



To protect and preserve the irreplaceable historic resources  
of Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear Region

March 9, 2021

New Hanover County Commissioners  
230 Government Center Drive  
Suite 175  
Wilmington, NC 28403

Dear Commissioners,

The Historic Wilmington Foundation greatly appreciates New Hanover County's commitment to enhancing our community's library and museum services. As an advocate for our region's irreplaceable historic resources, the Historic Wilmington Foundation prefers the county preserve the Belk-Beery Building and Borst Building located in the county-owned, downtown block. The Borst Building, constructed in 1926 and formerly the Register of Deeds Office, is a contributing structure in Wilmington's National Register Historic District.

Since the Borst Building is a contributing structure, loss of the Borst Building will have damaging repercussions to Wilmington's entire National Register Historic District. This National Register designation is currently at risk due to years of historic structures being demolished by neglect or storms, and loss of architectural details that strip buildings of their historic integrity. A spatial decrease in Wilmington's National Register Historic District could cost downtown properties economic benefits such as eligibility for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits. Thus, the Historic Wilmington Foundation respectfully requests that New Hanover County place a historic preservation easement managed by the Historic Wilmington Foundation on the Borst Building.

It is imperative that a historic preservation easement be placed on the Borst Building before a decision is rendered about the North Parcel's long-term ownership. A preserved Borst Building will serve as an asset to the North Parcel and will anchor the revitalized block into the historic district. Our organization has proudly managed historic preservation easements throughout our community for over fifty years. Historic preservation easements allow a property owner to retain private ownership of the property while ensuring the community does not lose the property's historic integrity. Preserving the Borst Building through an easement strengthens New Hanover County's commitment to the economic revitalization of downtown Wilmington.

Lastly, the Historic Wilmington Foundation respectfully requests to play a significant role during the design phase of this project. Including the Historic Wilmington Foundation's perspective in the design process will ensure the block's redevelopment contributes positively to Wilmington's National Register Historic District. Our organization looks forward to cooperating with the county, architect, and developer to create a block that increases our library and museum services while honoring Wilmington's rich history.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis John Gilbert".

Travis John Gilbert  
Executive Director