

HISTORIC WILMINGTON

A Guide to Districts and Buildings on the National Register of Historic Places

Introduction

In 1966 the National Historic Preservation Act called for a program to preserve cultural properties throughout the nation. The National Register of Historic Places was created and is a list of districts, sites, structures and objects significant in American history and culture. The National Register plays an important role in restoring and maintaining the historic and cultural environment of the nation. Wilmington, with its rich history, is fortunate to be well represented on the Register.

The first of Wilmington's historic properties appeared on the National Register of Historic Places soon after the Register was created. Individual structures are listed primarily because of their architectural integrity and the historic significance of the events or the people associated with them. Groups of properties having a common past, plan, or design characteristics are designated as historic districts. Each building or district contributes to Wilmington's history and development.

The individual National Register sites are keyed as square symbols and listed at the top of the map. The National register districts are keyed in circles, shaded on the map and summarized in the text. Several of the individual properties are within districts. Take this map along as your guide and visit Wilmington's historic districts to get a sense of our rich and varied heritage.

Architectural Styles

Georgian 1700-1800	Symmetrical arrangement of parts, pedimented pavilion with pilasters or columns.	Second Empire 1860-1890	Multi-colored exterior of brick & stone, arches, stone trim, quoins, belt courses, varied window sizes.
Federal 1780-1850	Low-pitched gabled roof, elongated windows, Roman decorative motifs (swags, garland, sheaves of wheat), fanlights.	Victorian Romanesque 1870-1890	Towers, turrets, tall chimneys, projecting pavilions, verandas, multi-paned and stained glass windows.
Greek Revival 1820-1860	Front gabled roof, heavy entablature under the roof line, rectangular transom lights & narrow sidelights beside door, entry portico with columns, frieze band windows.	Queen Anne 1880-1900	Unpainted wood shingles as covering, steeply pitched & multi-paned roof, short eaves, multi-paned windows.
Gothic Revival 1830-1860	Steeply pitched roof, wall dormers, chimney pots, hood molds over windows.	Shingle Style 1880-1900	Based on Greek & Roman architectural orders; pedimented porticos, large, single light windows.
Italianate 1840-1880	Large brackets on cornice, flat or low pitched roof, symmetrically placed win-dows with hooded trim.	Neo-Classical Revival 1900-1920	Emphasizes geometric forms; low-relief ornamentation around windows and doors often in metal, glazed terra-cotta or mosaic tiles.
Romanesque 1840-1900	Stone or brick arches over window & door openings, horizontal belt courses, square or polygonal towers flank facades.	Art Deco 1925-1940	
	Mansard roof, classical moldings and details.		

Ninth Street Commercial Historic District

This district represents an early 20th century commercial/rental residential area that boasted specialty shops with loyal clientele, unique products and a concentration of businesses run by and for women. The presence of Goldey College, a premiere business school (and the forerunner of Goldey Beacom College) that relocated to 225-231 W. 9th Street in 1914, provided particular support for young professional women and a solid institutional presence around which to gather. Women-owned businesses included tea rooms, millineries, gift shops, clothing stores, salons, a book shop and an ice-cream shop. Anchor buildings included the Diamond State Telephone Company (1928) and the Eckerd's Drug Store at 9th and Orange Streets (1940). Architectural details reflect many Revivalist trends of the period, as well as Italianate, Art Deco and Art Moderne inspirations. In the immediate vicinity is the former site of the Mid-Town Parking Garage (1957), the first parking facility in Delaware and the site of a seminal Civil Rights case (1958-61) that tested the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (see *Burton vs. Wilmington Parking Authority*). The revered Wilmington attorney, Louis L. Redding, represented the plaintiff.

Rodney Square Historic District

This district of five buildings and an open square recognizes the economic and civic heart of the early 20th century City, and the strong influence of the extended DuPont family. Four of the five buildings, the square and the Caesar Rodney statue are executed in Revivalist architectural styles, exhibiting elements of Italian Renaissance, Classical Revival and Beaux Arts elements. The Nemours Building, located behind the DuPont Building, is designed in the Moderne style. The district is a unique example of a collective public and private development venture that developed from the City Beautiful movement.



Delaware Avenue Historic District and Amendment

An excellent representation of the exuberance of America's "Gilded Age," the 1200 and 1300 blocks of Delaware Avenue boast large Victorian mansions that housed Wilmington's financial barons. Massive in size and irregular in plan, these houses feature elaborate exterior and interior details; Italianate and Queen Anne are the predominant styles. In 1864, Joshua T. Heald established the trolley line along Delaware Avenue, making the area accessible from downtown. Along with his partner, Heald laid out and improved lots along the trolley line, encouraging settlement in this early "suburb" of Wilmington.

As transportation improved, streets adjacent to Delaware Avenue were developed and slightly more modest homes were made available for middle class residents. During World War I and World War II, housing was needed for the workers in the burgeoning defense-related industries. As the population of Wilmington grew, mansions were subdivided and apartment houses were built in vacant areas or replaced some Victorian structures. Delaware Avenue housed all classes: large mansions for the wealthy, rowhouses and semi-detached homes for the middle class and apartments for the new City dwellers brought by industrial growth.



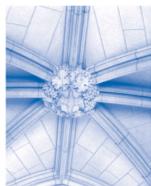
Wilmington Downtown Commercial Historic District

This area includes selected 19th and 20th century mixed use buildings in the 600 through 800 blocks of Market Street and the facing blocks of King and Shipley Streets. During the late 19th century, developmental pressures in the Wilmington commercial district shifted north from lower Market Street and the industrial riverfront of the Christina, towards the Brandywine in space that accommodated a lively, dense community of retail, residential, office and entertainment uses that peaked in the mid-20th century. This district contains the greatest variety of architectural styles in the City, including Italianate, Romanesque, Queen Anne, Commercial, Art Deco, Art Moderne and International. Trends in new materials, such as vitrolite panels, can be seen as well.



Brandywine Village Historic District

As the early borough of Willingtontown developed on the Christina River, a village grew up around several grist mills on the north and south banks of the Brandywine Creek. The first mill in the Village area was built ca. 1760 by Byrne and Moore, on the south side of the creek near the foot of French Street. Other grist mills and a cotton mill followed through the 19th century. By 1869 the northward expansion of Wilmington reached the banks of the Brandywine, and Brandywine Village became the City's Ninth Ward. Today, only the south mill race, some stone foundations and the stately granite residences of the milling Tatnall and Lea families survive as a reminder of that once thriving industry. The Daniel Lamont cotton mill spurred the development of workers row housing from the mid-19th century through the early 20th century. Notable buildings include the Brandywine Academy (1798) one of the oldest structures in the vil-



Baynard Boulevard Historic District

Baynard Boulevard is an example of a turn of the 20th-century American "streetcar suburb." The North Side Improvement Company of Wilmington, headed by Samuel H. Baynard, purchased sixty acres in 1892. In addition to donating land, Baynard financed the construction of churches and speculative housing. The area was planned for a mix of economic levels, though the residences on the Boulevard were large and eclectic, housing mainly successful entrepreneurs, company directors and other professionals. Adjacent streets to the east and west were developed with more modest housing for skilled workers and the growing white collar labor force. Eclecticism predominates as an architectural style on the Boulevard, as the houses show the creative adaption of formal and vernacular elements of several styles: Queen Anne, Classical Revival, Georgian Revival, Shingle Style, and Romanesque.



Shipley Run Historic District

A stream called Shipley Run once traversed this ten-block district, facilitating tanneries other industries further south. Rapid construction of row houses between 1870 and 1890 provided housing for the growing population of industrial workers as the City expanded westward. Architectural details in the district reflect simplified versions of the popular styles of the time: Queen Anne, Second Empire, and Italianate. Rehabilitation efforts in the northern part of the district have resulted in attractive streetscapes, particularly in the area of Trenton Place. The former Sacred Heart Church, opened in 1875 as a German Catholic parish at 10th and Madison Streets, anchors the district as an oratory and community center.



Eighth Street/Tilton Park District

This area experienced two waves of settlement. The first residences were built by wealthy professionals, and the development was scattered. The earliest residence, known as "Bellevue," was built in 1802 and occupied by Dr. James Tilton, the U.S. Army Surgeon General between 1813 and 1815. During the 1780s, Tilton had proposed that the United States capitol be built in this area, which he named "Federal Hill" in anticipation. While that neighborhood name has not survived, the Bellevue mansion is now occupied as the University & Whist Club. Later settlement by middle class residents, many of whom were employees of the growing ship and railcar operations, foundries, and tanneries, began in the 1860s and was facilitated by the establishment of the Eighth Street streetcar line in 1889. The district contains two "firsts" of the City. Tilton Park, created in 1865, was among the City's first parks. The first public hospital was established in 1871 with the purchase of 708-710 North Franklin Street. The hospital specialized in treating victims of industrial accidents. Both the park and the hospital were manifestations of a reform movement designed to improve the quality of life in Wilmington. The predominant architectural styles of the Eighth Street/Tilton Park District are Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Italianate, and represent Wilmington's period of Industrial Growth, 1860-1900.



Cool Spring Historic District

Caesar A. Rodney, nephew of the signer of the Declaration of Independence, owned a large estate here called "Cool Spring." Although that estate no longer exists, Cool Spring became the name of one of Wilmington's oldest parks. As Wilmington evolved from an industrial to a corporate City, a residential area developed around the park. Between 1873 and 1877, the Cool Spring Pumping Station and the reservoir were built to meet the needs of the burgeoning west side. The predominant architectural styles are Second Empire and Queen Anne. The City's largest historic district includes large and eclectic Colonial Revival residences, public buildings, and substantial row houses.



Brandywine Park, Kentmere Parkway, and Rockford Park

Paralleling Brandywine Creek are Rockford Park, Kentmere Parkway, and Brandywine Park. This chain of curving roads, wooded knolls, and dramatic vistas is the jewel of the city's park system. The noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead consulted on the design of both parks and Kentmere Parkway. Work on Brandywine Park began in 1886, and Rockford Park was created in 1889. Kentmere Parkway, completed in 1895, gracefully links the two parks. First known as Brandywine Glen, the land along Brandywine Creek has been a recreation area since Wilmington was established. In the 1860's however, American landscape architects began planning parks to provide a better environment for the residents of heavily populated areas. Evidence of this trend in Wilmington was the establishment of the Board of Park Commissioners in 1883. In 1886 the board began purchasing



land for the park and today it includes the Jasper Crane Rose Garden, Josephine Fountain, Brandywine Zoo, Monkey Hill Pavilion and several playgrounds. The Kentmere Parkway is a scenic, curving road which links Brandywine Park to Rockford Park. It was the dream of William P. Bancroft, known as the father of the Wilmington Park System. Work on the parkway began in 1891 and was completed four years later. The parkway and its landscaped median are bordered by large homes with expansive, sloping lawns.

At the northern end of the parkway lies Rockford Park, another of Bancroft's contributions to Wilmington. He donated fifty nine acres in 1889 after Olmstead stressed to the parks Commission that the creation of spacious landscape provided City people with "physical, intellectual and moral vigor, and . . . longer lives." Built in 1901, the Rockford Park Water Tower still is a functional and iconic landmark for the city.

Quaker Hill Historic District and Amendment

Located on a rise overlooking the Christina River, this area attracted residents whose lives were tied to the Christina riverfront and to mercantile ventures along Market Street. One of the first Quaker settlers of Wilmington, William Shipley, built a home here in 1738. The first Quaker meeting house was constructed on West Street, just across the street from the present meeting house (actually the third such structure, built in 1816). The promising grain market attracted more Quakers from Philadelphia, and settlement burgeoned on the hill. St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church was founded in 1816 at Sixth and West Streets. Today it is the Cathedral Church of the Wilmington Diocese. Many other churches and former homes of prominent and ordinary Wilmingtonians remain, reflecting the economic, cultural, and religious diversity of the this neighborhood in the 19th century. A variety of architectural styles reflect that diversity, including Italianate, Gothic Revival, Georgian Revival and Second Empire.



Lower Market Street and Old Town Hall Historic Districts

Just two blocks north of Wilmington's Christina River waterfront, lower Market Street represents two centuries of the City's development. The variety of architectural styles and building uses visually records the growth and change of mercantile Wilmington. Market Street's importance was established when it became Wilmington's main street in the 18th-century grid plan. The Delaware Historical Society maintains the Georgian-style Old Town Hall (1799), early rescued buildings in Willingtontown Square, and a museum in a flagship former Woolworth's Department Store between 5th and 6th Streets. The rehabilitated Queen Theatre is a neighboring Art Deco jewel. View details of Victorian, Italianate, Romanesque, Neoclassical and Art Deco styles by looking to the upper stories along Market Street. This part of Wilmington has been the subject of significant rehabilitation projects since 2000.



Districts

1. Brandywine Village Historic District (N-322)
2. Baynard Boulevard Historic District (N-3915)
3. Brandywine Park, Kentmere Parkway (N-1566), and Rockford Park (N-1446)
4. Delaware Avenue Historic District (N-3662)
5. Eighth Street/Tilton Park Historic District (N-3656)
6. Cool Spring Historic District (N-8848)
7. Shipley Run Historic District (N-3861)
8. Quaker Hill Historic District (N-4015)
9. Lower Market Street Historic District (N-5264)
10. Wilmington Downtown Commercial Historic District (N-9351)
11. Eastside Brandywine Historic District (N-10057)
12. Church Street Historic District (N-10951)
13. Wawaset Park (N-10276)
14. Henry Clay Village Historic District (N-333)
15. Old Town Hall Historic District (N-4000)
16. Ninth Street Commercial Historic District (N-14449)
17. Rodney Square Historic District (N-5263)

Church Street

The Church Street Historic District covers one block on Wilmington's East Side. Its dwellings and corner commercial structures were built for industrial workers in the last three decades of the 19th century. The industries that employed these workers — shipyards, railcar and iron works — were located to the south of the district along the Christina River and to the east, along the peninsula formed by the confluence of the Brandywine Creek and Christina River.



Within a small area the district contains a variety of architectural styles typical of the East Side. Rowhouses are Italianate in style, while the large commercial buildings on the corners exhibit Second Empire and Queen Anne details. The block also offers an interesting variation from the grid street pattern in that E. 7th Street takes a northward angle in order to avoid the Old Swedes churchyard and cemetery located just south of the district.

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Eastside Brandywine Historic District

This district was nominated to the National Register as a microcosm of the evolution of industrial, commercial, residential and institutional development of 19th-century Wilmington. It is located in the northeastern-most portion of the East Side, just south of Brandywine Creek. The significance of the district has suffered from demolition of some of the larger commercial buildings and dwellings in the 1990s, as well as from some block-long insensitive rehabilitation projects.



The area features a mix of churches, schools, row houses, apartment buildings, corner commercial structures and former factories, many of which are representative of 19th-century vernacular architecture. Some of the area's industrial buildings were associated with nationally known companies, such as Diamond Match (demolished). Other buildings accommodated the leather industry, which had a significant role in the development of Wilmington's industrial economy in the 19th century. The district also includes the 1928 Howard High School building, a National Historic Landmark related to Brown v. Board. Organized on another site in 1867, Howard High was the first school in Delaware to provide higher education for black students. Of the many notable graduates and teachers of Howard High were State Representative William J. Winchester and Louis L. Redding, Esquire who gained local and national recognition for their Civil Rights efforts of the 1950s and 1960s.

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The Henry Clay Village

A small section of the Henry Clay Village Historic District along Rising Sun Lane is situated within the City limits. The district contains all of the elements of a 19th century industrial community — a mill, houses, a church, a school, stores and a tavern — and reflects the origins of the village, the DuPont Company powder mills on the Brandywine. Henry Clay Village takes its name from the U. S. Senator, Secretary of State and presidential candidate. Clay (1777-1852) was a proponent of "The American System," a program based on tariff provisions and other measures to protect American industries from foreign competition.



Wawaset Park

Located on the western edge of the City, Wawaset Park was developed as a planned community at the end of World War I. It is significant for its site design, based on landscape planning principles developed by Frederick Law Olmsted and applied here by his student Edward L. Palmer. The curvilinear streets and ample lawns gave this neighborhood the setting of a suburb within the City.



Wawaset Park was designed for the professional employees of the DuPont Company, whose work force had expanded during World War I. There are row houses, semi-detached houses, single family houses and an apartment house within the district. The buildings exhibit interpretations of early 20th century revival styles, including Tudor cottages and Georgian mansions. The dwellings incorporate elements of Picturesque and Gothic styles as well.

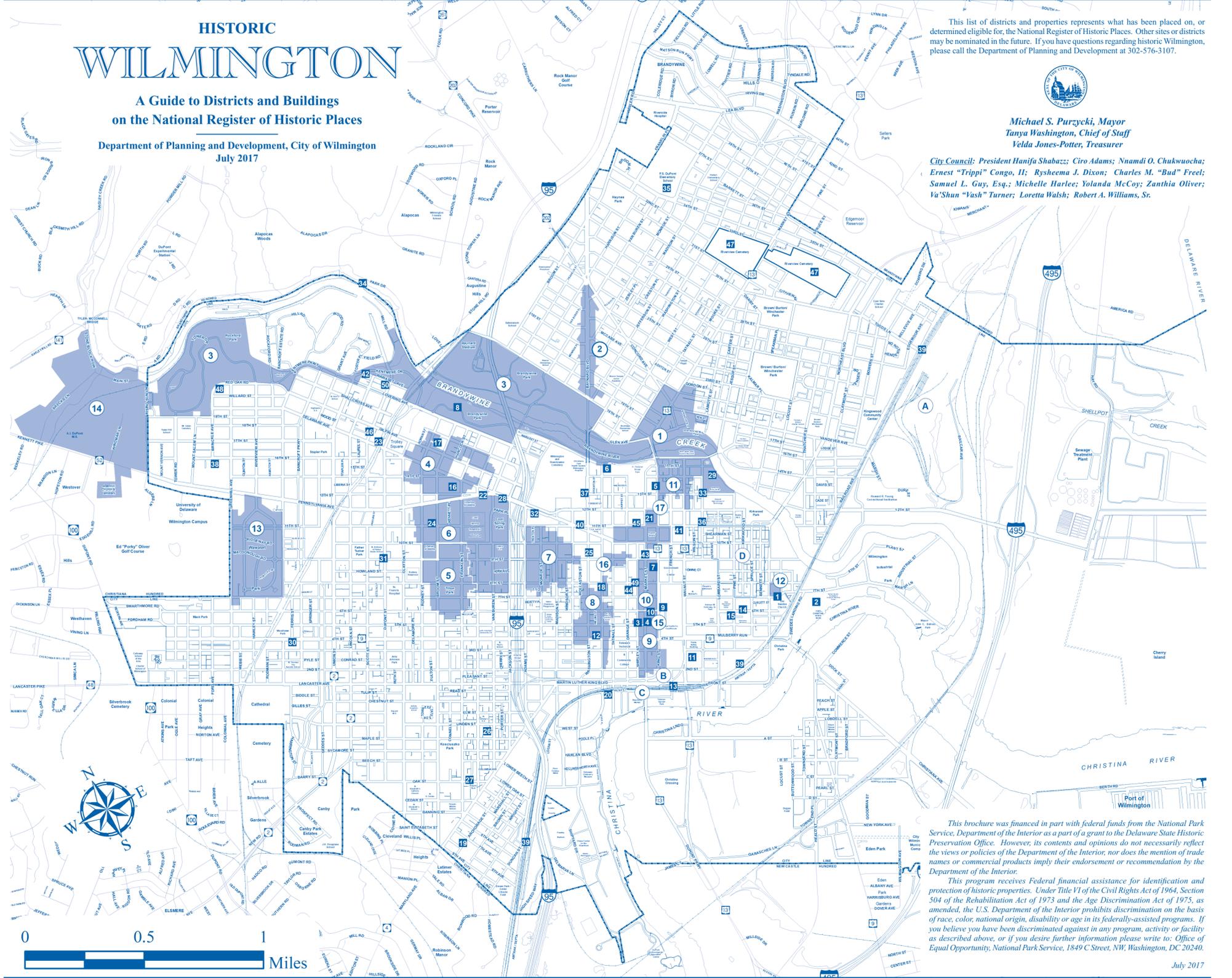
Picturesque and Gothic styles as well.

Properties

1. Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church (National Historic Landmark) (N-340) 606 N. Church Street
2. Fort Christina Monument (National Historic Landmark) (N-338) E. 7th Street and the Christina River
3. Jacob and Obadiah Dungee Houses (N-335) Willingtown Square
4. Job and Mary Jacobs House (N-859) Willingtown Square
5. Starr House (N-344) 1310 King Street
6. Old First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington (N-5603) South Park Drive
7. Masonic Hall and Grand Theatre (N-418) 818 N. Market Street
8. Continental Army Encampment Site (N-430) Loring Avenue near Broom Street
9. Old Custom House (N-579) Southeast corner of 6th and King Streets
10. Old Town Hall (N-180) 512 N. Market Street
11. Old Asbury Methodist Church (N-174) Southeast corner of 3rd and Walnut Streets
12. Friends Meeting House (N-874) Northwest corner of 4th & Washington Sts.
13. Wilmington Amtrak Station and Former Pennsylvania Railroad Office Building (N-3568) Southeast corner of Front and French Streets
14. Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church (N-651) Southeast corner of 6th and Pine Streets
15. Saint Mary's School (N-649) 5th & Pine Streets
16. Howard Pyle Studios (N-2671) 1301 N. Franklin Street
17. Frank E. Schoonover Studios (N-4042) 1616 N. Rodney Street
18. Woodward Houses (N-1458) 701-703 N. West Street
19. Dr. John A. Brown House (The Anchorage) (N-4046) 4 Seventh Avenue
20. Harlan and Hollingsworth Office Building (N-3637) Water Street at West Street
21. Former U.S. Post Office, Courthouse and Customhouse (N-4043) 11th and Market Streets
22. Rodney Court (N-5267) 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue
23. Logan House (N-1077) 1701 Delaware Avenue
24. Postles House (N-2530) 1007 N. Broom Street
25. Grace United Methodist Church (N-915) 9th & West Streets
26. Saint Hedwig's Roman Catholic Church (N-1883) 408 S. Harrison Street
27. Saint Hedwig's High School (N-1882) 801 S. Harrison Street
28. New Century Club (N-4582) 1014 Delaware Avenue
29. New Castle Leather Raw Stock Warehouse (Kaumagraph Building) (N-3652) 1320 Clifford Brown Walk (formerly Poplar St.)
30. Lore Elementary School (N-3651) 4th Street and Woodlawn Avenue
31. Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic Church (N-7486) 927 N. DuPont Street
32. Trinity Episcopal Church (N-9573) 1108 N. Adams Street
33. Howard High School (N-4234) (National Historic Landmark) 13th & Poplar Streets
34. Bancroft Mills (N-3646) Rockford Road at the Brandywine River
35. P. S. du Pont High School (N-1454) 701 W. 34th Street
36. Main Office, New Castle Leather Company (Allied Kid) (N-2976) 1043 Clifford Brown Walk (formerly Poplar St.)
37. Torbert Street Livery Stable (N-7554.01 & .02) Adjacent to 1212 N. Washington Street
38. Gibraltar (N-9075) Pennsylvania and Greenhill Avenues
39. Wilmington Rail Viaduct (N-5281)
40. Wilmington Central YMCA (N-7540) 501 W. 11th Street
41. St. Joseph's Catholic Church (N-13687) 1012 N. French Street
42. Delaware Academy of Medicine (N-159) 1925 Loring Avenue
43. Delaware Trust Building (N-1450) 900 N. Market Street
44. Foord Massey Furniture Company (N-7590) 701 N. Shipley Street
45. Wilmington Club (John Merrick House) (N-77) 1103 N. Market Street
46. Fire Station No. 5 (N-2449) 1814 Gilpin Avenue
47. Riverview Cemetery (N-11234) 3117 and 3300 N. Market Street
48. 12 Red Oak Road (N-9285)
49. Episcopal Church of Sts. Andrew and Matthew (N-841) 719 Shipley Street (pending)
50. Homsey Architectural Studios (N-6574) 2003 Scott Street (pending)

Properties and Districts Determined Eligible

- A. Wilmington Yards and Shops (N-5257)
- B. Wilmington Boulevard (Archaeological) Historic District (N-5259)
- C. Baltimore and Ohio Water Street Railroad Station (N-3570)
- D. Eastside Historic District (N-3739)



This list of districts and properties represents what has been placed on, or determined eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places. Other sites or districts may be nominated in the future. If you have questions regarding historic Wilmington, please call the Department of Planning and Development at 302-576-3107.



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