

Environmental Evaluation Clears Way for University to Purchase Former Corporate HQ

In December 2016, Sacred Heart University, with the assistance of Pullman & Comley attorneys, purchased the 66-acre former General Electric world headquarters in Fairfield. The \$31.5 million purchase has been described by University President John J. Petillo as “...a transformational moment in the history of Sacred Heart University.” The University plans to use the property as an innovation campus; to expand its new School of Computing, which is focused on computer engineering, computer gaming and cybersecurity; and to develop programs in STEM fields such as health and life sciences, science and technology. The University will also move certain elements of its Jack Welch College of Business to the new campus, including its new hospitality management program.

Our environmental attorneys worked closely with Sacred Heart University Secretary and General Counsel, Michael D. Larobina, to ensure that the University had full access to the site to conduct comprehensive due diligence. With the assistance of the University’s environmental consultants, we evaluated the complex environmental issues related to the site, negotiated with the GE project team regarding state and federal compliance issues, including those under the Transfer Act and RCRA, and drafted documents that accurately reflected the agreement of the parties on the allocation of responsibility for compliance, which was especially important due to the post-closing obligations retained by GE. We also made recommendations to the University to significantly limit any environmental risk. Despite the complexities and size of this transaction, the parties were able to successfully close within approximately three months of the beginning of negotiations.

Professionals

Gary B. O'Connor

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