

The demolition of historic buildings diminishes the built environment and creates unnecessary waste. Because demolition is irreversible, all possibilities for saving a threatened historic structure should be explored.

Fires and unexpected catastrophic events can happen. In cases where a building must be removed for legitimate purposes, these guidelines provide a basis for designing a new, compatible structure to replace a demolished historic structure.

Demolition or relocation of a historic building is only appropriate in very specific and narrowly defined circumstances. No demolition should occur without approval of post-demolition plans. In addition, the historic preservation ordinance incorporates a proactive deterioration-by-neglect strategy to aggressively pursue remedies for historic properties endangered by disregard to structural integrity.

Each building proposed for demolition or relocation should be evaluated for historic and architectural merit as well as importance to the character of the site and historic district.

9.1. Failure to Provide Ordinary Maintenance

Also known as “deterioration by neglect,” this is preventable demise of a historic building due to willful lack of maintenance. In the City of Bainbridge, within the local designated historic district, these issues are typically addressed through compliance with Section 31 of the “Bainbridge Historic Preservation Ordinance” as adopted by the City of Bainbridge (See Appendix II, and excerpt below).

Section 31. “Failure to Provide Ordinary Maintenance” (Taken from Bainbridge Historic Preservation Ordinance, also found in Appendix II & III)

Property owners of individual properties within a designated historic district or of designated historic properties shall not allow their buildings to deteriorate by failing to provide ordinary maintenance or repair. The commission shall be charged with the following responsibilities regarding deterioration by neglect:

- A)** *The commission shall monitor the condition of historic properties and existing buildings in historic districts to determine if they are being allowed to deteriorate by neglect. Such conditions as broken windows, doors and exterior openings which allow the elements and vermin to enter, or the deterioration of a buildings structural system shall constitute failure to provide ordinary maintenance or repair.*
- B)** *In the event the commission determines a failure to provide ordinary maintenance or repair, the commission shall notify the property owner and set forth the steps which need to be taken to remedy the situation. The property owner shall have 60 days in which to resolve the situation.*
- C)** *In the event the situation is not remedied in 60 days, the owner shall be punished as provided in this ordinance; or at the direction of the Governing Body, the commission may perform such maintenance or repair as is necessary to prevent deterioration by neglect. The property owner shall be liable for the cost of such maintenance or repair. The cost of such maintenance or repair shall be a lien against the real property. The lien shall attach to the real property at the time of payment of all costs of maintenance or repair by the City.*

Nothing in this section shall be construed to impair or limit in any way the power of the City to define and declare nuisances and to cause their removal or abatement by summary proceedings or otherwise.

9.2. Variances for Undue Hardship

Guidance also exists concerning variances for undue hardship, found in Section 27 of the "Bainbridge Historic Preservation Ordinance."

Section 27. "Variances for Undue Hardship" (Taken from Bainbridge Historic Preservation Ordinance, also found in Appendix II & III)

Where, by reason of unusual circumstances, the strict application of any provision of this ordinance would result in the exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship upon any owner of a specific property, the commission shall have the power to vary strict adherence to these ordinance provisions (not including variances to the zoning ordinance), or to interpret the meaning of said provisions, so as to relieve such difficulty or hardship; provided that such variances or interpretations do not compromise the architectural or historical integrity of the property. In granting variances, the commission may impose such reasonable and additional stipulations and conditions as deemed necessary. An undue hardship shall not be a situation of the person's own making.

9.3. Criteria for Relocations

In making the determination to approve an application and issue a certificate of appropriateness (COA), specific criteria shall be considered by the HPC for the act of relocating a structure into, out of, or within the historic district boundaries. The HPC will weigh decisions based on findings that the proposed material change(s) in the appearance would not have a substantial adverse effect on the aesthetic, historic, or archi-

tectural significance and value of the structures and historic property in the portion of the historic district which the relocation is being applied for. As found in Section 22(b) the criteria for acting upon a permit for a relocation are established in the "Bainbridge Historic Preservation Ordinance."

Section 22(b). Relocation: (Taken from Bainbridge Historic Preservation Ordinance, also found in Appendix II & III)

Relocation: A decision by the commission approving or denying a certificate of appropriateness for the relocation of a building, structure or object shall be guided by:

- 1.)** *The historic character and aesthetic interest the building, structure, or object contributes to its present setting.*
- 2.)** *Whether there are definite plans for the area to be vacated and what the effect of those plans on the character of the surrounding area will be.*
- 3.)** *Whether the building, structure, or object can be moved without significant damage to its physical integrity.*
- 4.)** *Whether the proposed relocation is compatible with the historic and architectural character of the building, structure, site or object.*
- 5.)** *Provision of post-demolition plans that adequately describe the site use after relocation.*

9.4. Criteria for Demolitions

In making the determination to approve an application and issue a certificate of appropriateness (COA), specific criteria shall be considered by the HPC for the act of demolition within the local historic district boundaries. The HPC will weigh decisions based on findings that the proposed material change(s) in the appearance would not have a substantial adverse effect on

the aesthetic, historic, or architectural significance and value of the structures and historic property in the portion of the historic district which the demolition is being applied for. As found in Section 22(c) the criteria for acting upon a permit for a demolition are established in the "Bainbridge Historic Preservation Ordinance."

Section 22(c). Demolition: (Taken from Bainbridge Historic Preservation Ordinance, also found in Appendix II & III)

Demolition: A decision by the commission approving or denying a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of buildings, structures, sites, trees judged to be fifty years old or older, or objects shall be guided by:

- 1.)** *The historic, scenic, or architectural significance of the building, structure, site, tree or object.*
 - 2.)** *The importance of the building, structure, site, tree, or object to the ambiance of a district.*
 - 3.)** *The difficulty or the impossibility of reproducing such a building, structure, site, tree or object because of its design, texture, material, detail, or unique location.*
 - 4.)** *Whether the building, structure, site, tree, or object is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the neighborhood or the city or county.*
 - 5.)** *Whether there are definite plans for use of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and what the effect of those plans on the character of the surrounding area would be.*
 - 6.)** *Whether reasonable measures can be taken to save the building, structure, site, tree, or object from collapse.*
 - 7.)** *Whether the building, structure, site, tree, or object is capable of earning reasonable economic return on its value.*
- *Document that a building classified as historic is incapable of earning economic return on its value, as appraised by a qualified real estate appraiser or structural report by a licensed engineer itemizing structural condition and discussion why building is incapable of being repaired. A report by a licensed restoration contractor may also be required.*
 - *Provide drawings to adequately describe stie use after demolition.*
 - *Provide color photographs of structure to be demolished, clearly labeled to show area of structural deterioration.*

Most well-built structures from any era can be rehabilitated. Here, the building being removed for its materials can become a liability on the neighboring buildings (i.e. exposed party-wall interior brick seen in the background). With this facade gone, an unpleasant gap will impact the overall downtown environment.



MACTEC Photo Archives, 2003

9.5. Stabilization (Mothballing) of Structures

If a building becomes vacant or is abandoned, it should be secured in order to prevent demolition by neglect. Important steps to take include the following:

1. **Security.** Secure the building against vandalism, break-ins and natural disasters. Apply temporary coverings to window and door openings in such a manner as to not damage historic features or materials.
2. **Stabilization.** Structurally stabilize the building as needed and provide and maintain a weather-tight roof. Temporary roofing may be installed if needed. Discontinue all utilities and remove flammable materials and debris from the building.
3. **Ventilation.** Provide adequate ventilation to the interior of the building through the use of vents in the window and door coverings. (Inexpensive air duct covers set over square holes cut in plywood are effective.)
4. **Pest Control.** The building should be treated to prevent termite infestation and any foundation or eave damage covered with wire screen.
5. **Monitor.** Periodically monitor the building to insure the effectiveness of the mothballing program.
6. **Maintain vegetation.** Cut back landscaping or remove any shrubs, small trees, and vines that may grow into the foundation, damage structural materials or overtake the building. Visibility deters trespassers as well.

Motion Activated Security Lights
(If power is on)

Full Plywood Sheets Over Windows

- Paint dark gray to give the impression of windows.
- Use house-trim color to paint 8-inch borders on boards.

Cut Down Vines & Shrubs for Visibility

***Visible Sales Sign if For Sale
or "Pardon Progress" if
Possibly Working on Structure***

For additional information, see the National Park Service Preservation Brief: #31: Mothballing Historic Buildings (information on researching NPS Briefs is located in the Appendix, Section VI).

Fig. 9.1: Stabilization Measures for Vacant Property



(Above) This is an example of a structure which, given more time in a vacant condition, may need to follow a "mothballing" routine. (Below) An illustrated concept of simple mothballing measures.

