

CASE SUMMARY • CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA)

Historic Preservation Commission Evidentiary Hearing • August 14, 2025

Project Planner | Hillary Taylor, LEED-AP | 910.765.0862 | hillary.taylor@wilmingonnc.gov

Address:	20 South 3 rd Street	District:	Historic District (HD)
Request:	Install a fence on a corner lot		
Property Owner:	RCG Wooster House LLC 20 South 3 rd Street, Unit 9 Wilmington, NC 28401		



20 South 3rd Street | Front (East) Façade | 7/2025 (staff)

Case Overview

The applicant is requesting to install a picket fence located at the northeast corner of the property.

Details as shown on the drawings, plans, photographs, submittals, and narrative statement contained in the application, and supplemental materials and statements made at the August 14, 2025 meeting are a part of this request unless otherwise noted.

Property Information

Property Description

The following property description is adapted from the Wilmington Historic District Boundary Expansion and Additional Documentation report, dated 2003 (originally listed 1974)

The Wooster House, constructed circa 1850, is a two-story dwelling with an asymmetrical five-bay façade. The windows are six-over-six sash, framed by low-pitched pediments with dog-ear detailing on the first floor. Alterations made in 1913 include the addition of a Colonial Revival-style front porch and a roof dormer.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

- **1983 Map.** The subject structure, addressed as 20 South 3rd Street, first appears on the 1915 Sanborn Fire Map as a two-story L-shaped dwelling located at the south of the lot fronting Dock Street. The dwelling shares the lot with a one-story dwelling located at the northeast fronting South 3rd Street.
- **1904 Map.** Unchanged.
- **1915 Map.** A porch has been added to the front (east) elevation and a roof dormer to the rear (west) elevation of the subject structure, located at the south of the lot fronting Dock Street.
- **1955 Map.** Unchanged.

Current Conditions

- The subject property is a contributing resource to the Historic District (HD).
- The property is zoned Historic District (HD), which was established on June 13, 1962.

Proposed Findings of Fact

Property Information

1. The subject property is a contributing resource to the Historic District (HD). Revisions to all facades of a building and the site are subject to design review in this district.
2. The subject property is located on the southwest corner of Dock Street and South 3rd Street intersection.
3. The following Certificates of Appropriateness have been issued for the property:
 - a. January 6, 2025 (MW-25-106): Install welded handrails on the front porch, front side entrance, back side entrance, and back porch.
 - b. July 26, 2022 (MW-23-17): Repair siding in-kind and paint the exterior of the house.
 - c. June 9, 2004 (MW-04-133): Paint exterior of the house.
 - d. May 17, 1983: Paint exterior of the house.
 - e. May 25, 1976: Replace signage.
 - f. March 19, 1975: Replace signage.
 - g. April 1, 1974: Replace signage.
 - h. December 21, 1973: Paint exterior of the house.
 - i. November 30, 1973: Replace windows, convert a door to a window, add new signage.
 - j. January 16, 1973: Erect an electrical post.
 - k. October 31, 1972: Paint exterior of the house.
 - l. September 16, 1966: Repair roof and remove brick wall at rear of lot.

Scope of Work

- 4. The applicant proposes to install a wood picket fence the same height as the existing property line fence at the northwest corner of the property to create a fenced-in area.
 - a. The proposed picket fence will run approximately 35' east-west and 30' north-south.
 - b. The proposed white picket fence will match the fence of the neighboring property.

Staff Observations

- 5. Staff notes the following:
 - a. The proposed picket fence will create an enclosed area in the backyard of the subject property on a corner lot.
 - b. The proposed fence will be visible from the public right-of-way.

Applicable Design Standards

- 6. The following Wilmington Design Standards for Historic Districts and Landmarks are applicable to this request:

Section	Description	Standards
1.6	Secretary of the Interior's Standards	1-5, 9, 10
1.	A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment	
2.	The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.	
3.	Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.	
4.	Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.	
5.	Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.	
9.	New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.	
10.	New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.	
2.3	District Setting-Fences and Walls	4, 5, 8, 9
4.	Construct new fences or walls to follow property lines, unless they will negatively impact the neighbor's property by obscuring a view or preventing repair and maintenance of the property. Fences and walls should be installed a minimum of three (3) feet from an adjacent structure to provide space for adequate maintenance.	

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5. New fences or walls should be constructed of traditional materials and design, and only in locations that are characteristic of the district. Walls should not be constructed of cinder block or cement block unless it is stuccoed or veneered with brick. Walls constructed of artificial siding that seek to resemble brick veneer, stone veneer, or wood veneer are not appropriate. Walls should not feature plastic panels, corrugated metal or any similar material.
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9. Design fences and walls to be compatible with the era of the associated building and the immediate area. Wooden picket fences should be limited to historic residential areas. Vinyl, opaque, stockade and chain link fencing are inappropriate in the historic districts. Other incompatible fence types include split rail and basket weave fences.
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Recommended Conditions

If the commission elects to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for this request, staff recommends the following conditions be applied.

1. The proposed picket fence shall be white wood fencing matching the height of the existing property line fence.
2. The finished side of the fences shall face toward the public right-of-way.
3. Any gates shall not swing out over public right-of-way or into any neighboring properties.
4. No mature trees or historic landscaping shall be removed as a result of the proposed project.
5. All construction shall comply with the regulations and requirements imposed by the Land Development Code and other applicable federal, state, or local law, ordinance, or regulation, including the North Carolina Building Code. All required permits shall be obtained.
6. Changes to the project from that described in the application and submittals, shall be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission, or if minor in nature as specified in the Wilmington Design Standards for Historic Districts and Landmarks, by staff through the administrative bypass process.

Public Hearing Notice

Notification Type	Date
<i>Signs posted</i>	7/31/25
<i>Notice mailed to adjacent property owners</i>	7/31/25
<i>Newspaper advertisement date</i>	8/8/25

Attachments

1. Application (Received 7/9/2025)
2. Case Map (Dated 7/11/2025)
3. District Map (Dated 7/11/2025)
4. Narrative and Materials (Received 7/9/2025)
5. Tax Map, Site Plan, and Photo (Received 7/9/2025)



20 South 3rd Street | Front (East) Façade | 4/1974 (unknown)



20 South 3rd Street | Side (South) Façade | 7/2025 (staff)



20 South 3rd Street | East side of proposed picket fence enclosure, looking west | 7/2025 (staff)

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION

MAJOR WORK

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

- Applications are due by 1:00 PM on the submission deadline date and can be dropped off in person, submitted via email to: preservation@wilmingtonnc.gov or mailed to PO Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402.
- Do not drop off, email, or mail-in an application for major work prior to scheduling a pre-application meeting. Meetings may be scheduled by calling 910-254-0900.
- Application fees must be paid before the COA can be granted. Invoices for the application fee and the neighboring property owner mailing fee (\$0.85 per notice) will be provided by staff after submission and will include deadlines and payment instructions. If you wish to pay over the phone, please call 910-254-0900 to arrange credit card payments.
- All applicable items listed on the submittal checklist are required for an application to be considered complete.
- Applications will be reviewed for completeness before they are accepted. Incomplete applications will not be scheduled for HPC review.

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Dates and Submission Deadlines

Meeting Date	Submission Deadline
August 14, 2025	7/9/2025
September 11, 2025	8/5/2025
October 9, 2025	9/2/2025
November 13, 2025	10/7/2025
December 11, 2025	11/4/2025

Application Fees

Check one:	Estimated Project Cost	Application Fee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Up to \$ 17,999	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 18,000 - \$ 24,999	\$ 20
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 25,000 - \$ 49,999	\$ 25
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 50,000 - \$ 99,000	\$ 35
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 100,000 - \$ 499,000	\$ 50
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$500,000 or more	\$ 100

Approval of after-the-fact (ATF) work (completed without a COA) requires application submittal and an ATF fee of \$100.

Is this an after-the-fact approval?

☐ Yes ☐ No

For more information:

City of Wilmington • Planning and Development Department • Historic Preservation

929 N. Front Street, 1st Floor

PO Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402

preservation@wilmingtonnc.gov • 910.254.0900



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION MAJOR WORK

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

Property Street Address: _____

Tax Parcel Number: _____

RECEIVED

By Ben Riggle at 8:40 am, Jul 09, 2025

Property Owner Information

If the applicant is not the property owner, an agent form (below) is required to be signed by the property owner and submitted with an application. Application must be signed by all legal property owners.

Owner name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

AGENT FORM *(This section is required if the applicant is anyone other than the property owner)*

I _____ the undersigned owner, do hereby appoint
_____ to act on my behalf for the purpose of petitioning
the
city of Wilmington Historic Preservation Commission for a certificate of appropriateness, as applicable
to the property described in the attached petition.

I do hereby covenant and agree with the city of Wilmington that said person
(agent) has the authority to do the following acts for or on behalf of the owner:

- Submit a property petition and require supplemental materials
- Appear at public meetings to give testimony and make commitments on behalf of the owner
- Accept conditions or recommendations made for the issuance of the certificate of appropriateness on the owner's property
- Act on the owner's behalf without limitations with regard to any and all things directly or indirectly connected with or arising out of any petition for a certificate of appropriate-

This appointment agreement shall continue in effect until final disposition of the petition submitted in conjunction with this appointment.

Owner(s) name(s): _____

Owner(s) signature: _____ Date: _____

Designated agent name: _____ Designated agent phone: 910-444-9289

Designated agent email: _____

Designated agent mailing address: _____

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION

MAJOR WORK

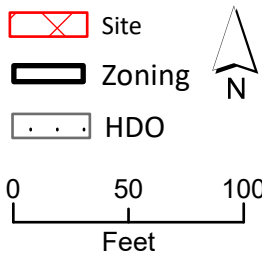
SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

If the information is not included with the application, the request cannot be scheduled for review by the Commission. Please check off the items below if completed:

- ☐ **Signed Application Form / Agent Form** (as needed)
 - ☐ **Project Narrative**
 - Brief detailed description of the project, including a description of how the proposed changes are consistent with the Wilmington Design Standards for Historic Districts
 - ☐ **Tax Map**
 - This can be found online at New Hanover County GIS Portal at <https://www.nhcgov.com/844/GIS-Maps-Data>
 - ☐ **Proposed Building Materials**
 - Product sheets for each type of material proposed (including windows, doors, roof, siding, etc.)
 - Material Sheet Checklist if applicable
 - May include brochures or manufacturer's specification sheets
 - ☐ **Digital Photos** (all photos may be emailed)
 - A keyed site plan or lot diagram showing existing structures, features and conditions
 - A close-up of the proposed work area.
- These scopes will require additional information including but not limited to the following:*
- ☐ **New Construction, Major Alterations, Additions**
 - Site plan drawn to scale with existing and proposed buildings, setbacks, parking areas, driveways, trees to be removed or preserved, fences and landscaping.
 - Architectural drawings, drawn to scale including elevations and floor plans.
 - Additional information that helps determine whether the project is consistent with [Design Standards](#).
 - Three dimensional models (optional)

The applicant is responsible for supplying all information necessary to enable the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to understand the proposal and potential impacts on the historic district or overlay.

**Without sufficient information, the Commission
may continue or deny the request.**



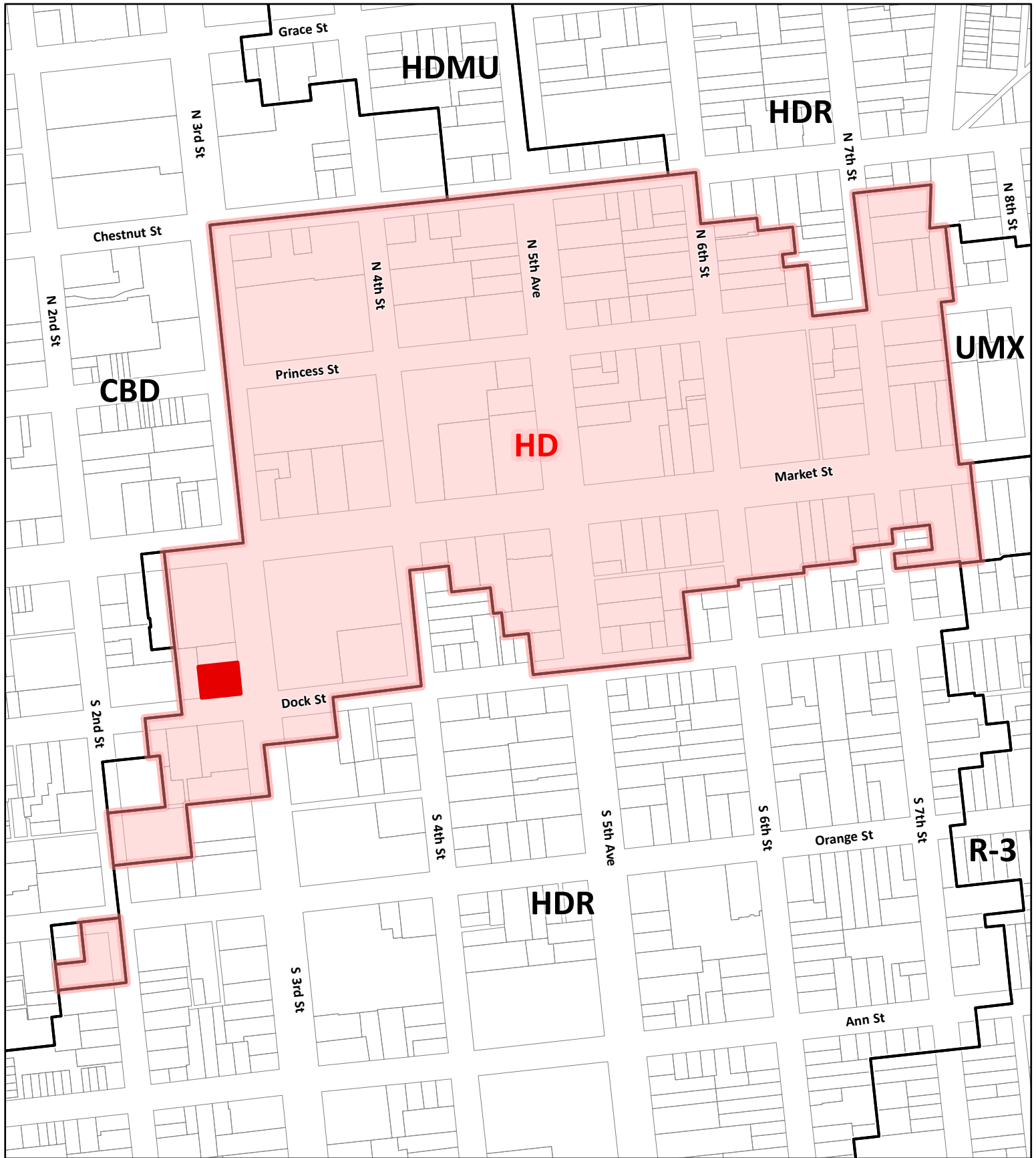
Historic Preservation Commission


MJW-07-2609 Attachment 2 — Case Map


20 S 3rd St


7/11/2025






 Site

 Historic District or Overlay

 Zoning

0 100 200
Feet

 N

Historic Preservation Commission

MJW-07-2609 Attachment 3 — District Map

20 S 3rd St

7/11/2025



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION

MAJOR WORK

Deck (Materials and Dimensions)	
Posts	
Balustrade / railing (top cap and bottom)	
Balustrade - individual balusters	
Foundation (height and materials)	
Entry steps and railings	
Doors (Materials and Dimensions)	
Front entry	
Sides (specify location)	
Rear	
Windows (Materials, Style, Dimensions)	
Front	
Sides	
Rear	
Gutters and Downspouts	
Driveway	
Dimensions	
Curb, Apron and Runner Materials	
Any Additional Materials	





CRMLS