

Section 5

Relocation And Demolition



5.1 Relocation:

Numerous historic districts are encouraging moving historic buildings into the district as in-fill construction. This is especially important to encourage in Fort Smith. As churches, schools or businesses expand in older parts of the city, historic properties are doomed for the wrecking ball and dozer unless another place can be located for them to live again. There are numerous vacant lots in the Belle Grove Historic District that could accommodate a relocated historic building.

Advantages of this consideration are:

- a. Chances are the style will fit within the period of the neighborhood.
- b. The historical value of the building should increase since it will be located next to friends who will benefit from their new neighbor's history.
- c. The cost to relocate and construct a new foundation should be much less than having to construct a "new" building to "match" the texture, scale, mass, etc. of the neighborhood.
- d. As each historic building is recycled into the district, it enhances the district and helps maintain the living museum of history for future generations.
- e. Once the building is in the district, the Guidelines and HDC oversight will help perpetuate its value to history.
- f. Relocating historic buildings from the Belle Grove Historic District will not be permitted.
- g. The HDC must issue a COA (Certificate of Appropriateness) before any such relocation can be considered.

See Section 4.3 for Sample-Site Layout Sketch.

5.1 Relocation: Guidelines

- .1 Prior to relocating a building into the historic district, apply for a COA.
- .2 (COA) submittal information required includes the following:
 - a. A detailed procedure plan for relocation. i.e., the route of travel, any trees, power lines or other things that may be damaged or affected.
 - b. A site plan of the new location. Illustrating all existing and new elements such as ancillary buildings, landscaped areas and trees, setbacks, drives, etc.
 - c. A foundation plan by an architect or engineer.
 - d. A letter addressing the method for protecting existing elements of the site and district as a result of the relocation.
 - e. A financial plan detailing that the building will be rehabilitated and the financial certifications.
 - f. A detailed time schedule of work to be completed and dates for each phase.
 - g. A history of the building including style, features, previous owners and date of construction, etc.
 - h. Photographs of the building exterior from (4) views.

5.2 Demolition:

During the past several years there have been a number of historic buildings demolished due to the severe fire damage from unknown causes. It has been assumed by investigating the aftermath of some of the fires that someone had broken into a building that was vacant and caused the fire.

If a building is to be vacant, it is important that some type of security system or covering over openings be put in place so that vandals cannot enter the structure.

Neglect is another cause for deterioration of the building fabric such as walls, windows, roofs and porches, etc. Routine maintenance and repair are required to preserve any building, especially an historic building which usually has a more ornate facade fenestration from its place in time. The structural integrity may also be affected by neglecting weather, water or moisture damage.

As an historic district loses even a single historic building, it is diminished in its overall architectural context and significance.

Selective removal (demolition) of previous non-historic alterations or additions may be considered.

Demolition of a building which contributes to the historic or architectural integrity of the historic district should not occur, unless:

- a. Public safety and welfare requires the removal of a building or structure as determined by the building or code inspector and concurring reports commissioned by and acceptable to the Historic District Commission from a structural engineer, architect or pertinent professional. The building official and pertinent reports shall specify the deficiencies of the structure that cause the structure to be unsafe and an imminent threat to public safety.
- b. Where economic hardship (the fact that no reasonable return on or use of the building exists) has been demonstrated and proven.
- c. Where rehabilitation is undesirable due to severe structural instability or deterioration of a building.
- d. The building or addition has lost its original architectural integrity and no longer contributes to the district.
- e. No other reasonable alternative is feasible, including relocation of the building.
- f. To ensure public safety and welfare.

Outbuildings or ancillary structures may have historical significance and some may be more significant than the main building of the site. A COA is required for removal of part(s) of or any structure on a site.

Every effort must be put forth to repair and maintain an historic building before a request for demolition will be considered by the HDC. Before submitting a COA for demolition, the owner must provide photographic documentation and measured drawings of the building for keeping in the historic records of the district.

If a building in the District is fire-damaged beyond economical means to repair it, or if it has been so damaged that reconstruction would render it a "non-contributing resource," the possibility for demolition may be considered.

See Section 4.3 for Sample-Site Layout Sketch.

5.2 Demolition: Guidelines

Recommended

- .1 Obtain a COA for demolition of part(s) or all of the structure.
- .2 Prior to demolition, record through photographs and detailed drawings all historic elements and building plan(s).
- .3 Prior to demolition, work with the HDC to allow any salvageable materials to be removed.
- .4 During demolition, protect from damage elements of the property which are to remain and the neighboring buildings and structures.
- .5 After demolition, clean the site and surrounding area of all debris.

Not Recommended

- .6 Demolition of any original feature or part of a historic building

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