



Historic Preservation Administrative Demolition Approval Policy

APPROVED BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AUGUST 15, 2016

Section 813 of the city of Phoenix Zoning Ordinance states, "It is the intent of this ordinance to preserve the historic and architectural resources within Historic Preservation (HP) Districts. However, it is recognized that there can be circumstances beyond the control of the owner, or situations involving public health, safety, and welfare which may result in the necessary demolition of a structure within an HP District. These situations include a building which constitutes a danger to the public health, safety and welfare, or which involves a resource whose loss does not diminish or adversely affect the integrity of the district, or which imposes an economic hardship on its owners."

The Ordinance specifies that the criteria to be used by the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) to determine if a demolition approval can be issued are as follows:

- a) The structure is of no historic or architectural value or significance and does not contribute to the historic value of the property; and
- b) Loss of the structure would not adversely affect the integrity of the HP District or the historic, architectural or aesthetic relationship to adjacent properties and its demolition shall be inconsequential to historic preservation needs of the area.

The purpose of this policy is to identify the project types that meet the criteria above and are eligible to be approved administratively by HPO staff.

PROJECT TYPES

The following project types may be approved for demolition administratively provided that the applicant 1) submits a complete application package; and 2) the property does not have a conservation easement. (Note: If there is a conservation easement on the property, the HPO will determine whether demolition approval is consistent with the terms of the easement. City Council approval may be required.)

1. Nonhistoric Additions

Additions may be demolished if they were constructed after the historic building's period of significance or if they otherwise lack historical significance. In select cases, historic additions may also be removed if the building is being restored rather than rehabilitated.

2. Noncontributors to Historic Districts

Demolition approval may be granted for properties in historic districts that are classified as noncontributors, either due to age or a loss of historic integrity. However, properties that are individually eligible or that could possibly become contributors, either through a reversal of previous alterations or by extending the historic district's period of significance, may not be approved for demolition.

3. Accessory Buildings

The HPO recognizes that, in many cases, detached garages and other accessory structures in historic districts were not built to the same standards as the primary building. For example, they were often of wood frame construction rather than masonry and built directly on dirt or on a concrete slab with no footings. Demolition approval may be granted for modest accessory buildings that are deemed by the HPO to have low preservation potential due to their condition and/or method of construction. This policy does not allow the demolition of accessory buildings that are individually significant or whose design, materials, and workmanship are comparable to that of the primary structure (e.g., a brick garage behind a brick house).

PROFESSIONAL REPORT

To determine whether a property meets the above criteria, the HPO may request that the applicant provide a written report prepared by a qualified professional (e.g., a licensed architect, professional engineer, or contractor).

The professional must have experience rehabilitating historic properties and must provide at least two examples of his or her prior work.

REUSE PLAN

Section 813.E of the Zoning Ordinance states that if demolition is granted on any basis other than that of economic hardship, then the Building Official shall not issue a demolition permit until a reuse plan for the property has been filed with the HPO. The plan must be in compliance with existing zoning, the General Plan, any adopted Specific Plan, and the HP design guidelines applicable to the property. Vacant land is not considered an acceptable reuse.

A reuse plan is not necessary for the demolition of an addition or an accessory building, as long as the primary structure remains. However, if the primary structure will be demolished, then a reuse plan is required.

Additionally, a reuse plan is not required when demolition of the building will occur pursuant to a City order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. A reuse plan is also unnecessary if, following demolition, no historic feature will remain in the HP zoning district and the HPO determines that the plan is unnecessary to ensure compatibility with other HP-designated properties in the area.