

# 100 BLOCK OF CHARLOTTE STREET

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# A PRESERVATION RESPONSE

We fully support the City's goal of higher density development along Charlotte Street, however, for the following reasons, we do not support the proposed development.



- 1** The large-scale demolition of homes and trees will be detrimental to the historic and natural character of the area.
- 2** The proposed development does not address equitable housing needs—more affordable housing units are lost than gained.
- 3** Preservation is a crucial tool in combating climate change and must be part of city planning efforts.
- 4** Reuse of existing historic structures, coupled with sensitive in-fill construction, encourages healthy growth and diverse economic opportunities.
- 5** Higher density can be realized along the Charlotte Street corridor without the negative impact of this proposed development.

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Adaptive reuse should be the default,  
and demolition a last resort.

Historic preservation encourages cities to build on the assets they have—unleashing the enormous power and potential of older buildings to improve health, affordability, prosperity, and well-being. Ultimately, it's the mix of old and new buildings, working together to fashion dense, walkable, and thriving streets, that helps us achieve a more prosperous, sustainable, and healthier future.

*- National Trust for Historic Places*

**1** The large-scale demolition of homes and trees will be detrimental to the historic and natural character of the area.



*Local Landmark,  
Patton-Parker  
House, immediately  
across the street  
from the proposed  
development*

Placemaking is an important part of any city planning process and contributes to the overall welfare of a community. A significant part of placemaking is understanding and utilizing the established resources that contribute to the character of an area. Community input is imperative to creating and enhancing places that will serve that community. In Asheville, the collective historic and natural resources are a major asset to the community and draw for the people visiting and moving to the area.

Neighborhoods are the soul of Asheville and should be included in all placemaking efforts.

*-Living Asheville:  
A Comprehensive Plan  
for Our Future*

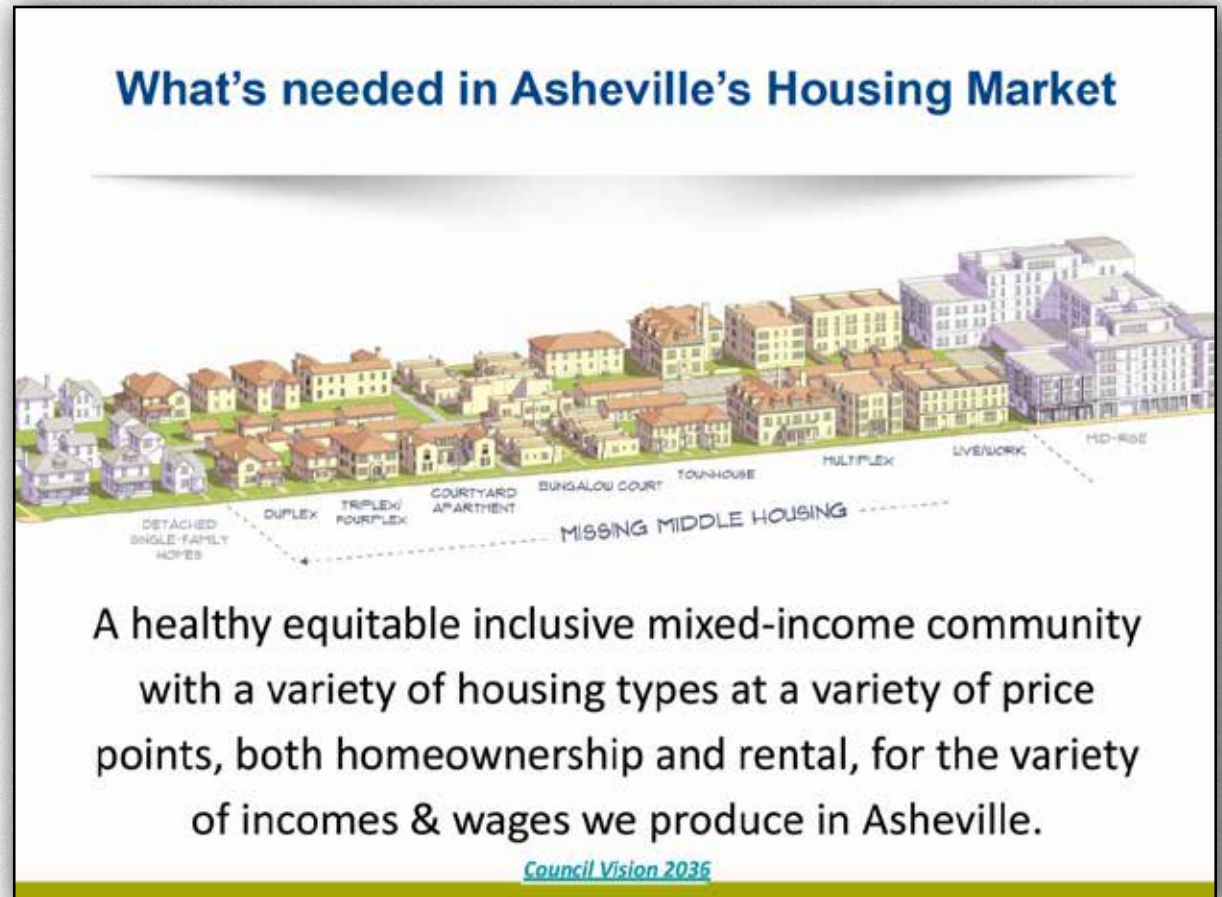
As a collection of stylish turn-of-the-century domestic buildings, Chestnut Hill is rivaled in western North Carolina only by her larger sister neighborhood to the west, the Montford Area National Register Historic District.

*- Chestnut Hill Historic District  
National Register Nomination*

## 2 The proposed development does not address equitable housing needs—more affordable housing units are lost than gained.

Asheville residents need affordable places to live, and unfortunately, this simple fact does not have a simple solution. What we do know is that historic districts offer more density and more diverse housing options than new construction. *Twenty-Four Reasons* sites a study that looked at Manhattan, Miami-Dade County, Nashville, San Antonio, Savannah and Los Angeles (known for being a low-density city) and across the board, historic districts offer more density than other residential neighborhoods.

In a recent affordable housing workshop presentation by the City of Asheville, the need for “middle housing” was highlighted. These are structures that work well as duplexes, triplexes and other multi-unit dwellings. The proposed development looks to demolish the exact housing options that the city has identified as missing.



Historic districts help to achieve public policy housing goals by providing housing options for a range of household sizes and incomes, while fostering a balance of neighborhood stability and healthy change.

- *Twenty-Four Reasons Historic Preservation is Good for Your Community*

*Two of the  
13 historic  
homes slated  
for demolition*



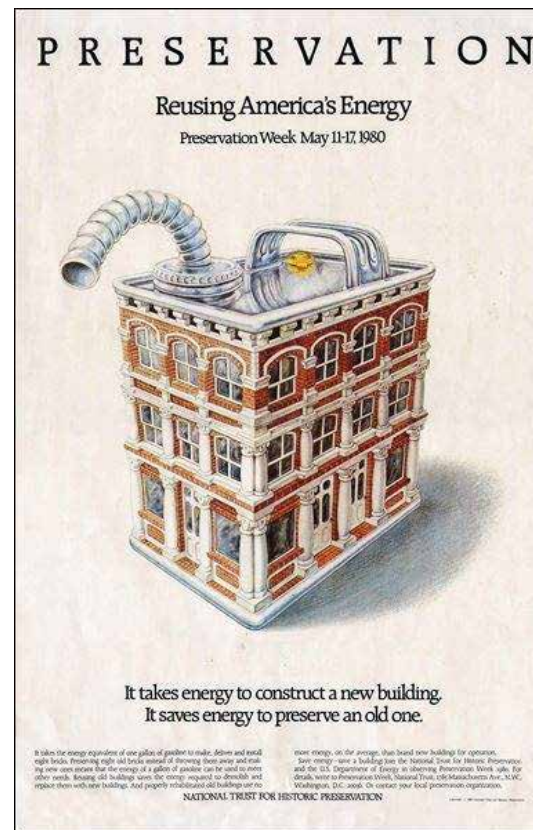
There are multiple causes for the housing affordability crisis, but two things are clear:

- 1) You cannot build new and rent or sell cheap, unless there are very deep subsidies or you build crap.
- 2) We are simultaneously tearing down what is affordable and building what is not.

Keeping older housing maintained and occupied, both in historic districts and elsewhere, needs to be a central strategy for housing affordability. The chances of a dwelling unit being razed and replaced by a more affordable unit is virtually non-existent.

*- Twenty-Four Reasons Historic Preservation  
is Good for Your Community*

### 3 Preservation is a crucial tool in combating climate change and must be part of city planning efforts.



*The greenest building is the one that is already built*

City planners must begin to recognize the important role of preservation in fighting climate change. The greenest building is the one that is already built! This is not only because historic buildings were often designed to take advantage of natural daylight, ventilation, and passive solar, but historic buildings also have something that new buildings do not: embodied energy. The concept of embodied energy—that is, all of the material and human energy consumed by the initial building process—is critical to understanding how historic architecture can help communities reduce their carbon consumption immediately. When the embodied energy of existing buildings is taken into account, demolition and reconstruction is almost never the most environmentally beneficial option.

*Examples of just a few successful adaptive reuse in the Charlotte Street community*



*The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse* found that building reuse almost always consumes less energy when compared to demolition and construction of new buildings, even energy efficient ones. Adaptive reuse not only reduces resource consumption, it also keeps enormous amounts of construction waste out of our landfills, and often preserves undeveloped land by encouraging the rehabilitation of already-developed land.

As a city, we need to think creatively about how our local communities and government programs can encourage property owners to seriously consider the short and long-term benefits of reuse and renovation before resorting to demolition and construction of “energy efficient” replacements.

## 4 Reuse of existing historic structures, coupled with sensitive in-fill construction, encourages healthy growth and diverse economic opportunities.

*Creative businesses flourish in older buildings and infill developments*



In addition to being less susceptible to economic downturn, historic districts are more likely to be home to new, small, local, and women and minority owned businesses, while new construction is much more likely to attract chain businesses.

Older business districts provide affordable, flexible space for entrepreneurs from all backgrounds. In Seattle and Washington, D.C., neighborhoods with a smaller-scaled mix of old and new buildings host a significantly higher proportion of new businesses, as well as more women and minority-owned businesses than areas with predominantly larger, newer buildings.

*-Older, Smaller, Better,  
National Trust for Historic Places*



*Small and local  
businesses thrive on  
Arlington Street*



The creative economy thrives in older, mixed-use neighborhoods. In Seattle and Washington, D.C., older, smaller buildings house significantly greater concentrations of creative jobs per square foot of commercial space. Media production businesses, software publishers, and performing arts companies can be found in areas that have smaller-scaled historic fabric.

Older, smaller buildings provide space for a strong local economy. In Seattle and Washington, D.C., streets with a combination of small, old and new buildings have a significantly higher proportion of non-chain restaurants and retailers, and in Seattle, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., areas of the city with older, smaller buildings host a significantly higher proportion of jobs in small businesses.

*-Older, Smaller, Better,  
National Trust for Historic Places*

*An example of open  
development areas  
along Charlotte Street*



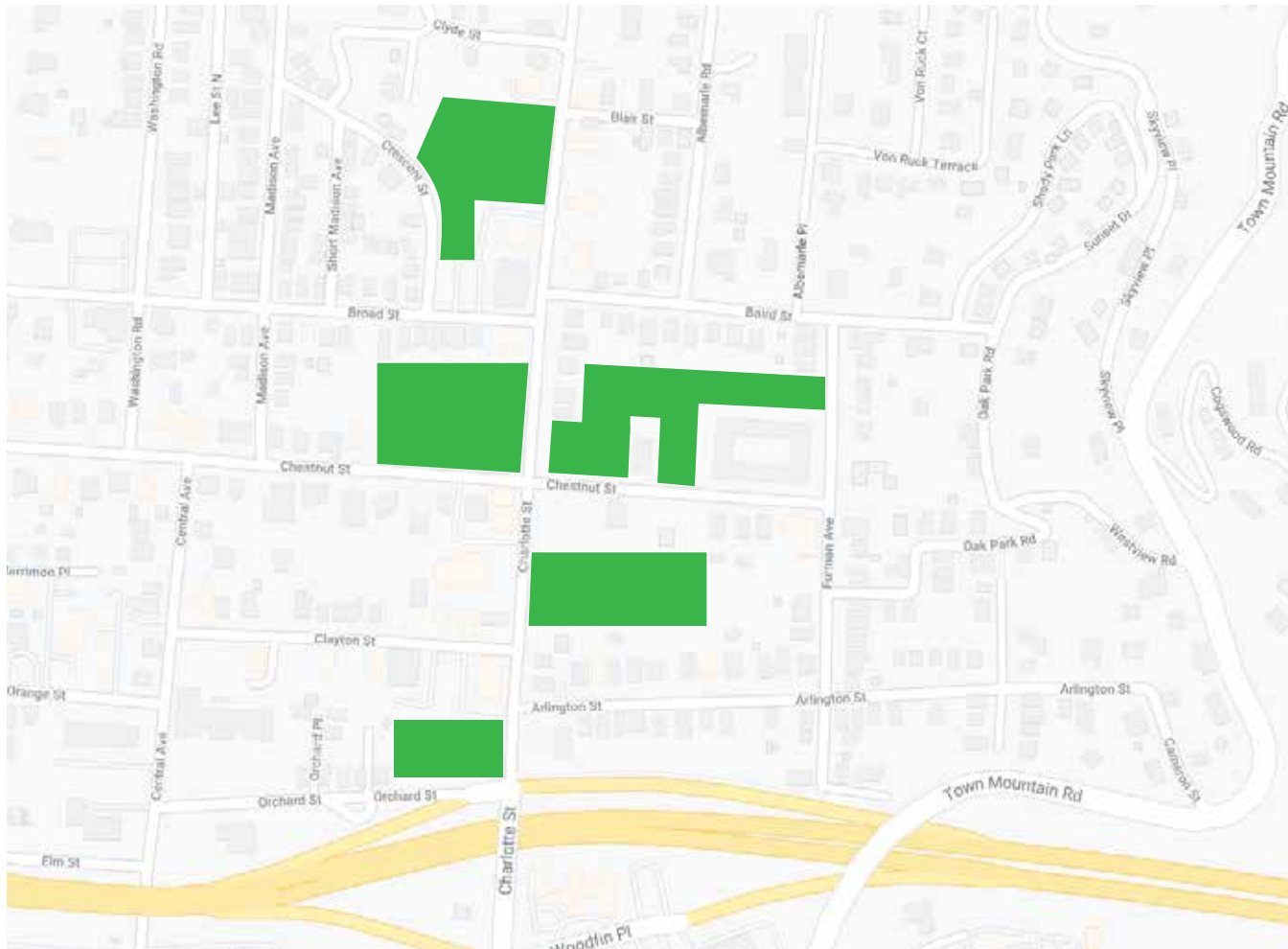
The site of the proposed development is well suited for in-fill construction. This type of development would support healthy growth in the corridor without the negative impact of the proposed demolition.

Findings from the three study cities show that mixing buildings from different vintages—including modern buildings—supports social and cultural activity in commercial and mixed-use zones. Many of the most thriving blocks in the study cities scored high on the diversity of building-age measure. Scale also played an important role. Grid squares with smaller lots and more human-scaled buildings generally scored higher on the performance measures than squares characterized by larger lots and structures. These results support the concept of adding new infill projects of compatible size alongside older buildings.

*- Older, Smaller, Better,  
National Trust for Historic Places*

**5** Higher density can be realized along the Charlotte Street corridor without the negative impact of this proposed development.

*Underutilized tracts in the proposed development and nearby*



The goal of 12 units per acre along the Charlotte Street corridor can be reached both through sensitive in-fill construction and larger scale development. There are a number of sites on the corridor that provide the space needed for larger scale projects without the negative impact of a large scale demolition.

*Current  
workforce  
housing  
proposed for  
demolition*



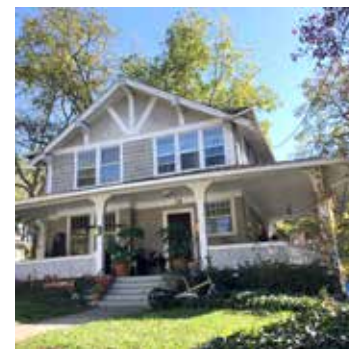
As the city's policy for added residential density implicitly shows, as Asheville grows its population with a limited land base, more intense land use is to be expected. Both population growth and the need for greater affordability are givens, as is a rising level of tourism. Such growth can be good news if its energy is channeled well. Old buildings can be repurposed and rehabilitated. As the city is primarily low-density and there are many non-historic structures and areas where redevelopment would be desirable, there is plenty of room for more infill and intensive development, generally speaking. Compatible, affordable new housing can be built on vacant lots, helping to stabilize more neighborhoods with more investment. More people can help pay the bills for the same infrastructure, and support local businesses.

Neighborhood residents frequently oppose higher density infill development when they see it as incompatible with the character of their neighborhoods, regardless of designation. More extended neighborhood planning could engage residents in managing density and other issues – such as helping to identify locations where added density would be welcomed and ways to achieve compatible new construction.

*- Historic Preservation Master Plan 2015,  
Historic Resource Commission  
of Asheville and Buncombe County*

# Conclusion

As development pressures continue, our leaders must follow the *Living Asheville* comprehensive plan which clearly calls for a balance: balance between development and the needs of our residents, balance between development and the environment and balance between development and the natural and historic character of Asheville.



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