Block 3101, Lots 2 & 3

Area in Need of Redevelopment Study

September 30, 2026

Township of Bernards | Somerset County, New Jersey

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Introduction

On October 5, 2021, the Township Committee of the Township of Bernards adopted Resolution 2025-0395 directing the Township Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if the property located at 99 Lord Stirling Road and 25 Sherwood Drive (herein referred to as the "Study Area") constitutes an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" under the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL). The Planning Board subsequently directed Burgis Associates, Inc. at their March 10, 2026, public hearing to prepare the planning analysis contained herein for its review and subsequent recommendation to the Mayor and Council.

As identified in Township Resolution 2025-0395 (See Appendix A), the Study Area consists of two (2) lots which are identified by municipal tax records as Block 3101 Lots 2 and 3. The Study Area encompasses approximately 12 acres and presently contains the former Lord Stirling School on lot 2 and one single-family residence on lot 3.

Resolution 2025-0395 further declares that the preliminary investigation of the Study Area shall be undertaken within the context of a "non-condemnation" redevelopment procedure. That is, if the Study Area or a portion thereof is determined to be an Area in Need of Redevelopment pursuant to the LRHL, it would be designated as a "Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area." Such a designation would authorize the Township to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area, excluding eminent domain.

Accordingly, the following report examines whether the Study Area qualifies as an Area in Need of Redevelopment pursuant to the requirements and criteria set forth by the LRHL. It is based upon an examination of the Study Area's existing development pattern; site inspections; a review of historical data; an assessment of the Study Area's surrounding development pattern; a review of the Township's master plan goals, objectives, policy statements, and land use recommendations; a review of the Study Area's zoning provisions; and an evaluation of the statutory "Area in Need of Redevelopment" criteria.

Ultimately, this report finds that a portion of the Study Area displays characteristics which satisfy three (3) of the redevelopment statutory criteria and consequently justify the designation as a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area.

This study is divided into the following sections:

1. Section 1: LRHL Background

   The first section discusses the background of the LRHL, the redevelopment process, and the statutory criteria for determining whether a site qualifies as an Area in Need of Redevelopment.

2. Section 2: Study Area

   The next section provides an overview of the Study Area. It includes an analysis of its existing land use, development history, and surrounding development pattern.

3. Section 3: Township Master Planning Documents

   Section 3 discusses the relationship between the Township's master planning documents and the Study Area.

4. Section 4: Existing Zoning

   Next, Section 4 discusses the existing zoning of the Study Area.

5. Section 5: Compliance with the Statutory Criteria

   The penultimate section analyzes the Study Area's compliance with the LRHL statutory criteria.

6. Section 6: Planning Conclusions and Recommendations

   Finally, Section 6 offers the study's planning conclusions and recommendations.

Section 1: LRHL Background

In 1992, the New Jersey Legislature enacted a new statute which revised and consolidated the State's various redevelopment statutes. Known as the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL), this new statute rescinded a number of prior redevelopment statutes and replaced them with a single comprehensive statute governing local redevelopment activities throughout the State.

Ultimately, the LRHL was designed by the State Legislature to assist municipalities in the process of redevelopment and rehabilitation. As explained by the Legislature in the preamble to the LRHL:

> *"There exist, have existed and persist in various communities of this State conditions of deterioration in housing, commercial and industrial installations, public services and facilities and other physical components and supports of community life, and improper, or lack of proper development which result from forces which are amenable to correction and amelioration by concerted effort of responsible public bodies, and without this public effort are not likely to be corrected or ameliorated by private effort."*

The LRHL provides the statutory authority for municipalities to engage in a number of redevelopment activities, including: designating an "Area in Need of Redevelopment"; preparing and adopting redevelopment plans; and implementing redevelopment projects. Essentially, the LRHL is a planning and financing tool that allows an area to be overlain with specific zoning and other incentives to stimulate its redevelopment.

More specifically, a redevelopment designation allows a municipality at its discretion to:

1. Adopt a redevelopment plan that will identify the manner in which an area will be developed, including its use and intensity of use;
2. Issue bonds for the purpose of redevelopment;
3. Acquire property through eminent domain;
4. Lease or convey property without having to go through the public bidding process;
5. Collect revenue from a selected developer; and/or
6. Grant tax exemptions and abatements.

1.1: Redevelopment Process

As outlined by the LRHL, the first step of the redevelopment process is for the governing body to direct the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether an area is in need of redevelopment. At the outset of this process, the governing body must also indicate whether it is seeking to designate the area as a "Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area" or a "Condemnation Redevelopment Area." Pursuant to the resolution adopted on November 11, 2025, the Township Committee initiated this process as a "Non-Condemnation" Study Area (see Appendix A).

An area qualifies as being in need of redevelopment if it meets at least one (1) of the eight (8) statutory criteria listed under Section 5 of the LRHL. These criteria, which are described later in this section, are the same regardless of whether a governing body seeks to designate a study area as a "Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area" or a "Condemnation Redevelopment Area."

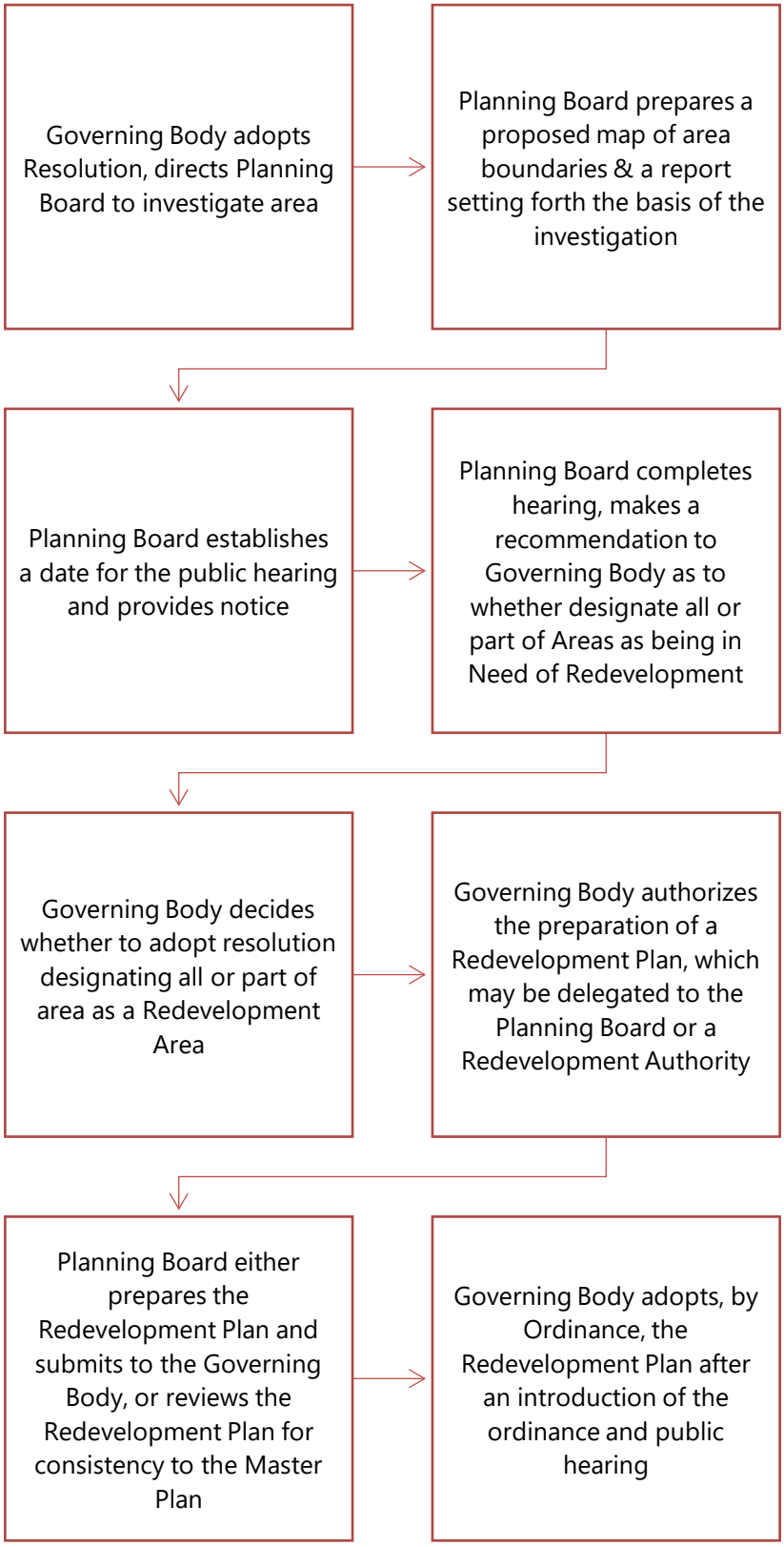
The statute also specifically establishes that a redevelopment area may include lands which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, provided that the inclusion of those lands is necessary for the effective redevelopment of the area.

After it conducts its investigation, the planning board must hold a public hearing on the proposed redevelopment area designation. Based on the planning board's recommendation, the governing body may designate all or a portion of the area as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment." The governing body will then prepare a redevelopment plan for the area, or alternatively will direct the planning board to prepare such a plan.

Following the adoption of the redevelopment plan, the governing body or another public agency/authority designated by the governing body as the "redevelopment entity" will oversee the implementation of the redevelopment plan. This redevelopment entity is responsible for selecting a redeveloper to undertake the redevelopment project which implements the plan.

In summary, the LRHL essentially establishes a two-fold process in which a site is designated as an Area of Need of Redevelopment (Step 1), and a plan is prepared based on that designation (Step 2). The accompanying figure provides a summary of this process, beginning with the adoption of a resolution by the governing body and ending with the preparation and adoption of a redevelopment plan.

Figure 1: Summary of Redevelopment Process



1.2: Area in Need of Redevelopment Statutory Criteria

The LRHL establishes eight (8) statutory criteria to determine if an area qualifies as being in need of redevelopment. The statute provides that a delineated area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if "after investigation, notice and hearing…the governing body of the municipality by resolution concludes that within the delineated area" any one (1) of the eight (8) criteria are present.

The redevelopment criteria are as follows:

1. The "a" Criterion: Deterioration	The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.
2. The "b" Criterion: Abandoned Commercial and Industrial Buildings	The discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenantable.
3. The "c" Criterion: Public and Vacant Land	Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography, or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.
4. The "d" Criterion: Obsolete Layout and Design	Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.

5. The "e" Criterion: Property Ownership and Title Issues	A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general.
6. The "f" Criterion: Fire and Natural Disasters	Areas, in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated.
7. The "g" Criterion: Urban Enterprise Zones	In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Act," the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment
8. The "h" Criterion: Smart Growth Consistency	The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.

In regard to the "h" criterion, there are ten (10) principles of smart growth. These principles are established as follows:

1. Mix of land uses
2. Take advantage of compact design
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choice
4. Create walkable neighborhoods
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Direct development toward existing communities
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

Section 2: Study Area

The following section provides a general overview of the Study Area, including: an analysis of its existing site configuration and development pattern; a brief summary of its development history; and a discussion of its surrounding land uses.

2.1: Study Area Overview

As shown in Map 1 in Appendix B, the Study Area is comprised of two separate lots located in the central / eastern portion of the Township near the municipal boundary with Long Hill Township. It lies within what is categorized as State Planning Area 2 according to the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan which is known as the Suburban Planning Area. The larger of the two lots, Lot 2, encompasses 10.8 acres and has frontage along the south side of Lord Stirling Road. Across Lord Stirling road to the north lies the Somerset County Environmental Center. This lot also has frontage along the west side of Sherwood Drive. The smaller of the two lots, Lot 3, encompasses 1.14 acres and has frontage along the west side of Sherwood Drive. In total, the two lots together have an area of approximately 11.94 acres and is irregular in shape. Elevations on site range from a low of 240 feet above sea level near its southeast corner to 270 feet near its northwest corner.

2.2: Existing Development

The site is presently developed with the former Lord Stirling School on Lot 2 and a single-family residence on Lot 3. The site is approximately 700 feet wide by 820 feet in length.

Ingress and egress to Lot 2 is provided by a driveway which extends from Lord Stirling Road at the site's northern lot line. Lot 2 contains several structures and other improvements which were used by the former school which operated from 1964 to 2020. Improvements include a two and half story main school building, a barn, an inground pool and associated decking and fencing, a climbing wall, an aerial climbing system, three separate sheds, another single-story structure as well as associated paving throughout the property and a masonry & stone wall near the barn.

The main school building has a footprint of approximately 5,500 square feet and was constructed around 1900. This structure is set back approximately 430 feet south of Lord Stirling Road and 230 feet from the western side lot line. The single-story structure located just east of the school building was used as a kitchen for the former school. This structure is approximately 810 square feet. Farther to the east is the barn structure which has a footprint of approximately 2,920 square feet. According to NJMAP, approximately 1.48% of the lot is considered impervious coverage of buildings and 5.73% of the lot is covered by other structures (other structure refers to any man-made, artificial surfaces that resist water infiltration but do not fit into the primary categories of buildings (footprints) or roads (transportation infrastructure).

Lot 3 contains a 2,766 square feet single-family split-level frame dwelling as well as a shed structure in the rear of the property. This parcel has 250 feet of frontage along the west side

of Sherwood Drive. This lot is constrained by freshwater wetlands transition area. According to NJMAP, approximately 4.46% of lot 3 is covered by buildings while approximately 9.98% is covered by other structures and 0.19% is covered by roads (note: "roads" is a distinct mapped feature class representing paved, hard-surfaced vehicular thoroughfares constructed of materials like asphalt and concrete).

There is a 35-foot-wide sanitary sewer easement running along the entire south lot line of the site. Both Lots 2 and 3 are served by New Jersey American Water and the Harrison Brook Sewage Treatment Plant.

Aerial Mapping and environmental constraints mapping are provided in the Appendix.

2.3: Surrounding Land Uses

Surrounding land uses consist of the following. See Map 3 in the Appendix for an existing land use map.

- Single family dwellings to the east and south;
- Multi-family/attached residential to the west;
- The Somerset County Environmental Center to the north.

Section 3: Master Plan

The following section discusses the relationship between the Township's master planning documents and the Study Area.

3.1: Township Master Plan

The most recent Township Master Plan was adopted 2023. Pursuant to the statutory requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), a Master Plan is required to have a number of elements within. The required elements include a land use plan element, a housing element, a stormwater management plan and a number of other optional elements. A Land Use Plan (LUP) essentially depicts the proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial and industrial purposes. The 2023 LUP for the Township emphasizes the objectives of *"protecting neighborhoods and the Township's existing community character, and protecting the natural environment, natural resources and remaining open areas within the Township."* While it does not offer specific recommendations regarding the specific Study Area, the LUP refers to that portion of the Township as *"open/undeveloped character where forests, farm fields, water, riverine habitat and wetlands anchor the landscape."*

Figure II-3 Land Use Plan depicts the study area as within the "residential low density" land use category located directly adjacent to more residential low density to the south, Multifamily to the west, P1 to the north, and Residential Medium Density to the east. P1 refers to land used as public recreation and open space, public parks, roads and other public purpose uses.

As stated earlier, the study area is located within the R-2 Zone. The LUP states that *"the R-1 and R-2 districts provide for residential development at densities of 0.33 and .5 per acre (i.e., one dwelling unit per three acres and one dwelling unit per two acres, respectively)."* This development pattern in these zones seeks to *"protect the established suburban and remaining rural character of the community and reflects a conservation emphasis in the less developed sectors that will better protect natural resources and rural character."*

The LUP summary ends with the following text:

"As new development and redevelopment is evaluated in the future, a clearer focus should be brought to the task of orienting buildings to a site and a neighborhood in ways that promote the use of renewable energy and enhance opportunities for meaningful social and civic interaction and protect neighborhood character."

The most recent Housing Element and Fair Share Plan for the Township was adopted in 2025. One section of this plan discusses the consideration of land within the Township which would be deemed appropriate for the construction of affordable housing. The Township considered various sites from interested developers who approached the Township with prospective inclusionary housing development proposals. The Township considered many variables including suitability as well as environmental factors, traffic and aesthetic impacts

and bonus credit maximization. The study area is mentioned in this plan as one of areas that was considered but was ultimately not chosen to fulfill the Township's affordable housing obligation.

The Township's Circulation Plan discusses the goals and objectives related to the movement of people and goods throughout the Township as well as recommendations for the future of such movement. The plan speaks not only to vehicular movement but also discusses the importance of bicycle and pedestrian circulation. Portions of this plan were developed by the Township's Recreation, Parks, and Pathways (RPP) Committee. As stated in the Circulation Plan Element, this committee helped with the development of Figure V-4 in the appendix of the plan which reflects the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Plan. This particular figure depicts a series of Off-Road Paths and Greenways. The western boundary line of the study area is shown on this figure as a proposed location, or adjacent to a proposed location, for a future Off-Road Path heading south from Lord Stirling Road, looping around Lord Stirling Village to cross South Maple Avenue in order to connect with War Memorial Field Playing Fields and back to the area of Cedar Hill School. The Circulation Plan states that *"particular attention was paid to paths that facilitate school access, close missing links between existing paths, and provide access to Township open space…The RPP has highlighted the need to enhance the paths in the current plan that currently lack public access and improve safe walking and biking with new paths that fill missing links, provide school access, provide open space access, and meet other key community needs."* An analysis of connecting open space areas and their potential to provide recreational benefits is also discussed in the Township's Conservation and Open Space Plan.

The Township's Parks and Recreation Plan includes a number of goals and objectives with emphasis on the protection of open space areas using best management practices to protect and conserve natural resources and critical habitat. Figure VIII-5 displays Critical Habitat Data from New Jersey Landscapes Project. This figure reveals that portions of lot 2 have a Critical Habitat Ranking of 5 which means that forested portions of that lot (western and southern boundaries) are considered a habitat patch with Federal threatened or endangered species present. Relative to the study area, the Parks and Recreation Plan goes on to say "While forest is the most extensive habitat found in Bernards Township, the wetland/forest habitat is the most critical primarily within the floodplain of the Passaic River in Lord Stirling Park" which is the approximately 840-acre property directly across Lord Stirling Road from the study area.

This figure uses NJDEP GIS data related to critical habitats. It should be noted that the NJDEP data presented in this figure is based on the combination of two different data sets. The Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis (CRSSA) at Cook College, Rutgers University, utilized LandSat Thematic Mapper satellite imagery to map land cover for the entire State of New Jersey. Then, CRSSA classified the information into 20 different habitat/land cover types. These cover types were intersected and combined with the Natural Heritage Program's Biological Conservation Database (BCD) which is a geographic information system (GIS) which provides information on the sighting of threatened and endangered species, based on the field work of scientists and sightings reported by members of the public. See appendix for critical habitat mapping.

Section 4: Existing Zoning

The following section discusses the existing zoning applicable to the Study Area.

4.1: R-2 Residential Zone

The Study Area is located in the R-2 Residential Zone which is described below. See Map 4 in Appendix B for a study area zoning map. § 21-10.4 identifies the permitted and conditional uses of the residential zones in the Township (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6 and R-7). These zones are designed primarily for residential use. The following uses are permitted in these zones.

Table 1: R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6 and R-7 Zones Permitted and Conditional Uses

Permitted Uses	Conditional Uses
1. Residential uses. 2. Public or private golf course and the clubhouse and buildings. 3. Farming, agriculture and horticulture. 4. Public parks, roads and other public purpose uses. 5. Home offices. 6. Family day-care homes, in accordance with the requirements for single-family dwellings.	1. Raising or keeping of livestock. 2. Home offices. 3. Public utilities. 4. Cemeteries. 5. Apartment within a single-family residence 6. In the R-2 Zone only, continuing care retirement community 7. Houses of worship and/or houses of worship with clergyman's residence on the same premises 8. Public and private schools

The following bulk standards are established for the R-2 District. The density, lot area and type of residential development permitted in the R-1 through R-7 Zones shall be in accordance with Tables 401 and 501 in the Land Development Code. In short, the zone requires a minimum lot area of two (2) acres to create one dwelling.

Table 2: R-2 Zone Bulk Standards

Requirements	R-2 District
Min. Lot Area (ac)	2
Min. Lot Width (ft)	250
Min. Frontage	125
Min. Front Yard (ft)	100
Min. Side Yard: One (ft)	50
Min. Side Yard: Both (ft)	100
Min. Rear Yard (ft)	100
Min. Improvable Lot Area	22,000
Max. Improvement Cov. (%)	15
Max. Height. (st/ft)	2.5/35

It should be noted that this density within the R-2 District is adjusted for physical/ environmental constraints. Specifically, the study area is subject to maximum permitted lot yield standards. This essentially means that before any subdivision and development can take place within this zone, portions of a property that are constrained are deducted. Constrained portions are those which are encumbered by things such as: wetlands and wetlands transition areas, floodplains, riparian zones, land under water, existing easements and restrictive covenants, road and utility rights-of-way, steep natural slopes and certain other development limitations. Those areas are deducted from the lot area, with some slope categories receiving partial rather than full deductions. The resulting "net tract area" is then divided by the applicable zoning district's minimum lot size to establish the maximum potential lot yield.

Similarly, the study area is also subject to minimum improvable lot area standards which means there must be a contiguous area within the building envelope that is sufficiently free of the constraints mentioned above.

Section 5: Statutory Criteria Analysis

The following section offers an analysis as to how the Study Area relates to the redevelopment criteria established by the LRHL to qualify as an area in need of redevelopment. As discussed in greater detail herein, portions of the Study Area display characteristics which satisfy the redevelopment statutory criteria and consequently justify designation as a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area.

5.1: Compliance with the Statutory Criteria

As outlined in Section 1.2 of this report, the LRHL establishes eight (8) statutory criteria to determine if an area qualifies as being in need of redevelopment. The statute provides that a delineated area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if "after investigation, notice and hearing...the governing body of the municipality by resolution concludes that within the delineated area" any one of the eight (8) criteria are present. These criteria are summarized below.

In accordance with the LRHL, our office conducted two site visits of the Study Area, first on March 6, 2026, and again on August 28, 2026. The existing buildings in the Study Area were observed from both the interior and exterior. Our findings are based upon the site inspections, existing conditions, tax records, police records, coordination with the Township zoning official, the Township master plan goals and objectives, and Township land use regulations. **We find that Lot 2 (99 Lord Stirling Road) within the Study Area meets the applicable statutory criteria for designation as an area in need of redevelopment. We find that Lot 3 (25 Sherwood Drive) within the Study Area does not meet the applicable statutory criteria for designation as an area in need of redevelopment**. The conformance of each of the Study Area parcels with the LRHL criteria is addressed in turn below.

Block 3101 Lot 2 (99 Lord Stirling Road)

Lot 2 contains an empty, former school building and accessory structures are accessed via a singular driveway which ends in a loop configuration. The width of the access appears to be insufficient to safely permit two-way traffic, especially for emergency vehicles. The pavement is cracked and overgrown with weeds. No striping or directional signage is provided. Circulation on this lot is essentially uncontrolled / unregulated. No parking or loading spaces are delineated. No ADA space is provided. This portion of the Study Area is obsolescent and substandard with regard to vehicular access, circulation, and parking considering its former use as a school. These conditions are detrimental to public safety.

As evidenced by the accompanying site photographs in the appendix, the buildings on this lot are clearly dilapidated and unsafe for human use and occupancy. The main building has fallen into disrepair with significant structural issues including cracks and holes in the foundation, broken gutters and leaders, damaged doors and windows, deteriorating or missing siding, missing flooring, exposed wiring as well as graffiti. The building has rotting window frames, water damage both outside and inside, as well as holes in the ceilings and walls. In addition, substantial debris and garbage were observed in and around the interior of the building. This building is also more than 100 years old and as such, its interior layout and infrastructure is obsolescent and substandard when compared to today's standards for similar facilities.

At the time of our first inspection, the ground level of the barn building was open to the elements with standing water inside suggestive of unsafe conditions. The exterior of the barn building also had areas of chipping paint. The swimming pool on the property was fenced in at the time of inspection. The ropes course and climbing structure were not observed to have fencing. The State of New Jersey imposes strict administrative codes and safety requirements for school recreation facilities, including gymnasiums and swimming pools as well as playgrounds. These requirements come from both the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and UCC. All school playground modifications or new installations must comply with N.J.A.C. 5:23-11. According to New Jersey building subcodes, school gymnasiums must have restroom facilities located within 200 feet of the space. There were no restrooms observed within the barn structure during the site inspection. Additionally, recreational spaces must comply with N.J.A.C. 5:23-7. Indoor and outdoor facilities must be located on an accessible route of travel. There were no paths observed to and from the swimming pool, ropes course or climbing structure. Similarly, the second floor to the barn structure is only accessible via exterior staircase and is, therefore, not ADA accessible.

The single-story structure formerly used as a kitchen is also substandard. School kitchen facilities in New Jersey must follow the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.) standards for educational facilities under N.J.A.C. 6A:26 and public health sanitation rules under N.J.A.C. 8:24 enforced by the Department of Health. Kitchen design, construction, and renovation must comply with the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) and N.J.A.C. 6A:26-6.3 for educational facility planning. Kitchens require industrial-grade ventilation and exhaust systems. Equipment must include proper backflow prevention, grease traps, and adequate hot/cold running water compliant with health codes. These facilities must maintain proper

refrigeration, freezing units, and food storage areas protected from contamination, pests, and moisture. This structure has fallen into a state of disrepair that would render it impossible to comply with the aforementioned requirements without substantial upgrades and investment.

The property has been issued notice by the Bernards Township Construction Official for violation of N.J.A.C. 5:23 - 2.32 deeming it unsafe. The notice, which can be found in the appendix, indicated a lack of weed and vegetation control which subsequently creates a fire hazard. The overgrowth of shrubs and weeds has since been removed.

Pursuant to the Open Public Records Act (OPRA), our office made a request for police records associated with the property, which generated a number of police reports from the Bernards Township Police Department (BTPD). These reports can also be found in the appendix. These reports indicate criminal mischief such as trespassing and vandalism has taken place on the abandoned property on numerous occasions. These conditions have contributed not only to a negative image of the Study Area, but also to unsafe and unsanitary conditions on the property.

In summary, Lot 2 displays characteristics which satisfy the "a", "b" and "d" criteria.

Criterion 'a' regards the generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions. A former estate adapted into a private school with three separate, disjointed structures (main residence, detached kitchen, and a barn/gym conversion) suggests the property suffers from physical obsolescence. The main residence and detached kitchen show signs of dilapidation, mold and mildew, crumbling plaster and drywall, exposed wiring, all of which are unsafe conditions due to a half-decade of abandonment.

Criterion 'b' regards the discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenantable. The statute explicitly targets commercial or institutional properties that have been vacant for at least two consecutive years and are economically stagnant. The private school which inhabited this property has been closed since 2020 (more than 5 years), and the fact that the property has been sold twice without being re-occupied or developed suggests that private capital is struggling to return the property to productive use under current zoning constraints.

Criterion 'd' regards areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, over-crowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community. As evidenced by the numerous police reports, a vacant, obsolescent and dilapidated property with numerous trespassing and criminal mischief reports poses a significant and multi-faceted risk to public health, safety, morals, and

welfare, often meeting the legal definition of a public nuisance. And as shown from the citation issued by the construction official, overgrowth and neglect drastically increases the risk of accidental fires, which can lead to unnecessary use of municipal services and risk to municipal staff and volunteers.

Block 3101 Lots 3 (25 Sherwood Ave)

Lot 3 contains an occupied, single-family dwelling as well as multiple vehicles and/or trailers, temporary tent-like structures, fencing, and materials stored outdoors on portions of the property. The arrangement and concentration of these items appear to occupy a substantial portion of the property surrounding the dwelling. The site also appears to contain activity and/or materials that may be associated with a commercial or business-related use, although the nature and extent of any such activity have not been independently established as part of this preliminary investigation.

Following review of photographs from the site inspection, the Township Zoning Officer identified several conditions that may warrant further review under the Township's land use and property-maintenance regulations, including regulations concerning vehicles and trailers, accessory structures and setbacks, outdoor materials, potential home-office or home-occupation activity, and lot coverage. The Zoning Officer did not identify any previously issued violations associated with the property and, based upon the information presently available, any potential violations identified through the photographic review remain subject to confirmation through the Township's ordinary zoning and code-enforcement processes.

The existence or potential existence of zoning violations is not, in and of itself, determinative of whether Lot 3 constitutes an area in need of redevelopment. Rather, the relevant inquiry under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5(d) is whether the buildings or improvements on the property, by reason of conditions such as faulty arrangement or design, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use, or other comparable factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community. The statute therefore requires consideration of both the physical or land-use condition and its resulting community impact.

At present, the available information is insufficient to conclude that Lot 3 has met the threshold for excessive land coverage for purposes of N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5(d). With regard to potential faulty arrangement or design, the available evidence establishes the presence of these physical conditions but does not, by itself, establish that they rise to the level contemplated by the statute. If a commercial or business-related activity is being conducted from the property, the question for the investigation is whether or not the nature, intensity, and physical manifestations of that activity affect the residential use and physical character of the property and its surroundings. The area of concern based upon the statute is whether the presence of equipment, materials, vehicles and trailers and outdoor storage is, in and of itself, detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.

Based upon the information presently available, Lot 3 exhibits several observed physical conditions and suspected violations that warrant consideration in this preliminary investigation. These conditions have relevance to the statutory concepts previously

mentioned under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5(d). However, the present record does not establish that the property satisfies the statutory conditions or that the conditions are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community. In *Malanga v. West Orange*, the New Jersey Supreme Court explained that subsection (d) requires proof both of a qualifying condition and that, as a result of that condition, the area is detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community. In other words, redevelopment determination must be supported by substantial evidence in the record, not observed physical conditions and suspected violations alone.

Legally, Lot 3 can still be included in the designation via the "Inclusionary Property" Provision pursuant to Section 3 Inclusion (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-3) if, as is discussed in the LRHL the inclusion of Lot 3 is necessary for the effective redevelopment of the Study Area. The LRHL explicitly allows a municipality to include parcels that do not meet the criteria of blight if their inclusion is necessary for the effective redevelopment of the study area. Lot 3 is being evaluated alongside Lot 2 because they are contiguous. However, it is not immediately evident that Lot 2 would in fact require Lot 3 for proper roadway access, layout alignment, utility connections, or comprehensive parcel aggregation. Lot 2 has its own frontage on two separate roads. Lot 2 has already been served by utilities in the past during its use as a private school. Therefore, Lot 3 is not necessary for the effective redevelopment of Lot 2. Despite showing signs of aging, the home on Lot 3 is occupied and in fair shape.

Section 6: Planning Conclusions and Recommendation

The planning analysis contained herein concludes that portions of the Study Area display characteristics which satisfy both the redevelopment statutory criteria and consequently justify designation as a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area.

It should be noted that a determination to designate a redevelopment area simply defines and delineates the area in which the municipality intends to pursue an active role in furthering redevelopment. This redevelopment identification can include alternative approaches to upgrade and revitalize the area.

The following recommendations are offered for consideration:

1. The statute provides that "no area of a municipality shall be determined a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality shall, by resolution, authorize the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in the applicable Laws of the State of New Jersey". Such determination shall be made after public notice and public hearing.

   The Governing Body directed the Planning Board to conduct this redevelopment investigation. This report concludes that a portion of the Study Area satisfies the "a," "b", "d" criteria, which serves as the basis for the Planning Board's recommendation to the Governing Body.

2. Based on our analysis, we recommend that only a portion of the Study Area, specifically lot 2, be considered for designation as an Area in Need of Redevelopment. Furthermore, this portion of the Study Area satisfies three (3) redevelopment criteria.

3. Upon completion of a hearing on this matter, the Planning Board is required to forward its recommendation regarding whether the delineated area, or any part thereof, should be designated, or not designated, by the Governing Body as a redevelopment area.

4. After receiving the recommendation of the Planning Board, the Governing Body may adopt a resolution designating the delineated site for redevelopment.

5. If the Governing Body adopts a resolution to designate an area in need of redevelopment, the Governing Body may draft a redevelopment plan itself or direct the Planning Board to prepare a redevelopment plan pursuant to the applicable redevelopment statute. If the Governing Body directs the Planning Board to prepare the plan, after it is prepared by the Planning Board, it would be forwarded to the Governing Body for adoption. The redevelopment plan is required to include an outline for the planning, development, redevelopment, or rehabilitation of the project area sufficient to indicate:

    a. The relationship to define local objectives as to appropriate land uses, population density, traffic, public transportation, utilities, recreation and community facilities, and other public improvements;

    b. Proposed land uses and building requirements in the study area;

    c. Adequate provision for the temporary and permanent relocation, as necessary, of residents in the project area, including an estimate of the extent to which decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling units affordable to displaced residents will be available in the existing local housing market;

    d. Identify any property within the redevelopment area that is proposed to be acquired in accordance with the redevelopment plan;

    e. Any significant relationship of the redevelopment plan to the master plans of contiguous municipalities, County Master Plan and State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

6. If the Governing Board adopts a Redevelopment Plan, the Governing Body may appoint a redevelopment entity to oversee the redevelopment of the area.

Appendix A:
Resolution 2025-0395

Resolution of the Township of Bernards

1 Collyer Lane, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
908-204-2510; www.bernards.org

Resolution #2025-0395

Authorizing The Township of Bernards Planning Board to Undertake a Preliminary Investigation for the Redevelopment of 99 Lord Stirling Road, Block 3101, Lot 2, and 25 Sherwood Drive, Block 3101, Lot 3, as Shown on The Township of Bernards Tax Map as a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area

WHEREAS, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. provides a mechanism to empower and assist local governments in efforts to promote programs of redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law set forth specific procedures for establishing an area in need of redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6, prior to the Township Committee making a determination as to whether a particular study area qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment, the Township Committee must authorize the Bernards Township Planning Board, by Resolution, to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the subject area meets the criteria of an area in need of redevelopment as set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Legislature amended the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law on September 6, 2013 to expand and clarify various provisions of same; and

WHEREAS, as required by the amendment to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6, the Legislature has directed that the Resolution authorizing the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to state whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the Township to use all of those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area other than the use of eminent domain ("Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area"); and

WHEREAS, the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the Township of Bernards to use all of the powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area other than the use of eminent domain, thus designating it a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Bernards wishes to direct the Township Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed study area known as Block 3101, Lots 2 & 3 as shown on the Bernards Township Tax Map qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Bernards, in the County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, that the Bernards Township Planning

Board is hereby directed to conduct the necessary preliminary investigation, including the holding of a public hearing, to determine whether the study area identified above is or is not an area in need of redevelopment under the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Board shall submit its findings and recommendations to the Township committee in the form of a Resolution with supporting documentation.

Agenda and Date Voted: 11/11/2025

CERTIFICATION

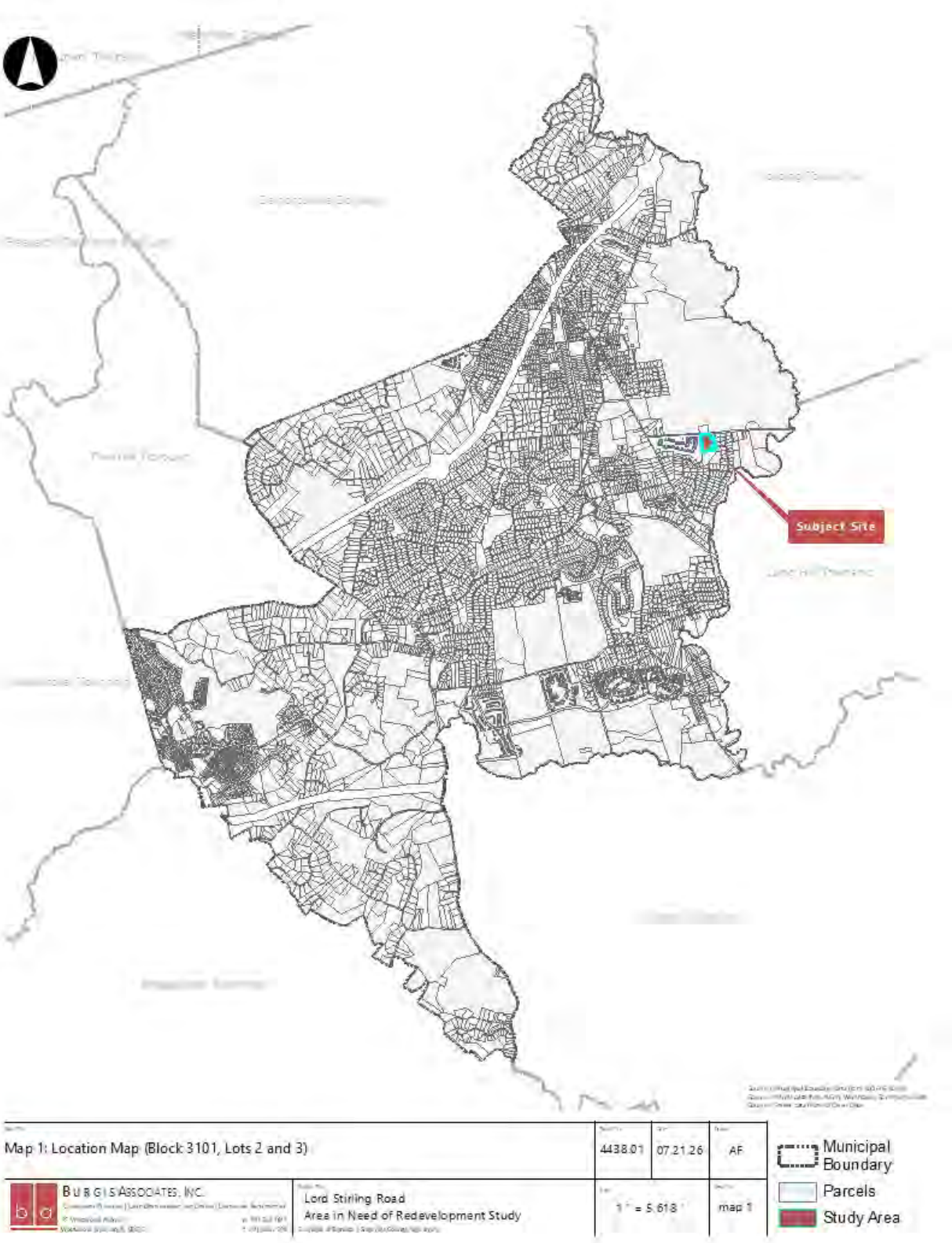
I hereby certify this is a true and exact copy of a resolution adopted by the Bernards Township Committee on 11/17/2025.

Christine V. Kieffer, Municipal Clerk

Appendix B: Mapping

The following maps are representation of geographic data, boundaries, and features depicted herein are provided for illustrative and planning purposes only. These maps do not represent a final engineering, surveying, or legal document. All locations, dimensions, and spatial data must be field-verified by qualified professionals.

Map 1: Location Map



Map 2: Aerial Map

Map 2: Aerial (Block 3101, Lots 2 and 3)

4438.01	07.21.26	AF

BURGIS ASSOCIATES, INC.
Community Planning | Land Development and Design | Landscape Architecture
25 Westwood Avenue, Westwood, New Jersey 07675
p: 201.666.1811 f: 201.666.2599

Lord Stirling Road
Area in Need of Redevelopment Study
Township of Bernards | Somerset County, New Jersey

1 " = 200 '	map 2

Legend
- Parcels
- Building Footprints
- Redevelopment Area

Map 3: Existing Land Use Map

Map 3: Existing Land Use (Block 3101, Lots 2 and 3)	4438.01	07.21.26	AF
BURGIS ASSOCIATES, INC.	Lord Stirling Road Area in Need of Redevelopment Study	1 " = 200 '	map 3

Map 4: Existing Zoning Map

Map 4: Zoning (Block 3101, Lots 2 and 3)

4438.01 | 07.21.26 | AF

BURGIS ASSOCIATES, INC.

Lord Stirling Road
Area in Need of Redevelopment Study

1 " = 200 '

map 4

Zone Boundary
Parcels
Building Footprints
Study Area

Map 5: Environmental Constraints

Map 5: Environmental Constraints (Block 3101, Lots 2 and 3)

4438.01	07.21.26	AF

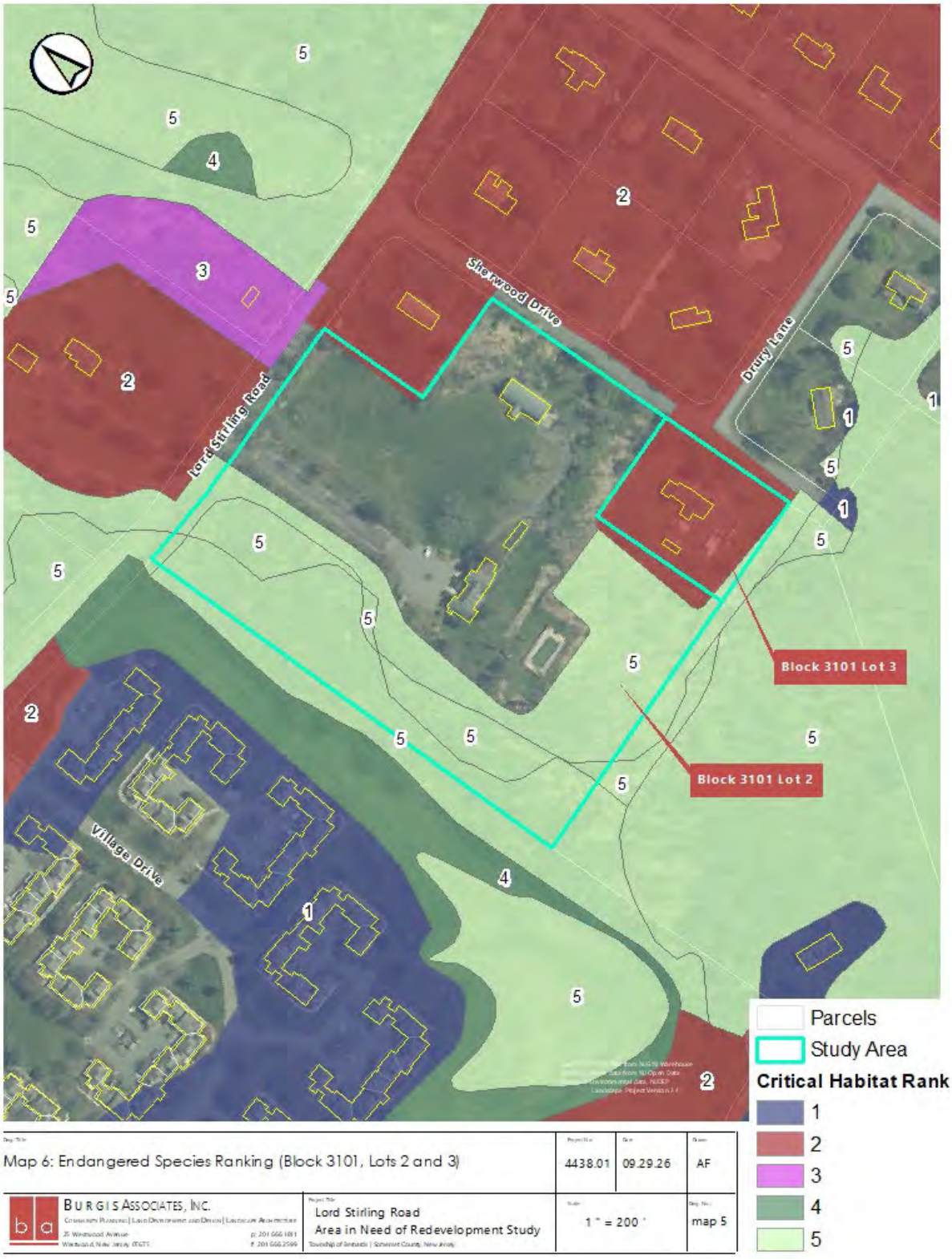
BURGIS ASSOCIATES, INC.

Lord Stirling Road
Area in Need of Redevelopment Study
Township of Bernards | Somerset County, New Jersey

1 " = 200 '

map 5

Map 6: Critical Habitats

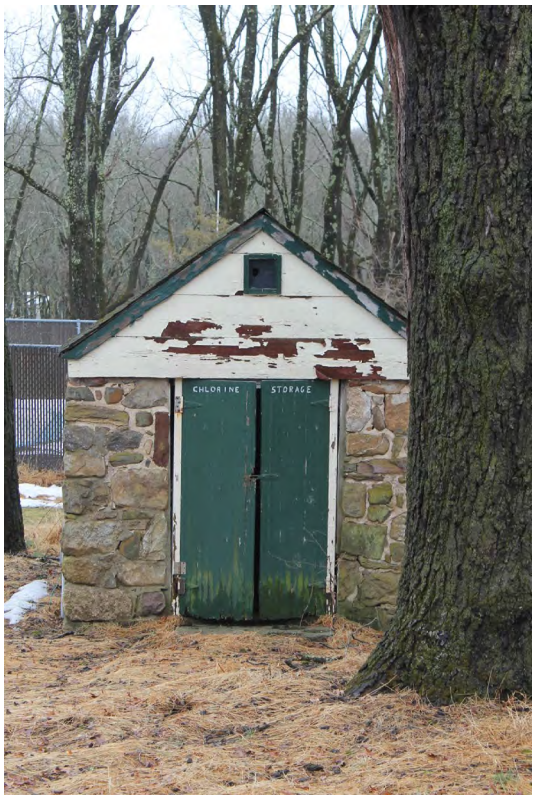


Map 6: Endangered Species Ranking (Block 3101, Lots 2 and 3)	4438.01	09.29.26	AF
BURGIS ASSOCIATES, INC.	Lord Stirling Road Area in Need of Redevelopment Study	1 " = 200 '	map 5

Appendix C:
Site Photographs

Image 1: Front Exterior of Main Building (Lot 2)

Image 2: Rear Exterior of Main Building (Lot 2)



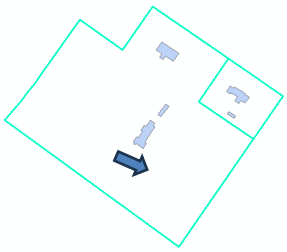


Image 3: Exterior of Shed 1 (Lot 2)

Image 4: Swimming pool (Lot 2)

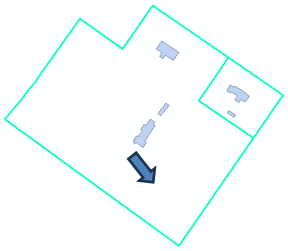


Image 5: Climbing Structure (Lot 2)

Image 6: Single-Story Former Kitchen Building (Lot 2)

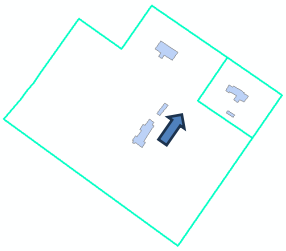


Image 7: Shed 2 (Lot 2)

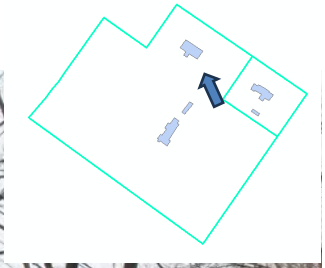


Image 8: Barn Building (Lot 2)

Images 9-12: Interior of Main Building (Lot 2)

Image 13: Ground Level Interior of Barn Building (Lot 2)

Image 14: Second Level Interior of Barn Building (Lot 2)

Images 15-16: Interior of Kitchen Building (Lot 2)

Image 17: Driveway (Lot 2)

Image 18: Front Exterior of Residence (Lot 3)

Image 19: Rear Outdoor Storage Area (Lot 3)

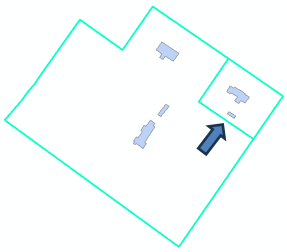


Image 20: Under Tent Storage Area Adjacent Residence (Lot 3)

Image 21: Rear Yard Facing North from Southern Side of Lot (Lot 3)

Image 22: Rear Yard Facing Sherwood Drive From Western Side of Lot (Lot 3)

Image 23: Rear Yard (Lot 3)

Image 24: Living Room (Lot 3)

Image25: Dining Room (Lot 3)

Image 26: Basement (Lot 3)

Image 27: Kitchen (Lot 3)

Appendix D:
N.J.A.C. 5:23 - 2.32 Violation

NOTICE OF UNSAFE STRUCTURE

Permit/Control #:
Date Issued: 8/19/2026
Violation #: V-26-053

IDENTIFICATION

Work Site Location: 99 LORD STIRLING RD Bernards Township, NJ
Block: 3101 Lot: 2 Qualification Code:
Owner in Fee: LORD STIRLING PROPERTY LLC
Owner Address: PO BOX 156 LIBERTY CORNER NJ 07938
Agent/Contractor:
Address:

To: [X] Owner [ ] Other:
[ ] Agent/Contractor

DATE OF INSPECTION: 8/19/2026 DATE OF THIS NOTICE: 8/19/2026

ACTION

Take NOTICE that as a result of the inspections conducted by this agency on 8/19/2026 on the above property, an unsafe condition has been found to exist pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-132 and N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.32.
The building or structure or portion thereof, deemed an unsafe condition is described as follows:

N.J.A.C. 5:23 - 2.32 (a) Unsafe structure
Lack of weed and vegitation control has created a fire hazard. Have the weeds and vegitation removed or cut.

You are hereby ***ORDERED*** to:

[ ] Vacate the above structure by _____

[X] Demolish the above structure by 8/28/2026, or correct the above noted unsafe conditions by no later than _____.

Failure to correct the unsafe condition or refusal to comply with this ***ORDER*** will result in this matter being forwarded to legal counsel for prosecution and assessment of penalties up to $2,000.00 per week per violation. You must immediately declare to the Construction Official, your acceptance or rejection of the terms of this ***ORDER.***

Any buiding or structure vacated pursuant to this ***ORDER.*** shall not be reoccupied unless and until a certificate of occupancy is issued by the Construction Official.

If you wish to contest this ***ORDER,*** you may request a hearing before the Construction Board of Appeals of the County of Somerset within 15 days of receipt of this ***ORDER*** as provided by N.J.A.C. 5:23A-2.1. The Application of the Construction Board of Appeals may be used for this purpose.

Your application for appeal must be in writing, setting forth your name and address, the address of the building or site in question, the specific sections of the Uniform Construction Code in question and the extent and nature of your reliance on them. You may include a brief statement setting forth your position and the nature of the relief sought by you, and you may also append any documents that you consider useful.

The fee for an appeal is $100.00 and should be forwarded with your application to the Construction Board of Appeals Office at: Somerset County
CONSTRUCTION BOARD OF APPEALS
PO BOX 900
SOMERVILLE, NJ 08873

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please call (908) 204-3172

By ***Order*** of _____ Date: 8/19/2026

U.C.C. F241 equiv (rev. 1/2004)

Appendix E: Police Reports

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP INVESTIGATION REPORT

1 COLLYER LANE
BASKING RIDGE, NJ 07920
908-766-1122

Municipal Code: 1802
ORI: NJ0180200

DEPARTMENT CASE NUMBER	MUN. CODE	PHONE NUMBER	UCR	DEPARTMENT ARREST NUMBER	
BT-2025-000566	1802	908-766-1122			

CRIME/INCIDENT	NJS	VICTIM NAME(Last Name, First Name, MI)	DOB
Trespassing CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	5711 2C:17-3	ROCKER, JONATHAN	[redacted]

SSN NO.	AGE	SEX	RACE	ETHNICITY
[redacted]	66	M		

DATE AND TIME	BETWEEN	HOUR	MONTH	DAY	YEAR	VICTIM'S HOME ADDRESS	PHONE
	☐	14:51	05	02	2025	[redacted]	[redacted]

CRIME/INCIDENT LOCATION	EMPLOYER	PHONE
99 LORD STIRLING RD, BASKING RIDGE NJ 07920	J. ROCKER DEVELOPMENT	908-326-6741

MUNICIPALITY	COUNTY	CODE	PERSON REPORTING CRIME	DATE AND TIME
BERNARDS TOWNSHIP	SOMERSET	1802	ROCKER, JONATHAN	05/02/2025 14:51

TYPE OF PREMISES	WEAPONS - TOOLS	ADDRESS	PHONE
Commercial		[redacted]	[redacted]

MODUS OPERANDI
WALK-IN REPORTING UNKNOWN SUBJECTS TRESPASSING ON ABANDONED PROPERTY.

VEHICLE	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	BODY TYPE	COLOR	REG. PLATE -STATE	VIN	VEHICLE VALUE

VALUE STOLEN PROPERTY	CURRENCY	JEWELRY	FURS	CLOTHING	AUTO	MISC.

TOTAL VALUE STOLEN	TOTAL VALUE RECOVERED	TELETYPE ALARM	TECHNICAL SERVICES	TECHNICAL AGENCY

WEATHER	SIC	NIC	ASSISTING AGENCIES

NO. OF ACCUSED	ADULT	JUVENILE	STATUS CRIME	STATUS CASE	UCR STATUS	DATE CLEARED

NARRATIVE

QED# 25156135

On 05/02/2025, at 1451 hours, I responded to headquarters for a walk-in report. I met with Jon Rocker, who owns the former Lord Stirling School at 99 Lord Stirling Rd. Jon advised that he has been receiving an increase in calls from neighbors stating that unknown people have been entering the property and consuming alcohol.

Jon has been checking the property and noticed that the first level of the interior of the building had been spray-painted. Once Jon sends me pictures of the graffiti, I will attach them to the resources section of this report. Jon said he believes actors may have been able to pry a door open to gain entry. Jon could not give me a specific timeline of how long this has been going on other than for the past several years.

As of today, Jon will be placing No Trespassing Signs at the driveway. I suggested he invest in a trail camera since the property has no power. I also told Jon to have the property's neighbors call the police immediately upon seeing people who should not be there on the property.

As of 05/03/2025, at 1613 hours, I have not received correspondence from Jon.

NAME	DATE OF REPORT	REVIEWED BY	SIGNATURE
OFFICER MCCARTNEY, KYLE 98	05/02/2025	LIEUTENANT MCKNIGHT, ALEX 60	

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP INVESTIGATION REPORT

1 COLLYER LANE
BASKING RIDGE, NJ 07920
908-766-1122

Municipal Code: 1802
ORI: NJ0180200

Case#: CC-2025-00214 Incident#: BT-2025-000566

Body Worn Camera Details

BWC Video: **Y** Vehicle Camera: **N** Unit/Serial#: **BWC 6**

Accreditation Details

Handcuffed and searched prior to transporting to headquarters: **N**

Handcuffs checked for proper fit and double locked: **N**

Searched the back seat, prisoner transport area, prior to transporting to headquarters: **N**

Searched the back seat, prisoner transport area, after the transport: **N**

Secured Weapon During Processing: **N**

REPORT SUBMITTED BY (NAME - BADGE NUMBER)	REPORT APPROVED BY (NAME - BADGE NUMBER)
OFFICER MCCARTNEY, KYLE 98	LIEUTENANT MCKNIGHT, ALEX 60

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP INVESTIGATION REPORT

1 COLLYER LANE
BASKING RIDGE, NJ 07920
908-766-1122

Municipal Code: 1802
ORI: NJ0180200

DEPARTMENT CASE NUMBER	MUN. CODE	PHONE NUMBER	UCR	DEPARTMENT ARREST NUMBER	
BT-2026-000702	1802	908-766-1122			

CRIME/INCIDENT	NJS	VICTIM NAME(Last Name, First Name, MI)	DOB
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	2C:17-3	ROCKER, JONATHAN	[redacted]

SSN NO.	AGE	SEX	RACE	ETHNICITY
[redacted]	67	M	W	N

DATE	BETWEEN	HOUR	MONTH	DAY	YEAR	VICTIM'S HOME ADDRESS	PHONE
AND	☑	00:00	05	12	2026	[redacted]	[redacted]
TIME		11:38	05	18	2026		

CRIME/INCIDENT LOCATION	EMPLOYER	PHONE
LORD STIRLING SCHOOL - 99 LORD STIRLING RD/S MAPLE AVE (CR 657), BASKING RIDGE NJ 07920	J. ROCKER DEVELOPMENT	908-326-6741

MUNICIPALITY	COUNTY	CODE	PERSON REPORTING CRIME	DATE AND TIME
BERNARDS TOWNSHIP	SOMERSET	1802	ROCKER, JONATHAN	05/18/2026 11:38

TYPE OF PREMISES	WEAPONS - TOOLS	ADDRESS	PHONE
Housing	NONE	[redacted]	[redacted]

MODUS OPERANDI
PRIVATE PROPERTY SIGNS DAMAGED ON 5/12/26.

VEHICLE	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	BODY TYPE	COLOR	REG. PLATE -STATE	VIN	VEHICLE VALUE

VALUE STOLEN PROPERTY	CURRENCY	JEWELRY	FURS	CLOTHING	AUTO	MISC.

TOTAL VALUE STOLEN	TOTAL VALUE RECOVERED	TELETYPE ALARM	TECHNICAL SERVICES	TECHNICAL AGENCY
$0.00				

WEATHER	SIC	NIC	ASSISTING AGENCIES

NO. OF ACCUSED	ADULT	JUVENILE	STATUS CRIME	STATUS CASE	UCR STATUS	DATE CLEARED

NARRATIVE

********** PARTIES INVOLVED **********
ROLE: INVOLVED | NAME: CABABE, CLIFFORD S | HOME ADDRESS: [redacted] | HOME PHONE: [redacted] | HOME ALT. PHONE: [redacted] | SEX: M | DOB: [redacted] | AGE: 59 | SSN: [redacted] | RACE: WHITE | ETHNICITY: NON-HISPANIC | HEIGHT: 5' 9" | WEIGHT: 161 | DL#: [redacted] | DL EXP: [redacted] | DL STATE: [redacted]

********** ARTICLE(S) INVOLVED **********
ROLE: Damaged | ARTICLE TYPE: PROP | DESCRIPTION: "PRIVATE PROPERTY' SIGN | DOLLAR VALUE: $50.00

QED#26169611

On 5/18/2026, at 1138 Hours, Ptl. Gengaro and I responded to 99 Lord Stirling Rd for property damage. The caller, Jon Rocker, has signs at the end of the driveway on 99 Lord Sterling Rd and was notified by his neighbor, Clifford Cababe, they were damaged.

Upon arrival, Ptl. Gengaro and I made contact with Jon and his neighbor Clifford, who were standing in the driveway next to the broken sign. Jon stated he put up the "Private Property" sign six months to a year ago. Jon stated he was notified via email from Julie Gerke who lives in the neighborhood on 5/12/2026, saying the sign has been damaged. Clifford said he noticed the damaged sign on the 5/14/2026, and also notified Jon on 5/17/2026. Jon went to the property today at 1138 hours to see it himself before reporting it.

The sign appeared to be smashed with an object into many pieces. Jon stated the value of the sign was approximately $50.

NAME	DATE OF REPORT	REVIEWED BY	SIGNATURE
OFFICER BRUNO, MICHAEL 109	05/18/2026	LIEUTENANT BAXTER, CHRISTOPHER 72	

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP INVESTIGATION REPORT

1 COLLYER LANE
BASKING RIDGE, NJ 07920
908-766-1122

Municipal Code: 1802
ORI: NJ0180200

Incident#: BT-2026-000702

Body Worn Camera Details

BWC Video: **Y** Vehicle Camera: **Y** Unit/Serial#: **Car #6 BWC#7-158138**

Accreditation Details

Handcuffed and searched prior to transporting to headquarters: **N**

Handcuffs checked for proper fit and double locked: **N**

Searched the back seat, prisoner transport area, prior to transporting to headquarters: **N**

Searched the back seat, prisoner transport area, after the transport: **N**

Secured Weapon During Processing: **N**

REPORT SUBMITTED BY (NAME - BADGE NUMBER)	REPORT APPROVED BY (NAME - BADGE NUMBER)
OFFICER BRUNO, MICHAEL 109	LIEUTENANT BAXTER, CHRISTOPHER 72

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP INVESTIGATION REPORT

1 COLLYER LANE
BASKING RIDGE, NJ 07920
908-766-1122

Municipal Code: 1802
ORI: NJ0180200

DEPARTMENT CASE NUMBER	MUN. CODE	PHONE NUMBER	UCR	DEPARTMENT ARREST NUMBER	
BT-2025-000826	1802	908-766-1122			

CRIME/INCIDENT	NJS	VICTIM NAME(Last Name, First Name, MI)	DOB
BIAS CRIME/ INTIMIDATION CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	2C:16-1A 2C:17-3	ROCKER, JONATHAN	[redacted]

SSN NO.	AGE	SEX	RACE	ETHNICITY
[redacted]	66	M	W	N

	BETWEEN	HOUR	MONTH	DAY	YEAR	VICTIM'S HOME ADDRESS	PHONE
DATE AND	☐	00:00	04	01	2021	[redacted]	[redacted]
TIME		15:40	05	02	2025		

CRIME/INCIDENT LOCATION	EMPLOYER	PHONE
99 LORD STIRLING RD, BASKING RIDGE NJ 07920	J. ROCKER DEVELOPMENT	908-326-6741

MUNICIPALITY	COUNTY	CODE	PERSON REPORTING CRIME	DATE AND TIME
BERNARDS TOWNSHIP	SOMERSET	1802	ROCKER, JONATHAN	07/30/2025 17:05

TYPE OF PREMISES	WEAPONS - TOOLS	ADDRESS	PHONE
SCHOOL BUILDING		[redacted]	[redacted]

MODUS OPERANDI
GRAFFITI FOUND IN A VACANT BUILDING DEPICTING HATEFUL RHETORIC.

VEHICLE	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	BODY TYPE	COLOR	REG. PLATE -STATE	VIN	VEHICLE VALUE

VALUE STOLEN PROPERTY	CURRENCY	JEWELRY	FURS	CLOTHING	AUTO	MISC.

TOTAL VALUE STOLEN	TOTAL VALUE RECOVERED	TELETYPE ALARM	TECHNICAL SERVICES	TECHNICAL AGENCY

WEATHER	SIC	NIC	ASSISTING AGENCIES

NO. OF ACCUSED	ADULT	JUVENILE	STATUS CRIME	STATUS CASE	UCR STATUS	DATE CLEARED

NARRATIVE

On 8/1/2025, Lieutenant Fallon, Sergeant Matthews, and I responded to 99 Lord Stirling Road and met with property owner John Rocker. Rocker explained he purchased the abandoned school four years ago and wanted to report hateful graffiti. Rocker could not give us a specific date when he first noticed the graffiti, but stated that he had seen more of it throughout the years of checking on the building. Inside the building, a majority of the rooms were tagged with graffiti. The graffiti was tagged in several different colors and styles, indicating that it was possibly created at different times and by different people. Much of the graffiti included childish drawings of human anatomy, gang related tags, Mickey mouse, curse words, and pentagram' s, I observed several hateful tags while searching that included:

"I hate the jews"
Swastikas
SS
"Fuck
Jews"
"Fuck the
indians"
"Burn the
mosque"
"Get out
Jews"
"Leave indians"

Photographs of the scene were attached to this incidents resources. Somerset County Detective Maurice Guglielmo was notified and a supplementary bias incident report was completed.

NAME	DATE OF REPORT	REVIEWED BY	SIGNATURE
DETECTIVE MCCREA, ALEC 87	08/01/2025	DETECTIVE LIEUTENANT 58 FALLON, BRIAN	

Body Worn Camera Details

BWC Video: **N** Vehicle Camera: **N** Unit/Serial#:

Accreditation Details

Handcuffed and searched prior to transporting to headquarters: **N**

Handcuffs checked for proper fit and double locked: **N**

Searched the back seat, prisoner transport area, prior to transporting to headquarters: **N**

Searched the back seat, prisoner transport area, after the transport: **N**

Secured Weapon During Processing: **N**

BERNARDS TWP POLICE

SUPPLEMENTARY INVESTIGATION REPORT

1.Complaint Number	2. Mun. Code	3. Phone Number	4. UCR	21. Prosecutor's Case Number	22. Department Case Number
BT-2025-000826	1802	908-766-1122			

5.Crime/Incident	5A. New Crime/Incident if Changed	23. Victim(s) New Address if Changed
7101 - Criminal Mischief		[redacted]
		23a. Victim(s) Name: ROCKER, JONATHAN

6A. New NJS	7. Date of Crime	Additional Value Stolen Property	40A. Currency	41A. Jewelry	42A. Furs
	07/30/2025				

43A. Clothing	44A. Auto	Miscellaneous

46A. S.C.I.C	49A. Additional Technical Service-Agency	48A. Additional Stolen Property Value	47A. Add'l Recovered Property

51A. B.C. Radio	52A. B.C. Radio Cancel	53A. N.C.I.C.

57. Model	58. Year	59. Make	60. Body Type	61. Color	62. Registration Number & State	62A. Serial Number or Identification

List Name Only of Previous Accused. Complete Information on New Accused; Include Additional Perpetrators: Suspects: Record all Developments Since Last Report: Explain Any Crime Change; List Additional Interviews of Victims: Persons Contacted: Witnesses: Evidence; Technical Services, Stolen Property: Recovered Property; Court Action.

63. No. of Accused	63A. New Accused	64A. Adult	65A. Juvenile	66A. Status Crime	67A. Status Case	68A. UCR Status Month Yr.	69A. Date Cleared

70. Name	Address	71. Age	72. Sex	73. Race	74. DOB

On 8/1/2025, Lieutenant Fallon, Sergeant Matthews, and I responded to 99 Lord Stirling Road and met with property owner John Rocker. Rocker explained he purchased the abandoned school four years ago and wanted to report hateful graffiti. Rocker could not provide a specific date when he first noticed the graffiti, but stated that he had seen more of it over the years while checking on the building. On the same date, Somerset County Detective Maurice Guglielmo was notified, and a supplementary bias incident report was completed and sent to the NJSP. In response to the criminal mischief, a Reconyx camera was posted on the property.

On 8/29/2025, the camera footage yielded only results of police cars conducting property checks. The Reconyx camera was removed from the property. Since the incident was reported, there have been 68 property checks conducted by patrol officers at this location. There are no suspects or further investigative leads at this time. There also have been no reports of any additional damage or trespassing on the property.

75A. Name	87	78A. Date Report	79A. Reviewed By
DETECTIVE MCCREA, ALEC		09/01/2025	DETECTIVE LIEUTENANT FALLC
Signature			

Body Worn Camera Details

BWC Video: **N** Vehicle Camera: **N** Unit/Serial#:

Accreditation Details

Handcuffed and searched prior to transporting to headquarters: **N**

Handcuffs checked for proper fit and double locked: **N**

Searched the back seat, prisoner transport area, prior to transporting to headquarters: **N**

Searched the back seat, prisoner transport area, after the transport: **N**

Secured Weapon During Processing: **N**