

# Design Guidelines: Demolition & Relocation

## Demolition

The goal of the Corydon Historic Preservation Commission is to protect the historic buildings, structures, sites, streetscapes and neighborhoods that give this community its unique character. **Demolition is permanent and irreversible.** The loss of a historic building that contributes to the district will negatively impact the visual quality and cohesiveness of the entire area, much as a missing tooth affects a smile. Owners of historic properties should exhaust all other possible options prior to considering demolition.

If the Preservation Commission denies a COA for demolition, a demolition permit can be issued by other agencies and the building demolished only if the property owner can demonstrate that the building is incapable of earning an economic return on its value, as appraised by a qualified real estate appraiser. The owner must also demonstrate that a good faith effort was made to sell or dispose of the property at fair market value to any public or private person or agency that gives reasonable assurance of its willingness to preserve and restore the property.

Before the demolition permit is issued, notice of the proposed demolition must be given for a period fixed by the Commission based upon the building's rating. This period will be from 90 days to one year, during which time the notice must be posted on the building and published at least three times in a newspaper of local circulation.

If severe deterioration or structural instability is the reason that demolition is being

requested, the applicant may be asked to provide - at his or her cost - a report from an architect or structural engineer verifying the condition of the structure and detailing the repair cost. If an emergency situation arises, such as a fire, town staff will assess the structure and inform the owner and the Preservation Commission of its recommendation.

### Demolition by Neglect

The Historic Preservation Ordinance for the Town of Corydon requires that historic buildings be maintained to meet all applicable state and local standards. Specifically, buildings must be maintained to prevent the "loss of historic materials and the deterioration of important character-defining features and details." (Ordinance 2016-13, Section 12 (a))

Allowing a building to deteriorate through lack of maintenance is considered to be a self-imposed hardship and will not be considered a mitigating circumstance when determining economic hardship.

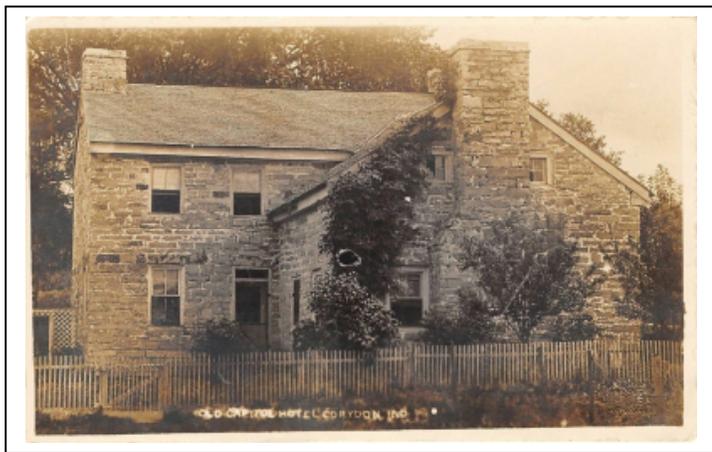
- De1** Work with the Preservation Commission to identify alternatives to demolition.
- De2** Document the historic resource and its setting prior to demolition, through photographs and drawings.
- De3** Identify architectural features and building materials that can be salvaged and reused.
- De4** Minimize the amount of ground-disturbing activity associated with

demolition, to avoid damaging adjacent structures, archaeological resources, site features or landscape elements.

- De5** Leave the site cleaned, graded and seeded after demolition. Re-establish the street wall through the use of low walls, fences or vegetation.



*When a historic building such as New Albany's Manus House (pictured above) is demolished, it not only creates a hole in the streetscape, but tons of debris are typically sent to the landfill.*



*The Old Capitol Tavern, constructed in 1864 about one mile east of downtown, was destroyed by fire in 1921.*

## Relocation

Moving an historic building should only be considered as a final alternative to demolition. Moving a building destroys its context, distorts the story of the town's architectural development, and can jeopardize a building's National Register status. Moving a building almost always results in damage to or loss of historic fabric. If a structure must be moved, every effort should be made to move it in one piece. If this is not technically or economically feasible, moving after partial disassembly is recommended. Total disassembly and re-erection on the new site is the least preferable option.

Prior to the move, careful planning should be undertaken to ensure that the new site is as similar as possible to the old. Relocation to a site within the immediate vicinity of the former lot is encouraged, as is keeping historic buildings within the historic district. The Commission will use the 'New Construction' portion of the design guidelines to evaluate a relocation request within a historic district.

- Re1** Relocation should be considered only as a last resort, if a building would be lost if kept in its current location.
- Re2** Document the building on its original site prior to relocation, through photographs and drawings.
- Re3** Work only with movers experienced in relocating historic buildings.
- Re4** Secure the structure to minimize damage during the move and vandalism before or after.
- Re5** The building's new site should correspond proportionally to the size of the structure.

**Re6** The moved building should be sited in a new location where its shape, mass and scale are compatible with the existing structures in the block.

**Re7** The structure should be positioned on its new lot in such a manner that its orientation to the street, setback and lot coverage is compatible with the existing structures around it.

**Re8** A building should be moved as a single unit whenever possible, to prevent loss of historic building materials. Partial or total disassembly is acceptable only when absolutely necessary.

**Re9** A relocated outbuilding should be sited to maintain the lot location, orientation, setback, and relationship to primary structures found in surrounding properties.

**Re10** Nothing included in these guidelines relieves the applicant of the responsibility of obtaining all relevant and necessary permits prior to moving a building.



*As Jeffersonville's Varble House illustrates, even large buildings can be successfully relocated if needed.*



*The Leonard Carter House, built by an African-American Civil War veteran, was moved to prevent its demolition.*