



1204

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District

other names/site number N14449

2. Location

street & number 111-320 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 901-909 North Orange Street, 825-901 North Tatnall Streets  
not for publication   
city or town Wilmington vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Delaware code DE county New Castle code 003  
zip code 19801

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date

DEPUTY STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government Date

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 12.22.08  
See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register  
See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper of Action Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>28</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>28</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

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In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James M. Bah Mayor 11/3/08  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
Wilmington, Delaware  
Certified Local Government

RECEIVED  
DELAWARE STATE HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION OFFICE

2008 NOV -6 AM 10: 56

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	Sub: <u>Business</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Professional</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Financial Institution</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Restaurant</u>
<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>Multiple Dwelling</u>
<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>College</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	Sub: <u>Business</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Professional</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Financial Institution</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Restaurant</u>
<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>Multiple Dwelling</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN; Italianate  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS; Colonial Revival  
MODERN MOVEMENT; Art Moderne  
MODERN MOVEMENT; Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE, BRICK  
roof TERRA-COTTA, COPPER, SYNTHETICS  
walls LIMESTONE, BRICK, COPPER, SHINGLE,  
STUCCO, ALUMINUM  
other \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS 7.1 THROUGH 7.11.**

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Summary

The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District consists of thirty-two buildings along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, North Tatnall Street, and North Orange Street in downtown Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware. The district includes approximately sixty-nine storefronts, a four-story office building, and a seven-story office building. There are four non-contributing resources within the district as well. Three of the four non-contributing buildings have undergone modern façade renovations and no longer retain sufficient integrity to contribute to the district, and one is a modern building. West 9<sup>th</sup> Street is a concentration of attached buildings that underwent a transformation from residential uses to a district of specialty shops and offices beginning around 1908. The buildings form a cohesive grouping of uses that convey the significance of the district as a commercial corridor from circa 1908 through 1958. The district includes mainly two- to four-story brick commercial buildings with first-floor commercial storefronts and upper-story office or residential uses. The façades are typically brick or stucco, and the most prominent stylistic influence is Italianate, although Colonial Revival, Art Deco, Stripped Classical, and Art Moderne are also represented. Common details include segmental arch windows and pressed metal cornices with decorative brackets. The storefronts are visually separated from the upper stories and usually have display windows and a recessed entrance. The upper levels were typically used for offices or apartments.

There are two notable exceptions to the brick commercial buildings that front West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The 9<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza Building (CRS # N14449.004/ N7515) is a seven-story office building constructed in 1938 at the southwest corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street and North Orange Street. The Diamond State Telephone Company Building (CRS # N14449.032/ N7573, 1928) occupies the north side of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, between North Tatnall and North West streets.

Setting

The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District is located at the northwest side of the central business district of Wilmington. The Market Street Commercial Historic District is located to the east and the Quaker Hill Residential Historic District is located to the southwest. To the north and east, high-rise office buildings line 10<sup>th</sup> and Market streets (Photographs 1-4). The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor is separated from the late-nineteenth to early twentieth-century residential neighborhood to the south by large parking lots and modern intrusions (Photographs 5-8). In the blocks immediately to the west, modern construction and parking lots have replaced many of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century residences that previously existed (Photograph 8). Grace Church serves as a prominent landmark

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remaining from the mid-nineteenth century at the northwest corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street and North West Street, immediately west of the district (Photograph 9).

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street is a one-way street with two lanes of traffic that head east from Wawaset Park to Market Street. Wide sidewalks flank the street, with occasional bump-outs to limit on-street parking. The side streets of North Shipley, North Orange, North Tatnall and North West have narrower sidewalks than West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Limited metered parking is provided on both sides of the street, with exception to the north side of the 300 block of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street in front of the Diamond State Telephone Building (Photograph 10). Street trees are found along the north side of the 100 block and the south side of the 300 block. The city made pedestrian mall upgrades to West 9<sup>th</sup> Street in 1974 by planting street trees and installing street lights, cast cement benches, water fountains and planters. Signage is typically found hanging from metal signposts that project over the sidewalk, also part of the pedestrian mall upgrades (Photograph 11). Awnings and signs installed flush to the façade are less common but are often typical of the signage installed within the period of significance.

Individual Building Descriptions: N14449.001-032

**West 9<sup>th</sup> Street**

- .001 111 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Alfred Carlis Building—ca. 1920. Three-story attached commercial building (Photograph 1). The storefront has a recessed central entrance, and a stucco façade was installed over the brick in 1948, covering the openings in the second and third levels. Cursive metal lettering that reads “Alfred Carlis” has been installed across the façade. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7512.
- .002 113-115 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1920. Three-story attached brick commercial building (Photograph 1). A stucco façade was applied over the second and third levels, and mosaic tiles were installed on the storefront in 1938. There are two bays of two-over-two light aluminum sash windows in each of the upper levels. Signage, likely dating to the renovations in 1938, projects from the façade at the second level. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7515.
- .003 117-119 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Eckerd’s—1941. Two-story Art Moderne building with a patterned brick veneer façade (Photographs 1 and 2). The façade extends across the south elevation, and wraps around the rounded corner entrance to continue along the west elevation. Display windows are found along the south and west elevations of the first floor and one-over-one

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light, double-hung windows are regularly placed along the south and west elevations of the second floor. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7514.

- .004 200-208 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza Building—1938. Seven-story reinforced masonry building clad in limestone (Photograph 12). The Art Deco building is five bays wide along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street and extends seven bays along North Orange Street. The main entrance is located on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The walls curve inward towards the entrance, which has bronze and glass doors. First floor storefronts are located on the North Orange Street elevation. The belt course that runs along the north and east elevations between the first floor and second floor is detailed with geometric designs, typical of the Art Deco style. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7515.
- .005 201-203 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1910. A former bank, the building at the northwest corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> and North Orange streets is two stories high. The façade was completely covered with a modern veneer circa 1964. The building now features ribbon windows and a grey and black polished marble veneer (Photograph 3). 1 non-contributing building, due to modern alterations leading to a loss of integrity.
- .006 205 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1920. Three-story attached brick commercial building, two bays wide with a brick veneer façade (Photograph 13). The storefront is framed with fluted stone pilasters and a simple entablature. The entrance is in the east bay and display windows are located in the west bay. The second floor has two large picture windows flanked by two-light fixed-pane windows. The third floor has two bays of two-over-one light, double-hung wood sash windows. A simple cornice tops the façade. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7521.
- .007 207 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1920. Two-story building faced in brick veneer (Photograph 13). Arched doorways flank a central display window. The second level has an eight-over-eight light double-hung wood sash window flanked by four-over-four light double-hung wood sash side lights. A simple wood cornice adorns the top of the façade. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7522.
- .008 209 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1890. Three-story Italianate building faced with stucco (Photograph 14). The storefront has a recessed entrance in the east bay and display windows in the west bay. A decorative belt course is located between the storefront and the second level. The



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second and third levels have two bays of one-over-one light double-hung wood sash windows with wood frames and sills. The cornice is detailed with contrasting ballflowers and a finial is located on each end. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7523.

- .009 211 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1910. Four-bay, three-story brick commercial building with Colonial Revival influence (Photograph 14). The storefront consists of a central recessed entry flanked by display windows. The second floor windows are six-over-six light double-hung wood sash with faux shutters. The third floor windows are six-light fixed-sash with faux shutters. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7523.
- .010 212-214 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Gewehr Piano Building—ca. 1920. Three-story attached brick commercial building (Photograph 15). The storefront has a recessed central entrance and a brick veneer. Fluted pilasters with sunbursts in the capitals flank the storefront. Below the pent roof that divides the storefront from the upper levels, the bricks are laid in a decorative bond made up of a soldier row topped with dentils and an entablature decorated with glazed tile diamonds. Above the entrance is a limestone panel that reads “GEWEHR PIANO COMPANY” (Photograph 16). The second floor has two cant bay windows with shallow cornices. The third level has tripartite windows and a full cornice supported by narrow brackets. The windows are all one-over-one light modern replacements. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7516.
- .011 213 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1890. Three-story, two-bay brick commercial building with Italianate details (Photograph 14). The storefront has a recessed entry in the west bay and is crowned by a decorative brick band detailed with dentils. A metal awning has been installed below the decorative brick band. The window openings have segmental arches with stone keystones. The windows are one-over-one light double-hung wood sash. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7524 and N2032.
- .012 216 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1890. Three-story attached brick Italianate building with an “L”-shaped footprint (Photograph 15). The storefront is three bays wide, while the upper stories are only two bays wide with a gap between 216 and 214 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The storefront has recessed entrances on each end, and the central display windows are topped with a series of leaded glass windows (Photograph 17). The storefront is crowned with a simple pressed metal cornice with finials on each end. The upper levels of the façade are stucco. Each double-hung, two-over-two light, wood sash window features decorative stone lintels and sills, and is flanked

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by faux shutters. The simple cornice is adorned with decorative brackets. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N2517.

- .013 217-223 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1981. This modern building is designed in a manner sensitive to the character of the surrounding buildings (Photograph 18). The brick-faced building is three stories high and five bays wide. The first level has a central entrance flanked by display windows. Each of these first-level bays is topped by a shed roof with a rounded slope and box cornice. The upper level windows are faux eight-over-twelve light vinyl sash with faux shutters. A simple cornice with a wide entablature extends along the façade. 1 non-contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7525.
- .014 218-222 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1920. Three-story attached brick commercial building with Colonial Revival details (Photograph 15). The building was designed as an apartment building with first-floor storefronts. Each of the three storefronts on the first level has a recessed entry and display windows. The upper stories are built in a U shape so that the levels above the central storefront open to the north to provide light and air to interior rooms. The north-facing walls of the upper levels are clad in brick veneer with quoins emphasized in the coursing at each corner. The windows in these outer bays are six-over-six light wood sash with transoms, grouped in the center of each bay with recessed panels to separate the levels. The walls facing the air shaft are covered with stucco. The windows are six-over-six light, double-hung wood sash and have decorative brick lintels. A cornice runs along all of the visible elevations, below a brick pedimented parapet with stone coping. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7518.
- .015 224-226 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—ca. 1920. Three-story attached brick commercial building with Colonial Revival details (Photograph 19). The building is visually separated into two halves, each with first-floor storefronts and continuous cant bay windows on the second and third levels. The storefronts have multi-light display windows and recessed side entrances. The upper levels are covered with brick with quoin detailing in the coursing along the corners. The bay windows have one-over-one light, double-hung sash modern replacements and recessed panels above and below each opening. The bays are topped with a simple cornice. Above the cornice line, 224 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street has an arched parapet, while 226 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street has a pedimented parapet. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7519.

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- .016 225-231 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Goldey College—1914. The building at the corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street and North Tatnall Street was formerly the Goldey College Building (Photograph 18). The building has recently undergone a complete renovation by Artisan Bank. The massing and fenestration pattern remains intact, with five bays facing West 9<sup>th</sup> Street and three bays facing North Tatnall Street. The first level is faced in a brick veneer, while the upper levels are covered with stucco. The windows are faux twelve-over-twelve light double-hung modern replacements with faux shutters. Colonial Revival details include the simple cornice with a wide entablature that extends along the south and west elevations and the pedimented door surrounds. 1 non-contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7526.
- .017 228 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, the Highfield Building—ca 1870. Originally constructed as a residence, the Highfield Building was converted to offices in 1926. The three-story attached brick building has two bays along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street and nine bays along North Tatnall Street (Photograph 6). The storefront occupies the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street elevation and the first two bays of the North Tatnall Street elevation. The storefront has multiple arched display windows and a recessed central entrance. The windows are generally one-over-one light double-hung sash modern replacements. A picture window is found in the second level facing West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as in the northernmost bays of the west elevation. There is a single entrance to the first level from North Tatnall Street and no other openings in the first level of the west elevation. The upper levels are clad in stucco, and a cornice supported by decorative brackets extends along the front and side elevations. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7520.
- .018 300-322 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street—1926. Built as a singular building with eleven individual commercial units, this building encompasses the entire south side of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street between North Tatnall and North West streets (Photographs 10 and 20). At the east and west ends of the building there are two additional levels above the storefronts that were constructed to serve as apartments. Although the upper stories portray a Colonial Revival influence, the storefronts are decorated with garlands and shields, reminiscent of the Beaux Arts style. The storefronts alternate in appearance, with either a stucco and copper front, an all copper front, or a glass front. The storefronts all have arched openings for the display windows, although in some storefronts the toplights have been infilled or painted over. The pent roof above the storefronts is clad in alternating copper and tile. The building extends six bays along North Tatnall Street and two bays along North West Street. The upper levels are covered with stucco, and a narrow band of metal trim separates the parapet from the third level. The windows are six-over-six

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light double-hung wood sash on the upper levels and have faux shutters. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7527.

**North Orange Street**

.019 901-903 North Orange Street—ca. 1920. Three-story masonry building with a first-floor storefront (Photograph 3). The storefront has a centrally-located recessed entrance and a secondary entrance in the north bay that leads to the upper levels. The rest of the storefront is made up of display windows and metal panels. The upper levels are faced in brick and are four bays wide. The central two bays are slightly recessed and have tripartite fixed-pane windows. The flanking bays have narrow two-light, fixed-pane windows with decorative metal frames and stone keystones. The brick is laid in a decorative coursing at the top of the façade to portray a cornice with dentils. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7580.

.020 905-909 North Orange Street—ca. 1910. Three-bay, three-story attached brick commercial building (Photograph 3). The three storefronts have plate glass display windows and recessed entrances. Three continuous cant bay windows cover the second and third levels. The bays are supported by decorative copper corbels and capped with decorative copper cornices. The windows of the upper levels are one-over-one light, double-hung aluminum sash. Recessed copper panels are found to each side of and below each window. The façade is capped with a decorative pressed copper cornice. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7581.

**North Tatnall Street**

.021 825-827 North Tatnall—ca. 1890. Three-story brick commercial building (Photograph 7). The four-bay façade has a recessed entrance in the north bay of the storefront. The second level has one-over-one light double-hung windows with arched lintels and stone sills. The third floor has a mansard roof with dormers. The dormers have paired windows capped by pediments. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7564.

.022 829 North Tatnall Street—ca. 1890. Three-story, two-bay brick attached commercial building (Photograph 7). The storefront has an entrance to the north and a single display window to the south. The upper levels have two bays of one-over-one light double-hung replacement windows with stone sills and lintels. The pressed metal cornice is adorned with decorative brackets. A two-story brick addition was constructed to the south, which was formerly a vacant

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- lot. The addition is two bays wide and is unadorned. The addition was constructed in the late twentieth century, after the period of significance, and is therefore non-contributing. 1 contributing building, 1 non-contributing addition. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7565.
- .023 831-833 North Tatnall Street—ca. 1890. Three-story, brick paired commercial building (Photograph 7). The north half of the building is two bays wide. The storefront has an entrance to the north and a single display window to the south. The upper levels have two bays of one-over-one light double-hung replacement windows with stone sills and lintels. The pressed metal cornice is adorned with decorative brackets. The original brick façade on the south half of the attached building has been replaced with a modern glass curtain wall. Therefore, the southern building of the pair is non-contributing. 1 contributing building, 1 non-contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7566.
- .024 835-837 North Tatnall Street—ca. 1890. Three-story brick attached commercial building (Photograph 21). Display windows flank a central recessed entrance. The upper levels contain two two-story cant bays clad in stucco. The central windows are paired, and all of the upper-story windows are one-over-one light modern replacements. The façade is capped with a decorative cornice flanked by finials. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7567.
- .025 836-840 North Tatnall Street—ca. 1890. Two-story attached brick commercial building, divided into three, two-bay units (Photograph 6). The windows are all segmental arch, one-over-one light, wood sash. The entrances are found in the north bay of each unit. Full-width metal awnings cover the first levels of each unit. A pressed-metal cornice runs along the top of the façade, adorned with stepped-brick brackets at each end and between each unit. 1 contributing building.
- .026 839 North Tatnall Street—ca. 1890. The façade of this three-bay attached commercial building is covered with wood shingles (Photograph 21). The storefront has an entrance in the south bay and a display window with three toplights in the north bay. The upper stories have two-story bay windows. The windows of the bays are all one-over-one light double-hung sashes with wood frames. The center windows of the bays are paired. The façade is capped with a box cornice. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7568.

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- .027 841 North Tatnall Street—ca. 1890. Three-story, one-bay attached brick commercial building with a first-floor storefront (Photograph 21). A two-story cant bay window extends along the second and third floors. The façade is covered with stucco except the bay window, which is clad with fish scale shingles. The windows of the upper floors have been replaced with modern one-over-one light double-hung sashes. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7569.
- .028 842 North Tatnall—ca.1890. Two-story, two-bay attached brick commercial building (Photograph 6). The windows are all segmental arch, one-over-one light, wood sash. The entrance is located in the south bay and a display window is located in the north bay of the first story. A pressed-metal cornice runs along the top of the façade, flanked by stepped-brick brackets. 1 contributing building.
- .029 843 North Tatnall Street—ca. 1890. Three-story, two-bay brick commercial building (Photograph 21). The storefront has display windows in the south bay and a recessed entrance in the north bay. The upper levels have modern one-over-one light double-hung sash windows with faux shutters. The cornice has been removed. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7570.
- .030 844 North Tatnall—ca. 1890. Two-story, two-bay attached brick commercial building (Photograph 6). The windows are all segmental arch, one-over-one light, wood sash. A nine-light display window is located in the south bay, and the entrance in the north bay has a decorative hood and frame. A pressed-metal cornice runs along the top of the façade, flanked by stepped-brick brackets. 1 contributing building.
- .031 845 North Tatnall Street—ca. 1890. The façade of the three-story brick commercial building is covered with stucco, and the two-story cant bay of the upper stories is clad with fish scale shingles (Photograph 21). The storefront has an entrance in the north bay and three display windows to the south. At the second level, the cant bay window has a picture window in the center, flanked by large one-over-one light double-hung wood sash windows. The third level has a one-over-one light double-hung window on each side of the bay. The façade is capped with a box cornice. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7571.
- .032 901 North Tatnall Street, The Diamond State Telephone Company building—1928. The five-story reinforced masonry building encompasses the north side of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street between North

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Tatnall and North West streets (Photographs 4 and 9). The building is clad in brick and designed in the Stripped Classical style. The brick is laid to appear as smooth-dressed stone on the first level of the south and east elevations. On the upper levels of the south and east elevations, brick belt courses detailed with dentils separate the first from the second level, the third from the fourth level, and run along the top of the fourth level. The fifth level appears to have been added at a later date and has no detail or openings.

The building extends thirteen bays along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street and five bays along North Tatnall Street. The central three bays of the North Tatnall Street elevation project slightly and are flanked by paired pilasters with Doric capitals. Single pilasters also separate each bay of windows. The windows are six-over-six light double-hung metal sash and the bricks framing the windows in the outside bays are set in a decorative pattern. Decorative brick panels are located in each bay between the second and third level of windows. Pilasters also separate the central nine bays of the south elevation. Decorative brick panels are found between the second and third levels of windows in each of the nine bays. The main entrance is in the south bay of the east elevation and is surrounded by brick laid to portray a frame with a crown lintel. The middle three bays of first floor windows on the east elevation have been filled in with matching brick laid in common bond, as have all of the first level openings along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. While the openings have been infilled, the fenestration pattern remains evident and the building retains adequate integrity to portray its significance as a 1930s commercial building.

The Diamond State Telephone building was constructed in three phases, the first of which was located at the northwest corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> and North Tatnall streets. The building was expanded to the corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> and North West streets in the mid-twentieth century, and a rear addition was constructed facing North West Street in 1972. These additions are sensitive to the original design of the building in that they are constructed of similar massing and clad in the same brick. The first addition carries on the design of the south elevation. The west elevation of this addition is devoid of windows except in the northernmost bay of each level. The rear addition is of modern construction and appearance, with no openings visible from the street. As it would not be a contributing resource to the district the rear addition is outside of the district boundary. 1 contributing building. Previously surveyed as CRS # N7573.

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Integrity<sup>1</sup>

The commercial corridor along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street between North Shipley and North West streets in downtown Wilmington is a cohesive district of commercial buildings that are representative of local commercial trends from circa 1908 through 1958. The majority of the buildings in the district has retained their original appearance and use and continues to portray the history of the corridor as an early-twentieth-century specialty shopping district. The four non-contributing buildings retain their commercial uses and two of the buildings (217-223 and 225-231 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street) were designed in a manner sympathetic to the surrounding buildings; therefore the non-contributing resources included in the district do not significantly detract from the overall visual and functional cohesiveness of the district.

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<sup>1</sup> Integrity was evaluated through comparison of current conditions and historic photographs and maps on file at the Historical Society of Delaware Library in November 2007.



8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE  
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance ca. 1908-1958

Significant Dates 1908, 1926, 1928, 1938, 1941

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

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Summary

The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District located in Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware, is significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Commerce, and under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The portion of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street that lies between North Shipley and North West streets in downtown Wilmington served as a specialty shopping district from circa 1908 to 1958. The buildings retain most of their original design details, and create a visually cohesive district of late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century commercial and office buildings. The development of this district in the city reflects commercial development trends in the United States.

The period of significance for the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District extends from circa 1908 through 1958. The period of significance begins circa 1908, when the first conversion of a residence to a store is noted in local papers. Although some small commercial uses may have already been present in the existing residential buildings, this is the first note of what would become a significant trend in the years following. Buildings along the corridor that were constructed in the mid- to late-nineteenth century were converted from residential uses to commercial to meet the growing demand for commercial spaces near the downtown. Several new commercial buildings were also constructed between 1920 and 1945, replacing the previous residential buildings. These new or adapted commercial buildings provided office space for a variety of companies and storefronts for specialty shops. The specialty shops of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street catered to the downtown workers, the students and workers of Goldey College (CRS # N14449.017/N7526), and the wealthy residents in the neighborhoods to the north and west. By the mid-twentieth century, the commercial operations of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street were forced to compete with suburban shopping malls, prompting the construction of the Mid-town Parking Center in 1957.<sup>2</sup> The period of significance carries through 1958, fifty years from the present, as the district continued to serve as a destination shopping area.

Background

Since it was laid out in 1731, the center of activity in Wilmington has been along Market Street. Originally focused on the south end near the river, the commercial district eventually expanded northward during the industrialization of the city. The streetcar was opened in 1864, making it more convenient for people to live farther from the commercial center. The streetcar line ran up Market Street to Delaware

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<sup>2</sup> The Mid-town Parking Center, CRS # N14994 (100-112 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street) is located outside of the district's boundaries.

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Avenue. By 1900, Wilmington, like all of the major cities in the United States, was crisscrossed by trolley lines, and the horse-drawn line was one of the first in the nation to be electrified.<sup>3</sup>

As demand for commercial space grew, the residential uses were moved farther off of Market Street, and it became solely a commercial corridor.<sup>4</sup> As a moderate-sized city, Wilmington generally followed the national trends of downtown development. Commercial and residential uses separated in the late nineteenth century, and the commercial district began to stratify into concentrated areas of similar uses. The middle and upper classes moved outside of the commercial core, and former dwellings were converted to commercial uses or rented to single males.<sup>5</sup> The trolley lines merged along Market Street, making the center city the most accessible for work, shopping, and entertainment.<sup>6</sup>

Urban growth in Wilmington was the most visible from 1880 to 1930. The population skyrocketed from 42,000 in 1870 to 110,000 in 1920. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the commercial district of Wilmington was roughly delineated along Market Street from Front to 11<sup>th</sup> Street, west to Tatnall Street between Front and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets, and east to French Street between Front and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets. This area represented the most concentrated area of retailers in clothing, dry goods, shoes and household furnishings in the city.<sup>7</sup>

The central business district of the early twentieth century was the location of white collar shops, government centers, corporate headquarters, entertainment venues, and luxury hotels. At this time, industry was becoming decentralized and residential and commercial areas were dispersing with the introduction of private automobiles and the expansion of mass transit. However, the downtown remained compact and was instead expanding vertically through the introduction of skyscrapers.<sup>8</sup> In Wilmington, the vertical trend was realized around 1910 with the construction of a 12-story office building at 10<sup>th</sup> and Market streets by the Du Pont Company. The impressive Du Pont building led to the construction of an imposing new city-county building, which was the beginning of the institutional square at the north end of the commercial district. The institutional development near upper Market Street further expanded the

3 Carol Hoffecker, *Corporate Capital: Wilmington in the Twentieth Century*. (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1983), 16-20.

4 Carol Hoffecker, *Delaware: Portrait of an Industrial City*. (University Press of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, 1974), 37.

5 Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950*. (Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 2001), 18-43.

6 Hoffecker 1983, 17.

7 Ibid, 20-35.

8 Fogelson, 184-217.

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commercial district away from the riverfront and decreased the focus of commercial development near the industrial district. By the 1930s, Wilmington had completed the transition from an industrial city to a white-collar city, focusing on banking, insurance and brokerage houses.<sup>9</sup>

The increasing accessibility, affordability, and convenience of the automobile, combined with the expansion of the Du Pont Company in the first half of the twentieth century, had a great effect on Wilmington. Population levels boomed, reaching a peak of 112,000 in 1940. While the residential areas were constructed farther and farther away from Market Street, apartment buildings increased in popularity near the downtown. As the automobile became affordable to the masses and roadways were improved, development opportunities abounded outside of the center city. The prime location for commercial development across the country became along the primary arterials, near where the city and suburbs met. The city and state could not keep up with the rapid expansion of the suburbs, and the downtown was not equipped for the traffic and the parking needs of those coming into the city from the suburbs.<sup>10</sup>

In the 1950s, freeways, parking garages, and urban renewal were touted as the saviors of the city; however, the results of these efforts were often disappointing, failing to renew the city and instead damaging the historic fabric. In the mid- and late twentieth century, as a backlash to suburban sprawl, a trend to reinvest in the downtown and compete with the suburbs was being established in cities such as Philadelphia and Providence. The "back to city" movement of the 1970s emphasized the intrinsic benefits of the downtown that could not be found in the suburbs. Cities were built for pedestrians and offered a density of unique architecture and cultural and entertainment possibilities that cannot be found in the outskirts. In 1974, as an attempt to give a fresh new image to the downtown, Wilmington decided to convert the existing commercial district into a pedestrian shopping mall. The pedestrian mall was a common trend in middle-sized American cities, and was designed to create a shopping environment for pedestrians at low cost to the city and entrepreneurs.<sup>11</sup>

Inspired by the Main Street Mall in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Wilmington utilized the existing commercial corridors of Market Street and West 9<sup>th</sup> Street as the focus of downtown revitalization. Modern upgrades were made such as park benches, plantings, lighting, and enhanced parking and circulation. While the marketing and improvements of the downtown shopping district had some positive effects on the City of Wilmington, businesses were still closing and/or moving to the suburbs, and

<sup>9</sup> Hoffecker 1983, 41-44, 87-89.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 116-125.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 230-237.

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vacancies were still commonplace. The cafes and retail establishments remained largely dependent on the lunchtime business of downtown office workers.<sup>12</sup>

In the late twentieth century and into the early twenty-first century, downtown Wilmington has undergone a steady transformation. It has continued to be a destination for the financial industry, and the downtown revitalization trends seen across the nation are visible throughout Wilmington's downtown. Bankcard and financial services companies are expanding or moving into the city. J. P. Morgan Chase, FirstUSA, Bank One, and ING Direct have helped to revitalize the downtown, and MBNA's decision in the late 1990s to relocate its headquarters from the suburbs to the central business district has had a major economic impact. The downtown is being revitalized through the construction of new commercial buildings and the restoration of existing buildings within the historic core of the city. Wilmington remains a favorite place for the incorporation of businesses (most of which have no operations in the state) because of Delaware's favorable incorporation laws and the State Court of Chancery, known as the nation's preeminent court for hearing disputes involving the internal affairs of corporations.<sup>13</sup>

*Area of Significance: Commerce*

The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District in Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of commerce. The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor contains a significant concentration of buildings that made up a prominent specialty shopping area in downtown Wilmington between circa 1908, when the first conversion of a residential building for commercial use was noted in local papers, and 1958, fifty years from the present. The shops that were located on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street offered consumers high-end merchandise that was hard to find elsewhere, and were on the cutting edge of modern trends.<sup>14</sup>

The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor between North Shipley and North West streets initially developed in the mid-to late nineteenth century as a residential area for those that worked in the major commercial district along Market Street. The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood was a convenient location bordered by residential neighborhoods to the west and south and commercial districts to the north and east.<sup>15</sup> As the trolleys increased access to residential areas farther from the city, commercial uses began to expand into former

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Society for Industrial Archaeology, "Fall Tour, 2004." (Society for Industrial Archaeology, Wilmington Delaware).

<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all buildings referred to in the commerce area of significance discussion are located within the National Register boundary of the historic district and are extant.

<sup>15</sup> Susan Eggert and Anne Goda, *Quaker Hill Historic District Amendment, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*. (City of Wilmington Office of Planning, Wilmington, Delaware, 1985).

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residential areas in downtowns across the nation. Many home owners found it agreeable to move away from the expanding commercial center, as downtown properties were more valuable for commercial than residential buildings. As the northern end of Market Street expanded into an office-dominated area in the early twentieth century, demand increased for commercial space nearby, and as was seen in cities everywhere, the commercial district began to stratify into concentrated sections of like uses. Department stores expanded their downtown locations and specialty shops that depended on the "carriage trade" created secondary shopping areas in former residential neighborhoods.<sup>16</sup> Beginning in the early twentieth century, West 9<sup>th</sup> Street was a prime area for the conversion from residential to commercial, as it was close to the trolley line and the offices of Market Street.

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street is an excellent local example of a secondary shopping area established in the early twentieth century. West 9<sup>th</sup> Street follows the national trends of specialty shopping districts and conversion of residential properties for commercial uses. For example, the commercial district of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, underwent a similar trend in the late nineteenth century. While the city was expanding outward, the downtown stratified into an area of department stores and specialty shops. These specialty shops did not depend on heavy traffic or proximity of access, as they had regular customers and unique products. Most of the buildings were constructed as three-story brick blocks, with apartments and offices on the upper levels, much like the buildings that were constructed along the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.<sup>17</sup>

The Fountain Square neighborhood in Indianapolis, Indiana, also shares a similar history with West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. This commercial district developed outside of the central business district of Indianapolis around the same time as West 9<sup>th</sup> Street was developing in Wilmington. Much like West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Fountain Square started as a residential neighborhood with a few neighborhood businesses but quickly expanded into a commercial district in the early 1900s. As demand for commercial space increased, residential buildings were converted for commercial use or replaced with commercial buildings. Development began with home businesses, and expanded from major intersections outward along the side streets.<sup>18</sup>

The first known mention of the conversion of a residence to a commercial establishment on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street is found in a local newspaper dated 1908, when William D. Haddock & Company obtained a building permit to build a new front to the dwelling of Mrs. Downing at 207 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (replaced by

<sup>16</sup> Fogelson, 183-217, 249-316.

<sup>17</sup> Marlys A Svendsen, *Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, ca. 1865-ca. 1945, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*. (City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. 1997).

<sup>18</sup> Mary Toshach, et.al. *Fountain Square Commercial Areas National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*. (Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1983).

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CRS # N14449.007/ N7522 circa 1920).<sup>19</sup> The following year, a Dr. Howell purchased the property next door and was completing renovations for a store. Across the street, Reverend George Nason purchased the corner lot at West 9<sup>th</sup> and Orange streets (present site of the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza Building). He had plans to alter the building to house four stores and six apartments. The newspaper articles note that that the building owners had numerous applicants for the stores and rooms.<sup>20</sup>

A significant signal of a shift in the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood, as well as a draw for additional businesses and offices, was the construction of the Goldey College building at the northeast corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> and North Tatnall streets. The college moved to 225-231 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.016/ N7526) in 1914 when they outgrew their former space in the Wilmington Institute Free Library building. Goldey was a business college and chose to relocate to West 9<sup>th</sup> Street to be close to the trolley line and the business center of Wilmington, while maintaining a relatively quiet atmosphere for studies.<sup>21</sup> Goldey College was a premier business school, attracting students from all over the country and from other countries. From the start, Goldey marketed their courses to women in addition to the typical male population. Efforts to enroll women increased during World War I, as women were needed in the business world to take the place of the men that were sent to war. Goldey provided boarding opportunities in both their own buildings and private homes. This would likely explain the large amount of female tenants in the upper-level apartments in the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street area during the early twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> This influx of young students to the neighborhood provided an increased demand and employment base for the service and shopping industries. Millineries, clothing stores, jewelry stores, salons, and gift shops became abundant in the 1910s into the 1920s. Many of these were run by women, possibly former Goldey students, or at least marketed to the current students. In addition to classrooms, the Goldey College building (CRS # N14449.016/ N7526) provided storefronts on West 9<sup>th</sup> and North Tatnall streets. These storefronts were occupied by such business as Sears and Roebuck, Mary Bailey's children's clothes shop, The Modern Shop clothing store, and Hayden Florist.<sup>23</sup>

Due to the location of the specialty shops and the college, West 9<sup>th</sup> Street was considered to be a central location for offices and public services. The upper stories of the commercial buildings often contained

19 Wilmington Department of Planning & Development, "Sunday Starr, 8 March 1908" (Historical files of the Wilmington Department of Planning & Development, Wilmington, Delaware).

20 Wilmington Department of Planning & Development, "Sunday Starr, January 1909".

21 Wilmington Public Library, "Spring Days Create Good Business for Ninth Street Shops." (The Evening Journal, 19 May 1927, Wilmington, Delaware).

22 Lloyd W. Kline, *A History of Goldey-Beacom College*. (Goldey-Beacom College, Wilmington, Delaware, 1993), 30-34.

23 R.L. Polk, *Wilmington City Directory*. (R.L. Polk & Company Publishers, Philadelphia. 1900-1950).

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office space, and several realtors, insurance companies and investment firms opened shop on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street in the early twentieth century. In 1923, the Diamond State Telephone Company purchased the lot on the north side of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street between North Tatnall and North West streets for \$200,000. The Diamond State Telephone Company was established in 1897 when rural companies were merged with the exchange in the city. Diamond State connected with the Bell system in 1905. The telephone business rapidly developed in Wilmington, and by 1928 had 20,300 phones. Diamond State bought a lot on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street in order to locate their new building in a central location that was convenient to the public. The parcel was originally the site of a hospital during the Civil War and was later occupied by dwellings. The houses were demolished in 1924, and a new building was planned, complete with "machine switching" equipment which would enable the company to install automatic dial instruments. The Diamond State Telephone building (CRS # N14449.032/ N7573) and the innovations inherent in its use are significant to the local history and the history of the telephone industry.<sup>24</sup>

Many of the stores in the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor were innovative for their time and were forerunners in modern trends. There were also a large number of women-owned businesses, including tea rooms, salons, millineries, gift shops, and clothing stores. One of the earliest was a hair salon opened by the Ellis Sisters on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street around 1921.<sup>25</sup> The Ellis Sisters specialized in the high French styles and products of the time, operating a successful salon for about twenty years at that location. In addition to the salon, the sisters operated a beauty school, which advanced the status of hairdressers during that time from the level of chambermaids to semi-professionals.<sup>26</sup> The Ellis Sisters salon was soon accompanied by several other high-end salons in the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.<sup>27</sup>

Tea rooms were an early twentieth-century trend associated with the suffragist movement and an increase in independency of women. Usually opened by women, tea rooms provided a bridge from the typical housewife role into the business world. Tea rooms offered a more pleasant dining atmosphere more exotic fare than the typical family restaurant. The location of a tea room was very important to its success; many were located near a hotel, school, or a large office building, making them convenient to businesswomen, students, and housewives. Often tea rooms were associated with candy shops, gift shops, and soda

24 Charles A. Stillman, *A Time to Remember: 1920-1960*. (Kaumagraph Co., Wilmington, Delaware, 1962), 51-52.

25 The City Directory for Wilmington in 1935 indicates the Ellis Sisters Salon was located at 111 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.002/ N7512)

26 Mary Sam Ward, editor, *Delaware Women Remembered* (The Modern Press, Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 1977), 57-60.

27 A high-end salon in the corridor included the Louise Beauty Parlor at 228 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.018/ N7520).



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fountains.<sup>28</sup> Therefore it makes sense that several tea rooms were opened in the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street commercial corridor in the early to mid-twentieth century, including: the Business & Professional Women's Tea House at 214 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (circa 1920, CRS # N14449.010/ N7516), the Venetian Tea Room at 845 North Tatnall (circa 1930, CRS # N14449.031/ N7571), Peggy's Tea Room at 302 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (circa 1930, CRS # N14449.018/ N7527), the Colonial Tea Room at 217 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (circa 1940, building replaced circa 1981), and the Far East Tea Garden at 207 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (circa 1940, CRS # N14449.007/ N7522).<sup>29</sup>

A trendsetter in women-owned businesses in Wilmington, Grace Lloyd opened the Green Lantern Studio at 216 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.012/ N2517) in 1925, moving to 220 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.014/ N7518) in 1928. The shop specialized in high-end gifts such as silver, crystal, and china. Lloyd's shop is a good example of the specialization that made the stores of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street unique and popular; not only did she offer high-end specialty goods, but she was the sole distributor of a number of fine china lines and commemorative plates. Green Lantern was also one of the first shops in the city to have a bridal registry. The shop's effective advertising and promotional strategies enabled its success at 220 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street until it closed in 1963.<sup>30</sup>

By 1930, West 9<sup>th</sup> Street was considered to be the secondary shopping center of Wilmington.<sup>31</sup> The vehicular and pedestrian traffic was not as heavy as it was on Market Street, but West 9<sup>th</sup> Street was still within walking distance of the trolley line and the densest areas of residential and office use. As it was located off of the main thoroughfare, rents were more affordable for small shop owners who were more specialized and therefore had a lower volume of sales than the shops of Market Street.<sup>32</sup>

Location and affordable rents proved successful in attracting not only new businesses but established business from other parts of the city. An article in the local paper in 1939 noted that it was a significant time in the growth of Wilmington's downtown shopping and business center, as the city's first office building was being removed. The building, located at 841 Market Street, was the home of a popular ice

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28 Jan Whitaker, *Tea at the Blue Lantern Inn: A Social History of the Tea Room Craze in America*. (St. Martins Press, New York, 2002), 115-129.

29 Polk, 1921, 1930, 1940.

30 University of Delaware Library, "Grace Lloyd Walsh Papers, Biographical Note." (University of Delaware Library, Special Collections Department, Newark, Delaware. Accessed online at [www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec](http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec) 1 July 2008).

31 Wilmington Public Library, "M.F. Hayden is Veteran Florist." (Wilmington Streets Vertical File E.J. 6-16-1927: 15, Wilmington, Delaware).

32 Donn Devine, retired Planning Director for the City of Wilmington. Telephone interview with author 12 March 2008. (On file at A.D. Marble & Company, Conshohocken, Pennsylvania).

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cream shop run by Miss Edith McConnell. Miss McConnell was following the lead of other prominent female business owners in the city by moving her business to West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The newspaper noted that the increasing population had prompted the expansion of the commercial district along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street<sup>33</sup>

By 1940, specialty stores, offices, banks, and cafes lined West 9<sup>th</sup> Street from Shipley to North West Street and spilled onto the side streets of North Orange and North Tatnall. While central business districts were feeling the increase in competition from business districts outside of the downtown, it was a time of prosperity for the business owners of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street who catered to a more select clientele. The services and products offered on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street were not easily found outside of the downtown.

The early tenants of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street were typically sole proprietors of small businesses, with the occasional large building constructed by a large corporation. However, chain stores were expanding around the country, and it was only a matter of time before it affected West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. While chain stores tended to prefer the suburbs where they had more flexibility and cheaper land,<sup>34</sup> at least one chain moved to West 9<sup>th</sup> Street early on, and there are presently multiple others that have taken over formerly independent shops. In 1940, the Eckerd's Drug Store constructed their third store in Wilmington at the northwest corner of North Orange and West 9<sup>th</sup> streets (CRS # N14449.003/ N7514).<sup>35</sup> The building previously located on the lot had been owned by Ellwood Souder and Sons since 1898. Souder's was a prominent interior and furnishing establishment in the Del-Mar-Va region, and one of the pioneer businesses of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Souder's started with a studio in the front room of a dwelling at the corner of North Orange and West 9<sup>th</sup> streets in 1899, and eventually expanded to take up four buildings.<sup>36</sup> Souder sold the site to Eckerd's in 1940, who subsequently demolished the Souder building to construct the existing Art Moderne structure.

The 1950s signaled a change in the commercial districts of cities across the country. The automobile had been having an increasing effect on the nature of shopping and neighborhoods. The effects were severely enhanced with the return of the veterans of World War II and the introduction of the large scale subdivisions and shopping centers that were made possible through modern technologies in construction

33 Wilmington Public Library, "Main Stem Corner to Have Face Lifting." (Wilmington Streets Vertical File, SS 6-25-1939:14, Wilmington, Delaware).

34 Fogelson, 218-248.

35 Wilmington Public Library, "Eckerd's Ninth Street Store Had March Completion." (Wilmington Buildings Vertical File, SS. 12-28-1941: 38, Wilmington, Delaware).

36 Wilmington Public Library, "Souders is old Ninth Street Firm." (Wilmington Stores Vertical File EJ 5-26-1927: 14, Wilmington, Delaware).

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and expanding transportation networks. Reacting to changing consumer tastes and needs, the shopping center concept was no longer simply a number of stores in the same building that shared a common parking area. Shopping centers were becoming huge, climate-controlled mega-structures. The suburbs were, in almost every case, the only location for these mega-structures. One key to the success of the shopping center was quick and easy automobile access. Such access was generally more available in the suburbs than in the city, and from the 1950s onward, the bulk of the shoppers resided in the suburbs. The suburbanization of commercial uses had a negative impact on downtown retailing not only because it drew the suburban customer away from the center city, but also because it drew automobile-owning city residents out to the suburbs for their shopping.<sup>37</sup>

While the downtowns faced a loss of residents, industries and commercial uses to the suburbs, the specialty stores remained active downtown, meeting demands that chain stores and malls could not.<sup>38</sup> A decline in sales for businesses along the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor was noted in the late 1950s; however it was attributed to the negative press that was being given to the downtown. It was thought by the suburbanites that the downtown was dirty, traffic was a headache, and parking was hard to come by.<sup>39</sup> In an effort to solve some of the problems faced by suburban residents coming to the city, the first parking garage in the city was built in 1957. The four-level Mid-town Parking Center (CRS # N14094) took up most of the south side of the 100 block of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The site was the former home of the federal building and post office from 1897 until 1937 when a new building was constructed at Rodney Square.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the construction of parking lots and garages, business owners in the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood realized the importance of keeping up with modern trends to compete with the suburbs. The business owners updated their storefronts to reflect modern aesthetics to attract the growing numbers of office workers. Downtown Wilmington had a larger assortment of shops than any single suburban shopping center, and West 9<sup>th</sup> Street had specialty shops with items not available in malls or on Market Street. Bus fares, parking rebates, and increased advertising were used, and by the 1960s sales were no longer on a downward slide.<sup>41</sup>

37 Fogelson, 384-394.

38 Ibid.

39 Wilmington Public Library, "Downtown Seen Own Best Hope." (Wilmington Stores Vertical File, M.N 4-11-1964, Wilmington, Delaware).

40 Stillman, 108-109.

41 Wilmington Public Library (MN 4-11-1964:14).

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Although West 9<sup>th</sup> Street was still an attraction to shoppers because of its selection of specialty shops, the downtown as a whole was feeling the increased pressure of the suburban competition and aging infrastructure. Downtown Wilmington underwent a transformation in 1974 as a part of the pedestrian mall efforts that were made to attract shoppers and businesses to the downtown. Portions of Market Street and West 9<sup>th</sup> Street were closed to automobile traffic, and new street lights, planters, landscaping, flag poles, phone booths, park benches, and water fountains were added to the streetscapes. Parking was relocated off of the main roadways, and the individual property owners removed modern elements from façades and installed historic-looking signage to return the appearance of the corridor to what it was in the early twentieth century. The improvements were a joint effort of the City and the private property owners in a move to magnify the allure of the commercial corridor.<sup>42</sup>

The area remained a popular corridor for upscale shopping into the 1980s, with shops lining West 9<sup>th</sup> Street and seeping onto North Tatnall and North Orange streets; however, decline was eminent with the continued growth of the suburbs. The city continued efforts to maintain business and bring new groups of people downtown, offering incentives such as free parking at the Mid-town Parking Center (CRS # N14094). Today, while some stores along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street have been open since the height of the corridor, it is showing signs of wear and loss of business. The high-end clients eventually found their specialty needs met by shops of the suburbs or neighboring cities, and the downtown specialty shops of Wilmington were faced with a decline. While its niche allowed "Joy Trimming's," 214 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.010 N7516), to operate from the mid- 1950s into the 1990s, the decline of the home sewing trend forced the forty-six-year-old specialty business to close their doors in March 1999.<sup>43</sup> Although local businesses and developers are working to reverse the trend, the corridor is no longer the burgeoning specialty district that it was in the first half of the twentieth century.

Area of Significance: Architecture

The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District in Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of architecture. Although the buildings lack individual distinction, the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor between North Shipley and North West streets, is a significant and distinguishable entity. Constructed between circa 1870 and 1957, the corridor followed many of the national trends in residential and commercial architecture, and survived

42 Commuter News Digest, "The New 9<sup>th</sup> Street." (Commuter News Digest, 7 November 1974, On File at the Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware).

43 Nancy E. Lynch, "There's This Wild Place" (*Evening Journal*, edition of 24 January 1968, pg. 10, col. 1); Maureen Milford, "Sometimes a great notions store has to call it quits," (*Wilmington News Journal* edition of 9 March 1999, accessed via an internet search at <http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives>).

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through the suburbanization era of the mid-twentieth century. The buildings along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street from North Shipley Street to North West Street were erected in the preferred architectural styles of the day and were altered to reflect contemporary styles from the period of significance. The buildings within the district not only portray architectural details and methods typical of the time period, but also depict the conversion of residences to commercial buildings, a common practice in the period of significance.

The West 9<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood was originally constructed in the mid- to late-nineteenth century as a residential area for skilled professionals. Although frame row houses were likely common during the early years, fire codes and construction trends resulted in rows of brick dwellings from circa 1870 onward. The impetus for the neighborhood was the proximity to the Market Street commercial district, which was quickly expanding northward in the 1800s. The construction of the trolley line up Market Street to Delaware Avenue in 1864 also made living away from the industrial and commercial center even more convenient. In 1876, West 9<sup>th</sup> Street was lined with row houses in addition to the Lafayette Hotel between Shipley and Orange streets, at the current site of the Mid-Town Parking Center (CRS # N14094) and the Friends Meeting House at the current location of the Diamond State Telephone Building (CRS # N14449.032/N7573) at the northwest corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> and North Tatnall streets.<sup>44</sup>

The row houses of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street were often simple in appearance, with some Italianate detail. The dwellings were typically three-stories high with a flat roof, and most had pressed metal cornices and bay windows. The windows often had splayed lintels and segmental arch openings.

As pressures for commercial space and apartments increased away from Market Street, the owners of the single-family homes along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street began to find it more profitable to sell their homes and move farther from the city center. Many of the dwellings were converted to a first-level storefront with upper-level offices or apartments. This often meant interior alterations in addition to the alteration of the first-level façade. Storefronts were added to the brick row houses, using large display windows that span the first floor and recessed entrances to maximize the visibility. The buildings along North Tatnall are especially representative of the converted row house. Most of the dwellings on the side streets off of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street were converted in the 1940s, later than those on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>45</sup>

The year 1926 marked one of the most noted adaptations of a West 9<sup>th</sup> Street residential building to a commercial building. Realty Holdings Incorporated purchased the building at the corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> and

<sup>44</sup> G.W. Baist, *Property Atlas of the City of Wilmington, Delaware*. (G.W. Baist, Philadelphia).

<sup>45</sup> "Building Permit Files." (City of Wilmington, Office of Licenses & Inspections, Wilmington, Delaware).

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North Tatnall streets in 1925. The Highfield Building (CRS # N14449.017/ N7529), as it is now known, was constructed a few years after the Civil War by local builder Archie Given. Given was well known for the construction of the old courthouse. Givens erected the house on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street as his home. Realty Holdings, Inc., under president William J. Highfield, adapted the building from a residence to its main offices. The building was sold to North American Mutual Life Corporation in 1941, which made several alterations to the interior of the three-story building in order to adapt it for offices for about forty-four employees.<sup>46</sup>

Several of the dwellings, as well as the Friends Meeting House, in the corridor were also demolished for the construction of new buildings designed for commercial use. These new structures were designed as three-story brick structures in character with the existing buildings. However, stylistic preferences had changed by the early twentieth century and the details are typically reminiscent of the Colonial Revival style. Boxed cornices, broken pediments, flat or low-pitched gable roofs, quoins, stuccoed façades, and shutters are common on the buildings constructed circa 1920.

Additional changes were made in the mid-twentieth century in order to keep up with modern trends and compete with the suburbs. Oftentimes this resulted in updated storefronts with plate glass windows framed with modern details. Some buildings, such as the Alfred Carlis building at 111 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.001/ N7512), had the entire façade altered to update the appearance.

The late twentieth century brought additional changes to a few of the buildings, rendering them non-contributing to the historic district. The bank at 201-203 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.005) had a new façade constructed circa 1964, and the brick façade of 831 North Tatnall (CRS # N14449.023/ N7566) was replaced with a glass curtain wall in the late twentieth century. The Goldey College building (CRS # N14449.016/ N7526) was completely remodeled in the late twentieth century for its reuse as a bank. Fortunately, only one building was demolished, replaced with the modern building at 217-223 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.013/ N7525) circa 1981. The modern addition at 829 North Tatnall (CRS# N14449.022/ N7565) was constructed in a historically vacant lot.

Significant buildings

A few individual buildings of architectural note that were constructed in the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street district in the early to mid-twentieth century are discussed below.

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<sup>46</sup> Wilmington Public Library, "Insurance Firm Buys Building from Highfield." (Wilmington Buildings Vertical File, MN 11-14-1941:1, Wilmington, Delaware).

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*300-322 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.018/ N7527)*

The first major project in the transition of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street from residential to commercial use began in 1925. Developer Guy R. Ford purchased the lots on the south side of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street between North West and North Tatnall streets. The dwellings were demolished and replaced with a commercial building with upper-level apartments. Designed by architect Roscoe Cook Tindall, and constructed by Charles Dougherty, six of the storefronts were opened in the winter of 1925. Five more stores and an apartment building fronting on West Street were completed the following summer. The storefronts of the building alternate in appearance between stucco and copper fronts, all copper fronts, and all glass fronts. The roofing also alternates between copper and tile, giving the building the appearance of multiple attached buildings rather than a single building with multiple storefronts. The construction project attracted much attention to the neighborhood and signaled the first visible move of the neighborhood from a declining residential area to a prominent commercial corridor.<sup>47</sup> The building and storefronts remain intact today, housing specialty stores as they did when they opened between 1925 and 1926.

Roscoe Cook Tindall was one of Wilmington's leading professional architects in the early twentieth century. Born and raised in Wilmington, Tindall opened his first architectural practice in 1909. He typically worked on industrial, commercial, and residential properties, with several projects involved in reconversion during World War II.<sup>48</sup>

Charles J. Dougherty was a well-known contractor in early twentieth-century Wilmington. He worked on many dwellings, churches, schools, and other building types in Pennsylvania and Delaware during his sixteen-year career. He is best known for his work on the Simon Hotel at 8<sup>th</sup> and King Streets, and the Perpetual Loan Association Building at 9<sup>th</sup> and Orange Streets (no longer extant).<sup>49</sup>

*Diamond State Telephone Building (CRS # N14449.032/ N7573)*

The Diamond State Telephone building opened in 1928 as one of the finest telephone business offices in the country and a "distinct contribution to the architecture of the city". The building was constructed in the Stripped Classical style by architect John Torrey Windrim. John Torrey Windrim was the son of the illustrious James Hamilton Windrim of Philadelphia. He worked in his father's firm for many years, continuing the practice after Windrim Sr.'s death. Windrim mostly designed commercial and public buildings, and became well known for his classical revival and Beaux-Arts designs. Primarily known for

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47 Wilmington Public Library, (Wilmington Buildings Vertical File, EJ 6-10-1926:22, Wilmington, Delaware).

48 H. Clay Reed, ed., *Delaware: A History of the First State*. (Lewis Historical Publishing Company, New York 1947), 214.

49 Wilmington Department of Planning & Development. "One-Two-One-Four, March 1926."

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his work on the Franklin Institute and Municipal Court in Philadelphia, he also designed more utilitarian buildings for Philadelphia Electric Company and Bell Telephone. The Diamond State Telephone Company building was designed in a manner similar to many of Windrim's Bell Telephone buildings, using simplified classical details.<sup>50</sup>

The Stripped Classical style contains a symmetrical composure, with a repetitive rhythm of columns or column-like elements and a reliance on carefully considered proportions. Very simplified cornices and pilasters or square piers are common elements found on Stripped Classical architecture. The style was so named because the basic form and symmetry of Classicism was retained, but the ornamentation and motifs were reduced or removed. The style was preferred in institutional buildings of the time as it retained a dignified classical appearance while conveying stability and responsibility in uncertain times.<sup>51</sup> The Diamond State Telephone Building displays the elements of the Stripped Classical style in the repetition of windows, the denticulated belt courses separating the levels, the smooth-dressed stone appearance of the first level, and the Doric pilasters on the primary elevations.

The interior plan of the Diamond State Telephone building was also notable, as the layout was designed to provide every possible convenience for subscribers. One of the most interesting features was the "customer room" which exhibited various types of switchboards arranged to show how they operated. Exhibits also featured the new hand set phone, which had an attached mouthpiece and receiver. The new phone booths made almost entirely out of glass were unveiled for the first time in the country at the Diamond State building in Wilmington. The customer room also had a large table for visitors to file toll and out-of-town calls and to access directories for cities all over the country.<sup>52</sup> Today, the Diamond State Building remains in its original use by Verizon. Although additions have been constructed, it retains all of the original notable details, and the additions have been made in character with the original design.

*9<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza Building (CRS # N14449.004/ N7515)*

A fifteen-story bank building was planned for the southwest corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> and North Orange streets circa 1926, another sign of the increasing financial district of Wilmington and the transformation of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Excavation began but construction of the building was halted soon after, and the site remained vacant for almost a decade. The DiSabatino Holding Company, well-known local developers with offices

<sup>50</sup> Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, "John Torry Windrim." (Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Website. Accessed at [www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab) 8 July 2008).

<sup>51</sup> Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture*. (Plume, New York, 1998), 107-110.

<sup>52</sup> Wilmington Public Library, "Diamond State Phone Building Opening Monday." (Wilmington Buildings Vertical File, EE 7-28-1928: 9, Wilmington, Delaware).



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nearby on North Tatnall, purchased the lot. After a careful study of Wilmington's office facilities, they decided to build a seven-story commercial building at the site. The 9<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza Building was a notable addition to the Wilmington downtown in 1938 and received much praise. It was designed by architect G. Morris Whiteside II and used mostly local firms and workers in its construction.<sup>53</sup>

G. Morris Whiteside was a prominent Wilmington architect, completing over 1000 projects in his fifty years in the industry. He also designed the Mid-town Parking Garage on the 100 block of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Whiteside established the firm Brown & Whiteside in 1910. After Brown's death, he worked independently from 1931 until 1955. In 1956, he joined two other local architects to establish Whiteside, Moeckel & Carbonell. The most notable buildings designed by Whiteside and his two firms include the YMCA building in Wilmington, the Atlas Chemical home office, the Pierre DuPont Home, and the Delaware State Hospital.<sup>54</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza building is an example of a fairly simple office building design. Art Deco was prominent in commercial buildings from circa 1927 to 1940. Art Deco designs often include rectilinear massing and vertical bands of windows. The limestone, brick or terra cotta walls are typically decorated with horizontal banding and stylized ornament. The 9<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza building demonstrates the Art Deco style in its vertical emphasis and rectilinear massing, as well as in the geometric patterns detailed in the limestone façade.

*Eckerd's Building (CRS # N14449.003/N7514)*

While not the first Eckerd's store in Wilmington, the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street store was designed to be a modernistic and innovative consumer experience. The new Eckerd's Drug Store was designed by Robinson, Stanhope & Manning Architects of Wilmington.<sup>55</sup> Robinson, Stanhope & Manning was established in 1930 by Reah DeBourg Robinson, Alan Burton Stanhope, and William Reynolds Manning.<sup>56</sup> The building has a steel frame with concrete slab floors, brick exterior, and a deck roof of precast cement slabs. The façade has Art Moderne details, such as a curved corner entrance flanked by display windows, and smooth masonry walls with horizontal aluminum stripping and a simplified geometric pattern with horizontal emphasis. Art Moderne was a popular style in commercial architecture

53 Wilmington Public Library, "Imposing Building Added to City's Growing Skyline." (Wilmington Buildings Vertical File S.S. 8-7-1938:6, Wilmington, Delaware).

54 Reed, 9.

55 Wilmington Public Library, "New Building at 9<sup>th</sup> and Orange Finished, Ready for Ceremony." (Wilmington Buildings Vertical File, JEE 3-27-1944:28, Wilmington, Delaware).

56 Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, "Robinson, Stanhope & Manning."

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after circa 1930. The simple streamlined designs were reminiscent of industrial design for ships, airplanes, and automobiles.

On the interior, the new building boasted a fifty-six-foot soda bar with twenty-five sit-up stools in red imitation leather. The company installed new "Formica" for the counter, which was heat and stain proof and had a "finish simulating fine Irish linen".<sup>57</sup> The Eckerd's Drug Store, while no longer a pharmacy, remains intact on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street; its curved corner stands out as an Art Moderne detail amongst predominantly Italianate and Colonial Revival brick buildings.

Integrity

The commercial corridor along West 9<sup>th</sup> Street between North Shipley and North West streets in downtown Wilmington is a cohesive district of commercial buildings that are significant for their role in commercial development in the city from circa 1908 through 1958. The end date for the period of significance is fifty years ago since the commercial activities for which the district is significant have continued to the present. The district has retained much of the original appearance and uses and continues to convey the history of the corridor as an early twentieth-century specialty shopping district. All of the buildings remain in commercial use and several of the shops, including Bag and Baggage and Colton's Cleaners, have been operating under the same use at their present locations since the period of significance. The buildings retain most of their character-defining details, including façades, window frames, storefronts, signage, cornices, and other design details from the period of significance. Many commercial districts that were developed in the same time period do not retain the level of integrity that West 9<sup>th</sup> Street does. For example, it is noted in the National Register nomination for Fountain Square in Indianapolis, Indiana that the historic fabric is "difficult to discern" due to the continued commercial development of the district.<sup>58</sup>

Almost all of the buildings within the limits of the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District were either constructed for or converted to commercial use between 1908 and 1958. The only exception is the building at 217-223 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street (CRS # N14449.013/ N7525), which was constructed in 1981. This modern building was designed in character with the surrounding buildings and matches the scale, massing, use, and details of the buildings around it; however, it is considered a non-contributing building since the construction date falls outside the period of significance. A few of the buildings within the district boundaries have undergone significant alterations and can no longer convey cohesiveness with the rest of

<sup>57</sup> Wilmington Public Library, "New Building at 9<sup>th</sup> and Orange Finished, Ready for Ceremony."

<sup>58</sup> Toshach, et al.

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the district. Non-contributing buildings include the former Goldey College building at the northwest corner of North Tatnall and West 9<sup>th</sup> streets (CRS # N14449.016/ N7526), 831 North Tatnall Street (CRS # N14449.023/ N7566), and the bank building at the northwest corner of West 9<sup>th</sup> and North Orange streets (CRS # N14449.006). While the buildings retain their original massing and integrity of location, the façades no longer convey their appearance from the period of significance.

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State Plan Link

Zone: Urban

Period: 1880-1940±: Urbanization and Early Suburbanization  
1940-1960±: Suburbanization and Early Ex-Urbanization

Theme: Commerce and Architecture, Engineering and Decorative Arts

Property Type: Mixed Function District

Cultural Affiliation Undefined

Architect/Builder John Torrey Windrim  
G. Morris Whiteside II  
Roscoe Cook Tindall

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  
**SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS 8.1 THROUGH 8.20.**

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
  - previously listed in the National Register
  - previously determined eligible by the National Register
  - designated a National Historic Landmark
  - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
  - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS 9.1 THROUGH 9.4.**

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 4.00 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	452758	4399700	3	18	452923 4399669
2	18	452774	4399592	4	18	452936 4399613

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)  
**SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 10.1.**

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)  
**SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 10.1 THROUGH 10.2.**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
property name  
New Castle County, Delaware  
county and State

Section 9 Page 3

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
property name  
New Castle County, Delaware  
county and State

Section 9 Page 4

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 1

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
property name  
New Castle County, Delaware  
county and State

**Boundary Description**

The National Register boundary for the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District in Wilmington includes 32 buildings on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street between North Shipley Street and North West Street, on North Tatnall south of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street, and on North Orange Street north of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Boundary Justification**

This boundary includes those properties that are historically associated with the commercial corridor during its period of significance (1908-1958) and retain adequate integrity to portray their relationship to the district of specialty shops and offices. The boundary encompasses all of the significant resources and features that comprise the district, as well as four non-contributing resources. One of these non-contributing buildings is modern, while the others have undergone alterations that have notably altered their appearance since the period of significance.

The boundary was drawn based on the limits of the specialty shop corridor during its period of significance and to exclude modern intrusions and buildings that have lost integrity. The district was historically limited to West 9<sup>th</sup> Street between North Shipley and North West streets and parts of North Orange and North Tatnall streets. The eastern boundary is drawn to exclude four buildings on the north side of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street that have undergone modern alterations and would not contribute to the historic district. Modern intrusions including parking lots and high-rise office buildings delineate the boundary to the north. At the western end, Grace Church is not included as it is not significant to the commercial history of the neighborhood. The apartments along North West Street are excluded for the same reason. The southern border was drawn to exclude non-commercial buildings, those commercial buildings that no longer retain integrity, and modern parking lots.

The National Register boundary has been prepared in accordance with guidelines established by the National Register Bulletin, *Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties*.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>National Park Service, National Register Bulletin, *Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1997).

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shauna J. Haas, Catherine M. Dluzak, and Barbara Frederick / Architectural Historians

organization A.D. Marble & Company date October 20, 2008

street & number 375 E. Elm Street, Suite 200 telephone (484) 533-2500

city or town Conshohocken state PA zip code 19428

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:  
Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative digital photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
property name  
New Castle County, Delaware  
county and State

**Photo Inventory**      **Page 1**

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1.      117 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
        West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
        Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
        Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
        Date: November 2007  
        South Elevation, Facing East  
        Photo 1 Of 21
  
2.      117 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
        West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
        Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
        Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
        Date: November 2007  
        West Elevation, Facing North  
        Photo 2 Of 21
  
3.      201 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 901-909 North Orange Street  
        West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
        Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
        Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
        Date: November 2007  
        South Elevations Of North Orange Street Streetscape, Facing North  
        Photo 3 Of 21
  
4.      Diamond State Telephone Building, West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
        West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
        Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
        Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
        Date: February 2008  
        East Elevation, Facing Northwest  
        Photo 4 of 21
  
5.      Streetscape View, North Orange Street Outside the Historic District  
        West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
        Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
        Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
property name  
New Castle County, Delaware  
county and State

**Photo Inventory**      **Page 2**

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Date: November 2007  
East Side Streetscape, Facing Southwest  
Photo 5 of 21

6.      228 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and East side of North Tatnall Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
West Elevations, Facing East  
Photo 6 of 21

7.      West Side of 800 Block of North Tatnall Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
East Elevations, Facing Southwest  
Photo 7 of 21

8.      Streetscape of District Edge, 800 Block N. West Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
West Elevations, Facing Southeast  
Photo 8 of 21

9.      Diamond State Telephone Building  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
South Elevation, Facing Northwest  
Photo 9 of 21

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
property name  
New Castle County, Delaware  
county and State

**Photo Inventory**      **Page 3**

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10. South Side of 300 Block of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Streetscape  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
North Elevations, Facing Southwest  
Photo 10 of 21
11. South Side of the 200 Block of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
North Elevations, Facing Southwest  
Photo 11 of 21
12. North Side of 200 Block of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
South Elevations, Looking Northeast  
Photo 12 of 21
13. North Side of the 200 Block of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
South Elevations, looking Southeast  
Photo 13 of 21
14. South Side of the 200 Block of West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
property name  
New Castle County, Delaware  
county and State

**Photo Inventory      Page 4**

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Date: November 2007  
North Elevations, Facing Southeast  
Photo 14 of 21

15. 212-214 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
Sign Band Detail  
Photo 15 of 21

16. 216-218 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
Clerestory Detail  
Photo 16 of 21

17. 200 Block West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Streetscape  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: February 2008  
South Elevations, Facing Northeast  
Photo 17 of 21

18. 200 Block West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Streetscape  
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
Date: November 2007  
North Elevations, Facing Southeast  
Photo 18 of 21

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

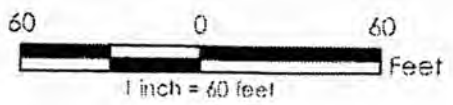
West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
property name  
New Castle County, Delaware  
county and State




**Photo Inventory**      **Page 5**

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19.    300 Block West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Streetscape  
      West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
      Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
      Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
      Date: November 2007  
      North Elevation, Facing Southeast  
      Photo 19 of 21
  
20.    800 Block North Tatnall Street  
      West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
      Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
      Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
      Date: November 2007  
      West Elevations, Facing East  
      Photo 20 of 21
  
21.    9<sup>th</sup> Street Plaza Building  
      West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
      Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware  
      Digital Images by: Shauna Haas, A. D. Marble and Associates  
      Date: November 2007  
      North and East Elevations  
      Photo 21 of 21



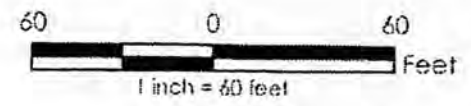





-  Non-Contributing
-  National Register Boundary
-  Tax Parcel

Source: New Castle County

**National Register Boundary  
and Contributing Status Map**  
West 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
CRS # N14449  
Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware

Photograph Location MAP



-  Non-Contributing
-  National Register Boundary
-  Tax Parcel

**National Register Boundary and Contributing Status Map**  
 West 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
 CRS # N14449  
 Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware

Source: New Castle County

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: West 9th Street Commercial Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DELAWARE, New Castle

DATE RECEIVED: 11/14/08      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/02/08  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/17/08      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/28/08  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08001204

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    12-22-08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



West 9th St. Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 1 of 21



West 9th Street Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 2 of 21





201 W. 9<sup>th</sup> STREET, 901-909 W. Orange St.

West 9<sup>th</sup> STREET COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

WILMINGTON, New Castle County, DE

Photo 3 of 21



Bags & Baggies

Artisans

FREE CHECKING

CHESAPEAKE  
SOCIAL  
CLUB  
BOOK

W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
4 of 21



Wagon Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle, Delaware  
5 of 21



W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District

Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware.

6 of 21





West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 7 of 21



W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 8 of 21



West 9th Street Commercial Historic District.  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 9 of 21



West 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE

Photo 10 of 21

**Minster's**  
Jewelers Since 1895

**Minster's**  
Jewelers Since 1895

*Fernand's* LOCK  
SERVICE  
KEYS MADE

Bag and  
Baggage  
BAGGAGE





West 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE

Photo 11 of 21



Watson 1st  
LEASE  
OFFICE SPACE  
301-522-9500  
CALLED CONVINCE

301-555-5700

W 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 12 of 21



West 9th Street Historic District (Commercial)

Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware

Photo 13 of 21

Dental Diagnostics  
& Services

215 WEST 87TH ST.

FLASH  
NAILS

OPEN

*Flash Nails*

THE  
CANTON

ACCESSIBLE  
PARKING  
FOR THE  
HANDICAPPED

FLASH  
NAILS



West 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 14 of 21





W. 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 1506 21

PIANO COMPANY

Caribbean Lagoon

Smirnoff's  
Vodka

Budweiser  
SELECT

Light

W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 16 of 21



W. 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 17 of 21



Citizens Bank

Artisans

FREE CHECKING

FREE CHECKING

Artisans Bank

LEASE

BAG & BAGGAGE

Bag and Baggage

W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District (Commercial)  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 18 of 21



Bag and Baggage 235

Bag and Baggage 235



W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 19 of 21



DAN *Product of the City*  
STYLED BY **PRO**  
SHOE REPAIR

**B&B**  
Tickettown

**SPECTRUM**  
TICKETS

SEASON TICKETS

WAL  
SED

Stop Here



W. 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 20 of 21

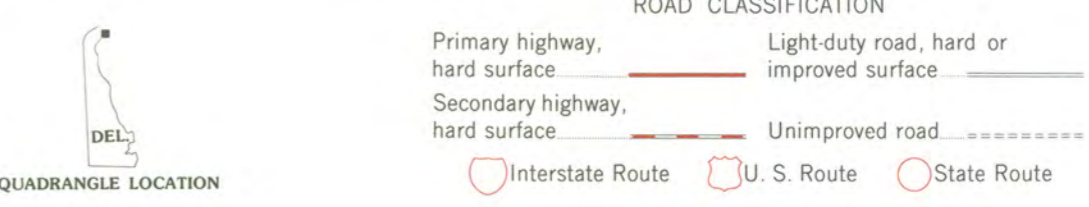
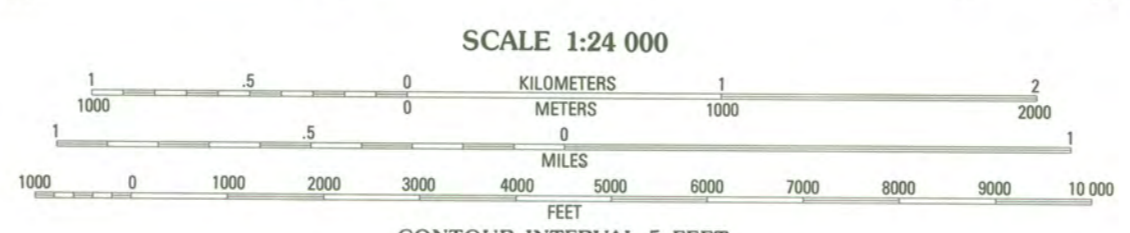
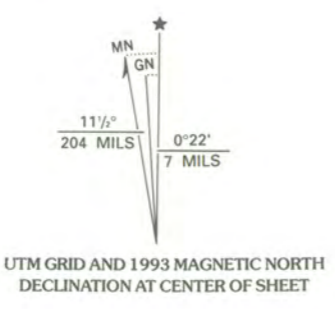


W. 9th Street Commercial Historic District  
Wilmington, New Castle County, DE  
Photo 21 of 21



WEST 9<sup>TH</sup> ST. Commercial  
Historic District  
Wilmington,  
New Castle County,  
DELAWARE  
A/B/452750/4399700  
B/B/452774/4399592  
C/B/452923/4399609  
D/B/452936/4399613

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Compiled from aerial photographs taken 1989  
Field checked 1991. Map edited 1993  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS chart 294 (1966)  
This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and  
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18  
10 000-foot ticks: Delaware Coordinate System of 1983  
2 500-meter ticks: New Jersey Coordinate System of 1983  
1927 North American Datum (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks  
The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute  
intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of  
the National or State reservations shown on this map  
Gray tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

1 Kennett Square  
2 Wilmington North  
3 Marcus Hook  
4 Newark East  
5 Penns Grove  
6 St. Georges  
7 Delaware City  
8 Salem

WILMINGTON SOUTH, DEL.-N.J.  
NE/4 WILMINGTON 15' QUADRANGLE  
39075-F5-TF-024  
1993

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929 (NGVD 29)  
(TO CONVERT ELEVATIONS TO THE NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988, SUBTRACT 1 FOOT)  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET, DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS 5.6 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

State of Delaware  
Historical and Cultural Affairs

21 The Green  
Dover, DE 19901-3611

Phone: (302) 736.7400

Fax: (302) 739.5660



November 12, 2008

Dr. Janet Snyder Matthews, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service 2280  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Dr. Matthews:

Enclosed please find the nomination for listing the West 9<sup>th</sup> Street Commercial Historic District, located in Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware, in the National Register of Historic Places. If there are any questions regarding these documents, please contact me at (302) 736-7411.

Sincerely,

Robin L. Krawitz  
National Register Program Coordinator

Enclosures

