

THE CITY OF WILMINGTON
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING
DESIGNATION OF LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 160A, Article 19, Part 3C of the North Carolina General Statutes and Section 19-131 of the Wilmington City Code, the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Wilmington establishes this policy to provide criteria, principles for the application of criteria, priorities, and procedures for the designation of local historic landmarks.

Section 1. Goals

1.1 The first goal of the local historic landmark designation program is to preserve the heritage of Wilmington by extending protection of landmark status to especially significant structures, buildings, sites, areas, or objects (hereinafter collectively “the property or properties”).

1.2 The second goal of the local historic landmark designation program is to promote the use and conservation of especially significant properties for the education, pleasure and cultural enrichment of residents of Wilmington and of the public at large.

1.3 In furtherance of these goals the Commission shall encourage the public to nominate properties for landmark status and shall itself actively seek to identify properties worthy of designation. The Commission shall regularly conduct educational and other programs to enhance public knowledge and awareness of the historic landmarks in Wilmington.

Section 2. Criteria for Landmark Designation

2.1 Recommendations. The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend to the City Council individual properties to be designated as local historic landmarks only if the Commission finds that the property meets the criteria of age, special significance, and integrity.

2.2 Age. A property should be at least 50 years old to be considered for local historic landmark status. The Commission may make exceptions for properties less than 50 years old which are threatened with demolition and which meet the special significance and integrity criteria.

2.3 Special Significance. The property’s special historical, prehistorical, architectural or cultural significance must be evidenced by meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) The property embodies in a special or outstanding way the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles, building types, construction technology, landscape design or other architectural, aesthetic or engineering expressions that are particular to the appearance and development of Wilmington.
- (2) The property exemplifies in a special or outstanding way the political, economic, social, scientific, educational, archeological, architectural, cultural, or artistic heritage of Wilmington.
- (3) The property is an especially important site of events that were critical turning points in the history of Wilmington.

- (4) The property is an especially important site associated with persons, groups, institutions or movements that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture, or development of Wilmington.
- (5) The property is the principal building, structure, or object in Wilmington associated with a person of recognized importance to the history of Wilmington, the region, the state, or the nation.
- (6) The property is an outstanding example of the work of craftsmen, artists, engineers, builders or developers whose works have influenced the evolution of their fields of endeavor in the region or nation, or whose works have influenced markedly the development of Wilmington.
- (7) The property provides information or evidence not available elsewhere in the Wilmington area concerning historic or prehistoric events, institutions, settlement patterns, or other facets of earlier cultures.
- (8) The property reflects in a unique way the patterns of settlement or use of the landscape as well as the evolution of cultural attitudes toward the land.

2.4 Integrity. The property has integrity if its significance can be seen or experienced, not just imagined. Most or all of the following characteristics are required for the property to meet this standard:

- (1) Integrity of design – The historic organization of space, proportion, scale, technology and materials can be experienced.
- (2) Integrity of setting – The place where the property played its significant role can be experienced because the physical environment related to the property’s function, role, or design retains its historic character.
- (3) Integrity of workmanship – The physical evidence of the crafts of the culture or people during the period when the property was created can be experienced.
- (4) Integrity of materials – The historical materials that were combined to form the property must have been preserved and not recreated.
- (5) Integrity of feeling – The historical or aesthetic sense of the property’s original time can be experienced because its physical features together enable it to evoke a sense of its historical character.
- (6) Integrity of association – The property is the place where a significant activity or event occurred or where a significant person lived or engaged in historic actions. The property is sufficiently intact that the observer can experience the property’s connection with the significant event, activity or person.

Section 3. Principles for Applying the Criteria

The following principles govern the application of the Criteria for Landmark Designation in Section 2 herein above:

3.1 Local Historic Districts. The Commission may recommend landmark designation for properties that are located within local historic districts and that meet the criteria of special significance and integrity, subject to the following principles.

3.1.1 The Commission may recommend a building within a local historic district for landmark designation only if the building contains interior features of special significance and the owner consents to review of the interior features and an annual inspection by the City's Historic Preservation Planner to ensure that the features remain intact.

3.1.2 By way of exception to the preceding principle, the Commission may recommend landmark designation for a building within a local historic district without subjecting its interior features to review if at least one of the following conditions applies:

- (1) The Commission finds that the property's associative history or exterior features alone are of sufficient citywide significance that landmark designation without interior review will contribute substantially to the goal of education, pleasure and cultural enrichment of the residents of Wilmington and of the public at large.
- (2) The Commission finds that achievement of the goal of physical preservation through restoration, rehabilitation, or rescue from demolition can be accomplished if the tax benefit associated with landmark designation is granted, thereby making such restoration, rehabilitation, or rescue from demolition economically feasible.

3.2 Age. Age alone does not warrant local historic landmark designation.

3.3 Significance. Any association with persons or events must be substantial to meet these criteria.

3.4 Exception to Material Integrity. An exception to the criterion of material integrity—e.g., a building lacks material integrity because it has been covered with aluminum or vinyl siding—may be made if the property, is of major importance, meets the criteria of special significance and is threatened with demolition.

Section 4. Procedure

4.1 Lists.

Four lists of properties should be maintained in connection with landmark designation, as follows:

4.1.1 High Priority List. This list contains properties that the Commission has determined deserve urgent attention as follows:

- (1) First Priority. Properties that are threatened with demolition.
- (2) Second Priority. Properties whose preservation is of significant community interest because they are related to, or are a part of, a larger historic preservation projects, including but not limited to any programs or projects initiated or endorsed by the Commission.
- (3) Third Priority. Other properties that the Commission determines are of greater historical, architectural, social, cultural, or technological importance that the remaining properties under consideration for landmark designation.

4.1.2 Inventory of Historic Properties. This inventory is described in Section 19-131(4) of the Wilmington City Code .

4.1.3 Master List of Potential Landmarks. This is a list of properties that have been recommended by the Commission, City Historic Preservation Planner, or interested members of the

public as possible candidates for landmark designation. The required information on each property is name and address or location.

4.1.4 Study List. This list contains the properties that the Commission has found, on the basis of preliminary research presented in the study list application, to be likely to meet the criteria for designation. Inclusion on the Study List is not a guarantee of recommendation for landmark designation.

4.2 The Process of Designation.

The principal steps in the designation of local historic landmarks are as follows:

- (1) Any property on the Commission's High Priority List may bypass steps 2 and 3 below.
- (2) The property is suggested by the Commission, City's Historic Preservation Planner, or the public as a candidate for landmark designation and is added by the Commission to the Master List of Potential Landmarks. If the suggested property is not already in the Inventory of Historic Properties it is added to the Inventory in accordance with the procedures stated in Chapter 5 of the Handbook for Historic Preservation Commissions in North Carolina (1994).
- (3) A study list application is completed and submitted. If the Commission finds that on the basis of the application that the property is likely to meet the criteria for landmark designation, the Commission may place the property on the Study List.
- (4) A landmark designation application is completed and sent to the State Historic Preservation Office, which reviews the application and forwards its comments and/or recommendation concerning the application to the Commission.
- (5) The Commission considers the landmark designation application, the comments and recommendations of the State Historic Preservation Office, the comments and recommendations of the City's Historic Preservation Planner, and other relevant evidence in deciding whether to recommend to the City Council approval or rejection of an ordinance designating the property as a local historic landmark.

4.3 Application Forms. There are two local application forms to be completed in connection with the designation process and submitted to the Commission for its consideration:

- (1) Study List Application. A brief form that contains the identifying information of the property and a brief explanation of how the property can be expected, upon further detailed research, to meet the criteria for designation.
- (2) Landmark Designation Application. A longer form that contains all of the information needed to demonstrate that the property meets the requirements of State Law and The Wilmington City Code for landmark designation.

4.4 Responsibility for Completing Applications.

- (1) In the case of private properties it is ordinarily the responsibility of the property owner to do the needed research and to complete the applications, or to have the research and completion of forms done by a qualified consultant.

- (2) In the case of public properties, or properties that are threatened with imminent demolition and the owners of which are unwilling or unable to complete the application, the City staff or the Commission may conduct the necessary research and complete the forms unless qualified volunteers can be found to complete the research or grant funds can be obtained to fund completion by qualified consultants.

4.5 Review Schedule

- (1) The Commission may consider Study List or Landmark Designation applications at any time.
- (2) The Commission may add properties to the High Priority List, Master List of Potential Landmarks or the Study List at any time.
- (3) The City staff will provide to the Commission an annual report on proposed landmark designations, including a list of applications received and the status of the applications.