



Truro Historical Commission

PRESERVING HISTORIC PROPERTIES – BYLAW GUIDE

PURPOSE:

The Bylaw's purpose is to preserve and protect Truro's significant buildings, structures and sites. If the Historical Commission at a public hearing determines a significant property to be preferably preserved, issuance of a demolition permit by the Town's Building Commissioner can be delayed by up to one year, during which time the owner/applicant can work with the Historical Commission to explore alternatives to demolition.

FINDINGS

Under the Bylaw, a building is significant if it is over 75 years old; is listed on or part of a pending application for listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places; or is found by the Historical Commission to be historically or architecturally significant, for example because of its style, construction method, architect, or association with historic persons or events or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town.

Under the Bylaw, the Historical Commission can find a building to be preferably preserved if it is in the public interest to be preserved rather than demolished because the proposed demolition would be detrimental to the historical, cultural or architectural heritage of the Town.

With the assistance of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and experienced outside consultants, the Truro Historical Commission has documented Truro's significant buildings. This information, which is available at the Truro Public Library and online on the Massachusetts Historical Commission's website at <http://mhc-macris.net>, guides the Historical Commission's determinations under the Bylaw.

STEPS TO FOLLOW FOR DEMOLITION PERMIT APPLICATIONS:

1. The owner/applicant applies for a demolition permit at Town Hall.
2. The Building Commissioner notes that the requested demolition may be subject to the Bylaw and forwards the application, including a description of the building and

any proposed replacement plans, to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Historical Commission. (Ordinary maintenance, painting, and repair are not subject to historical review.)

3. Within 15 working days, the Historical Commission Chair determines whether the building or portion proposed for demolition is significant and subject to review under the Bylaw, and so notifies the Building Commissioner.
4. Within 30 working days, the Historical Commission holds a public hearing, requesting the owner/applicant to provide reasons why the preservation of the significant building is not feasible and to present plans for any replacement structures, since their character and compatibility with neighboring historic properties are relevant to whether the existing building is preferably preserved. Applicants are encouraged to provide any available conditions assessments of the existing building and replacement plans to the Building Commissioner in advance of the hearing to aid in the Historical Commission's review.
5. After reviewing the application and discussing the project with the owner/applicant at the public hearing, the Historical Commission may determine either that the building is not preferably preserved, in which case the demolition can proceed, or that the building is preferably preserved, in which case the Historical Commission may vote to delay demolition of the building for up to 12 months in order to explore alternatives to demolition. The Historical Commission may request or require additional design review of the replacement building's compatibility with neighboring historic structures, either to support the finding that the building proposed for demolition is not preferably preserved, or to enable the Historical Commission to lift the delay period so the demolition can proceed as described below.
6. If the Historical Commission votes to delay demolition, the owner/applicant is invited to meet with the Historical Commission at any time during the delay period to discuss alternatives considered, the feasibility of preserving the historic building, and revised plans as requested during the initial public hearing. The Historical Commission may vote to lift the delay of demolition based on this information.
7. After the delay has expired or been lifted, the Building Commissioner can issue a demolition permit so long as all other requirements are satisfied.