

# Relocation and Demolition

## Saving Historic Character



*The Smith-Montgomery house on Penn Street was relocated around the 1840-50's from the opposite side of the street. The continued activity and close edge location reinforce street identity.*

use this brochure when:

- moving a building into, out of, or to another site within, the historic district.
- demolishing a building or buildings in the historic district.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Relocation preserves a building, yet severs its historic relationship with a site. Only under very limited circumstances, such as when the only other alternative is demolition, should a building be subjected to the stresses of being moved. When relocation is unavoidable, certain precautions can be taken to protect important structural and architectural features and to ensure compatibility of the historic building in a new context.

Demolition erodes the physical fabric of the historic district and often adversely affects a neighborhood. Demolition is an extreme and irreversible action not to be undertaken lightly. It should be considered only after all other alternatives - such as resale, rehabilitation, and relocation - have been exhausted.

The negative effects of historic building removal may be reduced by carefully documenting the appearance of a building and its site and by salvaging historic materials for reuse.

Historic buildings should not be removed from their original sites without having redevelopment plans for the property.

# EVALUATING BUILDING CONDITION and STATUS

## General

During the evaluation process, protect vacant buildings and sites against damage from weather, fire, and vandalism. Research the pros and cons of building removal to make an informed decision.



*The property survey file (top) and National Register of Historic Places registration form (bottom) can help you understand your property's significance.*

- Review the property survey file(s), the report entitled A Survey of Historic Architecture in the Blacksburg Historic District (1997), and the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the historic district, all of which may be obtained from the Town. This information will help establish the property's significance.
- The Review Board will determine the architectural and/or historical significance of the property, individually and as a part of the historic district. Is the building or site one-of-a-kind, or are there other examples of its type and style represented in the district? Would the removal of the building harm the district's integrity?
- Assess the physical and visual impacts of the building's removal on nearby properties.
- Conduct feasibility studies and structural assessments to evaluate the economic impact of keeping and using the building on its original site vs. the costs of removal and replacement

## Relocation or Demolition (per ordinance 1222)

Identify possible relocation sites, including moving routes, and determine their compatibility with the building. Contact the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for assistance when considering the relocation of a building that is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register or the National Register of Historic Places either individually or as a contributing property in the district. If the move causes the property to lose integrity, it may no longer qualify for available state and federal tax credits, and could be delisted from the registers.

If a property owner seeking a demolition permit for a historic building is denied a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition, he or she may appeal the decision of the Review Board to Town Council..

If council denies the appeal, the owner may file a statement with the director of Planning & Engineering identifying the property, sale price, appraisal, listing date, and agent before making a bona fide offer to sell the landmark, building, or structure and the land. If, after the waiting period, the property has not been sold, the owner may obtain a demolition permit. The minimum period that the building must be offered for sale:

- offering price less than \$25,000 = 3 months
- \$25,000-\$39,999 = 4 months
- \$40,000-\$54,999 = 5 months
- \$55,000-\$74,999 = 6 months
- \$75,000-\$89,999 = 7 months
- \$90,000 or more = 12 months

## REDUCING IMPACTS on the HISTORIC SETTING

### General

Take steps to identify and protect historic site elements and significant landscape features before, during, and after building removal.

If the vacant site of a removed building is not to be redeveloped immediately, try to return it to a condition and appearance similar to other open spaces in the historic district.

Discourage the informal use of vacant sites as de facto parking lots.

### Relocation

Select a setting for a relocated building that is compatible with its character and that of the original site.

When relocating a building to another site within the historic district, follow relevant guidelines pertaining to the siting and design of New Construction.

Make every effort to re-establish the historic orientation and landscape features of a relocated building at its new site.

## RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

### General

- Prior to building removal, undertake documentation as comprehensively as possible, using the following list as a guide:
- Photograph the present appearance (exterior, interior, and site).
- Take notes on the present appearance (exterior, interior, and site).
- Record overall dimensions of the subject building.
- Sketch out property features, including the relationship of the building to the overall site, outbuildings, historic landscaping, and adjacent properties.

Consider submitting a copy of all documentation prepared on the building and site to the Town or other publicly accessible repository for archival purposes.

### Relocation

Hire licensed professional building movers to relocate a historic building.

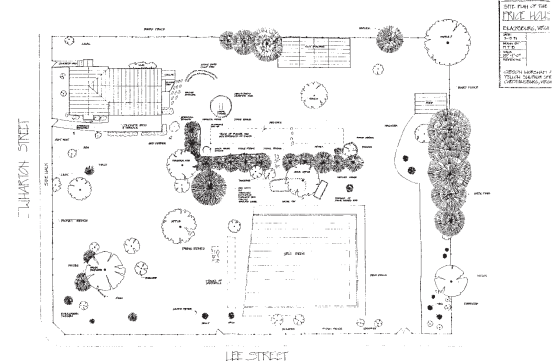
Whenever possible, move a building in one piece. If problematic structural or relocation route conditions preclude moving a building as a single unit, then partial disassembly into large sections is acceptable. Avoid total disassembly of building components except under extreme situations.

Protect buildings or their components from damage during the moving process by adding bracing, or strapping, or by temporarily infilling door and window openings for structural rigidity.



*Identify and protect historic site features such as wrought iron fencing during relocation or demolition activities.*

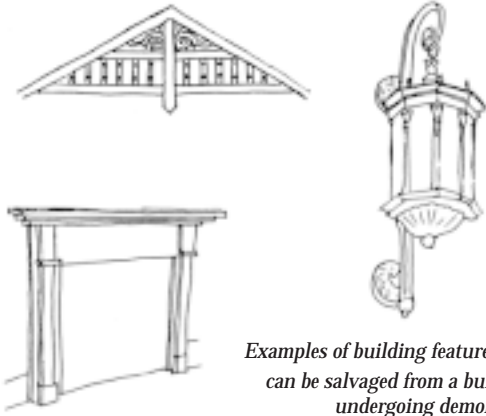
*An example of good property documentation (Price House):*



*site plan . . .*

*. . . and photo series*





*Examples of building features that can be salvaged from a building undergoing demolition.*

### **Demolition**

Salvage important features and materials of a building and its site prior to demolition. They can often be recycled for use in similar buildings in the area undergoing repairs or rehabilitation. Look for the following items:

- hardware, light fixtures
- columns, baseboards, cornices, and other decorative trim
- paneling and other decorative wall or ceiling finishes
- mantels, staircases, siding, trim, windows and doors
- heavy timbers, logs, flooring, and other structural elements
- bricks, stone, and other masonry elements such as slate shingles

## **PROPOSAL REVIEW & COMMENT** (per ordinance 1222)

In addition to the application form (described in the overview pamphlet), you may be asked to submit any or all of the following items to help the Review Board and Town staff better understand your proposal:

- a map showing the marked location of properties under consideration; for relocation requests, show original and proposed sites
- for relocation requests, provide a map showing relocation route
- copies of structural condition and economic feasibility reports
- a site plan indicating the location of all existing, structures, including accessory structures, walls, fences, walks, and other significant elements
- recent photographs of all sides of the structure or sites under consideration, and of adjoining properties in the historic district

Using the guidelines for New Construction, submit a proposal for the redevelopment of the site along with the other items described above.

Processing of applications includes the following actions:

- Town staff will notify owners of adjoining properties that the proposal will be discussed at a public meeting.
- The applicant, other property owners in the district, and other potentially affected parties will have an opportunity to comment on the proposal at the review board meeting.
- The review board will review the proposal according to Design Guidelines and will render an assessment at the public meeting.
- Town staff will notify applicant in writing of the review board's assessment regarding the proposal.
- Town will maintain minutes that outline the facts of the proposal assessment.
- In the case of relocation or demolition proposals, Town will issue Certificate of Appropriateness or notice of denial of application to property owner and to zoning and building officials.
- Property owners denied a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition or relocation proposals have the opportunity to appeal the decision to Town Council.