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Tim Hovey (left), developer of the Apple Blossom Apartments, and Ron Basso, member of the Iron River Downtown Development Authority and project committee member, reviewed plans for renovating the old Central School on June 13.

IRON RIVER—Don’t call it “The Old Central School” anymore—the Apple Blossom Apartments development plans are under way.

Having received approval from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the project’s developer, the Hovey Companies, is moving forward with remediation plans, then renovating the building into one, two and three-bedroom affordable housing, along with retail space on the lower level.

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Developer Tim Hovey, along with the project architect, Barry Polzin, representatives from Wolverine Building Group of Grand Rapids, general contractor for the project, conducted an onsite review of the plans, and met with members of the Downtown Development Authority’s project committee members on June 13.

“The group met at the site and spent several hours both inside and outside the building assessing what needs to happen next, and how best to coordinate activities,” said DDA member Ron Basso. The next step is lead paint remediation.

Polzin, who was also the architect for the Crystal View Apartments in Crystal Falls, brought plans for the units, which included converting the old auditorium, where the roof had collapsed, into a community room.

In order to apply for state historic tax credits through the State Historic Preservation Office, much of the original layout must be maintained. The exterior appearance also needs to be preserved.

“Everyone is hoping even the ivy on the walls will stay,” Basso said.

When completed, the building will contain 22 rental units for low-income and special needs residents.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis application for affordable housing grant dollars was submitted with the assistance of the First National Bank and Trust of Iron Mountain’s Iron River branch.

“This will keep the tax dollars in the community,” said Hovey.

Basso explained that the contractor, Wolverine Building Group, plans to use as many local subcontractors as possible for the project, which should get under way later this fall.