

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
REHABILITATION AND DESIGN  
GUIDELINES** Gainesville, Florida

**DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR RELOCATING BUILDINGS**

## RELOCATING BUILDINGS

### Applicable Secretary Standards

*2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*

Relocating a building is a last resort to avoid demolition. From a preservation perspective, relocating a building has many negative consequences. First, the context of the building is lost. The association with the surrounding natural and built environment is destroyed. Left behind are sidewalks, retaining walls, and landscape features that make each building unique.

Moreover, many of the character-defining features that contribute to the architectural significance of a building have to be removed or are seriously damaged as a result of relocation. These include foundations, porches, chimneys, and interior finishes, particularly plaster. Structural damage can also result. The loss of a building's historic context and many of its features conflicts with Standard 2.

Furthermore, an improperly relocated building can have a negative impact on the setting of existing buildings in a new location. Side and front setback, orientation, scale, mass, and individual features of existing buildings should be considered when choosing an appropriate site. It is also important to establish a clear plan of use, especially if the historical function is to be changed. Buildings that are moved and left to deteriorate create a negative for the concept of adaptive use and preservation in general.

Despite the negatives, relocation is preferable to demolition. This is particularly true with regard to buildings whose significance is primarily architectural. There are several criteria to be considered when reviewing a proposal to move a building to a new site. They are essentially the same as those for compatible infill. The built environment for the new site should be similar to the old one in terms of the age of the surrounding buildings, their height, materials, setback, and architectural detail. If not properly planned and executed, a relocated building can be just as incompatible as a poorly designed infill structure.

In an effort to avoid demolition of historic structures, several buildings in Gainesville have been relocated. The McCreary House, originally built in the central business district, was moved to 815

University Avenue in 1977. The Hodges House originally located at 116 N.E. 1st Street was moved to 717 S.E. 2nd Avenue in 1978.

The demolition delay ordinance, adopted in 1988, provides that permits to demolish structures which have a Florida Site File and are 45 years of age or older, not be issued until 90 days from the date of the permit application.

## **RECOMMENDED**

1. Retain the historic relationship between buildings and streetscape and landscape features.
2. Move a building only when there is no alternative to its preservation. Provide documentation that there is no feasible alternative for preserving a building at its historic location.
3. To mitigate the impact of the relocation, move the building to an existing vacant lot within the historic district in which it is located.
4. In choosing a new site for a moved building, select a setting compatible with the original. Consider the age of surrounding buildings, their height, mass, materials, setback, and architectural details.
5. Properly locate the moved building on its new site. Place the building so that the orientation of its principal facade and front and side setbacks are compatible with surrounding buildings.
6. Provide a new foundation whose design, height, and facing materials match those of the original. Salvage original foundation materials where possible for reuse as veneer on new foundation.

## **NOT RECOMMENDED**

1. Relocating a historic building thus destroying the historic relationship between buildings, features and open space.
2. Relocating a building not threatened by demolition.

3. Relocating a building outside a historic district.
4. Relocating a building to a site where the surrounding buildings date from a different period or are architecturally incompatible due to their height, materials, setback, and detailing.
5. Destruction or alteration of significant features, structures, or archaeological sites at new location.
6. Improperly locating a building on its new site so that its orientation and front and side setbacks are incompatible with surrounding buildings.
7. Placing the building on a new foundation whose design and materials are incompatible with the original. Examples include slab foundations or unfinished concrete blocks.

## **STAFF APPROVAL GUIDELINES**

Staff can approve relocation projects that meet the following conditions:

Relocations of structures within the same district;

The placement, scale, and style of the relocated structure are compatible with the new context.

## **BOARD APPROVAL GUIDELINES**

Relocating structures from one district to another can be approved by the board if the building is compatible with its new setting.

Relocation projects that involve moving a related group of structures or more than one structure on a street or block are required to demonstrate documentation that feasible alternatives for rehabilitation and adaptive use are not possible.