

Friends of Historic Flemington

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Cust Redevelopment Project Determined to be an Encroachment on Flemington's Historic District

The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (HPO) has determined that a massive redevelopment project proposed by Jack Cust Jr.'s Flemington Center Urban Renewal LLC constitutes an encroachment upon Flemington's nationally recognized historic district.

Under state law, the Historic Preservation Office's Historic Sites Council (HSC) must review any public undertaking that would "encroach upon, damage or destroy" properties listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. Sale of the Borough-owned building at 90-96 Main Street in Flemington falls under HSC jurisdiction.

Upon review of the Application for Project Authorization submitted by Flemington Borough and Cust, its designated redeveloper, Historic Preservation Office Administrator Katherine J. Marcopul informed Flemington Mayor Phil Greiner of the encroachment determination via a July 25 letter. The Historic Sites Council will consider the Borough's Application for Project Authorization at its August 16 meeting in Trenton.

Ms. Marcopul also recommended that the Borough outline the costs of selling 90-96 Main Street with a preservation easement to preserve the historic building and its character-defining features and present a plan to keep the scale of development to that of the surrounding historic district. This and further documentation must be received by August 2nd to allow for review before the August 16th meeting.

The Friends of Historic Flemington, a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation established to protect and celebrate Flemington's history, welcomes this decision by the state Historic Preservation Office.

Mr. Cust's redevelopment plan would demolish or significantly alter four Main Street buildings, including the iconic Union Hotel, in the heart of Flemington's historic district. He plans to construct a new 100-room hotel, a fitness facility, and massive parking garage along with 250 apartments, restaurants, retail, medical space, and a college within a complex of 7- and 8-story buildings. Flemington Borough Council signed a Redevelopment Agreement formally authorizing Cust as designated redeveloper for the site in March 2017.

The Friends continue to question the absence of a credible market study proving the project is viable; a traffic study proving that Borough streets will not be overwhelmed; a definitive determination of the sewer and water infrastructure upgrade costs that will be borne by Borough rate payers; a fiscal cost-benefit analysis of the project by a qualified neutral third party; and

Development, YES. Demolition, NO.

audited financial statements from Mr. Cust and his investors proving Flemington Center Urban Renewal LLC has the resources to fund and complete the project.

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