

Relocation of Buildings



St. Joseph Landmark Commission

The moving of an historic building should be considered a “last resort” option to the demolition of the historic structure. Moving a building destroys the original context of the building and distorts the story of the City’s architectural development. The moving of a structure invariably results in the substantial loss of original building material. If moving a structure is warranted, every effort should be made to move the building intact as a single unit. If this is not possible, moving by partial disassembly is recommended. If neither of these methods is deemed feasible, complete disassembly may be considered as a means of saving the structure from demolition.

Moving an historic building may jeopardize its status as a National Register listed property. Careful planning should be undertaken to ensure relocation to a site that has similar characteristics to the site that has been vacated. Relocation of buildings to vacant lots within the immediate vicinity of the property or within the historic district is strongly recommended over the moving of buildings to lots outside the historic district. The Commission will use its new construction guidelines when reviewing requests to move structures to lots within local historic districts.

Relocation of Buildings: Guidelines

1. Choose relocation only as a “last resort” to demolition.
2. Document the original site through drawings and photographs prior to relocation of the historic resource.
3. Work with licensed, bonded, and insured contractors to accomplish the relocation.
4. Secure a House Moving Permit from the City of St. Joseph Public Works Department in accordance with Chapter 7, Article I, Section 7-3 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of St. Joseph.
5. Secure the structure to be moved to minimize damage during the move and to curb vandalism.
6. Choose a site for a relocated building that corresponds proportionally to the size of the structure.
7. Position the building on the new site in such a manner that its orientation to the street, setback and lot coverage is compatible to and harmonious with the existing structures on the block to which it is moved.
8. Ensure that the shape, mass and scale of the building to be moved conform to the existing structures on the block to which it is moved.
9. Move a building as a single unit in order to prevent the unnecessary loss of historic building fabric. Partial or complete disassembly is acceptable only when absolutely necessary.



Relocation of a historic building should be a last resort to demolition.