultation: \$41,641
Parcel sale (senior housing complex): \$286,000
Salmon Falls Nursery in-kind landscaping: \$13,750
Hall Roofing: \$3,400

HIGHLIGHTS

- A geothermal system will lessen the Library's reliance on fossil fuels and electricity for heating and cooling.
- Supported an estimated 14 full-time positions and received nearly \$59,000 in in-kind donations.

For this nearly \$3.75 million project, the Town contributed nearly \$2.1 million to the project. The Friends of South Berwick Public Library rallied the community to raise nearly \$1 million to make the site redevelopment a reality. The project itself generated an unprecedented amount of community support and in-kind donations for the Town. For example, the entry doors were constructed by a local craftsman and all of the landscaping was donated and installed by a local landscaper.

Along with renovating the Church's Great Hall, an addition was built and opened to the public in the spring of 2012. Even with just the use of this space so far, the Library is already regularly frequented by townsfolk and is engaging in outreach with the school next door. Additionally, part of the parcel was sold for affordable senior housing and it is hoped that someday the abutting storefronts will be able to open their back doors to connect to the library, which will make for a more walk-able community. When completed, the new South Berwick Public Library will undoubtedly become a locus of community activity, draw even more residents to the downtown, and increase the Town's attractiveness to potential new residents and businesses.

TIMELINE

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| Apr. 2009 | Phase I site assessment completed |
| June 2009 | Hazardous Materials Inventory completed |
| Mar. 2010 | Phase II site assessment completed |
| July 2010 | Cleanup planning |
| Aug. 2010 | Phase I site assessment updated |
| Dec. 2010 | Cleanup activities complete on site |
| Feb. 2012 | Cleanup certified complete by ME DEP |
| Mar. 2012 | 1800 sq. ft addition opened |
| Sept. 2012 | Grand opening (projected) |