
WILMINGTON'S City Historic Districts



and Neighborhood Conservation District



Michael S. Purzycki, Mayor
City of Wilmington, Delaware

City of Wilmington
Department of Planning & Development
800 N. French Street, 7th Floor
Louis L. Redding City/County Bldg.
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

WILMINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Hanifa Shabazz, President
Nnamdi O. Chukwuocha
Ernest "Trippi" Congo, II
Zanitha Oliver
Michelle Harlee
Va'Shun "Yash" Turner
Yolanda McCoy
Robert A. Williams
Charles M. "Bud" Freel
Ciro Adams
Kysheema J. Dixon
Samuel L. Guy, Esq.
Loretta Walsh

Velda Jones-Potter, City Treasurer



Old Town Hall, 504 Market Street, c. 1927; Market Street C.H.D. *Courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware.*

INDEX

| | |
|--|-------|
| What is a City Historic District? | p. 2 |
| How are Districts Designated? | p. 3 |
| Benefits of District Designation | p. 3 |
| What Work Items are Reviewed? | p. 4 |
| How is the Review Initiated? | p. 4 |
| Who Performs Design Review? | p. 5 |
| Review by the Planning Department | p. 5 |
| Review by the Design Review and Preservation Commission | p. 6 |
| What is a Neighborhood Conservation District? | p. 25 |

CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT MAPS

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------|-------|
| Baynard Boulevard | (1985) | p. 7 |
| Cool Spring/Tilton Park | (1996) | p. 9 |
| Delaware Avenue | (1979) | p. 11 |
| East Side | (1987) | p. 13 |
| Old Swedes | (1987) | p. 13 |
| St. Mary's | (1987) | p. 13 |
| Kentmere Parkway | (1979) | p. 15 |
| Market Street | (1975) | p. 17 |
| Lower Market Street | (1998) | p. 17 |
| Quaker Hill | (1986) | p. 19 |
| Rockford Park | (1987) | p. 21 |
| Trinity Vicinity | (2003) | p. 23 |

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

| | | |
|-------------|--------|-------|
| Forty Acres | (2004) | p. 25 |
|-------------|--------|-------|

WILMINGTON'S CITY HISTORIC DISTRICTS

This brochure provides an overview of Wilmington's City Historic Districts and Neighborhood Conservation District and the review procedures performed by the Design Review and Preservation Commission (DRPC). The legislation establishing City Historic Districts and Neighborhood Conservation Districts and the related design standards are more fully described in the Wilmington City Code (*Sections 48-396 through 48-427*), available online at www.WilmingtonDE.gov.

For printed copies of the regulations governing City Historic Districts and Neighborhood Conservation Districts, or for additional information, please call the Design Review and Preservation Commission Coordinator in the Department of Planning and Development at (302) 576-3100.

WHAT IS A CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT?

A City Historic District is an area that has been recognized for its outstanding historical, architectural or archaeological significance. Since 1975, twelve City Historic Districts have been designated to recognize and protect the city's cultural resources. Within City Historic Districts all exterior changes to buildings, structures, objects or sites, including renovations, alterations, new construction, demolition and changes to the topography, are monitored through the design review process.

Cover Photos:

(Top) **Delaware Avenue, view of Soldiers and Sailors Monument from Franklin Street, c. 1900;** Delaware Avenue C.H.D. *Wilmington Department of Planning postcard.*

(Bottom) **The Rutledge Apartments, c. 1915 (formerly the Lyle Apartment Building),** 8th & West Streets, Quaker Hill C.H.D. *Courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware.*

All contemporary photographs provided by the City of Wilmington Department of Planning and Development, Patricia A. Maley, AICP, and John Kurth, 2013.

HOW ARE CITY HISTORIC DISTRICTS DESIGNATED?

From time to time, City Council may designate certain areas in the City as City Historic Districts based on requests by residents and other interested parties, substantiated by historic research and the recommendation of the Department of Planning and Development (hereafter referred to as Planning Department). Property owners are invited to attend neighborhood meetings and public hearings regarding such proposals. The Design Review and Preservation Commission and the City Planning Commission make recommendations to City Council, which enacts the legislation officially designating an area as a City Historic District, which is a category of overlay zoning.



1400 Block of Delaware Avenue, c. 1900, view west from Broom Street; Delaware Avenue C.H.D. *Courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware.*

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION?

City Historic District designation recognizes the historical significance of Wilmington's unique neighborhoods and cultural resources. Such designation helps stabilize property values by protecting the elements that define the area's character including buildings, structures, objects and sites. Property owners within City Historic Districts may be eligible for a City tax abatement, Federal and State tax credits, and other limited funding programs for pre-approved work on their buildings.

WHAT WORK ITEMS ARE REVIEWED?

The Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) refers all building permit applications involving exterior work elements proposed for buildings, structures, objects and sites within a City Historic District to the Planning Department for review. L&I will not issue a building permit until the design review process is complete. Property owners risk financial penalties and the removal of unauthorized work if changes are made without following the design review and permitting processes.

The following categories of work are subject to review:

- Maintenance
- Renovation or Restoration
- Alterations
- New Construction
- Demolition
- Changes in Topography

HOW IS THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS INITIATED?

For a building permit, L&I refers applicants within a City Historic District to the Planning Department for review. The formal Design Review process is initiated when an applicant submits a fully completed application with all requisite support documentation, which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Completed building permit application;
- Completed Design Review application;
- Description of proposed work;
- Plans and specifications showing all facets of proposed work;
- Photographs of the current site conditions.

Applicants initiate the Design Review process through the Design Review and Preservation Commission Coordinator, Wilmington Department of Planning and Development, (302) 576-3100.

THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals that involve ordinary repair with in-kind materials, maintenance, or that meet pre-established design criteria can be reviewed administratively by the Planning staff. All other proposals must be referred to the Design Review and Preservation Commission for review. Upon application, certified Planning staff will make a preliminary determination as to whether a work proposal can be reviewed administratively or must be referred to the Design Review and Preservation Commission (DRPC).

The Department of Planning and Development

Sec. 48-418 of the City Code allows for the expedited review of certain maintenance type proposals based on review by the Planning Department. These items include:

- Work that is considered in-kind repair or replacement of materials specifying historically appropriate materials;
- Work that does not change the design, material type (if extant material is historically appropriate), or outward appearance of a property;
- Work that meets pre-established design criteria approved by the Design Review and Preservation Commission.

Upon completion of the in-house review, the Planning Department will transmit a Certificate of Appropriateness Memorandum to L&I recommending approval of the proposed work and issuance of a building permit. Applicants are responsible for meeting all other L&I permit requirements prior to issuance of a permit.

Design Review and Preservation Commission meetings are generally held on the third Wednesday of each month. To be scheduled on the agenda, a fully completed application and support documentation must be received and accepted by the Planning Department three weeks prior to the meeting date.

The Design Review and Preservation Commission

If the Planning Department determines that a work proposal is not considered ordinary repair with in-kind materials or maintenance, does not meet pre-established design criteria, or involves signage, new construction or demolition, the proposal may be referred to the DRPC for review.

The DRPC is a seven-member commission appointed by the Mayor, with members having backgrounds in architecture, planning, urban design, real estate, construction, environmental systems and the fine arts (*Sec. 2-66 through 2-69 of the Wilmington City Code*).

The DRPC generally meets on the third Wednesday of each month. To be placed on the agenda, a fully completed application and support documentation must be received and accepted by the Planning Department a minimum of three weeks in advance of the meeting.

The Planning Department prepares a brief analysis regarding the proposed project for review by the DRPC. Applicants or their agents must attend the DRPC meeting to answer any questions about their proposal. Following review, the DRPC recommends approval, conditional approval, or denial of the application. They may also choose to defer the application if further information is required.

The DRPC recommendation is forwarded to L&I within five working days, after which building permits may be issued. Applicants are responsible for meeting all other L&I permit requirements prior to issuance of a building permit.

Proposals that are denied by the DRPC can be revised and re-submitted for consideration at the next monthly meeting, or appealed through the L&I Commissioner.

BAYNARD BOULEVARD

The Baynard Boulevard City Historic District consists of an eclectic mix of Victorian and Colonial Revival style homes primarily located along “the Boulevard,” a wide, tree-lined street constructed in 1906. It was renamed in 1925 after Samuel H. Baynard, president of the North Side Development Company. Late 19th-century rowhouses along the 1700 block of Washington Street complement the larger, early 20th-century homes and churches along Baynard Boulevard.



1800 block of Baynard Boulevard, c. 1921; Baynard Boulevard C.H.D. *Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware.*



Concord Avenue and Baynard Boulevard; Baynard Boulevard C.H.D.



COOL SPRING / TILTON PARK

The Cool Spring/Tilton Park City Historic District features a spectrum of late 19th- and early 20th-century residential architecture representing Queen Anne, Italianate, Colonial Revival and Second Empire styles. A significant portion of the district

was developed between 1885 and 1900 on Caesar A. Rodney's 23-acre estate, known as "Cool Spring." The district is also significant due to the construction of the 37 million gallon Cool Spring Reservoir in the early 1870s, in response to sanitary sewer innovations, as well as the establishment of Tilton and Cool Spring Parks as urban amenities.



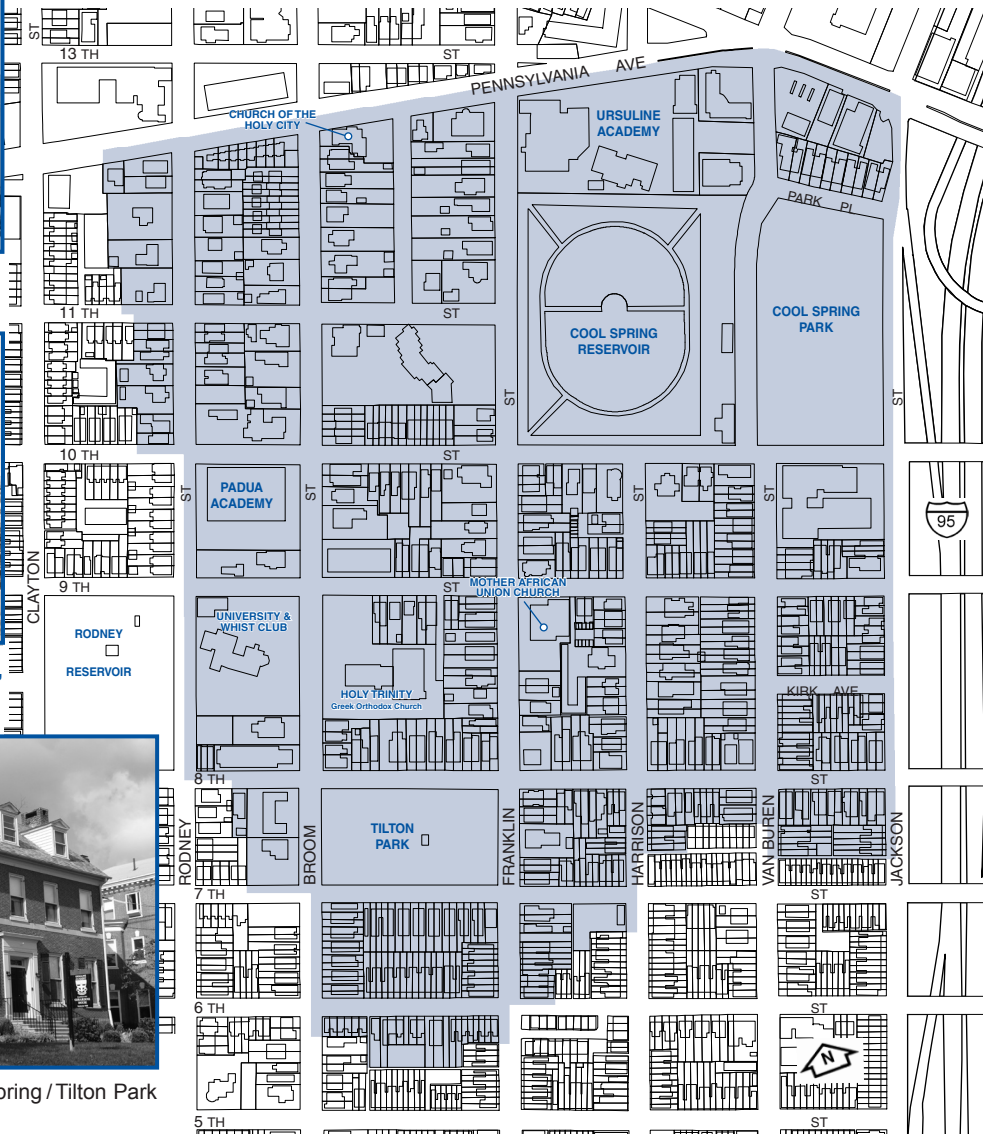
Delaware Children's Theater,
1014 Delaware Avenue.



Cool Spring Pumping Station,
c. 1907. Dept. of Public Works.



1103 N. Franklin Street; Cool Spring / Tilton Park
C.H.D.

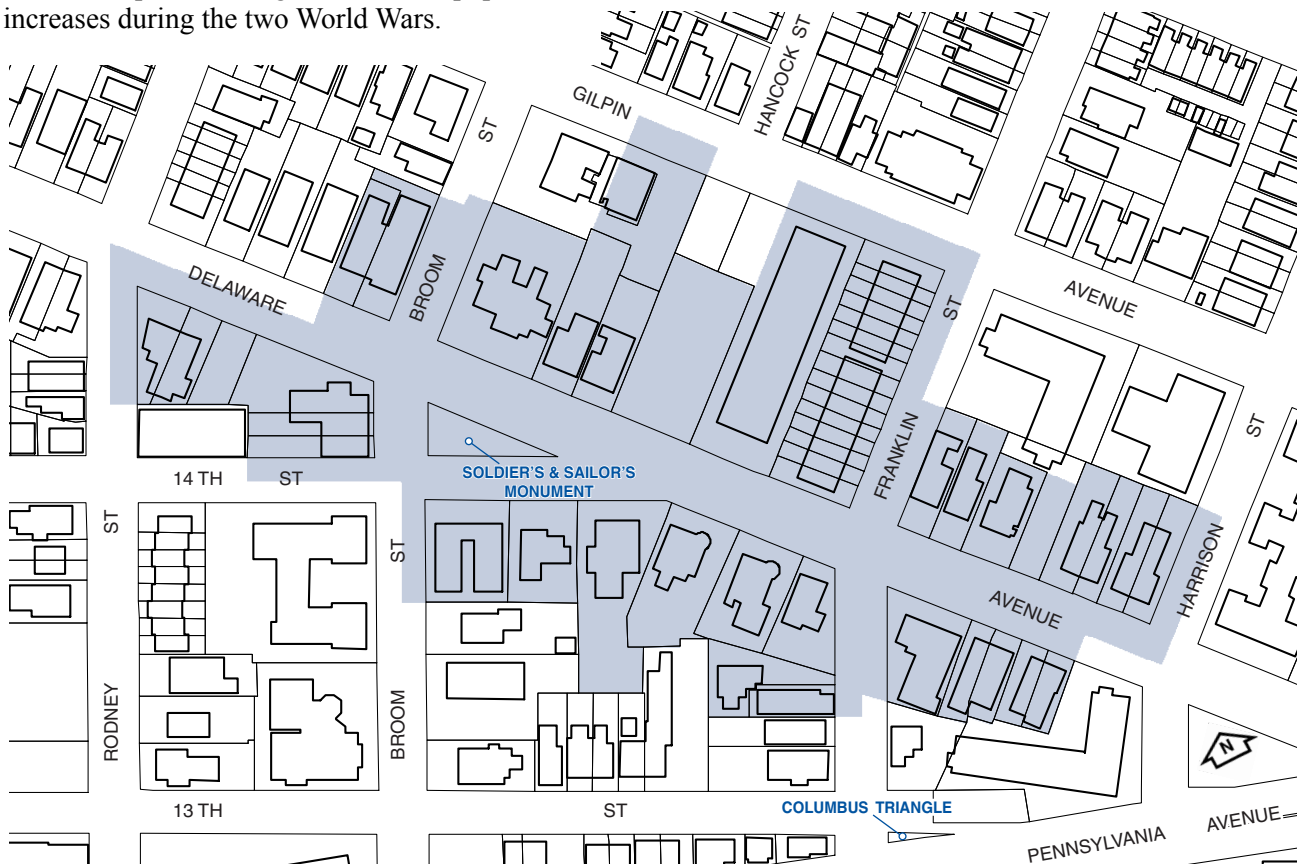


DELAWARE AVENUE

The Delaware Avenue City Historic District began as an early suburb of Wilmington when Joshua T. Heald developed the first horse-drawn trolley line out of the City along Delaware Avenue in 1864. The horse barns and trolley depot were once located on the site of the Trolley Square shopping center. The Victorian houses in this district reflect the new wealth of entrepreneurs who benefitted from the industrial demands of the Civil War and post-war rebuilding. The resulting buildings are generally large and highly stylized, reflecting the major late 19th-century architectural fashions, including Italianate, Second Empire, and Queen Anne. The area is currently a mixture of owner- and renter-occupied buildings as a result of population increases during the two World Wars.



1313 Delaware Avenue; Delaware Avenue C.H.D.



EAST SIDE, SAINT MARY'S and OLD SWEDES

The East Side, St. Mary's and Old Swedes City Historic Districts all feature brick rowhouses dating to Wilmington's period of intense industrial growth from 1830-1910. The districts also contain notable structures reflecting major events in Wilmington's history.

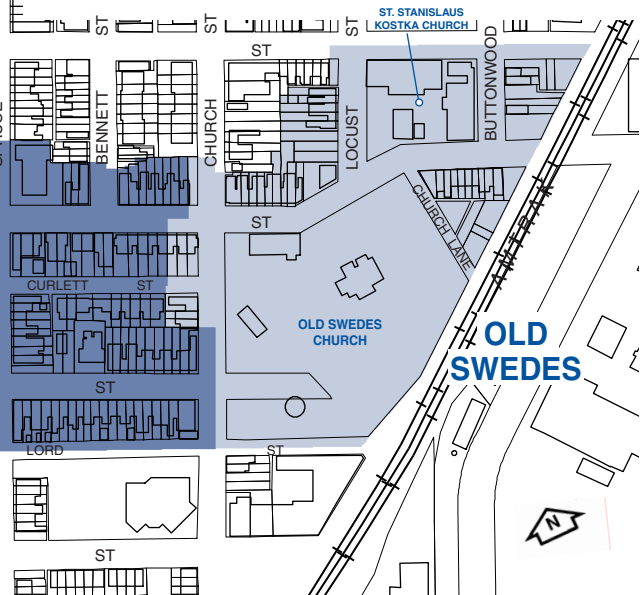


800 block East 7th Street; East Side C.H.D.

The [East Side City Historic District](#) is a neighborhood of continuous brick rowhouses with corner commercial structures. The houses feature a variety of roof lines, window treatments, cornice trim and decorative porches.

The [Saint Mary's City Historic District](#) is named for Saint Mary's church and school, built in 1858 and 1866, respectively, to address the needs of Irish immigrants and industrial workers of the mid-to-late 1800s.

The [Old Swedes City Historic District](#) is named for Old Swedes (Holy Trinity) Church, built in 1698 at 7th and Church Streets. The district honors the location of Wilmington's first Swedish settlement in 1638, known as Christinaham.

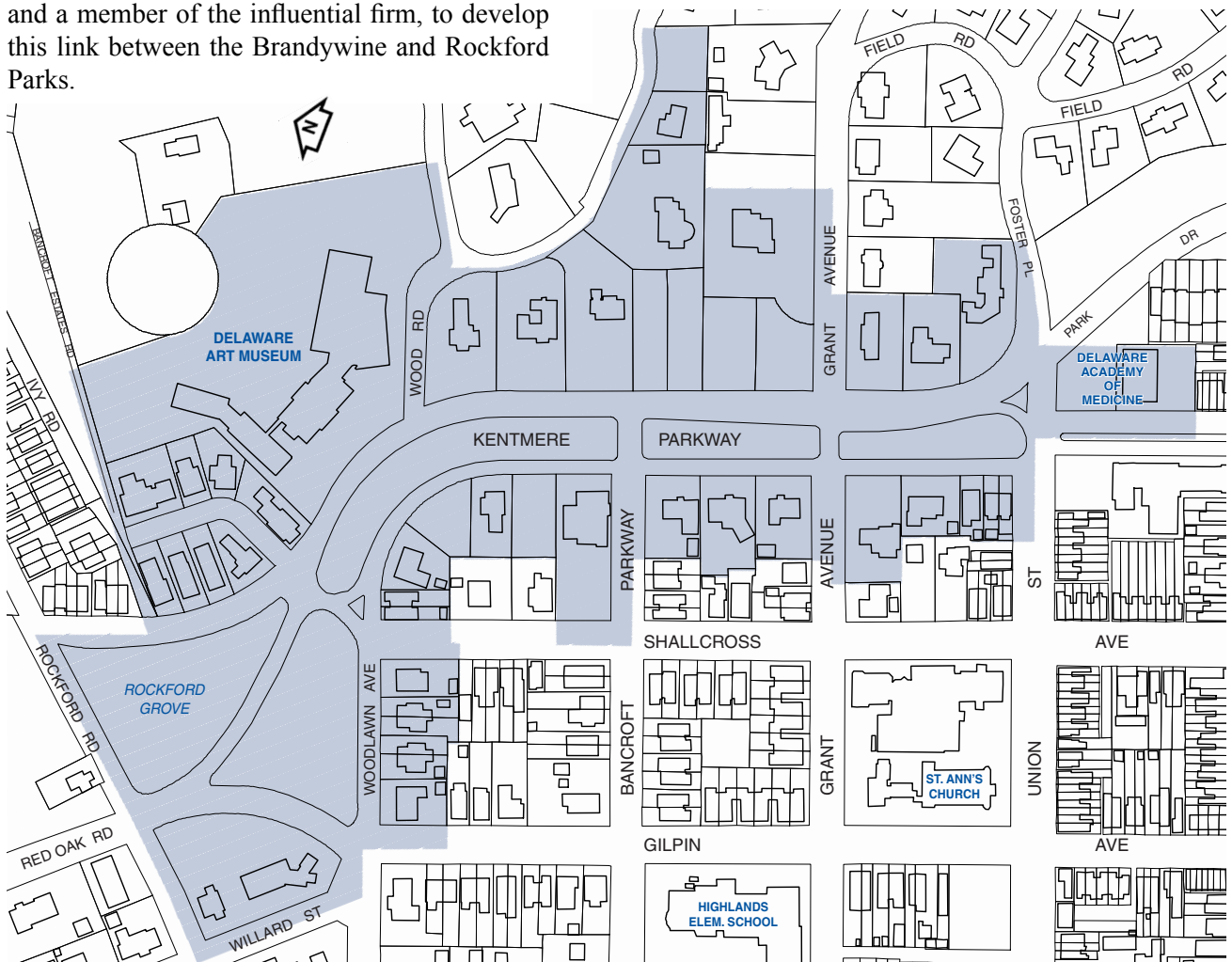


KENTMERE PARKWAY

The Kentmere Parkway City Historic District includes a highly stylized mix of late 19th century and early 20th century homes built along a curvilinear parkway, which originated in 1885 as a 100-foot wide easement through the property of William and Jennie Field. In 1891, William P. Bancroft, industrialist, philanthropist and founding member of the City Parks Commission, collaborated with John C. Olmsted, nephew of famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and a member of the influential firm, to develop this link between the Brandywine and Rockford Parks.



2200 Kentmere Parkway; Kentmere Parkway C.H.D.

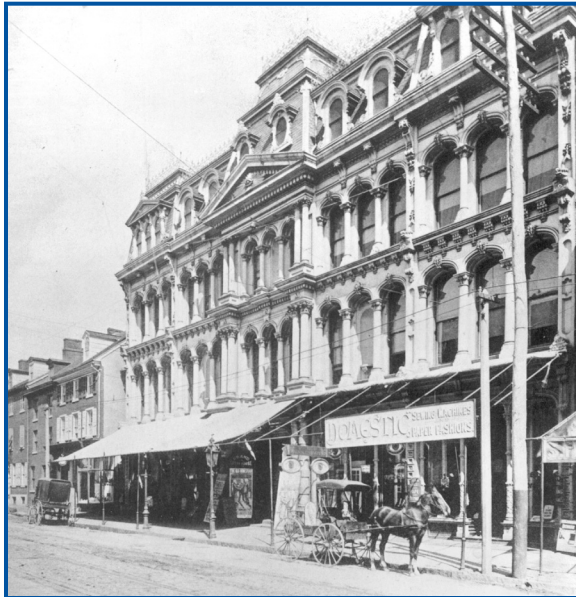


MARKET STREET and LOWER MARKET STREET

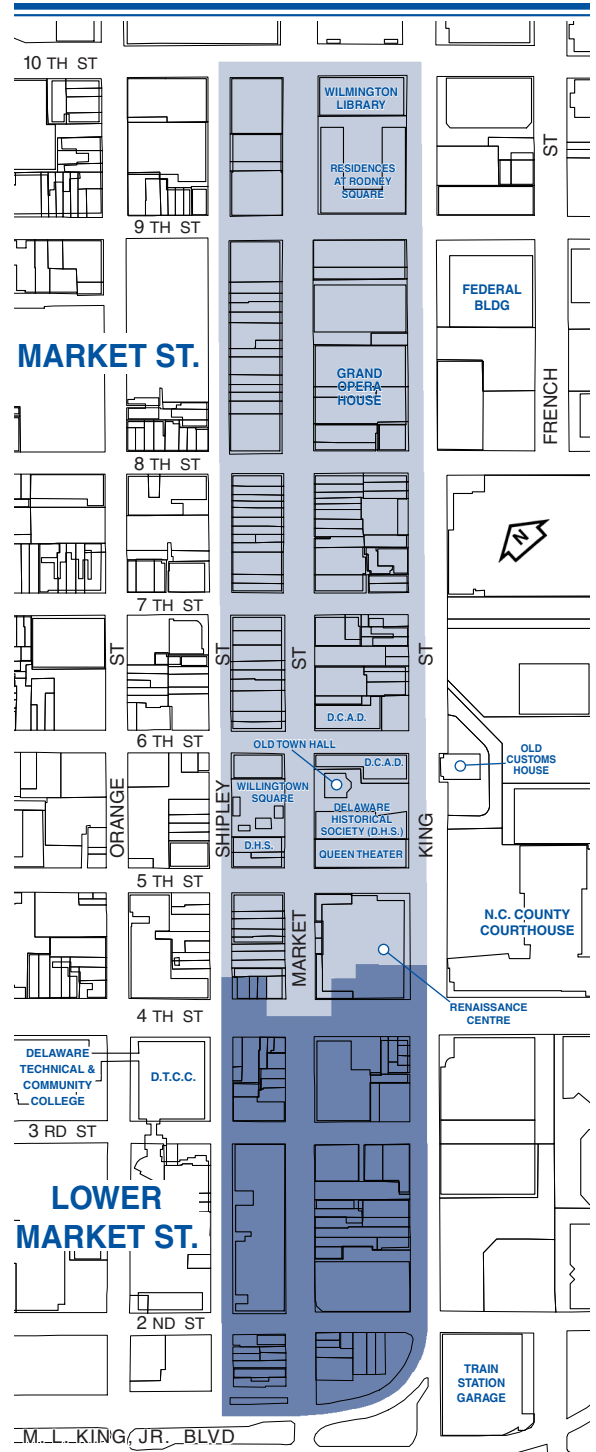
The Market Street and Lower Market Street City Historic Districts contain a significant collection of commercial and public buildings reflecting Wilmington's growth from a mid 18th-century governmental and market center to a late 19th-century and early 20th-century commercial district. Millennium redevelopment activity between 2nd and 4th Streets combined modern residential floor-



plans and ground floor retail uses. Market Street was reopened in 2002-08 to two-way traffic after being utilized as a pedestrian mall for two decades.



The Grand Opera House, c. 1893, 808 Market Street, view north; Market Street C.H.D. *Courtesy Historical Society of Delaware.* (At Top) **Northeast Corner**, 4th and Market Streets; Market Street C.H.D.



QUAKER HILL

The Quaker Hill City Historic District centers around the Friends Meeting House built in 1816 at Fourth and West Streets. The early Quaker settlement on this rise of land grew into a compact neighborhood of substantial three-story row houses. More elaborate, detached houses were developed in the mid-19th century and several churches were built in response to the growing City population. The area is notable for its wide range of architectural styles, building materials, and varying degrees of ornamentation.



West Street, view south from 9th Street; Quaker Hill C.H.D.
Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware.



A pair of Second Empire inspired houses, 5th and West Streets; Quaker Hill C.H.D.



ROCKFORD PARK

The Rockford Park City Historic District includes houses along Red Oak Road and Willard Street, just below Rockford Park's southern border. Both the neighborhood and the park are a result of the vision of William Bancroft, the major proponent of Wilmington's park system. Land adjacent to Rockford Park extending southward was purchased by his Woodlawn Company, who



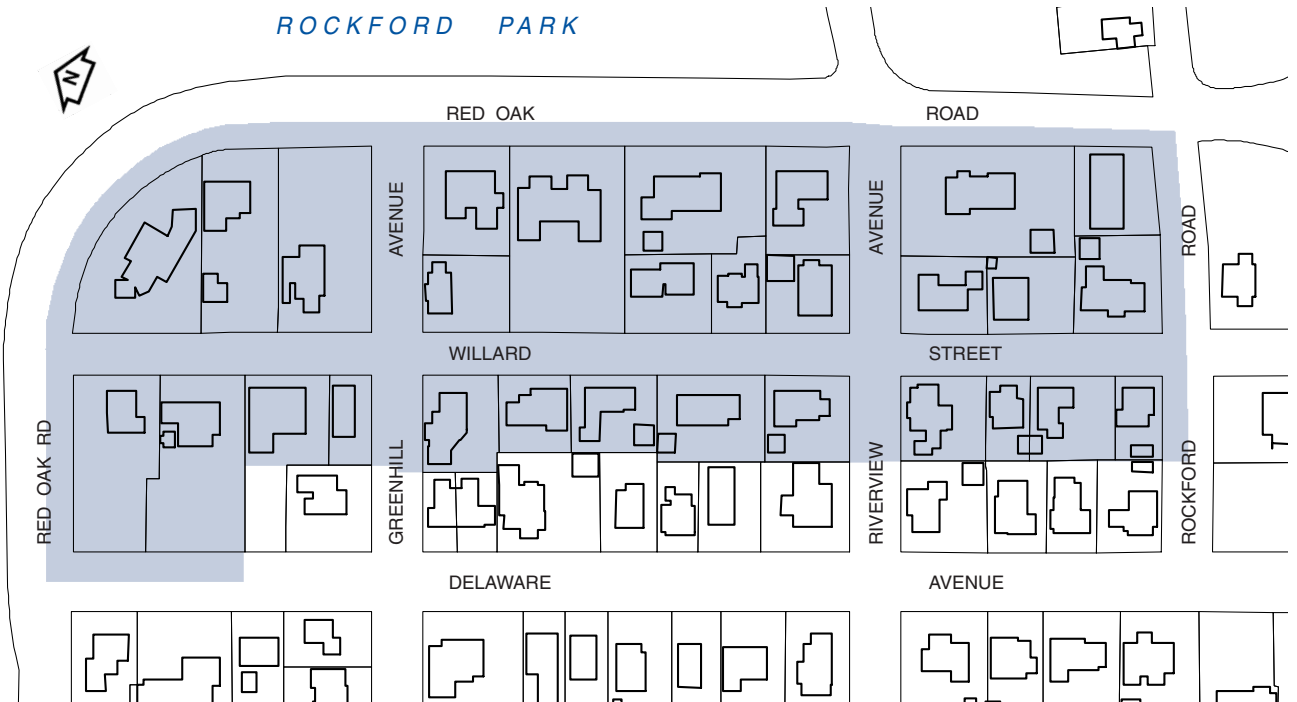
2500 block Willard Street; Rockford Park C.H.D.

installed utilities and then sold the parcels with deed restrictions for development based upon the then-popular "garden city" model communities. Affluent owners retained architects to design their houses in Colonial Revival, Shingle, Tudor, and other styles between approximately 1905-1910. The set-backs and spacious lots further help to define the Rockford Park City Historic District.



Red Oak Road; Rockford Park C.H.D.

ROCKFORD PARK

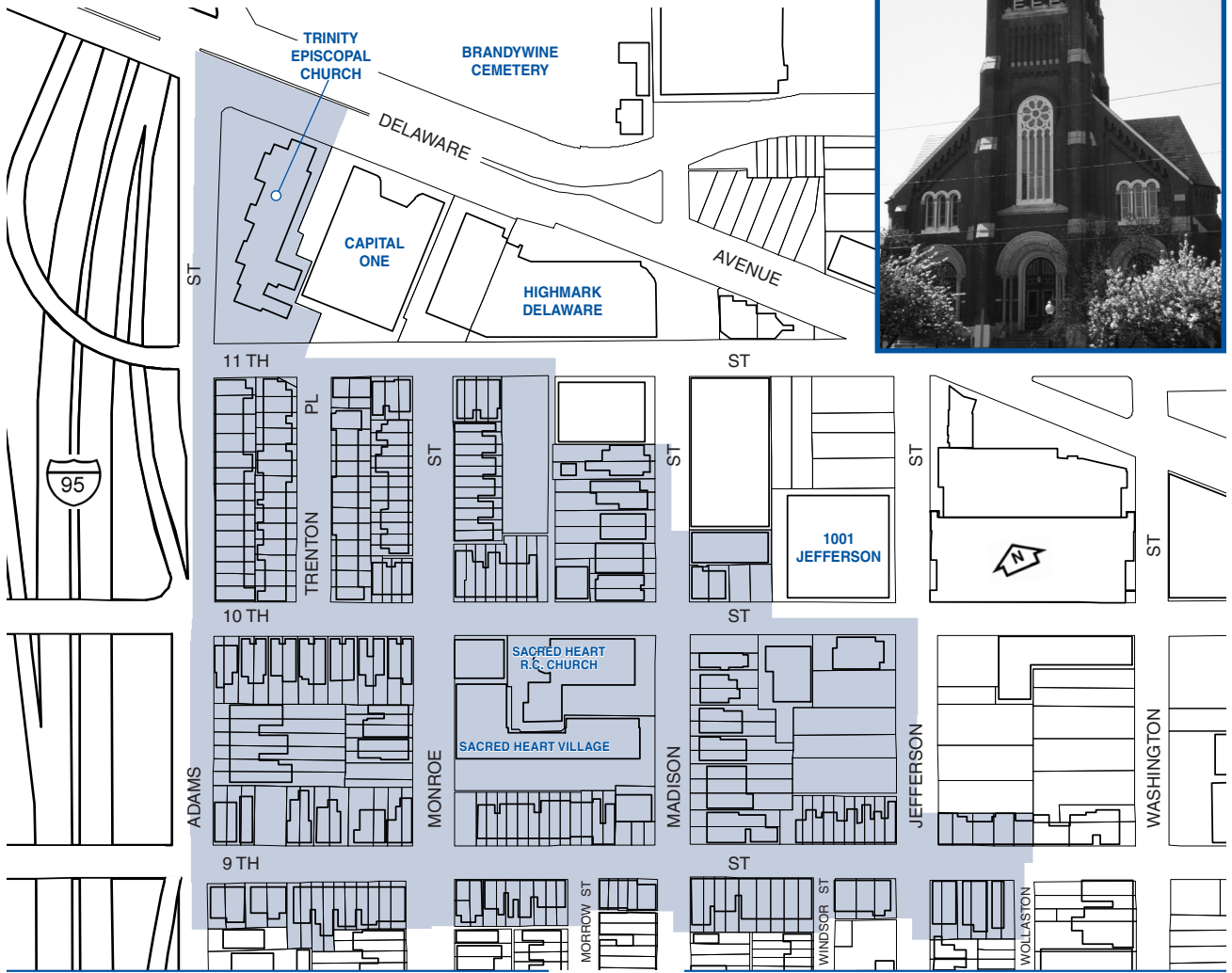


TRINITY VICINITY

Designated in January 2003, Trinity Vicinity City Historic District includes a mixture of row-houses and semi-detached homes dating from the 1870s to the early part of the 20th century. The neighborhood was built over the top of Shipley Run, a stream enclosed as part of the City's early sanitary sewer system. Architectural styles in the district include Italianate, French Second Empire and Neo-Classical Revival. The district includes the Church of the Sacred Heart, built

during a ten-year period between 1873 and 1883, and nearby Trinity Episcopal Church, designed in 1889 by Philadelphia architect Theophilus Parsons Chandler.

Sacred Heart Church with renovated steeple;
Trinity Vicinity
C.H.D.

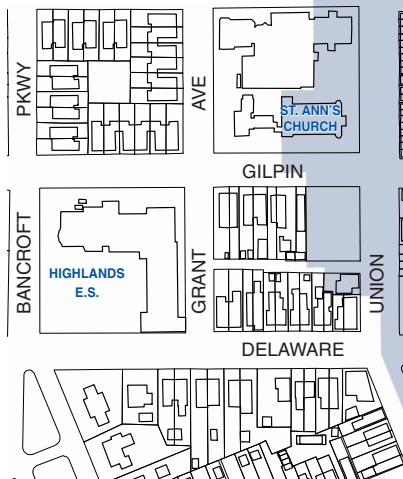


WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT?

Neighborhood Conservation District designation, which is also a category of overlay zoning, is used in situations where there is considerable neighborhood support for historic protection, but not enough support for a traditional City Historic District designation. Neighborhood Conservation District designation is a method to protect the aesthetical charm and character-defining features of older neighborhoods through a formal review of demolitions and additions. Planning Department staff can administratively process many of the building permit proposals. This type of designation does not focus as much on the use of traditional building materials, or on renovation/repair projects not viewable from the public right-of-way. Rather, the objectives are maintenance of streetscape views and architectural elements of individual structures that make up the streetscape as a whole.



St. Ann's Church; Gilpin Ave. & Union Street, Forty Acres N.C.D.



FORTY ACRES

In 2004, Wilmington's first Neighborhood Conservation District was established in the 8th District neighborhood of Forty Acres. The name "Forty Acres" was derived after the Lovering Family's 18th century, 94-acre "Hope Farm" was subdivided in June 1864, and 40 acres of land was sold to Joshua Heald and William Tatnall for the purpose of offering building lots in June of 1864. Today, Forty Acres is a compact neighborhood that could be considered an early "streetcar suburb" of Wilmington. The Wilmington Passenger Railway's station and car barns [1864], and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's Middle Depot [1884] were important landmarks of the neighborhood, as is the Logan House hotel [1865] that is still in operation. Two and three story red brick rowhouses and semi-detached twin homes predominate the neighborhood.



1800 block Gilpin Avenue; Forty Acres N.C.D.

