



Clarke Caton Hintz

Architecture
Planning
Landscape Architecture

100 Barrack Street
Trenton NJ 08608
clarkecatonhintz.com
Tel: 609 883 8383
Fax: 609 883 4044

John Hatch, FAIA
George Hibbs, AIA
Brian Slaugh, AICP
Michael Sullivan, AICP
Michael Hanrahan, AIA
Mary Beth Loneragan, AICP

Flemington Historic District

To: Flemington Borough Planning Board/ Zoning Board
38 Park Avenue
Flemington, NJ 08822

From: John D. S. Hatch, FAIA
Consultant to the Flemington Historic Preservation Commission

Re: Recommended Revisions and Updates to the Flemington Borough
Historic District

Date: June 15, 2020

Starting in January of 2019, Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) worked closely with the Flemington Historic Preservation Commission and interested citizens to review and update the boundary and individual building designations of the Flemington Historic District. This work was undertaken because it had become apparent that the current District map and designations may now be outdated and, in some cases, incorrect.

The original nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places was completed in 1980. This nomination was used by the Borough to delineate the boundaries of the District and has had only minor subsequent revisions. The individual building designations (i.e. Significant, Contributing, Non-contributing Historic/Contemporary and Encroaching) were then completed at some point in the 1990's. Since that time, a number of existing conditions have changed in Flemington, including building demolitions, road realignments, new construction, etc. In addition, new research tools, including access to digitized historic maps and aerials, have become available, providing better visual evidence for how the Borough developed. It has also become apparent that a number of the building designations were incorrect and should be updated. And finally, the original nomination to the State and National Registers included a number of outlying buildings not directly connected to the remainder of the District. This created confusion about whether these should be considered part of the District or ignored.

In order to correct these inconsistencies and to provide a coherent and updated map of the Flemington Historic District, CCH completed the following steps:



1. Prepared an updated base map that shows current conditions (e.g. recent building demolitions and new construction, road realignments, etc.).
2. Visually inspected and photographed all properties in and around the Historic District, and correlated the observations with the current designations on the Historic District Map, paying particular attention to properties at the edges of the District and that were mentioned in the National Register Nomination but not within the boundaries of the District.
3. Using historic maps and aerials, researched the development of Flemington. This research confirmed that the bulk of development occurred from the 18th century (specifically, the beginning of European settlement in 1712) through the start of the Great Depression, with a gap in development occurring from the mid-1930's to the end of WWII. This pattern of development provides a clear Period of Significance, using the internationally renowned Lindbergh Kidnapping Trial in 1934-1935 as the end date.
4. Met several times with members of the HPC, with a committee of local residents and business owners with particular interest and expertise in Flemington's history, and with other interested parties to discuss specific recommendations about the current configuration of the District and the designation of specific properties. Based on these discussions, and confirmed by further investigation, we recommended adjustments to the boundaries of the District and updated the designations of certain buildings. These recommendations were reviewed three times by the HPC with additional adjustments made after each review.
5. Prepared a revised Flemington Historic District Map based on the research and discussions described above.
6. Presented the findings to the Land Use Board. Additional revisions were made based on comments from the Board and the public at that meeting.
7. Summarized these findings and recommendations in a memo to the Planning Board dated September 18, 2019.

Since these findings were presented, it has become clear that there is little desire at this time to change the existing boundaries of the Flemington Historic District, despite the inconsistencies found during research for this project. That being said, it does make sense to correct a number of designations of the existing buildings within the current Historic District boundaries to better reflect the most current research.

Using the clear Period of Significance (1712 to 1935) as well as more accurate research and assessment, the Historic Preservation Commission is recommending that the status



Clarke Caton Hintz

of 18 properties currently within the Historic District be upgraded from “Contributing” to “Significant” (to reflect the significance of their architecture and/or their history; these reclassifications include two cemeteries already in the District); that one property’s designation be upgraded from “Encroaching” to “Non-contributing Historic/Contemporary” (to better reflect its character); and that one property’s designation be downgraded from “Contributing” to “Non-Contributing” (because it was constructed after 1935). These proposed designation changes will more accurately acknowledge architecturally and historically significant buildings and sites, etc., that are currently within the District. A map showing these corrected designations, but without changes to the District’s boundaries, is included for your reference. In addition, a list of these changes is also provided.

The Historic Preservation Commission hopes that the boundaries of the Historic District will also be revised in the not too distant future so that its overall outline also more closely matches Flemington’s historic development patterns.