City of Wilmington
P.O. Box 1810
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Wilmington, NC 28402

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Making Changes to Your Property

If you own property within a historic district or historic district overlay you will need to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for any exterior alterations, demolition, landscaping, new construction or site changes. Interior work is not subject to design review. The review process ensures that proposed work is compatible with the nature of the historic property and the special character of the historic district as a whole.

This review includes any building or structure, (including masonry walls, fences, light fixtures, steps, pavement or other appurtenant features) significant landscaping, archeological features or above ground utility structures or signs that can be erected, altered, relocated or demolished. These types of changes must be reviewed and approved by the City's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to make sure they comply with the Wilmington Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Landmarks. The Design Guidelines can be viewed online at wilmingtonnc.gov.

Application for Certificates of Appropriateness

To apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) please call 910.254.0900 or visit us at 305 Chestnut Street, or on the web at wilmingtonnc.gov.

Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for major works within historic districts are reviewed by staff prior to being scheduled for a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). HPC hearings are held the second Thursday of every month at City Hall. Completed applications must be submitted 30 days before the commission hearing date to be considered by the HPC.

Examples of Major Works Requiring a COA

- Swimming pools
- Roofs, windows and doors
- Exterior siding and decorative woodworking
- Porches and entrances
- Architectural metals
- New construction
- Storefront changes
- Relocation of buildings and structures
- Additions or Demolitions
- Major landscaping
- Fences and walls on corner lots
- Garages and other accessory structures
- Parking lots
- Masonry
- Exterior Alterations

Administrative Bypass

The Administrative Bypass procedure allows the City's Historic Preservation Planning staff to approve minor changes to properties within the historic districts.

To use the Administrative Bypass procedure, the property owner submits an application to the Historic Planning staff. The application is approved if found to be consistent with the Design Guidelines. Any requests that cannot be approved by staff are submitted to the HPC for consideration.

Examples of Minor Works Requiring an Administrative Bypass

- Storm doors and windows
- Fences (except corner lots)
- Shutters and blinds
- Primer/paint colors
- Signs
- Garage doors
- Satellite dishes
- Walkways, paths, driveways and patios
- Handicap facilities
- Roofing materials
- Awnings
- Garden sheds
- Rear yard decks
- Removal of asbestos siding
- Restoration of original features and/or materials
- Minor landscaping and exterior alterations

Wilmington Historic Districts

A guide for property owners, residents, and contractors

Congratulations! As a property owner/resident in downtown Wilmington, you play a very important role in the preservation of our city's heritage and unique character. This brochure describes the design review process required for exterior changes to historic buildings and properties, and provides guidance on which alterations are appropriate for maintaining, rehabilitating, and/or altering these resources.

What is a Historic District? A historic district is an area designated as having aesthetic, architectural, historical, cultural, or archaeological significance that is worthy of protection and preservation. Wilmington has one of the state's largest historic districts, which was established to help protect and maintain the historic fabric of the community, as well as to ensure that new development is compatible with our historic character.

Wilmington's historic districts have two major categories – National Register Historic Districts and Local Historic Districts – that have individual district and zoning designations that may impact your property.

"...to promote, enhance and preserve the character of the Wilmington historic districts."

Historic Preservation Planning

The City of Wilmington's Historic Preservation Planning program is responsible for administration of the Historic Preservation Commission's duties of overseeing Wilmington's historic districts and landmarks. The City's Historic Preservation Planner assists and offers guidance to the community and the commission on matters of historic preservation.

Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a nine member board appointed by the Wilmington City Council to "promote, enhance and preserve the character of the Wilmington historic districts." The HPC reviews and decides on requests for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) that are required for major works within the local historic district boundaries to make sure they comply with the city's Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Landmarks.

Tax Credit Programs

Federal and State tax credit programs for national and local historic districts are administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Raleigh. For more information contact the Restoration Branch at 919.807.6572 or visit the SHPO website at www.hpo.ncdcr.gov

Information and Assistance

Further information about the design review process, application forms and rehabilitation materials is available at the City's Planning Division office Monday-Friday, 8 am - 5 pm.

Office: 305 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, NC 28401
Call: 910-254-0900
Online: www.wilmingtonnc.gov

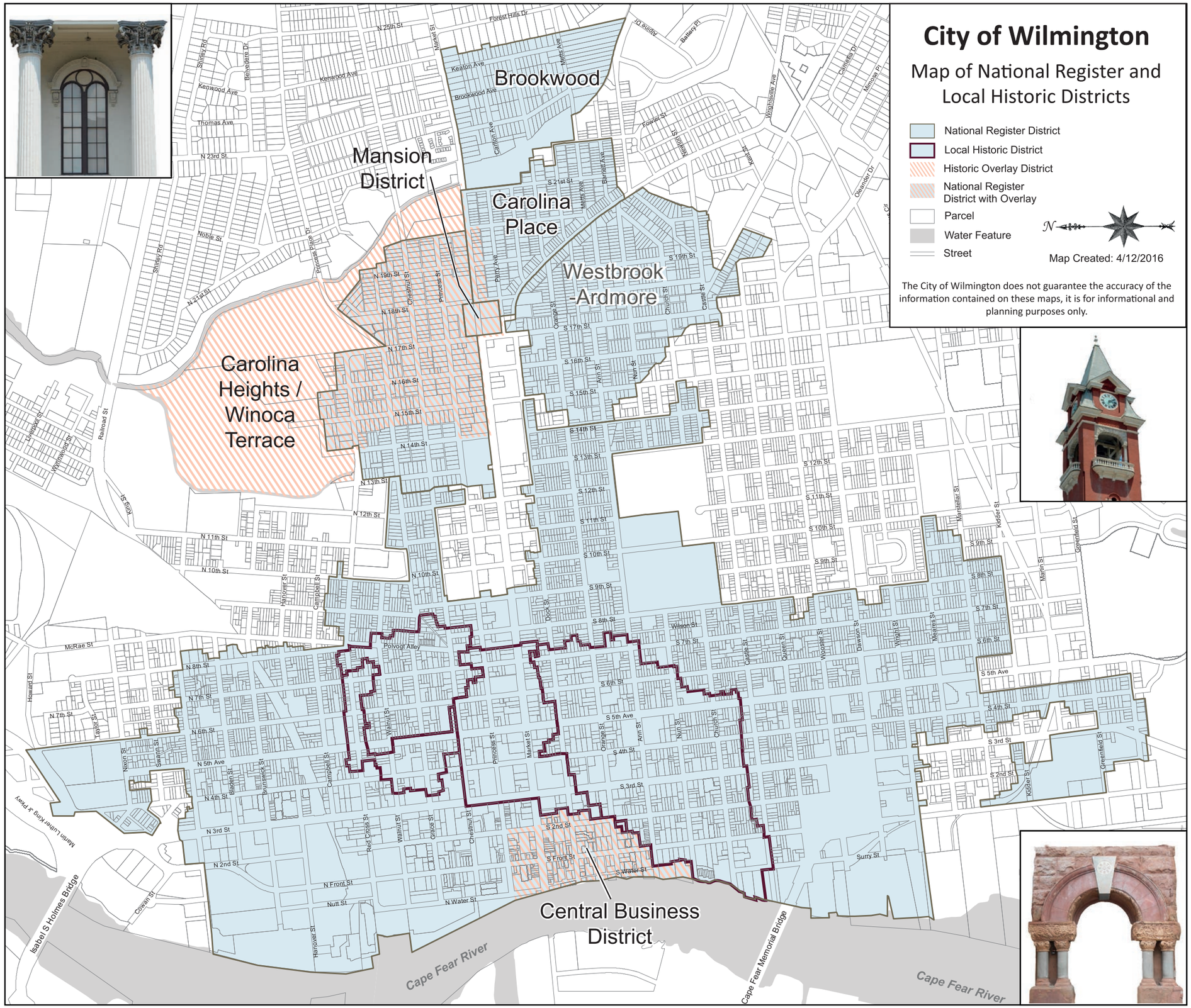
City of Wilmington

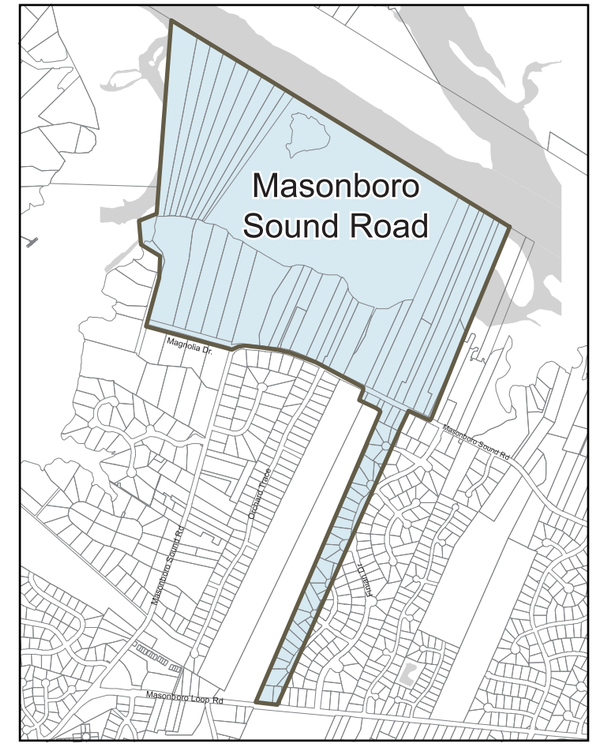
Map of National Register and Local Historic Districts

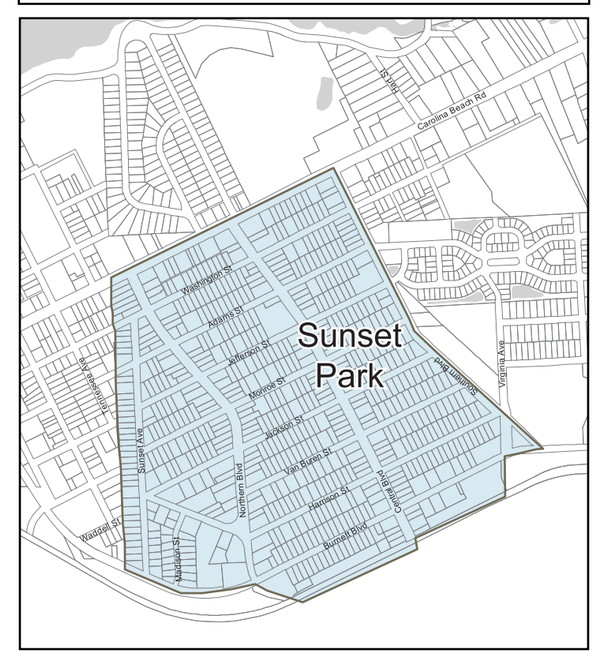
- National Register District
- Local Historic District
- Historic Overlay District
- National Register District with Overlay
- Parcel
- Water Feature
- Street

Map Created: 4/12/2016

The City of Wilmington does not guarantee the accuracy of the information contained on these maps, it is for informational and planning purposes only.





National Register of Historic Places

While properties within the National Register of Historic Districts are not subject to review by the HPC unless they are in a local historic district, a 90-day notice is required for proposed demolition of buildings and structures in the National Register Historic Districts.