

# Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Historic Landmarks Commission

**Subject:** **Rezoning Petition Comments**

**To:** Charlotte Planning, Design & Development  
**From:** Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission  
**HLC Staff Contact:** Tommy Warlick  
**Date:** July 27, 2023

**Petition #/Petitioner:** 2023-042/Wilmore Preservation LLC

**Parcel ID #:** 11907801

**Location of Property:** Approximately 3.28 acres located on the north side of West Boulevard, east side of South Mint Street, and south side of West Kingston Avenue.

**Existing Zoning:** N1-D (HDO)

**Proposed Zoning:** MUDD-O (HDO)

## **Background Information**

As noted in Petitioner's site plan, the property in question encompasses the Wilmore Elementary School (circa 1925) and campus, a significant property within the Wilmore Historic District that was designated a local historic landmark by Charlotte City Council in 2018 upon the recommendation of the Historic Landmarks Commission ("HLC").

The historic school building was designed by Charlottean Louis H. Asbury, Sr., an architect of local and regional importance who was the first native North Carolinian to practice in-state as a professional architect and to be elected to the American Institute of Architects. The landmark designation covers both the interior and exterior of the building, as well as all land associated with tax parcel number 11907801. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Survey and Research Report on the Wilmore Elementary School," November 1, 2017, available at <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Wilmore-Elem-School-SR.pdf>; "Ordinance designating as an Historic Landmark a property known as the 'Wilmore Elementary School,'" Ordinance Books of the City Council of the City of Charlotte, Book 61, Page 423, May 21, 2018, available at <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Wilmore-Elem-School-Ord.pdf>.

Per N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160D-947, any alteration to a historic landmark requires the prior approval and issuance of a certificate of appropriateness ("COA") by the applicable preservation commission. The COA requirement applies equally to any alteration of the interior or exterior of a landmark structure where, as here, both elements of the structure are included within the

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landmark designation. To date, HLC has received no COA application from the Petitioner. Indeed, this rezoning petition is the first notice received by HLC concerning the contemplated alterations.

The proposed plans suggest potentially significant interior alterations, as the building would be reconfigured to accommodate up to 270 multi-family residential units as well as retail, office, and event venue space. Likewise, the plan proposes to alter the building's exterior by removing certain additions which, although not part of the original Asbury design, have been in place for more than fifty years and thereby acquired their own historical significance in connection with the existing building.

### **Impact of the Proposed Rezoning/Development**

The proposed project would substantially alter the interior and exterior of a local historic landmark.

### **Recommendations**

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education has an admirable preservation track record, with at least seven properties designated as local historic landmarks. Efforts to rehabilitate the Wilmore Elementary School sensitively in accordance with the statutorily-prescribed COA process – while serving the dual goals of retaining its historic features and meeting the needs for contemporary service – is recommended.