2025 against 2024 — #1 of 3: One-Year Change in One-Unit Homes Permitted (2025)

Wilmington leads NC in construction slowdown

One-unit home permits drop 12.2% in 2025

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THE DATA

-12.2%

One-Year Change in One-Unit Homes Permitted (2025)

Wilmington’s construction pace slowed more than any other North Carolina county in 2025.

This 12.2% decline in one-unit home permits marks a sharp contraction in new housing supply, even as demand remains strong. The data, derived from U.S. Census Bureau Building Permits Survey, indicates a growing imbalance between housing need and new construction. With inventory already 12% below pre-pandemic levels, this slowdown could accelerate price pressures in the coming year.



Photo: Donald Lee Pardue · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey, county annual totals, 2024 and 2025 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-14-wilmington-permits-market-change

01

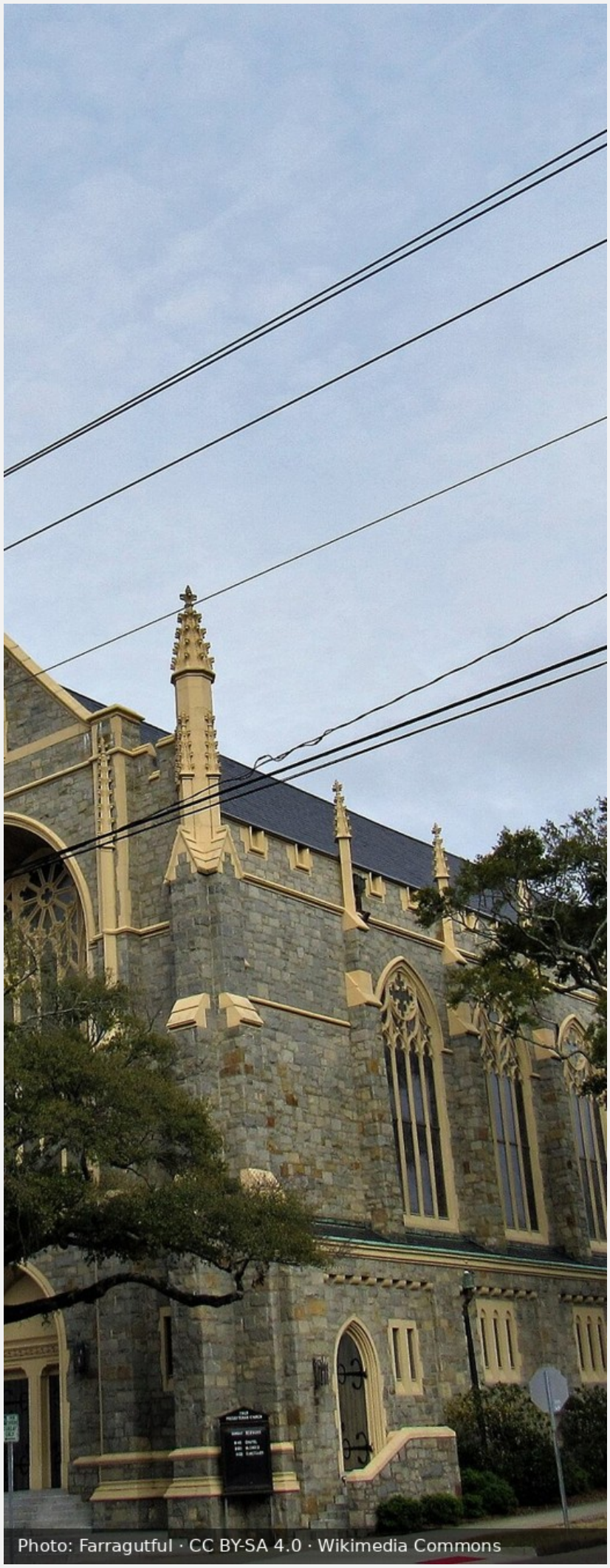
Supply collapse fuels price resilience

The drop in new permits suggests a structural supply shortage is deepening. This is not a temporary pause; it’s a signal that the market is entering a phase where price appreciation is increasingly decoupled from new build activity, driven purely by scarcity and demand.

The result is a self-reinforcing cycle: lower supply → higher prices → greater demand from investors and relocation buyers → further pressure on existing inventory.



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02

A construction drought with strategic intent

This sharp decline in permits may not reflect a market failure but a strategic recalibration. With two new Opportunity Zones recently designated in New Hanover County, the city is prioritizing redevelopment over greenfield construction. The focus is on adaptive reuse, mixed-use projects, and infill development—types of projects not captured in the one-unit permit count.

This suggests that the slowdown in traditional homebuilding permits is a temporary signal of shifting development strategy, not declining demand. The market is not cooling—it’s evolving toward denser, more sustainable urban forms.

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