



WINCHESTER
 HISTORIC DISTRICT
 DESIGN GUIDELINES
 MOVING &
 DEMOLITION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Criteria for Moving Buildings	2
Guidelines for Moving Buildings	3
Criteria for Demolition.....	4
Guidelines for Demolition.....	5

Historic buildings are irreplaceable community assets and once they are gone, they are gone forever. With each succeeding demolition or removal, the integrity of Winchester's heritage is further eroded. The new building or parking lot that often replaces the removed historic building is seldom an attribute to the historic character of the district. Therefore, the moving or demolition of any significant building in the historic district should be considered very carefully before any approval is given.

Moving & Demolition

CRITERIA FOR MOVING BUILDINGS

The following general standards should be applied in decisions made by the BAR in regard to moving buildings:

- 1 Whether or not the proposed relocation is the only practical means of saving the structure from demolition. Have other alternatives been studied which would not require the building to be moved?
- 2 The age and character of a historic structure. For example, is the subject building one of the older structures found in the district, or is its design that of a distinctive character not found frequently in the historic district?
- 3 The view of the structure or area from a public street or right-of-way. For example, is the site at a prominent location in the historic district that is very visible; and would the removal of the subject building create a detrimental view in the future? Or is the subject building part of a continuous row of similar structures, and its removal would result in a loss of the integrity of the view of the entire block?
- 4 The present character of the setting of the structure or area and its surroundings and the impact caused by the structure's removal. That is, how significant is the setting of the structure, and how much does the setting help define the character of the subject building? For example, is the existing lot a large area with significant landscaping, is it surrounded by similar properties, and would the removal of the building create a large gap along the street?
- 5 Whether or not the proposed relocation may have a detrimental or beneficial effect on the structural soundness of the building or structure. That is, will the move likely threaten the structural stability of the subject building, or improve its stability at a new location?
- 6 Whether or not the proposed relocation would have a negative or positive effect on other historic sites, buildings, or structures within the historic district. That is, would the moving of the subject building create an unsightly gap in a continuous row of existing historic structures? Or would the new location of the moved building within the historic district be an area where the subject building would not be of a type, style or scale that would relate to the surrounding historic buildings.
- 7 Whether or not the proposed relocation would provide new surroundings that would be compatible with the architectural aspects of the building or structure.
- 8 Whether or not the building or structure will be relocated to another site within the historic district that is appropriate in scale and size. For example, is the moved building scaled to its receiving site, or is it too large or too small for its new lot when compared with surrounding properties.

There are no criteria in the present ordinance for consideration of moving a building although many of the standards listed for demolition could apply to moving as well.

GUIDELINES FOR MOVING BUILDINGS

If a building is to be moved, the following steps should be taken.

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| 1 | Move buildings only after all alternatives to retention have been examined, including a professional feasibility study. Seek guidance from Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc. for information about moving buildings. | 4 | Thoroughly assess the building's structural condition in order to minimize any damage that might occur during the move. |
| 2 | Contact the Winchester Office of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for assistance prior to moving the building if there is a desire to remain listed on the National Register of Historic Places. | 5 | Select a contractor who has experience in moving buildings and check references with other building owners who have used this contractor. |
| 3 | Seek assistance from Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc. on documenting the building on its original site before undertaking the move. Photograph the building and the site thoroughly and also measure the building if the move will require substantial reconstruction. | 6 | Secure the building from vandalism and potential weather damage before and after its move. |
| | | 7 | If the site is to remain vacant for any length of time, improve the empty lot in a manner consistent with other open space in the historic district. |

CRITERIA FOR DEMOLITION

The following demolition criteria are presently in Winchester's ordinance:

- 1** Is the building of such architectural or historic interest that its removal or disturbance would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- 2** Is the building of such interest or significance that it could be made into a national, state, or local historic shrine?
- 3** Is the building of such old, unusual or uncommon design, texture, and/or material that it could only be reproduced with great difficulty and/or expense?
- 4** Would retention of the building help preserve the historic character of the district?
- 5** Would retention of the building help preserve a historic interest in a place or an area of the City?
- 6** Would retention of the building promote the general welfare by maintaining the increasing real estate values; generating business; creating new positions; attracting tourists, students, historians, artists, and artisans; attracting new residents; encouraging study and interest in American history; stimulating interest and study in architecture and design; educating citizens in American culture and heritage; and making the City a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

Moving & Demolition

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING DEMOLITION PROPOSALS NOT IN ORDINANCE

- 7 The reason for demolishing the building or structure and whether or not any alternatives to demolition exist.
- 8 The view of the structure or areas from a public street or right-of-way, and what the impact will be on that view if the building is demolished. For example, is the site at a prominent location in the historic district that is very visible and the removal of the subject building would create a detrimental view in the future?
- 9 The present character of the setting of the structure or area and its surroundings. Is the subject building located in a setting of surrounding buildings that contains examples of older, more rare, unique, or distinctive styles or types of buildings relative to the rest of the district?
- 10 Whether or not historic events significant in local, state or national history occurred in the building or structures.
- 11 Whether or not a relocation of the building or structure or a portion there of, would be to any extent practicable as a preferable alternative to demolition.
- 12 Whether or not the proposed demolition could potentially adversely affect other historic buildings located within the historic district, or adversely affect the character of the historic district.

GUIDELINES FOR DEMOLITION

State enabling legislation referred to in Winchester's current ordinance (sec 14-11) requires that if a property owner wishes to demolish a building, the owner first must offer the property for sale. The length of time the property is offered for sale relates to its asking price and is spelled out in the state legislation. Winchester's ordinance has an additional requirement that the asking price be verified through an appraisal process.

If a building owner wishes to demolish his/her building after going through the above process, the following steps should be taken:

- 1** Document the building thoroughly through photographs and measured drawings according to Historic American Building Survey standards. The resulting information should be retained in the offices of Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc. and with Winchester Office of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
- 2** Demolish a historic building only after all preferable alternatives have been previously exhausted.
- 3** If the site is to remain vacant for any length of time, improve the empty lot in a manner consistent with other open spaces in the historic district.

This publication has been financed with Federal Funds from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior through the Certified Local Government Program administered by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of any trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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