

ARTICLE XVII

Structure Demolition

Section 17.1 Intent and Purpose

This bylaw is enacted to promote the public welfare and safeguard Medway's historical, cultural and architectural heritage by protecting historical resources that make the town a more interesting, attractive and desirable place in which to live. The bylaw aims to protect "preferably-preserved historically significant structures" within the town by encouraging their owners to seek alternatives to their demolition and by providing the town an opportunity to work with owners of such properties in identifying alternatives to their demolition.

Section 17.2 Definitions

As used in this bylaw, the following words and terms shall have the meanings set forth below, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 2.1 "APPLICANT" - any person or entity who files an application for a demolition permit.
- 2.2 "BUILDING" - any combination of materials forming a shelter for persons, animals or property.
- 2.3 "COMMISSION" - the Medway Historical Commission.
- 2.4 "DEMOLITION" - any act of destroying, pulling down, razing or removing a structure or substantial portion thereof, or starting the work of any such act with the intention of completing the same.
- 2.5 "HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURE" - any structure or portion thereof, which:
 - (a) Is in whole or in part seventy-five or more years old; and
 - (b) Is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places, or which is the subject of a pending application for such listing, or is eligible for such listing, or;
 - (c) Is within any historic district, or;
 - (d) Has an important association with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town or the Commonwealth, or;
 - (e) Is historically or architecturally important (in terms of period, style, method of structure construction, or association with a recognized architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures.
- 2.6 "PREFERABLY-PRESERVED HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURE" - any historically significant structure which the Commission determines, as provided in section 17.3.6.iii of this bylaw, is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.

- 2.7 “STRUCTURE”: Anything constructed or erected at a fixed location on the ground to give support or to provide shelter, including dams.

Section 17.3 Procedure

- 3.1 No permit for the demolition of a structure which is in whole or in part seventy-five or more years old or portion thereof shall be issued other than in conformity with the provisions of this bylaw as well as in conformity with the provisions of other laws applicable to the demolition of structures and the issuance of permits thereof generally.
- 3.2 Application contents: Every application for a demolition shall be filed with the Building Commissioner and shall contain the following information:
- (i) The owner’s name and current address (and/or the name of owner’s legal representative, if applicable);
 - (ii) The applicant’s name, address, and interest in such structure, if different from the owner;
 - (iii) The address or location of such structure;
 - (iv) Assessors’ Parcel ID;
 - (v) A brief description of such structure including its age;
 - (vi) An explanation of the proposed use and/or changes thereof to be made of the site of such structure; and
 - (vii) 4” x 6” color photos of all sides of the structure exterior and all other structures that are visible from the street.
- 3.3 Upon receipt of an application for a demolition permit for a structure which is in whole or in part seventy-five or more years old, the Building Commissioner shall forward a copy thereof to the Commission within seven business days. No demolition permit shall be issued at that time.
- 3.4 Within forty-five days after the Commission’s receipt of a complete application, the Commission shall make an initial determination on whether the structure is historically significant. The applicant for the permit may make a presentation to the Commission at that time. The Commission may require that the applicant provide a report from an engineer licensed to practice in Massachusetts with respect to any claims by the applicant as to the structural condition of the structure. The Commission may also, at the applicant’s expense, hire its own consultant to review any such reports and any claims by the applicant as to the structural condition of the house.
- 3.5 If the structure is determined not to be historically significant, the Commission shall notify the Building Commissioner and the applicant, in writing, within seven business days of its initial determination and the Building Commissioner may issue a demolition permit.

If the Commission determines that the structure is historically significant, it shall notify the Building Commissioner and the applicant, in writing, within seven business days of its initial determination; and the Commission shall, within forty-five days of its initial determination, open a public hearing to determine whether the historically significant structure is preferably preserved.

(i) Publication of Notice of Public Hearing

Public notice of the time, place and purpose of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town not less than fourteen days prior to the date of said hearing and shall be posted in a conspicuous place in town hall for a period of not less than fourteen days prior to the date of said hearing. Notice of the hearing shall also be posted online on the Town of Medway website (www.townofmedway.org) for a period of not less than fourteen days prior to the date of said hearing.

(ii) Notification of Abutters

At least fourteen days prior to the public hearing, the applicant shall send copy of said notice by mail, postage prepaid, to the owners of all abutting properties at their mailing addresses shown in the most recent applicable tax list of the assessors, including owners of land directly opposite on any public or private way and abutters to the abutters within 300 feet of the property line of the applicant. A list of those so notified shall be provided to the Commission prior to the opening of the public hearing.

All costs associated with publication of the legal notice and required mailings shall be the responsibility of the applicant. Failure to comply with any of the above will result in a delay of the public hearing.

3.6 The Commission shall make a determination of whether or not the historically-significant structure is preferably preserved within thirty-one days following the close of the public hearing.

(i) If after a public hearing the Commission determines that the structure should not be preferably preserved, the Commission shall notify the Building Commissioner and the applicant, in writing within seven business days after the close of the public hearing and the Building Commissioner may issue a demolition permit upon receipt of the written decision.

(ii) If after a public hearing the Commission determines that the structure should be preferably preserved, the Commission shall so notify the

Building Commissioner and the applicant in writing within seven business days after the close of the public hearing, and no demolition permit may be issued until:

- a. at least twenty-four months after the date of determination by the Commission, for structures that are 200 or more years old; or
- b. at least eighteen months after the date of the determination by the Commission, for structures that are at least 150 years old, but less than 200 years old; or
- c. at least twelve months after the date of the determination by the Commission, for structures that are at least 75 years old, but less than 150 years old.

- 3.7 The demolition permit shall expire after eighteen months of being issued. This means that once the above conditions have been satisfied, the owner of the property or applicant has eighteen months to demolish the structure. If the structure is not taken down in that period, the owner or applicant shall submit a new demolition permit application.
- 3.8 Notwithstanding anything contained in section 17.3.6, the Building Commissioner may issue a demolition permit for a preferably-preserved historically significant structure at any time after receipt of written advice from the Commission to the effect that either:
- (i) The Commission is satisfied that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, rehabilitate and restore the subject structure, or
 - (ii) The Commission is satisfied that for at least the demolition delay period the owner had made continuing, bona fide and reasonable efforts to locate a purchaser to preserve, rehabilitate and restore the subject structure, and that such efforts have been unsuccessful.

Section 17.4 Responsibility of Owners

- 4.1 During the demolition delay period, the applicant shall make continuing, bona fide and reasonable efforts to find an alternative use for the structure that will result in its preservation, including seeking a new owner willing to purchase and preserve, restore or rehabilitate the structure. Other alternatives to demolition include, but are not limited to, incorporation of the structure into the future development of the site; adaptive reuse of the structure; utilization of financial incentives to rehabilitate the structure; or moving or relocating the structure. For the purposes of this paragraph, “continuing, bona fide and reasonable efforts” to seek a new owner shall mean retaining a licensed broker to market the property in the usual manner over substantially all of the demolition delay period,

obtaining an appraisal from a reputable appraiser and providing evidence of good faith negotiations with potential buyers of the property.

- 4.2 Upon determination by the Commission that a structure is a preferably preserved historically significant structure, the owner shall be responsible for properly securing the structure, if vacant, to the satisfaction of the Building Commissioner. Should the owner fail to so secure the structure, the subsequent destruction of such structure through any cause, which destruction could have been prevented by the required security measures, shall be considered a demolition in violation of this bylaw.
- 4.3 If requested by the Commission, it shall be the responsibility of the owner to assist in the facilitation of the implementation of the requirements of this Bylaw by providing information and any architectural plans readily available to the owner, allowing access to the property, participating in the investigation of preservation options, and actively cooperating in seeking alternatives with the Commission and any persons designated by the Commission.

Section 17.5 Emergency Demolition

Nothing in this bylaw shall restrict or prevent the Building Commissioner from ordering the demolition of a historically significant structure determined by the Building Commissioner pursuant to state law and/or the State Building Code to be unused, uninhabited or abandoned, and open to the weather.

If the Building Commissioner determines there is no reasonable alternative to an emergency demolition, the Building Commissioner shall prepare a written report describing the basis of that decision. A copy of that report shall be filed with the Commission.

Section 17.6 Non-Compliance

- 6.1 Any owner of a historically significant structure who violates any provision of this bylaw shall be penalized by a fine of not more than three hundred (\$300.00) dollars. Each day during which any portion of a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

As an alternative means of enforcement, the Building Commissioner may impose noncriminal penalties pursuant to G.L. c. 40, § 21D and Article XX of the Town's General Bylaws, in accordance with the following schedule:

- (i) First offense: one hundred dollars
 - (ii) Second offense: two hundred dollars
 - (iii) Third and each subsequent offense per violation: three hundred dollars
- 6.2 The Commission and the Building Commissioner are each authorized to institute any and all proceedings in law or equity, as they deem necessary to obtain compliance with the requirements of this bylaw or to prevent a violation thereof.

- 6.3 No permit shall be issued with respect to any premises upon which a historically significant structure has been demolished in violation of this bylaw for a period of two years after the date of the completion of such demolition. As used herein, “premises” includes all land within the property lines of said parcel of land upon which the demolished historically significant structure was located.

Section 17.7 Severability

If any section, paragraph or part of this bylaw is for any reason declared invalid or unconstitutional by any court, every other section, paragraph and part shall continue in full force and effect.

Section 17.8 Regulations

The Commission may enact rules and regulations to carry out the provisions and purposes of this By-law.

Voted by November 14, 2022 Town Meeting