



## IMPORTANT NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION

Dear Resident:

I want to alert you to the Alcohol Beverage Control Board (ABC) expansion planned for your neighborhood at the northeast corner of Castle and 17<sup>th</sup> Street. **The ABC Board intends to demolish an entire block of affordable, historic homes in order to build a warehouse and large parking lot.** Historic Wilmington Foundation recently placed the ABC block on our 2008 Most Threatened Historic Places list. We are concerned that this proposal will negatively affect home values in your neighborhood.

Over the last nine months, the ABC Board has quietly purchased 10 houses and several commercial buildings by aggressively paying "future value for present value," according to the Board chairperson. While buying up the block and planning its demolition, the ABC Board has **never once consulted city planning staff** to understand the zoning appropriate to the block. A single inquiry would also have revealed that the proposed project is in an area surveyed and determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In the coming months, after further research is completed and public meetings held, your neighborhood will be submitted for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Along with recognizing the significance of your neighborhood's character, **this designation will allow you to use North Carolina and Federal tax credits for approved work on your property.** For additional information about your neighborhood's proposed historic district, please visit our website ([www.historicwilmington.org](http://www.historicwilmington.org)) for a recent story.

While the coming National Register designation will benefit you and honor the historic character of your neighborhood, the designation itself will not prevent the ABC Board's planned demolition. When our organization met with the ABC Board in May, we found that they have not reviewed their project with city planners, nor did they have any written plans. In fact, the ABC Board has yet to prove any demonstrable need for such expanded parking. Demolition of the houses can occur without oversight but, in order to redevelop a residential area, the city council must review and approve the project. It is hard to believe that a public agency -- authorized by the State of North Carolina to conduct public business and use public revenues -- can ignore public opinion and treat your historic neighborhood in this way.

The ABC Board projects will undoubtedly have a negative effect on your neighborhood. The ABC Board now owns several million dollars' worth of real estate without final approval to use the site for their expansion. The ABC Board has consistently demonstrated a lack of respect for this community, a lack of appreciation for the character of the city and a lack of concern for you as the residents of this neighborhood.

In a city known for its historic neighborhoods, no public or private organization should make plans for destroying historic resources without considering the community. Wilmington was recently recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of America's ***Dozen Distinctive Destinations***. When organizations like the ABC Board act so thoughtlessly, they destroy the very quality that makes Wilmington unique to her citizens and our visitors. I urge you to contact City Council and ask them to stop the ABC Board. We must send the message that our city's historic resources – and its citizens – are far more important than the convenience of a larger parking lot.

**If you are as concerned as we are, please take the next step: call your City Council Members ([council@wilmingtonnc.gov](mailto:council@wilmingtonnc.gov) or 341-7815) and ask them to help preserve your neighborhood.** Your family, your neighbors and your home resale value will all benefit from your time. Please call me if you have questions. Thank you!

Respectfully,

**George W. Edwards**

George W. Edwards  
Executive Director

Cc: A version of this letter has been mailed to local residents, Wilmington City Council, NH County Commissioners and State legislators.