

# Chapter 11: Demolition

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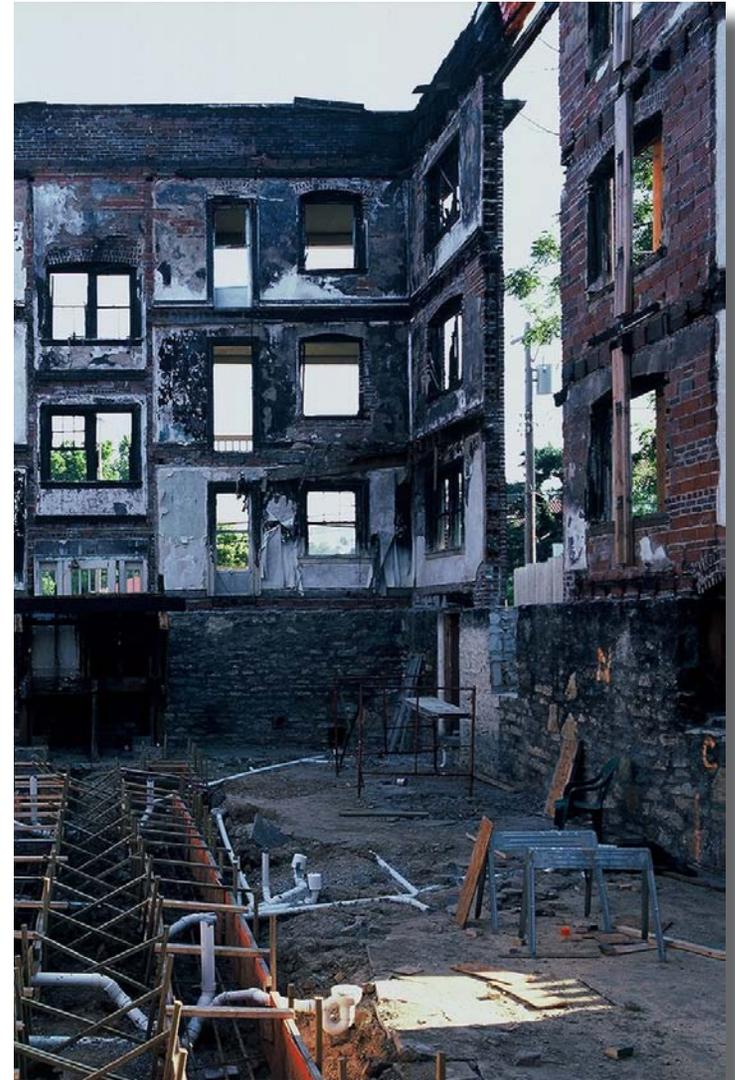


In this chapter you will find:

Demolition

Mothballing Treatment

Types of Demolition By Neglect and  
Recommended Corrective Measures



**DEMOLITION**

Photograph on cover page:  
View of Patriot Place Apartments located along Truman Road in Independence soon after a  
destructive fire, 709 West Truman Road, 2004.

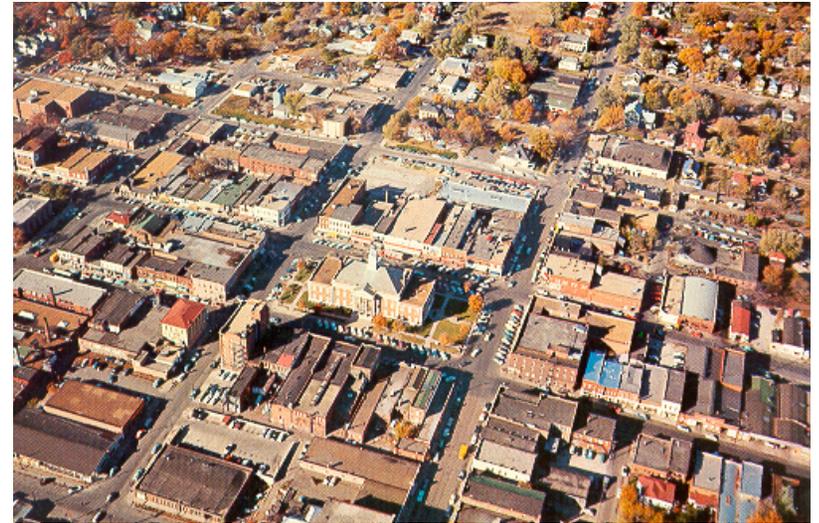
# DEMOLITION

## Demolition

Historic designation, either local or national, does not protect historic resources from demolition. Demolition requests for buildings or structures within a locally designated historic district or demolition of a historic landmark always requires Heritage Commission review prior to issuance of a permit. In addition, according to City Code, Article 1.30.009, the Heritage Commission must also review all city-wide demolition permits for buildings or structures, whether they are designated or not. In order to expedite this process, the Preservation Division staff reviews each demolition permit that is applied for. If the property is located within an area that has a high concentration of historic resources (for example, historic districts or those areas recognized in Chapter 11 of the City's Comprehensive Plan), the demolition request must first be reviewed by the Commission prior to issuance of a permit. ***The Heritage Commission Review Policy provides applicants who have been denied a demolition COA by the Heritage Commission or Preservation Division staff, the opportunity to appeal the decision with the City Council.***

Demolition of a historic building, outbuilding, or accessory structure should only be considered when the building is so deteriorated that it is no longer safe to occupy and cannot be rehabilitated. It is up to the property owner to show proof of structural stability or evidence of severe deterioration, associated rehabilitation costs if the building was put back into service, and evidence that maintenance was not deferred by the current property owner. A structural report prepared by a professional may be used to substantiate the owner's request for demolition.

***Each demolition request is evaluated on a case-by-case / property-by-property basis by the City's Preservation staff and the Heritage Commission.***



Two aerial views of downtown Independence are shown on the right. Above: aerial photograph prior to Urban Renewal. Photograph provided by the City of Independence, date unknown. Below: aerial view indicating the increased number of parking lots and vacant lots surrounding the downtown from Google Earth, 2010. Demolition of historic buildings has a huge impact within the overall cultural context of a city.



### **Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Application Review Tip:**

**The following questions should be considered by the property owner prior to requesting demolition:**

- 1) Is the building, garage, barn, etc. considered historic or contributing to a district?
- 2) Has maintenance been deferred for a prolonged period of time?
- 3) Has the building been out of use or vacant for over 12 months?
- 4) Is the building/structure structurally sound?
- 5) Could the building/structure be mothballed (boarded and secured)?
- 6) Has the building been on the market within the last 12 months?
- 7) Can the building be rehabilitated?
- 8) Does the building/structure display a unique style of architecture or method of construction?



### **COA Application Checklist for Demolition Requests :**

- ✓ **A pre-application meeting with staff (recommended, not required)**
- ✓ **A completed COA Application with property owner's signature**
- ✓ **Photographs of the building(s) or structure(s) to be demolished**
- ✓ **Structural engineer's report**
- ✓ **Cost estimates for rehabilitation vs. demolition**

***Refer to the Certificate of Appropriateness application process found in Chapter 4 for more detailed information about the Heritage Commission review process.***

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The Heritage Commission adopted a policy outlining their requirements for review of city-wide demolition requests to provide guidance to City staff as well as to property owners. The policy can be obtained from the Preservation Division and is as follows:

## Heritage Commission Review Policy for City-wide Demolition

*Pursuant to City Code §1.30.010(6), requiring the review of all city-wide demolition permits by the Independence Heritage Commission, the following policy applies:*

- A. The City Historic Preservation Manager shall, within three days of receipt of an application for demolition permit, verify, through a physical inspection or through documentation, the dates of construction of the building or structure to be demolished.
- B. If the Historic Preservation Manager determines that the application for demolition permits that involves:
  - 1) Any built resources (including, but not limited to, buildings, garages, sheds, barns, etc.) that is older than 100 years of age; or,
  - 2) Any property older than 45 years of age that qualifies under the following criterion:
    - a) Any property eligible for listing or already listed individually in the local or National Register or as a part of a local or National Register District possessing architectural, archaeological, or historical significance as described in the Unified Development Code §14-907-06 & §14-908-02;
    - b) Any property recognized individually or within a proposed district boundary in Chapter 11 of the City's Comprehensive Plan;
    - c) Any property within 300' of an established local or National Register Historic District; or,
    - d) Any building or structure tagged as a “dangerous building” by the City's Building Official that is neither structurally unsound nor a hazard to public safety that meets the criterion above.

The Historic Preservation Manager shall submit the application for demolition to the Heritage Commission for review. Review shall be scheduled within thirty days.

- C. All applications that do not meet the above criteria for Heritage Commission review shall be approved by the Historic Preservation Manager.

## Mothballing Treatment

### **Reference:**

**Preservation Brief 31: *Mothballing Historic Buildings***

If a property owner is denied approval of the demolition of a building, the property owner may elect to do nothing but secure the building, a treatment also known as “mothballing.” This course of action is acceptable only when the lack of attention does not result in the further deterioration of the building or its unique architectural features. If the building is vacant, it should be boarded and secured from public access.



**NOTE:** The Heritage Commission and the Preservation Division can never override a decision by the Building Official if a building or structure poses a life or safety issue. If a building/structure is tagged for an “emergency demolition”, meaning an immediate threat to the public's safety and in imminent danger of collapse, no Commission or Preservation staff review is required.

## Demolition By Neglect

“Demolition by neglect” is one of the most serious threats to the preservation of the City’s historic resources. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, “demolition by neglect” is defined as, “a situation in which a property owner intentionally allows a historic property to suffer severe deterioration, potentially beyond the point of repair.” This not only applies to the demolition of houses and commercial buildings, but also, barns, carriage houses, garages, retaining walls, etc. While there can be numerous reasons not to address maintenance issues on a building, the intentional withholding of basic maintenance and repair to a historically designated building is prohibited by the City’s Unified Development Code, Section 14-907-23(C).



***The Heritage Commission and City staff are authorized to survey historic properties and request a code violation citation and serve fines if serious maintenance issues are not immediately addressed.***

***The Heritage Commission reviews all demolition; both Owner-initiated reviews and those that are demolition by neglect.***

Above: Example of demolition of a residential property, Independence, MO, date unknown

Below: Example of demolition of a commercial property, Kansas City, MO, 2009

# DEMOLITION

## Types of Demolition By Neglect and Recommended Corrective Measures

There are any number of problems that can lead to the deterioration of a building. The following is a general list of some of the most common problems with some suggested solutions:

### Mothballing

If a property owner is denied approval of the demolition of a building, the property owner may elect to do nothing but secure the building, also known as “mothballing.” An open roof, for example, can result in water damage to the interior and risk structural instability and loss of significant features. If the building is vacant, it should be boarded and secured from public access.

### Structural Failure

Structural instability of a building or a portion of a building is often the most difficult to diagnose and correct. It is often very difficult to determine what failure can be assigned to the property owner and how much time, and wear and tear is responsible for the building’s failure. If structural stability is thought to be cause for alarm, a professional structural engineer should be hired to determine the extent of the damage and the measures necessary to correct it. If structural defects include masonry failure, construction repairs must be made using bricks or stone and mortar that match the existing in material, composition, size, and density.

If the condition of the building has deteriorated to the point that the building or a portion of the building cannot be saved, it is sometimes reasonable to propose demolition as a means of “correcting” the structural failure. The Heritage Commission will consider the roots of the cause when reviewing such a request.



These photographs are of the Patriot Place Apartment Building which was significantly damaged by fire. The property was salvaged and reconstructed from 2004-2005. This example indicates that almost no building is too far gone to be repaired. Above: 709 West Truman Road, 2004. Below: 709 West Truman Road, 2011

### Roof, Gutters, Downspouts, and Flashing

The roof components and associated drainage systems are the most important areas in protecting a building from water damage and deterioration. If a demolition by neglect citation is issued due to failure of the roof or its systems, the Heritage Commission recommends that repairs be made to match the original in material and detail. Flashing is a critical component of a roofing system. Counterflashing should be installed where the roof meets a chimney, dormer, or other changes in the roof line to ensure that water does not penetrate the underlayment or interior.

If roof damage is so extensive or if other structural repairs are required, it may be necessary to replace the entire roof surface.

### Broken or Missing Glazing, and Open or Missing Windows or Doors

Missing or broken windows and doors can allow water infiltration and unwanted public access. If left unchecked, water can lead to the eventual demise of a building; ruining the structural fabric of the building and damaging interior and exterior finishes. An open building is also an invitation to vandals and vagrants to enter and possibly damage the building. If a building is missing doors or windows, or if it is abandoned, City Code requires that the building be boarded and that any loose debris be removed.



Specific situations may require different or alternative solutions. City Preservation Division staff and the Heritage Commission is willing to consider any suggestions as long as they adequately address the problems that have created the deteriorated condition. They are available as a resource to assist building owners with maintenance-related issues that arise on a property.



Example of metal panels used to effectively mothball the second floor for rehabilitation at a later date, Joplin, MO, 2010

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For a temporary solution to broken or missing doors and windows, secure a piece of plywood or carefully fitted metal panels to the building. The covering should fit tightly inside the frame of the window or door on the exterior of the building. Avoid unnecessary insertion of fasteners into historic exterior siding or masonry.

## Missing Exterior Finish Materials

Exterior finish material such as siding, trim, fascia, soffits, and window casings provide a weather barrier as well as protection for interior finishes. These elements also often carry important architectural features that help define the style and age of the building. When repairing loose or missing exterior finish material, it is important not to remove any character-defining historic fabric. Where replacement material is necessary, it must match the original in material and detail, in-kind. All replacement wood should be primed with oil-based primer, both front and back, and painted after installation for years of lasting wear.



An example of a mothballing a storefront that has been thoughtfully painted to blend, Centerville, IA, 2009



An example of wood corbel repair that will retain the original historic features of the building that add greatly to the overall historic character of the building, 1500 North Liberty, date unknown

