

DATE: February 23, 2010

PRESERVATION OF WILSON UPDATE

Preservation of Wilson is showing its strength in historic neighborhood revitalization with a record setting year. As 2009 closed out, the non-profit organization continues to work to overcome the long-standing problem of vacant and abandoned houses. They are focusing on the goals set forth in an aggressive plan of action while working with a detailed set of operating procedures.

1. EXPANDING REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES

Preservation of Wilson is currently marketing 21 historic properties. They have sold four properties with protective covenants and secured a buyer for the fifth house through its Restoration Partners Program.

2. GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

Preservation of Wilson is getting their message out by utilizing grant funding. They have received \$15,000 from the Marion Steadman Covington Foundation, \$590 from the NC Community Foundation, \$4,000 from BB&T Lighthouse Project and \$1,000 from Wilson Tourism Authority. Grant awards support marketing efforts, preservation revolving fund activities, and focusing on the Old Wilson Mile as a pilot area to gain better understanding of how to promote an economically strong residential historic district.

3. GROWING GRASSROOTS SUPPORT

Grassroots support is vital to the success of Preservation of Wilson and the future of Wilson's historic districts. The organization has still seen a jump in the number supporting its mission. Records show that in 2007 there were 61 benefactors; 2008 went to 152 and 2009 with 203. Supporters of Preservation of Wilson are invited guests to an Annual Garden Party held each May in celebration of National Preservation Month.

4. PROPERTIES SOLD

SOLD

315 Green Street in the Old Wilson Mile
Old Wilson Historic District

The Darden Douglas House, c. 1902, was sold in March 2009. Originally a Victorian single-family home with Colonial Revival details and later converted into two apartments, met great despair over the years. After sitting vacant and threatened with continued deterioration from

weather and neglect and listed for condemnation by the City of Wilson, is now under restoration. Construction is underway to change its use to an owner-occupied special events facility with a full service kitchen. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2011.

The buyer Gaynell Stallings is no stranger to this type of project. She has restored historic homes in Savannah, GA, and Annapolis, MD. The Savannah property was her first project. She then purchased and restored three more homes on Market Street in Annapolis, MD, one of the most historic streets in downtown near the Annapolis waterfront. The last property she restored in Annapolis was the last condemned property in the city. HGTV did a segment on the project on their TV show "Old Homes Restored," giving Stallings's work national attention. Stallings is the recipient of the Preservation of Wilson, 2009 Preservation Spirit Award.

Stallings is the owner of Park Place Interiors in Wilson. This purchase marks the fifth historic property that Stallings owns in Wilson. Wilson, NC has been designated with five historic districts on the National Register, and three are recognized as local districts.

SOLD

201 Bragg Street in the Old Wilson Mile
Old Wilson Historic District

The J. Will Gardner House, c. 1922, was sold in April 2009. Paul & Andrea Grigas, a retired couple from Nashua, New Hampshire, purchased the house. The two-story bungalow has been converted from three rental units back to a single family dwelling. Paul is a retired contractor.

The Grigas family learned about Wilson as Paul and Andrea were traveling home from a vacation in Venice, Florida. Andrea is a quilter and while on trips they visit communities looking for quilt shops and to discover the downtowns. The day the Grigas' drove through Wilson was the first day the SOLD sign was posted in front of the Darden Douglas House which closed on March 11th.

Paul contacted Preservation of Wilson to see if there were any other properties available. By the end of the work day, Paul and Andrea were sitting in the office of First Wilson Properties with agent Kelly Vick as he was writing an offer to purchase the house which recently went into foreclosure. The closing took place in less than 30 days and it all started with a SOLD Preservation of Wilson sign.

SOLD

107 Bragg Street in the Old Wilson Mile
Old Wilson Historic District

Sisters of Providence of St. Mary's Convent, c. 1940, was sold in September 2009 to Michael Grigas, son to the new owners of the Gardner House. Michael is skilled and educated in the carpentry trade working along his contractor father, Paul Grigas.

Originally a convent for St. Therese's Catholic Church then converted into three apartments and three sleeping rooms. The restoration project is to convert the structure into a four unit apartment complex. The restoration is expected to be completed by late 2010

SOLD

109 Bragg Street in the Old Wilson Mile
Old Wilson Historic District

Within the same property lines as the Convent, the Joseph J. Best House, c. 1920, was also sold to Michael Grigas. Originally a single family home and then donated to St. Therese's Catholic Church for use as a rectory and convent until the new facility was completed. Later the house was converted into two apartments. The restoration project is to convert the structure back into a single family home with completion date set for early 2010.

SOLD

210 Moss Street
Broad Kenan Historic District

The Mack Bass House built in 1913 is a colonial revival house which has been boarded up for years. It is located in an area in the downtown that has seen much investment in the recent years. The house overlooks the newly constructed Paul Berry Hickory Grove Park and has been purchased by a seasoned professional in the historic preservation field.

The house has been purchased by Percy and Veronica Kelley last week and they will return it to a single family residence. They have restored 40 old homes including early houses dating from 1765 to vintage homes up to 1948. Homes have ranged in size from 1,800 sq. ft. to 8,000 sq. ft. Their work has spanned several states including Georgia, Delaware, Virginia and North Carolina.

The Kelley's have been responsible for saving many North Carolina Landmarks that were near demolition. These include the Gregory House in Weldon, The Hoffman Mansion in Scotland Neck, The Archibald White House in Tarboro, the Robert Mann House in Whitakers, the Manor Hall home in Enfield, Crowell's Manor in South East Halifax and the Rich Square Hotel.

They have restored homes in Goldsboro, Kenly, Littleton, Rocky Mount, Elm City, three houses in Weldon and three in Scotland Neck.

The Kelley's were awarded the Gertrude S. Carraway Award of Merit from Preservation North Carolina in 2008 for their preservation efforts in several North Carolina downtowns.

The Kelley's respect and admire the work and vision by Preservation of Wilson. They look forward to being a part of this exciting time and wish to pursue other projects as well as volunteer to serve in any capacity to assist Preservation of Wilson in their efforts to promote historic communities.

5. GRANTS

Grants help to keep Preservation of Wilson on target. With the City of Wilson leading the effort with an administrative grant in the amount of \$150,000 over a three year period, Preservation of Wilson has been successful in seeking other funding opportunities.

NC Community Foundation made an award of \$590 to kick-off the *Old Wilson Mile* project as the first targeted area for Wilson's historic neighborhoods revitalization plan. A \$15,000 grant was received from the Marion Stedman Covington Foundation to continue support for the *Old Wilson Mile*. Wilson Tourism Authority granted \$1,000 for use in the development of a website. BB&T and their Lighthouse Project granted Preservation of Wilson \$4,000 in tools to prepare the necessary vacant houses for showing and computer equipment for marketing.

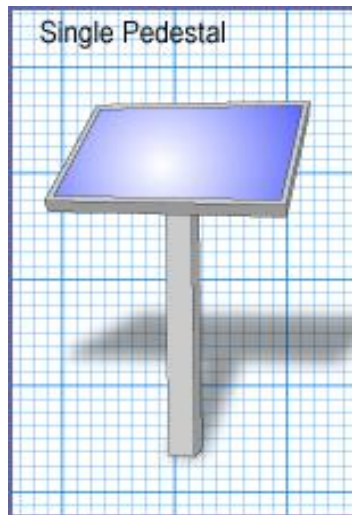
The New Year will bring newly set up POWER days. Now that BB&T has closed out their Lighthouse Project, Barton College students and volunteers will come out for scheduled POWER days – **Preservation of Wilson Economic Restructuring** days using the equipment donated by BB&T.

6. OLD WILSON MILE SIDEWALK MEDALLION PROGRAM

Preservation of Wilson is in the process of telling the Old Wilson Mile story by creating the Old Wilson Mile Sidewalk Medallion Program as a way to get folks back in the neighborhood and walking the area. Plaques will be in the sidewalk giving the program a special look and interest.

They are working with the City of Wilson to install bronze medallions to mark the Mile. In addition, an information pedestal will be installed to give historical detail to the Old Wilson District and mark the path of travel through the Mile. In the future significant houses will be identified and a printed brochure will be developed.

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7. IMPLEMENTATION OF A MARKETING PLAN

Preservation of Wilson's marketing plan has been created to attract local and out-of-town interest. You will see traditional real estate signage at each property, they advertise on their website at www.preservationofwilson.com, www.historicproperties.com and work with Preservation NC.

Ads have been placed in four magazines – Preservation NC, Our State, Victorian Homes and Cottages & Bungalows.

The March 2010 issue of This Old House has a one page write up about a property that Preservation of Wilson is marketing. Under the column Save This Old House the writer talks about the Joelda Terrace located at 219 Broad Street as an endangered property.