

**AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT  
INVESTIGATION REPORT**

**685 MT. KEMBLE AVENUE ("GLEN ALPIN")  
679 MT. KEMBLE AVENUE ("HURSTMONT")**

Township of Harding  
Morris County, New Jersey

February 1, 2019

A Redevelopment Study

Prepared by



Heyer, Gruel & Associates

236 Broad Street  
Red Bank, NJ 07701  
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The original of this report was signed and  
sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12



Susan S. Gruel, P.P. #1955



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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	5
Criteria for Redevelopment Area Designation .....	6
Township of Harding Master Plan .....	8
2018 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan .....	8
Evaluation of the Study Area for Conformity with Redevelopment Area Criteria .....	9
Maps of Study Area .....	10
Study Area and Location .....	15
Glen Alpin – 685 Mt. Kemble Avenue Block 34 Lot 1 .....	16
Property Description.....	16
A Brief History of the Site and its Structures .....	17
Current Status of the Site .....	18
Hurstmont – 679 Mt. Kemble Avenue Block 27 Lot 2.....	19
Property Description.....	19
A Brief History of the Site and its Structures .....	20
Current Status of the Site .....	20
Previous Approvals for Site .....	20
Area in Need of Redevelopment Criteria .....	22
Block 34 Lot 1 – Glen Alpin Site .....	23
Photos of the Glen Alpin Site .....	25
Block 27 Lot 2 – Hurstmont Site .....	29
Photos of the Hurstmont Site .....	30
Conclusion .....	35

## Appendix

*Prepared Under Separate Cover*

<b>Appendix A</b>	TC 18-196 Directing PB to Undertake Study
<b>Appendix B</b>	Glen Alpin – Property Survey
<b>Appendix C</b>	Glen Alpin – Property Detail Card
<b>Appendix D</b>	Glen Alpin - Property Record Card
<b>Appendix E</b>	Glen Alpin - Tax Map
<b>Appendix F</b>	Glen Alpin – 2004 Deed Purchase of property by Township and Harding Land Trust from Liang-Bin Jean and Su-Hsiang Jean
<b>Appendix G</b>	Glen Alpin – 2004 Easement Agreement for Waterline with Liang-Bin Jean and Su-Hsiang Jean
<b>Appendix H</b>	Glen Alpin – 2003 Phase I Environmental Study, prepared by Ecosystems Strategies, Inc.
<b>Appendix I</b>	Glen Alpin – 2004 Conservation Restriction Agreement with NJDEP
<b>Appendix J</b>	Glen Alpin – 2004 Easement Agreement with Morris County
<b>Appendix K</b>	Glen Alpin – 2005 Feasibility Report, prepared by Watson & Henry Associates
<b>Appendix L</b>	Glen Alpin – 2006 Archaeological Investigations and Management Plan, prepared by James Lee and Richard Hunter for Hunter Research
<b>Appendix M</b>	Glen Alpin – 2016 Appraisal of Real Property, prepared by Integra Realty Resources (excluding Addendum B's 2006 Archeological Investigation and the 2005 Feasibility Report as these were previously included)
<b>Appendix N</b>	Hurstmont – Property Detail Card
<b>Appendix O</b>	Hurstmont – Property Record Cards
<b>Appendix P</b>	Hurstmont – Tax Map
<b>Appendix Q</b>	Hurstmont – Construction Report from the Township of Harding
<b>Appendix R</b>	Hurstmont – 2011 Deed Purchase to Harding Holdings, LLC

## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to determine whether two properties within the Township of Harding, shown on the Redevelopment Study Area Map (Figure 1), referred to herein as the "Study Area", qualify as an "area in need of redevelopment" as defined in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL). This report is written pursuant to Section 6 of the LRHL, which provides the following:

- 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 Section 5 of P.L 1992/c.79 (C.40A:12A-5)... The governing body of a municipality shall assign the conduct of the investigation and hearing to the planning board of the municipality
- After completing its hearing on this matter, the planning board shall recommend that the delineated area, or any part thereof, be determined or not be determined, by the municipal governing body to be a redevelopment area. After receiving the recommendation of the planning board, the municipal governing body may adopt a resolution determining that the delineated area or any part thereof, is a redevelopment area.

The Township Committee of Harding has directed the Planning Board, through TC Resolution 18-196 adopted November 19, 2018, to conduct an investigation to determine whether certain properties within the Township are in need of redevelopment according to statutory criteria (see Appendix A – Township Committee Resolution). The properties identified for investigation are Lot 2 in Block 27 and Lot 1 in Block 34 on the Township's Tax Maps. The properties are located on Mount Kemble Road (Route 202) at the intersection with Tempe Wick Road. Together, the lots measure 29.44 acres.

The Redevelopment Study Area Map (see Figure 1) constitutes a "map showing the boundaries of the proposed redevelopment area and the location of the various parcels of property included therein." The map and this Study serve as the "statement setting forth the basis for the investigation which is required by Section 6(b) of the LRHL" (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6).

## Criteria for Redevelopment Area Designation

The criteria contained in Section 5 of the LRHL that were considered in evaluating the Study Area are the following:

- a. 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.
- b. The discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such buildings; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.

- g. In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act," P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) 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 pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). The municipality shall not utilize any other redevelopment powers within the urban enterprise zone unless the municipal governing body and planning board have also taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements prescribed in P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) for determining that the area is in need of redevelopment or an area in need of rehabilitation and the municipal governing body has adopted a redevelopment plan ordinance including the area of the enterprise zone.
- h. The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.

Furthermore, Section 3 of the LRHL permits the inclusion of parcels that do not meet the criteria if they are necessary for the effective redevelopment of the area, stating:

"A redevelopment area may include lands, buildings, or improvements which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area in which they are a part."

## **Township of Harding Master Plan**

### **2018 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan**

Harding Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was adopted by the Township Planning Board as an element of the Master Plan on December 17, 2018 ("December 2018 HEFSP"). The December 2018 HEFSP effectuates two Court-approved settlement agreements; one between the Township and Fair Share Housing Center ("FSHC") and a second between the Township and Mt. Kemble Associates. Both settlement agreements address the Township's obligation to meet its "fair share" of the regional housing need.

In accordance with the Court-approved settlement agreement with FSHC, the December 2018 HEFSP recommends the Study Area be evaluated as an "area in need of redevelopment" for the development of a 250-unit/bed Continuing Care Retirement Community ("CCRC") on the Hurstmont section of the Study Area. This recommendation includes the preservation of the Glen Alpin structure.



## Evaluation of the Study Area for Conformity with Redevelopment Area Criteria

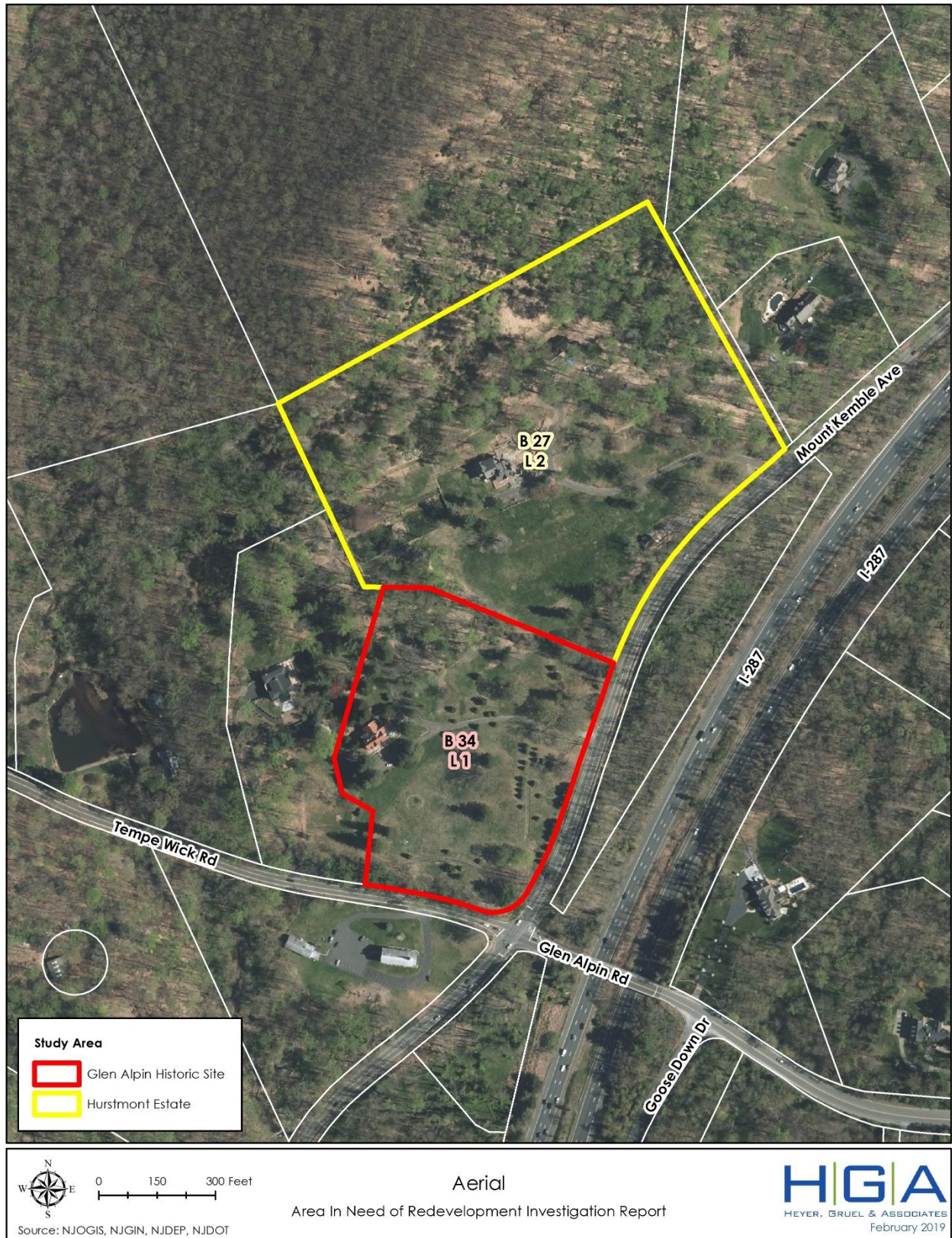
An analysis of the Study Area's existing land use, physical characteristics, history, and accessibility was conducted using:

- Tax maps and GIS data of the Township of Harding, including the Study Area
- Aerial photos of the Study Area
- Tax and ownership records of the Study Area
- Township of Harding Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, adopted December 2018
- Township of Harding Building Department files
- Floor plans of the existing buildings
- Field inspections of the Study area and its surroundings on January 8, 2019
- Deed filings for both properties
- Historical resources, photographs, and maps provided by Mary Prendergast and the Harding Township Historical Society
- "Glen Alpin A Corner of History," 2009, printed for the Harding Township Historical Society and written by Barbara J. Brennan
- 2003 Phase I Environmental Study of the Glen Alpin property, prepared by Ecosystems Strategies, Inc.
- 2005 Feasibility Report of the Glen Alpin property, prepared by Watson & Henry Associates
- 2006 Archeological Investigations and Management Plan for the Glen Alpin property, prepared by Hunter Research
- 2012 and 2013 applications and approval for development at the Hurstmont Site
- 2013 Environmental Impact Assessment, prepared by Schommer Engineering, Inc., in connection with the major subdivision application for the Hurstmont property
- 2016 Appraisal of Real Property for the Glen Alpin property, prepared by Integra Realty Resources Northern New Jersey

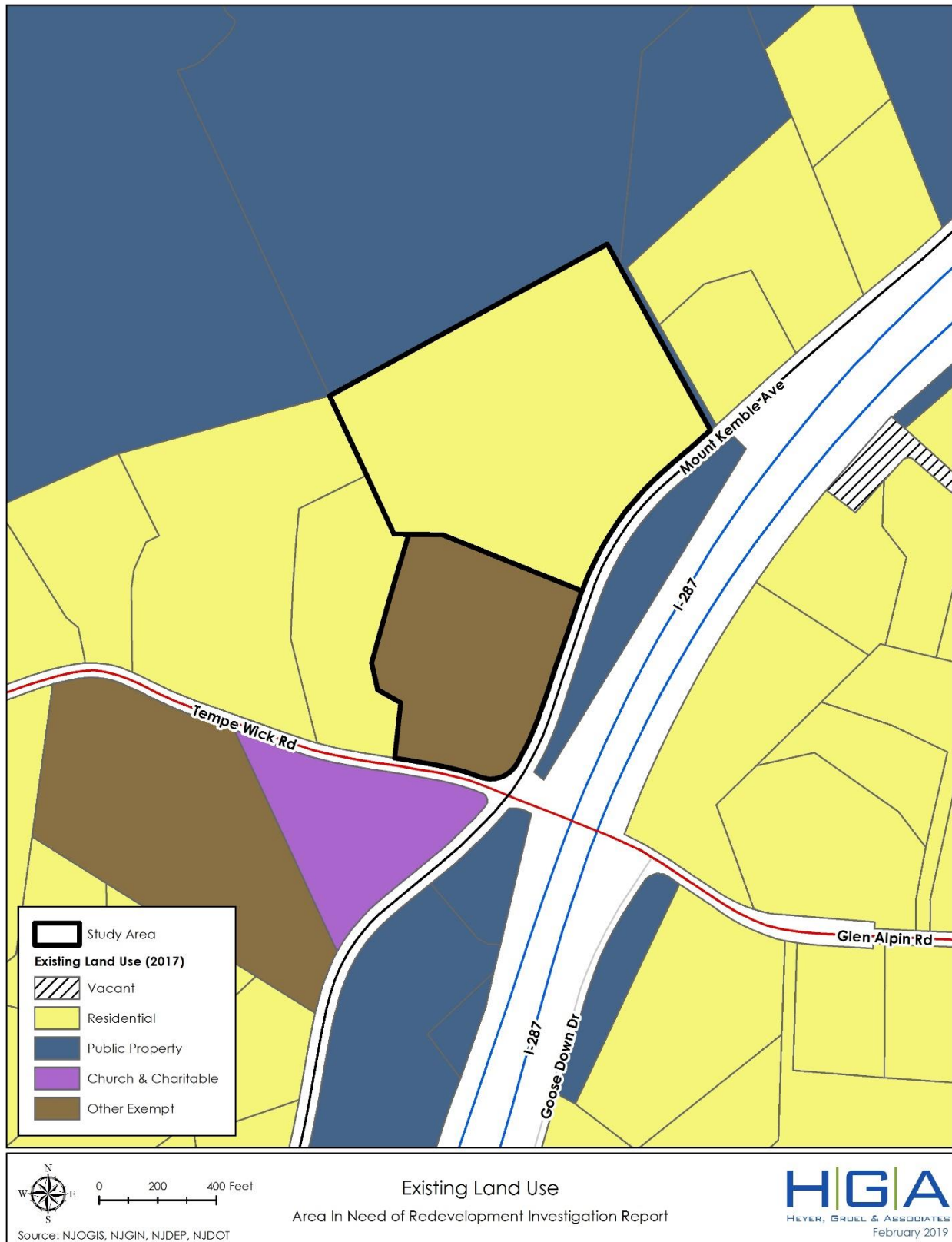
Glen Alpin Property	
Tax Assessment Data	
Block	34
Lot	1
Owner	TOWNSHIP OF HARDING / HARDING LAND TR
Owner Address	Blue Mill Rd Box 666 New Vernon, NJ 07976
Property Address	685 Mt. Kemble Avenue Harding Township, NJ 07960
Lot Area	9.57 acres
Assessment (2019)	
Land Value	\$439,300
Improvements	\$1,735,000
Total	\$2,174,300

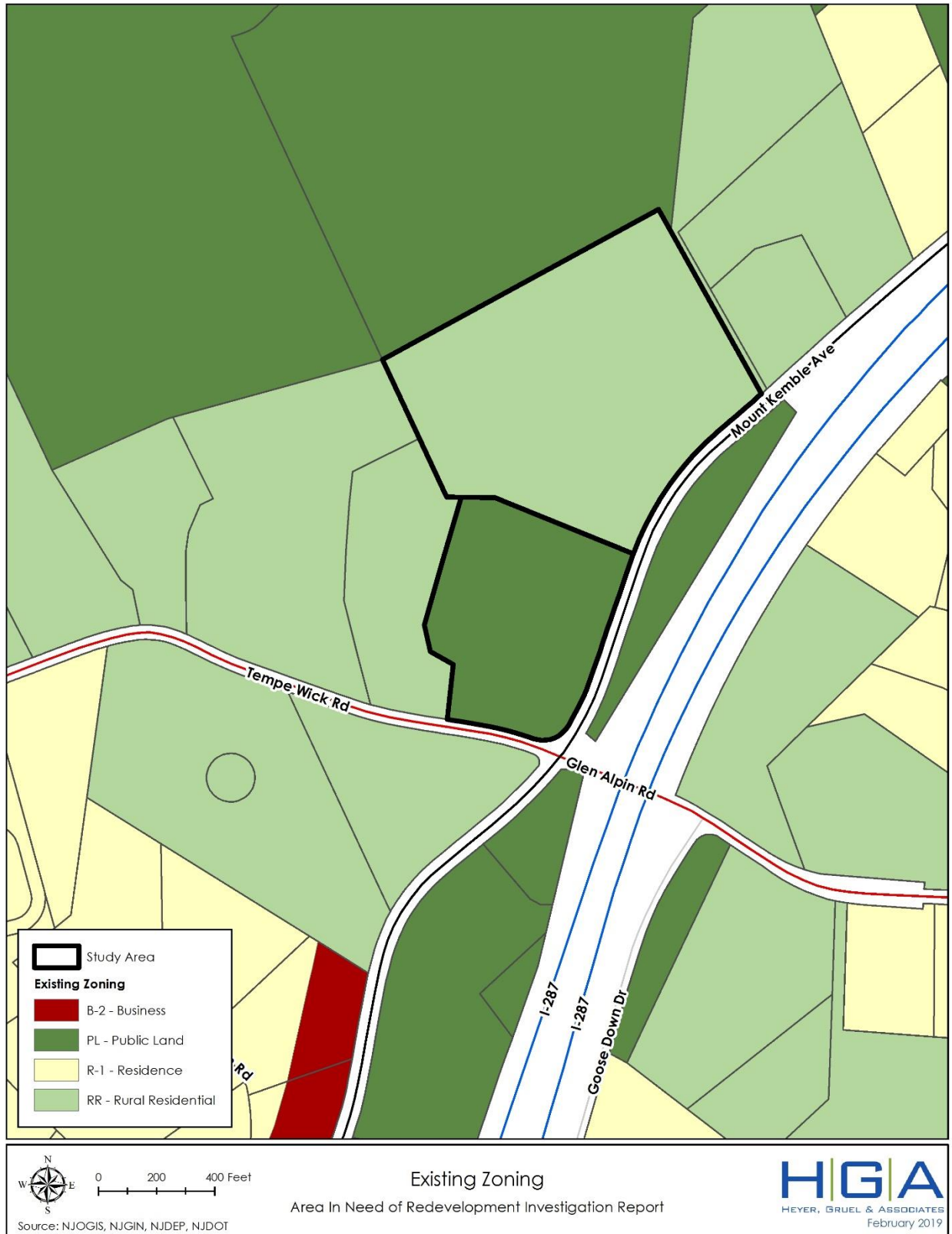
Hurstmont Property	
Tax Assessment Data	
Block	27
Lot	2
Owner	HARDING HOLDINGS PM, LLC, %P DORNE
Owner Address	105 Maple Avenue Morristown, NJ 07960
Property Address	679 Mt. Kemble Avenue Harding Township, NJ 07960
Lot Area	19.87 acres
Assessment (2019)	
Land Value	\$696,800
Improvements	\$1,747,500
Total	\$2,444,600

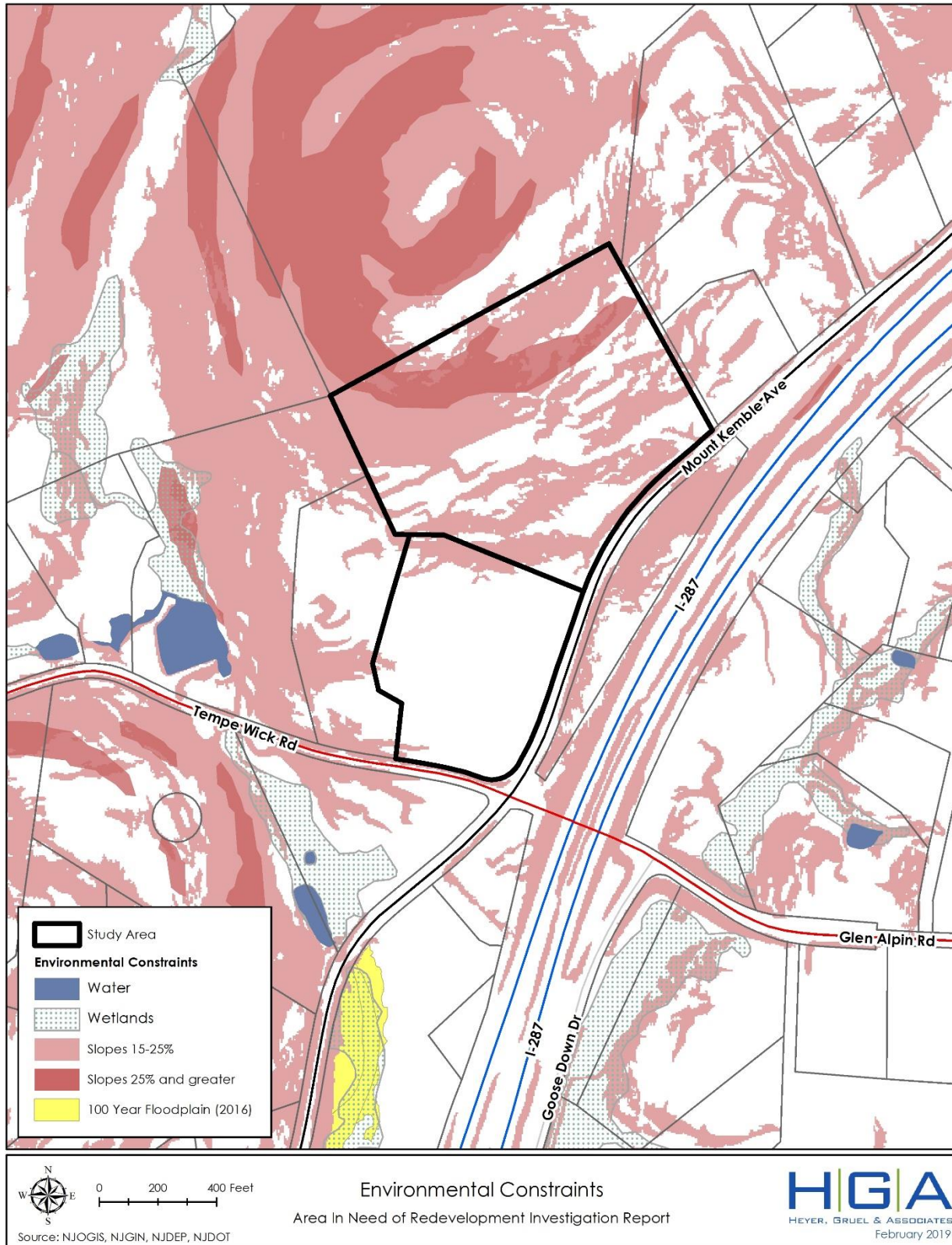
## Maps of Study Area



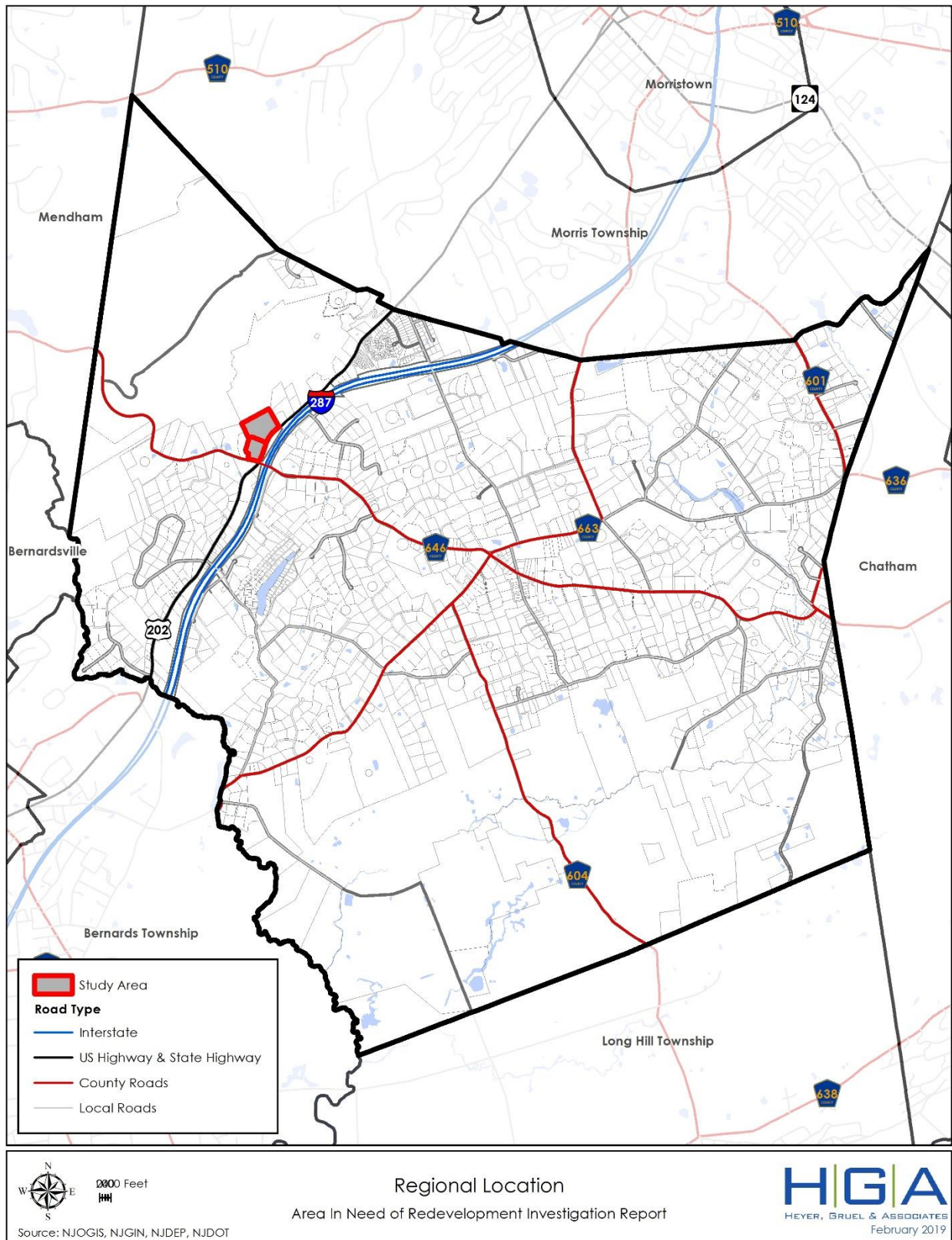












## Study Area and Location

The Township of Harding is a community of roughly 3,887 residents,<sup>1</sup> representing an area of 20.4 square miles in the southern section of Morris County. The Township is surrounded by Mendham Township to the west, Morris Township to the north, Chatham Township to the east, Long Hill Township to the south, and Bernards Township and Bernardsville Borough in Somerset County to the southwest. The majority of the land use in Harding Township is single-family residential and farmland, with small clusters of commercial located along the Route 202 corridor and within the Historic Village Business District. Two major thoroughfares, Route 202 and Interstate 287, bisect the Township in its northern section, connecting Bernards Township with Morris Township.

The Study Area is located on the west side of the Route 202 corridor, roughly halfway between Bernards Township and Morris Township, at the corner of Tempe Wick Road. The Area is composed of Block 34 Lot 1 (685 Mt. Kemble Avenue) and Block 27 Lot 2 (679 Mt. Kemble Avenue). The two properties total 29.44 acres with 679 Mt. Kemble Avenue comprising 19.87 acres and 685 Mt. Kemble Avenue comprising 9.57 acres. The Study Area is surrounded by single-family residences as well as the Morristown Seventh-day Adventist Church. Mt. Kemble Avenue creates the eastern boundary and Tempe Wick Road creates the southern boundary of the Area. Block 34 Lot 1 is within the PL Public Land Zone, which permits administrative buildings and installations, libraries, historical buildings, cultural or community centers, public schools, parks, playfields, playgrounds, conservation purposes, recreational uses, educational facilities, garages to house municipal equipment, and any other public uses, buildings, and structures. Block 27 Lot 2 of the Study Area is within the RR Rural Residential Zone, which permits single-family residential as well as farming. Both properties are contributing properties to the Tempe Wick Road Historic District, which were placed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places on June 26, 2000 and on the National Register of Historic Places on August 24, 2000.

The two properties are each developed with large, single-family structures and associated improvements and accessory structures. Both properties represent a tie to Harding's past as each has its roots in families important to the Township's evolution and history. Both properties can trace their roots back to a land purchase in 1751 by Peter Kemble, a member of New Jersey's governing council in the mid-1700s.

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<sup>1</sup> 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Glen Alpin – 685 Mt. Kemble Avenue Block 34 Lot 1

### *Property Description*

685 Mt. Kemble Avenue (Block 34 Lot 1) is locally known as the "Glen Alpin" property and is located directly on the corner of Mt. Kemble Avenue (U.S. Route 202) and Tempe Wick Road. The existing house is set far back from the street, approximately 500 feet from Mt. Kemble Avenue and 370 feet from Tempe Wick Road. A large yard and landscaped area sit between the house and the two roadways. The small Kemble family burial ground is still located on site, toward the southern boundary of the property. North of the main house is a six-bay, single-story, cement block, garage.

The remnants of a loop driveway can be seen in both aerial photos and during the site visit. This former loop road has entrances onto Mt. Kemble Avenue at two locations. The first and southernmost entrance being at the intersection of Mt. Kemble Avenue and Tempe Wick Road, and the second being approximately 500 feet north of the intersection. When the property was subdivided in the 1970s a portion of the original looped driveway was separated from Lot 1 and included on the property to the west at 508 Tempe Wick Road. A map from 1915 shows the southern driveway entrance as another central point at the Mt. Kemble/Tempe Wick intersection (see Figure 1 below). This southern entrance has now been all but abandoned. Any modern access to the property is from the northern driveway.



The property slopes upwards from the southeast corner to the northwest corner with a steep incline behind the house and a steep drop-off along the southern boundary toward Tempe Wick Road.

Figure 1. Detail of the 1915 Map of Glen Alpin, prepared by F. S. Tainter, Engineer;  
Courtesy of the Harding Township Historical Society



### *A Brief History of the Site and its Structures*

The original house on this property was built in the 1750s by the Kemble family and was moved to the property north of the Study Area (667 Mt. Kemble Avenue) in 1846. The current structure was constructed in the late 1840s in its place by the Hoyt family. The gothic-revival house gained its current name when in 1885 the property was bought by David Hunter McAlpin, a tobacco manufacturer from New York. The existing 2 ½-story structure now measures approximately 14,000 square feet. There were several add-ons over the years after David McAlpin purchased the site. When David McAlpin took over the property, porches and a conservatory were added. Additionally, a covered pantry behind the kitchen and a ground floor detached laundry building as well as bathrooms on the second floor were added during this time. In the early 1900s, David McAlpin's son, Charles added a one-story study/library behind the kitchen and next to the living room.

The property transferred ownership again in 1940, this time purchased by Doris Mercer, also known as Princess Farid-es-Sultaneh, or simply "Princess." Princess removed the horse stables that were at the rear of the house and in their place built a six-car garage.

A South Orange real estate developer, named Christopher DeCarlo bought the house and property in 1965 and enclosed the area between the laundry room and the kitchen and added another room in front of the laundry room. This new room was used as a caretaker's apartment from the 1960s to the 1990s. In 1970, DeCarlo subdivided the property and built a new house on the new lot to the west. He maintained the Glen Alpin house for use by his business. Bathrooms were added to the second floor in the 1990s. In the 1995, DeCarlo submitted an application for a major site plan and conditional use variance to convert the Glen Alpin site into the "Chapel at Glen Alpin." In 1996, however, DeCarlo withdrew his request to construct the chapel.

The property went through one more set of owners, Liang-Bin Jean and Su-Hsiang Jean beginning in 1999. In October 2004 the Township and the Harding Land Trust acquired the property for \$1,400,000 to be used as open space. Harding Township now owns 85.71% of the property and the Harding Land Trust, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving natural areas and farmland within the Township, owns the remaining 14.29%. Funds to purchase the property came from Harding's Open Space Trust (HOST), the Harding Land Trust, the Morris County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, the Morris County Park Commission, and the New Jersey State Green Acres. As the house stands today, it contains 22 rooms on 3 floors plus a basement, for a total of 14,000 square feet. The property has diminished in size over the centuries to the current 9.57 acres. Much of the original Kemble property was subdivided off to be developed as other residences or donated to the Morristown National Historic Park.

### *Current Status of the Site*

Since the Township and Land Trust took over ownership of the Glen Alpin property, the following work has been completed on the house: a roof replacement, chimney restoration, lighting protection outfit, new alarms, replacement/installation of a new HVAC system, removal of asbestos on all floors, reinforcement of the first floor structure, and replacement of electrical wiring.

While a significant amount of money has been invested in the mansion, the structure continues to show signs of deterioration. The fascia along the roofline of the northeast addition as well as the fascia above the front door are falling off. The masonry wall around the front patio and steps is crumbling, and the front steps themselves are decaying. There are several displaced steps that are deteriorating. Additionally, both interior rooms and exterior walls exhibit significant water damage.

In accordance with the Appraisal Report, prepared by Integra Realty Resources (appraisal dated October 26, 2016, report dated August 31, 2017) major features that still need work include upgrading and/or replacing the entire plumbing systems/fixtures, adding an ADA bathroom, installing a septic system, and restoring the exterior masonry walls, windows, and foundations. The Appraisal Report also cites additional needed cosmetic upgrades and renovations that include remodeling the kitchen and bathrooms to bring them up to current market standards.

The property previously received water from a lateral line from a public water supply line in Tempe Wick Road. A portion of the line is shared with the property to the west but splits off at a pit closer to the roadway. According to the Superintendent of the Township's Department of Public Works, Tracy Toribio, the water to Glen Alpin was shut off because the waterline froze and burst. The waterlines are compromised and would have to be replaced, as would the plumbing within the building itself, in order for the house to have water. Mr. Toribio also noted that the old, cast iron sanitary waste pipes in the basement were rotting and leaking, and so those were cut off as well. There is an old cesspool, located in the front yard, as shown on a survey of the property.

The property is subject to several deeds of easement. The first being with the adjacent property owners to the west. At the time of the 2004 sale of the property from Liang-Bin Jean and Su-Hsiang Jean to the Township of Harding and the Harding Land Trust, an access easement was placed along the waterline that provides water to both the Glen Alpin house and the residence of Liang-Bin and Su-Hsiang Jean to the west. That easement includes 10 feet on either side of the waterline for access and maintenance.

There is additionally a conservation restriction agreement with the NJ DEP, dated October 19, 2004 and recorded October 25, 2004 that covers approximately 6.4 acres of the site for Green Acres.

The purpose of this easement was to preserve the property in its natural state and maintain the property for active and passive recreational purposes.

The third easement is an easement agreement mandated by the County, dated October 19, 2004 and recorded October 25, 2004, ensuring the preservation of the existing structure. This easement comprises approximately 3.2 acres of the property.

The entire property is listed on the Township's Recreational and Open Space Inventory (ROSI). As of this Study, the Township has begun the process of seeking a diversion for the site. Should the Township be granted the diversion for the Glen Alpin property, the property would then be able to be used for purposes other than recreation and conversation purposes. The Township is not seeking to remove the historic easements that are in place and intends to preserve the historic mansion and ensure a permanent public access easement for the trail located towards the rear of the property.

## **Hurstmont – 679 Mt. Kemble Avenue Block 27 Lot 2**

### ***Property Description***

The second property that comprises the Study Area is 679 Mount Kemble Avenue. This property is colloquially known as the Hurstmont property. Similar to Glen Alpin, the Hurstmont structure is set back approximately 475 feet from Mt. Kemble Avenue. Hurstmont has a single driveway entrance, approximately 950 feet north of Glen Alpin's northern driveway entrance. There is a considerable grade change from Mt. Kemble Avenue to the house, allowing the residence to sit high up and overlook the tops of the trees. This grade change continues behind the house and into the Jockey Hollow National Historic Park. According to the February 8, 2013 Environmental Impact Assessment that was prepared in connection with the major subdivision application for this property, the slopes range from 1% to greater than 30%, with the majority of the site featuring slopes greater than 8%.

There are three structures on the site: the 17,000 square-foot central mansion; a small, one-story frame dwelling near the front of the property known as the "playhouse"; and a barn-like structure, known as the "carriage home," that appears to be two stories in height, located toward the rear of the property. The mansion and the carriage home are almost completely destroyed. The mansion is missing its entire east wing (due to a partial demolition process) and the carriage home remains in significant disrepair. The single driveway connects the three structures. There are additional foundation and masonry walls scattered throughout the property. To the southwest of the mansion is an area enclosed by masonry walls that used to be a formal garden. Behind the formal garden to the north are the remains of a greenhouse.

### *A Brief History of the Site and its Structures*

The original house was constructed in 1886 for David McAlpin's only daughter, Adelaide and her husband, James Tolman Pyle. At this time, the house was on the same, large property as the Glen Alpin house. It wasn't until 1892 that David McAlpin subdivided the property and conveyed 17.61 acres of the property, including the 1886 house, to his daughter Adelaide. Adelaide and James Pyle chose to redesign the home at the turn of the century to better reflect their social status, and the new, lavish home was completed in 1903. Stanford White of the prominent architecture firm, McKim, Mead and White designed the new home, which was built directly on top of the foundation of the 1886 home. The firm McKim, Mead and White was known for gilded age masterpieces, designed for socialites of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In its heyday, the home boasted some 30 rooms that were detailed with antique crowned molding, plaster designed ceilings, marble hearths, lavish tapestries, and Moravian Tile. The stylish home was even featured in the June 1907 edition of American Homes and Gardens.

The Pyle family owned the house until 1943 when it was purchased by Gerhard and Gladys Wagner, who owned the estate until 1982. At that point Edith and Sidney Kurlan purchased the home and property. They owned the property up until 2011 when Harding Holdings, LLC ("Harding Holdings"), the current owner, acquired the estate.

### *Current Status of the Site*

After Harding Holdings purchased the property, the entity received demolition permits and began a renovation and demolition process of the extravagant, but somewhat neglected estate. The in-ground swimming pool was removed relatively quickly after the purchase of the property and upgrades to the electrical service were made to the two accessory structures. Later, the entire eastern wing of the mansion was removed as well as the exterior porch. The carriage home located toward the rear of the property as well as the playhouse (the small structure located toward the entrance of the driveway) have also begun to be demolished. Demolition ceased, however, and as of this Study, all of the structures on the site remain shells of their former selves, in unlivable conditions. The dilapidation of the structures on the site is furthered by the fact that the no one has lived on the property for over 20 years. The years of neglect had effects on the structures well before the demolition process began.

### *Previous Approvals for Site*

The current owner, Harding Holdings, was granted a series of approvals from the Township's Board of Adjustment between 2012 and 2013. The Board of Adjustment adopted a resolution on November 15, 2012 that memorialized the decision made at the October 18, 2012 hearing

granting the applicant a d(5) variance for an increase in density over what is permitted in the RR Rural Residential Zone. The applicant received 'd' variance relief to construct 4 dwelling units on 4 proposed subdivided lots. The approval was conditioned upon receiving subdivision approval for the 4 proposed lots as well as any additional 'c' and 'd' variance approvals that may be necessary. The 2012 approval also included a conservation easement, intended to preclude development of the open hillside, with a depth ranging from 160' feet to 600 feet. The applicant planned to reduce the size of the mansion to be suitable for a modern-day single-family home.

Via a resolution dated April 18, 2013, the Board of Adjustment granted the applicant site plan approval along with numerous 'c' variances for the proposed 4-unit development, including setbacks, heights, location of a swimming pool, maintenance of the existing accessory structure (known as the "playhouse" and located along the driveway leading up to the mansion), and the retention of a greenhouse as an accessory structure. The April 2013 approval was once again conditioned upon receiving preliminary and final major subdivision approval for the 4 proposed lots.

On June 20, 2013, the Board of Adjustment approved the Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision of the property. Two of the four lots were approved at just over 5 acres, whereas the other two were just under 5 acres (5 acres being the minimum for the zone). Each of the four properties would be serviced by individual subsurface sewage disposal systems. Two other areas of the property, totaling approximately 0.37 acres, would be conveyed to the New Jersey Department of Transportation for road right-of-way.

The grant of variances provided that the relief would remain in effect for the two-year period of statutorily vested rights, applicable to the subdivision approval. This meant that they were set to expire on June 19, 2015. The subdivision was not perfected, and the applicant subsequently asked for two, one-year extensions of time of approvals, the first through June 2016 and the second through June 2017. The applicant did not ask for a third extension of time, and the 2012 and 2013 approvals have thus expired. The proposed conservation easement was not formalized and the 0.37 acres was not conveyed to the NJDOT.

## Area in Need of Redevelopment Criteria

This Redevelopment Study finds that Block 34 Lot 1 (Glen Alpin) of the Study Area meets the requirements to be designated as an "area in need of redevelopment" under the "e" and "d" criteria as established by Section 5 of the LRHL

The "e" criterion states:

"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."

The "d" criterion states:

"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."

This Redevelopment Study finds that Block 27 Lot 2 (Hurstmont) of the Study Area meets the requirements to be designated as an "area in need of redevelopment" under the "a" and "d" criteria as established by Section 5 of the LRHL

The "a" criterion states:

"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."

The "d" criterion states:

"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."

## Block 34 Lot 1 – Glen Alpin Site

**e. 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.**

The Glen Alpin site has a condition of diverse ownership, as it has been owned by both the Township (85.71% ownership) and the nonprofit organization known as the Harding Land Trust (14.29% ownership) since 2004. The property is additionally the subject of three easements. The first being with the neighboring property owners to share access and maintenance to the waterline. The second easement being a conservation with the DEP, and the third being a preservation easement with the County regarding the mansion itself. The entire property is additionally on the Township's ROSI.

The intention of the 2004 purchase by the two entities was to protect the building and land and to convert the property into a cultural resource. While a significant amount of work has been put into the restoration of the mansion, the partnership has not been able to prevent the house from deteriorating. Thus, the property is in a stagnant condition whereby it is unable to fulfill its intended role as a productive cultural resource within the Township. The physical condition of the property exhibits evidence of deterioration, including falling fascia, water damage, both to the exterior and interior, as well as crumbling front steps and masonry work. The house additionally has no access to sewer or water. While work has been done on the property by the two entities, the structure remains stagnant and in a deteriorating state.

The property's listing on the ROSI limits the potential involvement of a private redeveloper and restricts what can be undertaken on the property. This is a condition of title that discourages the undertaking of improvements and contributes to the stagnant and unproductive condition of the property.

The partnership between the Township and the Land Trust has not been able to adequately restore and maintain the property and prevent its ongoing deterioration. As a result, the property remains in a state of stagnancy and unproductivity that is detrimental to the economic and social welfare of the community. The attempted restoration of the property has been unable to provide

the valuable social and cultural resource that the property potentially represents. The general welfare of the community would be furthered by the redevelopment of this property.

**d. 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.**

Due to a lack of much needed investment and maintenance, the Glen Alpin mansion is deteriorating and obsolete. There is significant evidence of dilapidation, including water damage to both the interior and exterior of the building, fascia damage around the front and side of the building, and masonry damage around the front patio and stairway. The front stairs are crumbling, and steps have dislodged. In accordance with Mr. Toribio, the Superintendent of the Township's Department of Public Works, there is currently no water or sewer connection for the house. The waterline froze and burst, and the entire plumbing system of the house would need to be replaced in order to make it habitable. The 2016 Appraisal Report supports Mr. Toribio's first-hand account. The building's sanitary waste pipes in the basement were cracked and leaking, and therefore that connection was cut off as well. In accordance with Mr. Toribio and the 2016 Appraisal Report, a new septic system would need to be designed and installed to bring the building and property up to current standards. There is an existing cesspool in the front yard that has not been used since the house was last occupied, over 20 years ago. This ever-worsening dilapidation hinders the building from being used for its intended purposes and is detrimental to the welfare of the community.

While the original purpose of this structure was a single-family dwelling, the house has long been devoid of a residential tenant. More recently, the Township of Harding and the Harding Land Trust (dual owners of the property) attempted to restore the mansion and convert it into a cultural resource for public use. However, this intended use has not come to fruition. A considerable amount of work was put into that restoration process without any return. The property and structure remain vacant and in disrepair. Additionally, the lack of appropriate water supply and sewer accompanied by the substandard plumbing and an out-of-date cesspool, make this property untenable as either a single-family house or a cultural resource. The ongoing deterioration is detrimental to both the historic building itself and the welfare of the community.



## Photos of the Glen Alpin Site



Front of house



Crumbling fascia above front door





Northeastern section of building: Deteriorating conservatory, crumbling fascia, evidence of water damage, and masonry disrepair

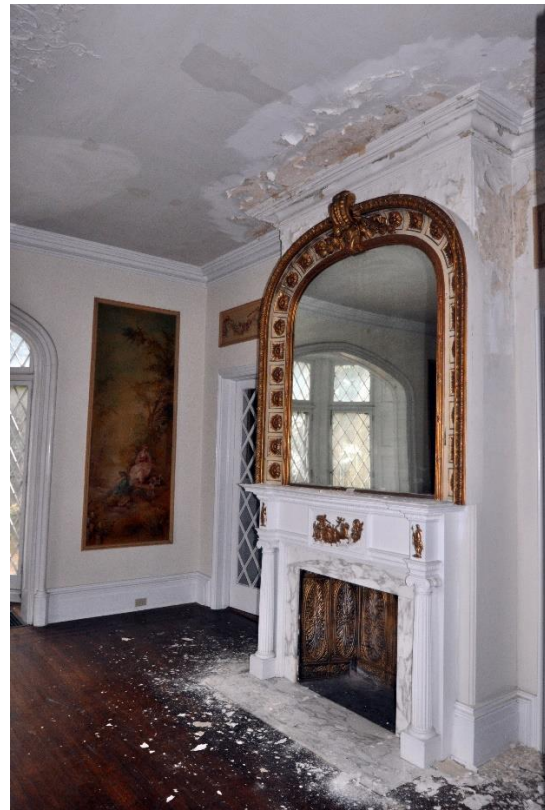


Front patio: Deteriorating masonry wall





Rear of building: Evidence of exterior water damage



Interior: Evidence of interior water damage



Evidence of interior damage



## Block 27 Lot 2 – Hurstmont Site

**a. 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.**

Due to the partial demolition and general deterioration of all structures, but particularly the mansion structure, the buildings on the property are substandard, dilapidated, and obsolescent. The mansion is literally an incomplete building as it has been sliced in half and is missing its entire eastern wing. Where the portion of the building has been removed, one can see the "half rooms" emerging from the interior of the house. The partial demolition has left the house uninhabitable.

In addition to the missing eastern wing, the remainder of the mansion is dilapidated and in significant disrepair. Most of the windows are broken or boarded up completely. The porch area, that no longer has a roof over it, is crumbling, and the foundation walls that once supported the eastern wing are falling down. The front steps are also overgrown and in significant disrepair.

There is additionally debris scattered around the exterior of the house including crumbled bricks and pieces of masonry walls as well as old construction equipment, tarps, and discarded tools. During the site visit, entrance into the mansion was strictly prohibited as the owner stated it is not safe to walk around within what remains of the building.

The mansion is substandard and obsolescent by way of a partial demolition process that has left the house dilapidated and untenable. The years of neglect that took place prior to the partial demolition have also left the house in an inadequate and dilapidated state. The ongoing dilapidation of the house is not conducive to a wholesome living condition.

**d. 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.**

The half-demolished mansion is obsolete and not conducive to reuse. The disuse of the building for many years caused it to enter a state of decay. Because of those years of neglect accompanied by the partial, yet significant, demolition process, the mansion represents a deleterious land use and the building is an obsolete residential structure. The building is so dilapidated and unsound that it is detrimental to the safety and general welfare of the community. Because such a significant amount of demolition has occurred, and the remaining structure is unkept and abandoned, the building has exceeded the possibility of adaptive reuse. Such an undertaking would not be economically or sustainably viable. The other structures onsite

are also in states of dilapidation and obsolescence. The rear "carriage house" has been almost completely stripped of all structural integrity and remains uninhabitable and unable to be reused. The playhouse is boarded up and shows signs of a crumbling roof.

### Photos of the Hurstmont Site



Crumbling and deteriorating masonry walls surrounding what was once the formal garden.



Close up of deteriorating masonry walls at the formal garden.





Front of house. Note the righthand side where the structure has been partially demolished.



Southwest corner of structure. Visible are broken and boarded up windows, damage to the exterior wall where the roof is missing over the patio, deteriorating masonry/foundation walls, water damage.





Missing eastern wing of building due to partial demolition. Also visible is the crumbling masonry/foundation wall that once supported this section of the house.



Missing east wing of building alongside various debris spread around the property.





Front of Carriage House; located at the rear of the property.



Rear of Carriage House; located at the rear of the property.





Playhouse; located at the front of the property; Visible are boarded up windows, debris, and a crumbling roof.



West wing of the house, showing broken windows, debris, the far left column is missing, and the far right column is in significant disrepair.

## Conclusion

There is substantial evidence to designate the Study Area (Block 34 Lot 1 "Glen Alpin" and Block 27 Lot 2 "Hurstmont") as an area in need of redevelopment according to the statutory criteria found in Section 5 of the LRHL. Block 34 Lot 1, the Glen Alpin site, qualifies under the 'e' criterion due to its condition of title and diverse ownership. The property is in a stagnant condition and has been unable to fulfill its intended role as a cultural resource. The Glen Alpin property also qualifies under the 'd' criterion as it shows significant signs of deterioration. The property also does not currently have access to water or sewer and is therefore untenable. Block 27 Lot 2, the Hurstmont property, qualifies under the 'a' criterion as the structure is substandard and dilapidated due to the partial demolition process that left the structure half destroyed. The substandard nature of the existing mansion is not conducive to wholesome living conditions. The Hurstmont property also qualifies under the 'd' criterion because, due to its partial demolition, the mansion is obsolete and not conducive to reuse.