

Demolition & Relocation

Demolition

The purpose of the New Albany Historic Preservation Commission is to protect the historic buildings, structures, sites, streetscapes and neighborhoods that give the city 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.

When an application is submitted for demolition, the following criteria will be considered by the Preservation Commission in evaluating that request:

- ✦ Effect of the demolition on the character of the Historic District;
- ✦ State of deterioration, disrepair or structural stability of the structure, including the foundation, roof, floor system or walls. The condition of the building resulting from neglect shall not be considered grounds for demolition.
- ✦ Balance of the public interest in preserving the structure or the integrity of the district with the interest of the owner of the structure in the use and utilization of the property; and
- ✦ Possible alternatives to demolition.

If the Preservation Commission denies a COA for demolition, a demolition permit may still be issued by other agencies and the building demolished but 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 60 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, city building 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 City of New Albany 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 structures, historic materials, and historic components, as well as the deterioration of character-defining features and details.' (Ordinance 151.11 (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.

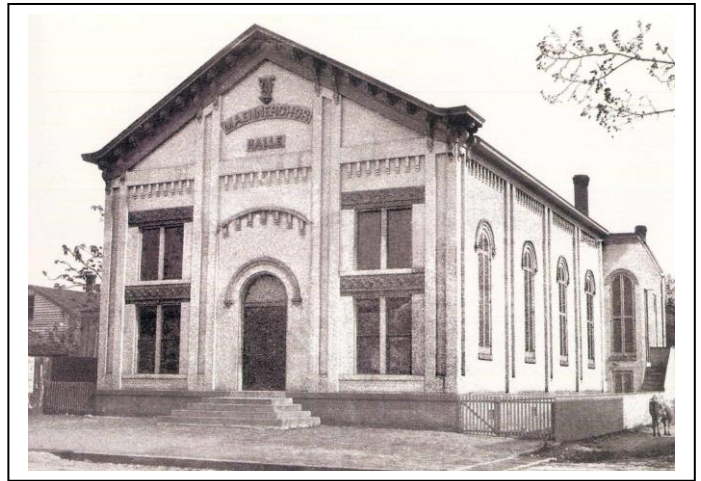
De2 Document the historic resource and its setting prior to demolition, through photographs and drawings.

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. Demolition work should be designed and completed carefully to

retain any mature trees on the lot if at all possible. Re-establish the street wall through the use of low walls, fences or vegetation.



Deferred maintenance led to the collapse of Maennechor Halle on East Spring Street in February 2003, as planning was underway to incorporate the historic structure into a new firehouse.

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 city'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. A location within the same historic district is ideal, but if that is not possible, a location with buildings of a similar character and era would be the next best option.

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 existing structures around it.

Re8 The new foundation for a relocated structure should match the original in height, design and facing materials.

Re9 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.

Re10 A relocated outbuilding should be sited to maintain the lot location, orientation, setback, and relationship to primary structures found in surrounding properties.

The Galbraith-Dishman House is a very early example of relocation – it was moved to its current site on East Elm Street from West 2nd Street in 1876 using mule power.



Previously threatened with demolition for new development on its Charlestown Road site, the circa 1860 Smith-Phillips farmhouse was moved to safety in April 2022. It has since been rehabilitated for office use.



The 1866 Floyd County Courthouse as it was being demolished, circa 1963.

*From the collection of the
Stuart Barth Wrege Indiana
History Room, Floyd Co.
Library*