



Client: Ohkay Owingeh
 Developer: Ohkay Owingeh Housing Authority
 Architect: Atkin Olshin Scade Architects
 Contractor: Avanyu General Contracting, Inc.

Development Consultant: Concept Consulting Group
 Partners: HUD Office of Native American Program, Chamiza Foundation, National Park Service, NM Mortgage Finance Authority, NM Historic Preservation Division, McCune Charitable Foundation, National Trust for Historic Preservation

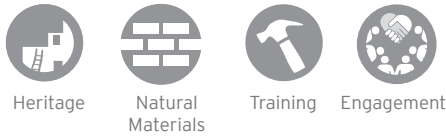


Photo: Kate Russell

TRIBAL PRESERVATION

Owe'neh Bupingeh, the traditional name for the Ohkay Owingeh village center, is believed to have been occupied for at least 700 years. Owe'neh Bupingeh is composed of four plazas, surrounded in the past by several hundred homes. Sixty of the homes remain, most of which had been abandoned by 2005 due to deterioration. This multiphased project balances rehabilitation with functional renovations of the homes, permitting contemporary life and cultural traditions to comfortably coexist and allowing families to return to the sacred core of the Pueblo. Approximately half of the construction crew were tribal members.

CORE PROJECT EMPHASES:

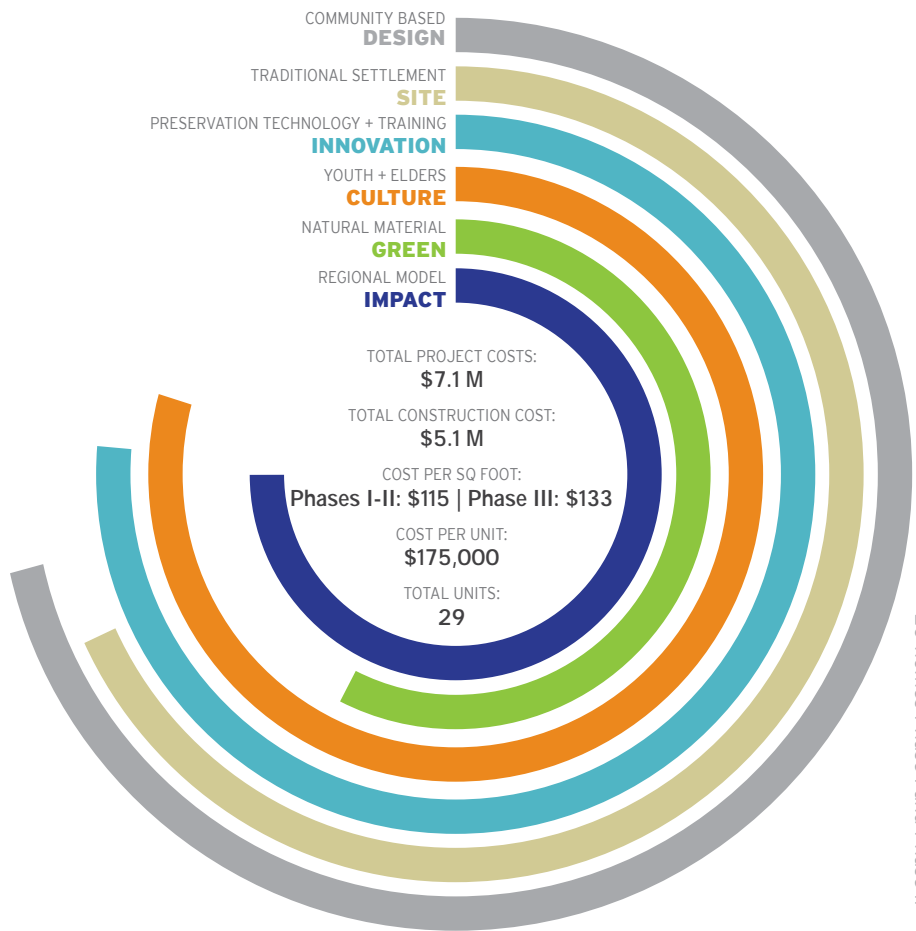


LESSONS LEARNED

- Involving many different community groups, including elders and youth, can provide a strong first step to define the vision and gain support.
- Developing partnerships with state and federal agencies can help define new pathways toward compliance and build enthusiasm.

BEST PRACTICES

- A strong preservation technology component combined with training and employment led to almost 50 percent employment by tribal members.
- Understanding the cultural resources philosophy of tribal leaders helped identify an alternative pathway to Section 106 (Historic Preservation) compliance.
- Being prepared through long-term planning can lead to "shovel-ready" funding to kick-start a project.



Drawing: Atkin Olshin Shade Architects



2006 Preservation Education Program
 2007 Oral Histories + Mapping
 2008 Preservation Plan + MOU
 2010 Phase I Begins Construction
 20 homes Phase I and Phase II
 JULY 2013 Phase I - III Complete
 29 Homes





OWE'NEH BUPINGEH

CONTEXT

In the past, the connected house blocks of this traditional village supported a social structure that knitted the families and clans together. Although U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developments of the 1970s consist of suburban, single-family homes built at the outskirts of the Pueblo and served a need for new housing at the time, they also contributed, with other societal changes, to a devastating decline in the language and life-ways of the people. The rehabilitation of Owe'neh Bupingeh is one strand of a broad tribal effort to rebuild the cultural traditions of the tribe by bringing families back to the historic and cultural core of the Pueblo.

SITE

Owe'neh Bupingeh is the historic center of Ohkay Owingeh. Four traditional plazas are surrounded by 60 extant homes and at least 20 lots on which homes previously stood. Compared with the later Spanish plazas and American squares, which are landscaped, furnished, and ornamented, the traditional earthen Pueblo plazas are very sparse. Yet Owe'neh Bupingeh is the setting for ritual observances and is the tribe's spiritual center. Several times a year, the plazas are filled with people. This project marks the start of a long process by which the traditional use and character of the historic Pueblo core will be restored through the form and appearance of the dwellings.



CULTURE

The project began with tribal youth who were taught to document and research the existing buildings and perform research. Elders contributed recollections of buildings no longer present and stories of their lives on the plazas. Dozens of community meetings were held to gain feedback, and the preservation plan was developed through extensive discussions with the Tribal Council and a newly formed Cultural Advisory Team. The rehabilitation principles that evolved are sometimes in conflict with federal preservation standards. However, these principles are based on Ohkay Owingeh community and cultural values, and are being implemented by construction crew members and home owners from the tribe who, through learning traditional methods of construction, ensure that the project is culturally-appropriate.



Photo credit: Atkin Olshin Shade Architects

GREEN

As a preservation project, Owe'neh Bupingeh is inherently sustainable. The entire project team (tribe, architect, and contractor) was committed to retaining as much of each existing building as possible. Constructed by their ancestors, the earthen walls contain the breath and sweat of the Ohkay Owingeh people. Where adobe walls were no longer structurally sound, they were taken down and ground up as the main ingredient of the new earthen plaster. In the initial phases, green design features include highly insulated roofs, insulated windows, and ENERGY STAR appliances. Phase III meets Enterprise Green Communities standards; however, it was determined that getting a HERS rating separately for each individual home would be cost prohibitive.



DESIGN

The design of the project is rooted in, but not restrained by, the past. The existing condition of the homes in 2005 was disappointing to tribal members. Owe'neh Bupingeh still functioned as the traditional center of the tribe, but appearances were marred by extensive deterioration and by the introduction of inappropriate modern details (doors, windows, gutters, cement plaster, etc.). An analysis of more than 400 historic photos was completed, with a clear understanding that only the last 140 years of this 700-year-old place had been documented. Great changes were observed in the photos found, and while it was necessary to understand the changes during the last 150 years, a strict restoration was neither possible nor desirable. The earliest images show the pueblo at its greatest density, with the dwellings, before doors were installed, still accessed via roof hatches. These historic photos provided the tribe with the ability to determine an authentic vocabulary, distinct from other pueblos and the pueblo revival style.



Photo: John Gaw Meen Collection



Photo: Atkin Olshin Shade Architects

CULTURE

Federal funding required meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Places (Section 106). These standards are based on the notion that historic places have a "period of significance" that should guide preservation treatment. However, to Ohkay Owingeh, the present and the future are just as significant as the past, and "preservation" means sustaining an entire way of being, not just buildings. The federal standard needed to be reinterpreted in ways that afforded a meaningful discussion and prioritized local needs. Although the preservation philosophy developed by the tribe sometimes challenges federal preservation standards, these self-determined principles are culturally sustainable. Rather than return to a specific appearance from the past, the tribe has developed a process for balancing traditional building elements with contemporary amenities.

PROCESS

Community participation is the foundation of the project. Throughout the process, the project team worked with elders, cultural leaders, residents and youth in defining their goals and vision. Construction and home owner training was a high priority, resulting in 43% of the construction crew being from Ohkay Owingeh.

INNOVATION

Ohkay Owingeh developed a comprehensive preservation plan to guide practical housing improvements according to cultural values. Planning costs were funded through traditional preservation sources, with construction funded primarily through various HUD programs, requiring a fine balance between regulatory standards in addition to the tribe's own perspectives. The project is rooted in the preservation philosophy of Ohkay Owingeh tribal leaders, which values the life of the Pueblo and inhabitation over material conservation. The preservation technology is highly innovative, utilizing many years of material sciences field research by specialists in adobe construction. For example, the repair and reconstruction of damaged *vigas* (round timber beams) included boring dowels into the viga and splicing on new extensions, in order to save as much of the existing material as possible. This was an important cultural factor, as many of the *vigas* were "gifted" from one family to another, with initials still visible.



Photo: Avanyu, LLC

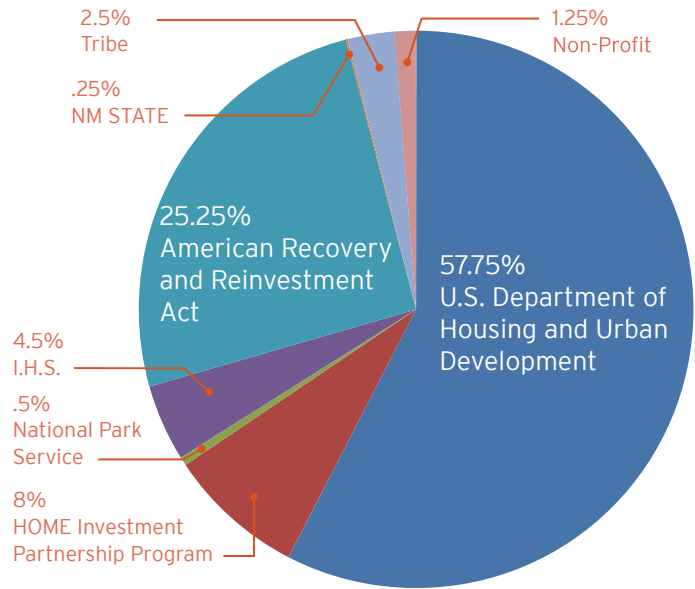




OWE'NEH BUPINGEH

VISION

This project has its roots in two previous projects at Ohkay Owingeh. Tsigo bugeh Village is a 40-unit rental development completed in 2003 and financed with low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC). It was the first modern project at the Pueblo to incorporate substantial community participation, including storytelling about life in the plaza area. Immediately following was a comprehensive master plan in 2004, which won a Smart Growth Award for Small Communities and was also developed with community input. The success of these projects helped to develop capacity to rehabilitate the historic core. It also brought the community and cultural leaders to the table with the Ohkay Owingeh Housing Authority (OOHA) to realize their collective vision to bring elders and families back to live in the historic core.



“ Where does the vision actually come from for the community? It should come from the members from that community, where members always have input. - Joe Garcia ”

Photo: Kate Russell

LESSONS LEARNED / CONCLUSION

A significant portion of the funding for the next phase of rehabilitation has been secured and the qualification process has begun. Funding thus far has been limited to low income families, leaving many families just above low income thresholds out of the project. OOHA established Cha Piyeh, Inc., a community development finance institution (CDFI), to provide low-interest loans to families who do not income-qualify and have no other means of participating in the project. Parcels of land on the plazas that have long been vacant have had ownership confirmed, and future phases of the project will include new construction on these sites to fill in the gaps between house blocks. Many of the other Pueblo tribes have come to visit Owe'neh Bupingeh and meet with the project team. Other groups, including the World Monuments Fund, the Getty Conservation Institute, and a delegation from Morocco have visited to learn how culturally appropriate housing can help re-build the strength of a community.



Dancers, photo: Guy Ambrosino

