



PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF AN HISTORIC BUILDING

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP

THE RICHBORO SCHOOL

JANUARY, 2009

INTRODUCTION

One-room schoolhouses throughout Bucks County embody the significance of education in Pennsylvania history. These often humble buildings provided a unique environment for the growth of young minds and communities. Many of these older buildings are no longer used but have continued life as museums, educational centers and private homes.



**Richboro School (circa 1980)
[Pre-Move]**

The Richboro School is an historic structure that embodies the evolution of education from one-room schoolhouses to magnet high schools that now seem so commonplace in our society. As such, it deserves life in the future as an asset, which enhances the Township's rich history and the building's service as an educational institution. It is an historic building to be treasured by both Northampton Township and Bucks County residents alike. It has been identified as worthy of consideration for National recognition.

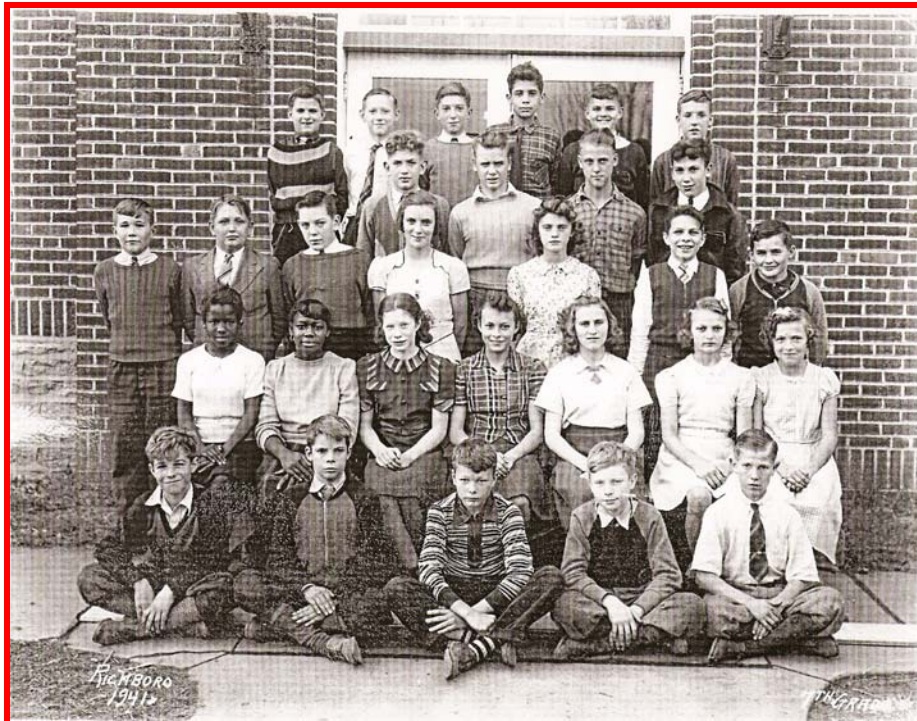
The Richboro School, built in 1913 on Second Street Pike, was known as Northampton High School. Its birth was the result of consolidating education for students from all schools throughout the 26-square miles of Northampton Township. It is important to note that this is the *first consolidated school* in all of Bucks County.

The view to the right shows the Richboro School in its original location. The upper left hand portion of the aerial shows the now-demolished series of additions made to the Richboro School as demands on the school grew. This configuration of the school site existed until 2000.



The relocation of the Richboro School (lower right) moved the school to the rear grassy area (2+/- acres) in the upper right-hand portion of the photo.

Commerce Bank's (TD's) newest offices in Northampton Township sit where the Richboro School is shown in the above photo. Second Street Pike runs in front of the building in the lower left-hand portion.



Richboro School 7th Grade Class - 1941

In 1914, the first class of 6 graduated from this three-year high school. Graduating classes ranged from 4 to 12 students in the 1920s. By 1942, there were 15 graduates and a staff of 9 teachers. The largest class ever to graduate from Richboro was in 1943 with 28 students.

ROAD TO HISTORIC RECOGNITION

Of course, with the growth of Northampton Township, additional schools were erected. The Richboro School housed its last classes in 1988. The property was sold by Council Rock School District and has changed hands several times, but never has been developed for active use.



The most recent owner was the development corporation of Commerce Bank. In 2002, the structure was moved from its original location on the site to further back on the same site to allow for continued commercial development along Second Street Pike. Commerce Bank committed to saving the stone structure; and, in concert with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), the school was raised from its foundation in preparation for the move and completed its journey successfully. The Bank created a new

daylight basement for the structure, repaired and repointed the stone, reroofed the structure, repaired the cupola, replaced all of the windows and doors to meet building codes, installed all utilities from the road to the building, landscaped, added steps and a ramp entry, exterior lighting (gas light configuration), and installed a needed retention basin adjacent to the school.





The Northampton Township Historical Society has been instrumental in working toward the historic recognition of the building. It secured the assistance of the Heritage Conservancy in preparing an application to PHMC. The building has been accepted and is considered eligible for the Federal Register of Historic Buildings.

Title of this historic building has been transferred and has been placed in the hands of Northampton Township which is offering the property sale,. They have chosen the Bucks County Redevelopment Authority to act as agent for the sale, and offers include commercial usage. The building is surrounded by 2 acres, a large portion of which is the retention basin. Sixty (60) parking spaces are available at the school.

ENTER THE FRIENDS OF HISTORIC RICHBORO SCHOOL

- Historic Reuse and Revitalization

The Friends seek to have this historic asset continue in its roles of education and public use. The Friends believe the School will become a jewel in the revitalization of the downtown Richboro. Developed as a showcase for exhibits, speakers, meetings, and programming designed to engage young and old alike, it can provide a cultural and historical backdrop for the burgeoning numbers of residents in the Township.

- The Plan

- Ownership/control

The Friends of Historic Richboro School proposes, as a minimum a lease/purchase, but preferably outright purchase.

The Children's Cultural Center, a nonprofit, will be the prime tenant and responsible for carrying out rehabilitation, rental to other tenants, management and use of the interior of the building in an appropriate manner for the site and the Township.

- Preparation of an Interior Restoration Plan

Secure a technical assistance grant from PHMC for a specialist to prepare an interior restoration plan (incorporate today's codes and safety features).



- This architectural study will detail the scope of work needed to restore the interior of the building and make it habitable including HVAC, stairway from first floor to second floor collapsed when relocated (needs to be installed), new steps from basement to first floor. Among the considerations are geothermal wells, solar light and hot water.
- Upon completion of the interior restoration plan, the Friends intend to recruit an architect/engineer to draw up plans and specifications for review and approval by PHMC. A preliminary cost estimate will also be prepared.
- If required by PHMC, a Memorandum of Agreement between PHMC and the Friends will be developed.
- Working with the Township and other regulatory bodies, permits will be obtained.
- Restoration of interior of building will be undertaken and completed under the supervision of the architect/engineer.
- Appropriate Township inspections (fire, electric, etc.) will take place.
- A Use and Occupancy Permit will be obtained.
- The building will be furnished.
- Appropriate tenants (office space) specifically nonprofit organizations and space users will sign contracts. Rentals of office space and meeting rooms by the public and other organizations will be used to defray building operating expenses.

- Historic Yet Functional

In its relocated state, the building contains 4,000 square feet of usable. The building has been vacant since 1989 and has suffered significant vandalism. Nevertheless, the Friends have chosen to make the building functional *and* historical as possible. Each of the four (4) first-floor classrooms and the principal's office on the second floor will be historically renovated. The Northampton Historical Society will have a permanent home in one of the first floor rooms; another will be utilized as a computer lab for uses such as an alternative to suspension program open to Council Rock Students, and a homework lab to include special needs and ESL students.

The double sized first-floor classroom will also be used for rotating exhibits. The second floor space will be populated by the offices of the Children's Cultural Center.

Even in its original configuration, the basement had been modernized to include restroom facilities and a gym. To make this a functional building (meeting codes), the entire *new* daylight basement will be divided into a meeting room; generic artist studio (for individual use and/or classes; a generic music studio which might also be rented as a recording studio; office space, kitchen area, restrooms and needed storage and mechanical room space.

- Historic Yet Keeping Up With Technology

Hidden among the restored walls will be the latest technology for electrification, communication, safety, plumbing, heating and air conditioning.

With the advice and consent of PHMC, the building will be adapted to use solar or other cutting edge technology to have the building operate as a "green" building.

In keeping with ADA requirements, an externally situated elevator will be installed to allow ease of access and to permit the school to be a tourist attraction for Township residents and those who are historically minded. This installation will be in the rear of the building. NOTE: current handicapped access ramp appears to be non-conforming to current laws; this will be replaced by an authorized version which will provide entry to the rear of the building.



- Existing Support:
 - Northampton Township Historical Society
 - Children's Cultural Center
 - Council Rock School District
 - Bucks County Commissioners
 - Pennsylvania State Legislators
 - Congressman Murphy
 - Richboro School Graduates
 - Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission

TOTAL BUDGET ESTIMATE HISTORIC RICHBORO SCHOOL			
Line Item	Narrative		Totals
Land and Building	Purchase of Land and Building from Northampton Township	\$550,000.00	
	<i>TOTAL ACQUISITION</i>		\$550,000.00
Environmental Assessment *	Study of building for possible environmental problems and determination of remediation activities if necessary.	100,000.00	
	TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT		100,000.00
Renovations *	Interior:		
	Replace heating system	50,000.00	
	Add Air Conditioning	70,000.00	
	Replace plumbing throughout	50,000.00	
	Install 5 restrooms (handicapped accessible)	125,000.00	
	Rewire electric and install interior lighting	150,000.00	
	Restore/replace floors	100,000.00	
	Repair and paint interior walls	75,000.00	
	Install code-compliant electrical system	100,000.00	
	Wire for telephone/internet/cable	60,000.00	
	Install Security System	20,000.00	
	Install two stair wells (first to second floor and basement to first floor)	75,000.00	
	Install external elevator	500,000.00	
	Divide daylight basement into a meeting room, artist & music studios office space, kitchen area, restrooms and needed storage and mechanical room space.	140,000.00	
	Historically renovate each of the four (4) first-floor classrooms and the principal's office on the second floor	125,000.00	
Environmental Cleanup *		315,000.00	
	<i>Sub-Total Renovations</i>	1,955,000.00	
Engineering *	Architectural and engineering services (15% of renovations)	293,250.00	
	<i>TOTAL RENOVATIONS</i>		2,248,250.00
Salaries & Fringe Benefits *	Administrative Oversight	35,000.00	
Audit	Required audit	10,000.00	
	Sub-Total Administrative/Audit		45,000.00
	SUB-TOTAL PROJECT COSTS		\$2,868,250.00
Contingencies	10% of Project Cost		286,825.00
	TOTAL PROJECT COST		\$3,230,075.00

* The Friends of Historic Richboro School and the Children's Cultural Center are committed to seek-out and utilize donated goods and services wherever possible to bring the renovation project budget in under the projected amounts. Offers have already been presented.