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## Chapter 7

# Demolition, Demolition by Neglect, and Relocation

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### Demolition

More than in most historic districts, the issue of demolition within the Great Falls Historic District (GFH District) is extremely complex. The district has already lost many historic buildings and suffered a catastrophe with the destruction by fire of the ATP site. The city accomplished a major blight



*A series of fires have left the ATP site in ruins, a devastating loss that compromises the integrity of the entire historic landmark district.*

clearance during the early 1980s of non-contributing buildings. Clearance had the effect of stranding different elements of the district, exposing to full view the palpable negative effect that the loss of an individual building would have on the character and legibility of the district.

The demolition of existing buildings has been an ongoing issue in the GFH District. The blight clearance left standing mostly only very significant buildings and non-contributing buildings that were occupied and in good condition. The result is that, with certain exceptions, standing buildings within the GFH District are either highly desirable for rehabilitation or in good condition, or both.

Whereas issues of design guidelines for preservation and new construction are driven by architectural and aesthetic considerations, demolition, especially of repairable structures, is more frequently an economic issue. Indeed, the only other legitimate reason for consideration of demolition is if the building poses a threat to public safety. In considering applications for demolition, especially those based on economic or development considerations, the City of Paterson must weigh issues beyond matters of architectural appropriateness, for demolition of an historic building in an historic district is rarely, if ever, appropriate. The GFH District, of national significance yet beset with the problems typical to northeast cities, warrants extraordinary measures to prevent further demolition. Continued loss of historic buildings will cause the district to lose those features that determine its status as a National Historic Landmark. Only after the city is convinced that all possible means of saving a building have been exhausted should demolition of existing historic buildings within the GFH District proceed.



*The Addy Textile Mill Building, built 1873-1880, is in a severe state of disrepair, with deterioration ongoing.*

The following criteria should be evaluated in considering applications for the demolition of historic buildings within the GFH District.

- Regardless of economic issues, the relative significance of the building slated for demolition should be evaluated. If the building is not considered a contributing structure in the district, then its demolition may be considered, and may even represent an improvement within the district. If a building is contributing or significant, then even a finding of economic hardship may not be sufficient to allow demolition. Many buildings within the district are so significant that extraordinary measures should be taken to delay or prevent their demolition. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings is always preferable to demolition and new construction.
- To determine the financial implications of maintaining a property versus demolishing it, the city may ask an applicant to submit documentation prepared by professionals from the relevant disciplines and pertaining to differential costs, structural soundness, suitability for rehabilitation, estimated market value of the property as is and after renovation for continued use, economic feasibility of rehabilitation, purchase price, income, and cash flow information (relating to the property only) and any other information considered necessary.
- In development-related applications, the city should review schematic plans for the new structure in order to help weigh the virtues of the new versus what exists.
- Further, in order to provide some slight mitigation of the effects of an unavoidable demolition within the GFH District, owners should be required to provide adequate recordation of a property. The extent of such recordation would depend on the significance of the property. At the least, archival photographs should be produced for every historic building that is lost to demolition within the district. When the demolition of an extremely significant building is unavoidable, measured drawings should be produced that comply with the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey.
- Lots left vacant by demolition must be treated in a manner that is sympathetic to the historic context. In the residential and commercial contexts, a five-foot-high opaque barrier should be constructed at the building line, consisting of either a fence or plant materials or both. Parking should not be permitted on vacant lots. Community gardens or parks should be encouraged.

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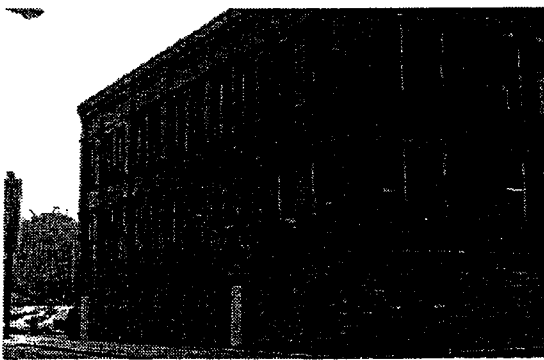
## Demolition by Neglect

“Demolition by neglect” is defined as “improper maintenance or lack of maintenance of a building, structure, or object which results in substantial and widespread deterioration of the building, structure, or object which threatens the likelihood of preservation and which presents a threat to the public safety, health, and welfare of the immediate community.”

Demolition by neglect has been tragically common in the GFH District. Vandalism, fires, and deterioration due to the elements have resulted from neglect and have, in a relatively short period of time, severely eroded the integrity of the district. As of this writing, there are at least two significant buildings within the GFH District that are open to the elements and seriously endangered—the Cooke Locomotive Administration Building and the Addy Textile Mill.

The Historic Preservation Commission, in its role as steward for the GFH District, must monitor the condition of existing buildings and notify the city when a historic building is suffering demolition by neglect. The Commission will officially request in writing that the Construction Official take actions under Section 705 of the Zoning Code to order repairs. It is the responsibility of all citizens to look for and report instances of demolition by neglect to the City of Paterson and its Historic Preservation Commission.

Owners of property whose buildings are in a state of neglect should consult the Historic Preservation Commission with regard to technical assistance, prior to ongoing deterioration resulting in a crisis situation. It is often the case that buildings can be “mothballed” in an economical manner that halts deterioration and essentially buys time for both the owner and the property until full-scale renovation can take place.



*Deterioration at the Cooke Office Building could be substantially halted by taking such relatively inexpensive measures as replacing the roof and enclosing the window openings with plywood (but allowing for ventilation). These measures will reduce the amount of repairs that will be required later to renovate the building.*



*Demolition by neglect creates hazards to passersby such as this loose piece of brownstone above the sidewalk at the Cooke Office Building.*

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## **Relocation**

Moving historic buildings out of, into, or within the GFH District should be discouraged. The removal of historic buildings from the district has the same effect as demolition on the historic character of the district. Moving historic buildings within the district confuses the actual history of the district and falsifies the existing historic record by adding a building that does not belong to either time or place. Relocating a building, however, is always preferable to its demolition.

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# Appendices

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## What is beyond Repair?

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Historic Preservation is based on the fundamental belief that those things that survive from an earlier time have intrinsic value because they contain and embody the past. A fundamental principal of preservation is that the repair of existing historic building materials and elements is far superior to its replacement, even if the replacement is an exact replica.

Preservationists often face the dilemma that the older and more historic something is, the more deteriorated it is, and the more difficult it may be to repair. The loss of certain building skills, the lack of availability of certain parts or materials, the recent awareness of the toxicity of certain materials, and the expense of specialized manual skills further complicate the repair of historic building materials.

Modern technology and an increasing pool of preservation specialists have brought the repair of virtually any historic material or building element into the realm of the possible. The costs associated with some of those repairs, however, may be prohibitive. That is, while technically feasible to repair many historic building elements, it may not be economically feasible, or prudent. Thus, the consideration of what may or may not be beyond repair must take into account the economic feasibility of the repair.

The economic feasibility of repair is itself dependent upon a number of factors. The repair of one severely damaged wood window may be expensive but affordable whereas the cost of repairing 150 deteriorated windows may be excessive. The reverse may also be true: an economy of scale may come into play when the repetitiveness of a typical repair actually lowers the cost of individual repairs. Thus, one hundred identical dutchman masonry repairs using actual stone to repair spalled areas of stone may be cheaper than 100 less satisfactory mortar repair patches.

The effectiveness of the repair must also be evaluated. In the case of deteriorated brownstone, mixing the cementitious patching material to match individual stones is made difficult by the range of brownstone colors usually present at a building. Thus it may be worth considering whether removing the faces of entire stones and replacing them with new brownstone facing is a preferable treatment. In this case, replacement may be a better long-term solution than repair.

It is tempting to create an absolute standard by which to evaluate whether an element is beyond repair; "If more than 50% of a given element is severely deteriorated, then it can be said to be beyond repair." But reparability is a factor of several variables, and is a subjective evaluation that must be made in the context of individual preservation projects.

In determining whether or not a particular element or element(s) is (are) beyond repair, the following factors must be considered.

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What is the condition of the element in question? Is there sufficient reusable fabric to warrant repair? If the condition of a wood sash warrants replacement of two rails and half the muntins, is it worth repairing? Will the repair of the element contribute to the long-term integrity of the building as much as replacement would? Is the repair a temporary or a permanent fix? If a 'permanent' fix is not achievable, then perhaps replacement is called for.

Is the element in question character defining? In the case of a brick wall, it makes better sense to replace a badly spalled brick than it does to repair it. In the case of spalls of ornamental carved brownstone, careful repair is called for. The wholesale replacement of one or more repetitive wood windows may be acceptable. The replacement of a particularly distinctive decorated window may not be.

What are the costs associated with repair? Is repair prudent, as determined by the condition of the element in question as well as its significance, as well as the cost associated with its repair? It may be prudent to spend a fortune repairing a badly damaged but particularly character defining element of a facade, whereas it may not be prudent to repair a number of wood windows that could be easily and inexpensively replaced in-kind without damaging the character of the building.

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# Glossary

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**Addition** – Any new construction that alters the exterior appearance of a property, site, or building, or that extends or increases the size, or floor area, or height of any existing improvement.

**Alteration** – Any change, rearrangement, or other work that is not an addition but that does alter the exterior appearance of a property, site, or building.

**Awning Signs**- Awning signs are signs which have been painted or sewn onto the fabric of an awning. These signs are not permitted in the GFH District.

**Corbel** – In masonry, a projection or one of a series of projections, each stepped progressively farther forward with height.

**Cornice** – A molded projection at the meeting of the roof and wall.

**Demolition** – The partial or total razing, dismantling, or destruction of an existing improvement.

**Flat Signs**- Flat signs are signs, which are, mounted parallel to a face of a building. Individual letters mounted to the face of a building without a backing material are also considered flat signs.

**Freestanding Signs**-Are signs which are suspended from posts or other supports rather than being mounted to the face of a building. Rules governing the forms and usage of projecting signs are covered in Section 904.2 of the City of Paterson Zoning Ordinance.

**Landscaping**-The term “landscaping” refers to all forms of plant life from ground cover such as grass or ivy, to flowers and shrubs or hedge, to trees. The term also includes planting beds, paving materials and patterns, and benches and light fixtures.

**Marquee Signs**- A marquee is a canopy of metal or glass, which projects over an opening of a building. Marquees are not permitted in the GFH District.

**Mullion** – A vertical member separating and often supporting windows, doors or panels set in series.

**Muntin** – A secondary framing member to hold panes within a window.



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**Projecting Signs**-A projecting sign is a sign which is mounted to a face of a building and which hangs perpendicularly to that face of the building. Rules governing the forms and usage of projecting signs are covered in Section 904.1 of the City of Paterson Zoning Ordinance.

**Repair** – Any work done on an existing property or structure that does not qualify as an addition, new construction or alteration and does not change its external appearance.

**Replacement** – A particular repair that replaces an existing or deteriorated feature with a new one. . .

**Replacement in-kind** - A particular repair that replaces an existing or deteriorated feature with a replica that matches the original in material, size, profile and configuration.

**Repointing** – The removal of mortar from between the joints of masonry units and the replacing of it with new mortar.

**Roof Signs**- Roof signs are signs which are either erected above, or project above the cornice line or parapet of a building.

**Setback**-A setback is the distance between the property line and the face of a building. This distance is usually set by the City's zoning ordinance.

**Streetwall**-the wall created by the aligned front facades of buildings which defines the edge of the street, and gives the street a feeling of enclosure.

**Window Signs**-Window signs are signs which have been attached to, or painted on windows. Rules governing the forms and usage of projecting signs are covered in Section 904.3 of the City of Paterson Zoning Ordinance.

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# Resources for Owners of Property within the Great Falls Historic District

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**City of Paterson**  
**Department of Community Development**  
**Division of Planning and Zoning**  
Municipal Complex  
111 Broadway  
Paterson, New Jersey 07505  
Tel: (201) 881-3305

**City of Paterson**  
**Historic Preservation Commission**  
65 McBride Avenue Extension  
Paterson, New Jersey 07501-1715  
Tel: (201) 357-1911

**New Jersey Historic Preservation Office**  
501 East State Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0404  
Tel: (609) 292-2023 (Menu Option #4)

**Paterson New Jersey Online**  
[www.patersonnj.com](http://www.patersonnj.com)

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service, Philadelphia Support Office**  
**NHL Technical Assistance**  
200 Chestnut Street, 3rd. Floor  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106  
Tel: (215) 597-1578

**National Park Service World Wide Web "home page" address:**  
[www2.cr.nps.gov](http://www2.cr.nps.gov)

**National park Service web site address for copies of Technical Preservation Briefs**  
[www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/index.htm](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/index.htm)

**National Park Service web site address for the Preservation Bookstore**  
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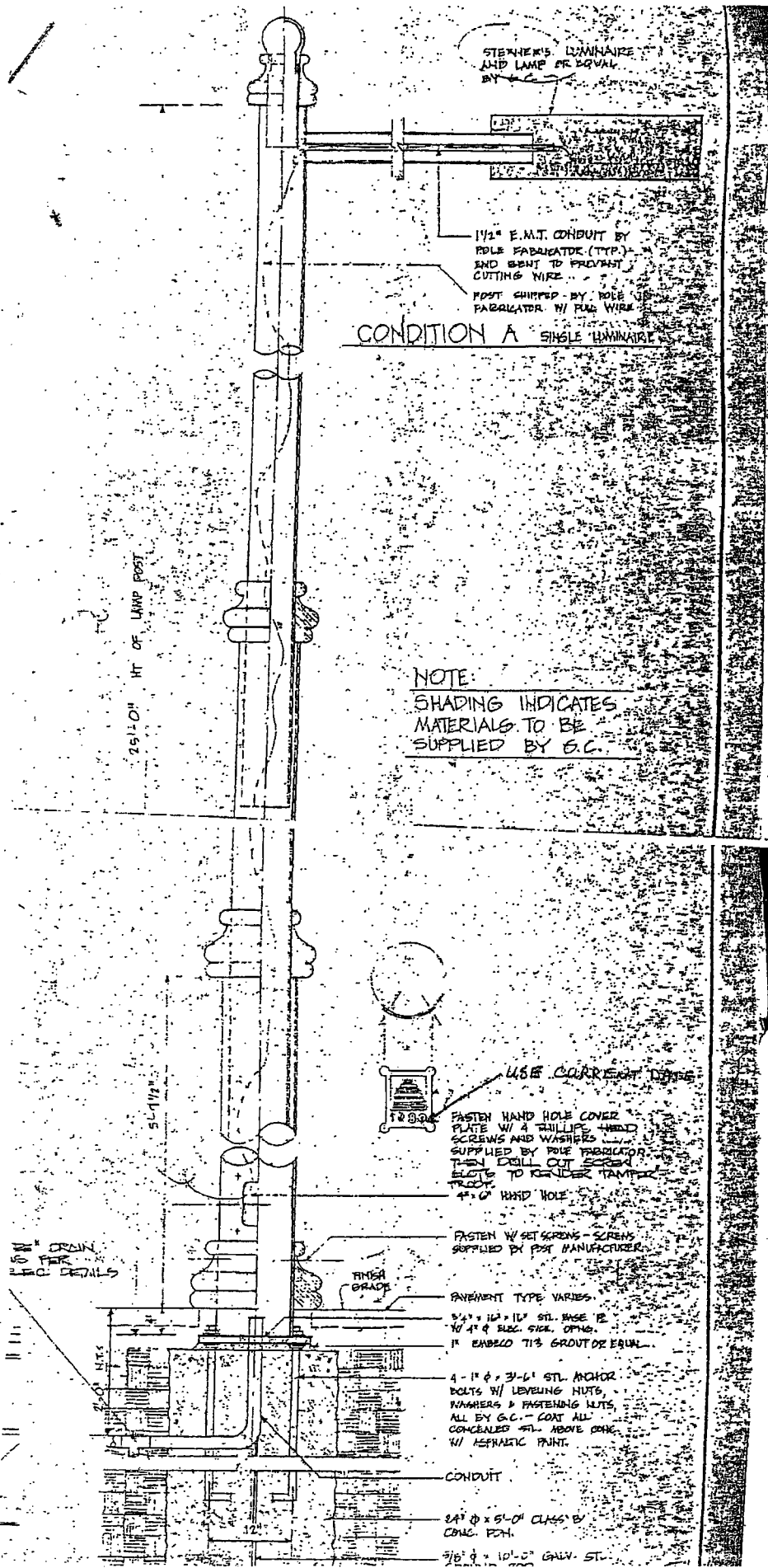
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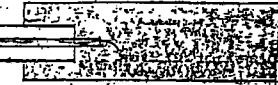




HISTORIC DISTRICT DETAIL A-1a  
OVERHEAD LIGHTING



STERNER'S LUMINAIRE  
AND LAMP OR EQUAL  
BY G.C.



1 1/2" E.M.T. CONDUIT BY  
POLE FABRICATOR (TYP.) -  
END BENT TO PREVENT  
CUTTING WIRE  
POST SHIPPED BY POLE  
FABRICATOR W/ POLE WIRE

CONDITION A SINGLE LUMINAIRE

25'-0" HT OF LAMP POST

NOTE:  
SHADING INDICATES  
MATERIALS TO BE  
SUPPLIED BY G.C.



USE CORRECT TYPE

FASTEN HAND HOLE COVER  
PLATE W/ 4 THINNE HEAD  
SCREWS AND WASHERS  
SUPPLIED BY POLE FABRICATOR  
THEN DRILL OUT SCREEN  
PLATE TO RENDER TAMPER  
PROOF  
4" Ø HAND HOLE

FASTEN W/ SET SCREWS - SCREWS  
SUPPLIED BY POST MANUFACTURER

FINISH  
GRADE

PAVEMENT TYPE VARIES  
3/4" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" STL. BASE 12"  
10" x 4" ELEC. SICK. OPENG.  
1" EMBOSD 7/8" GROUT OR EQUAL

4" x 1 1/2" x 3/4" STL. ANCHOR  
BOLTS W/ LEVELING NUTS  
NUTS & FASTENING NUTS  
ALL BY G.C. - CONT. ALL  
CONCRETE 4" ABOVE CONC.  
W/ ASPHALTIC POINT

CONDUIT

24" Ø x 5'-0" CLASS B  
CONC. PTH.

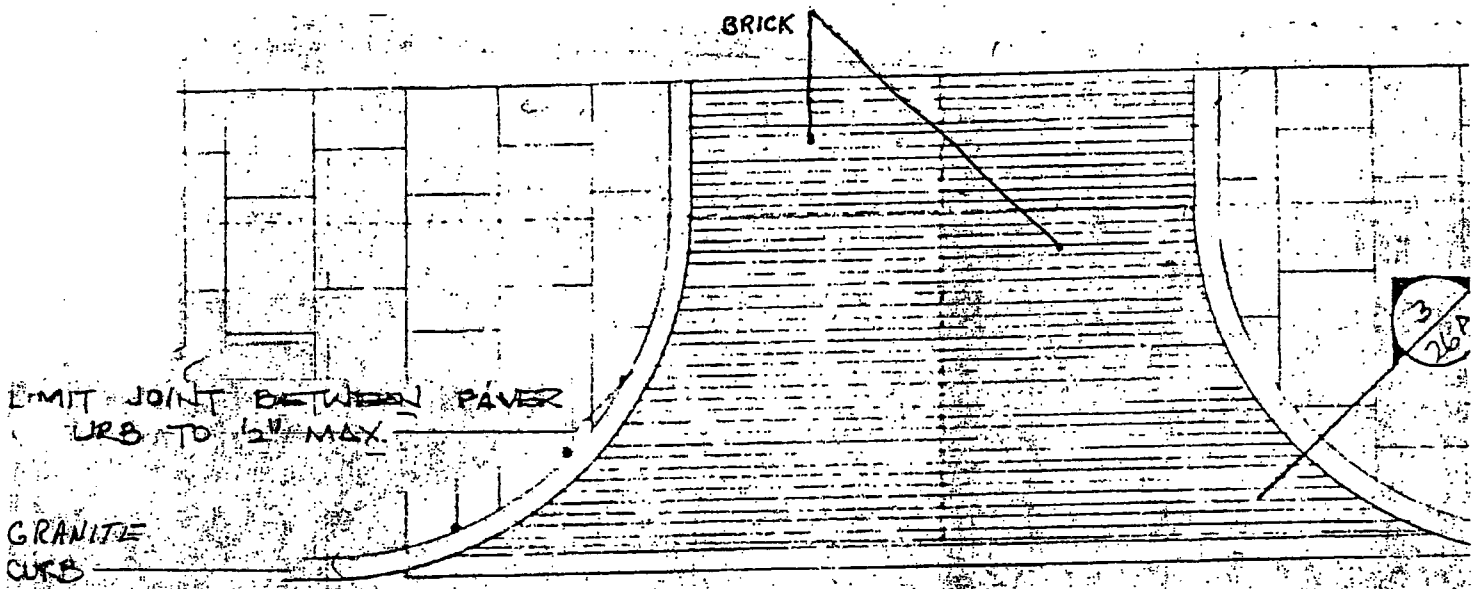
3/8" Ø x 10'-0" GALV. STL.

8" Ø DRIN  
FOR  
P.O.C. DETAILS

8" Ø  
DRIN



HISTORIC DISTRICT DETAIL A-3  
CURB CUTS  
AND  
DRIVEWAY APRONS

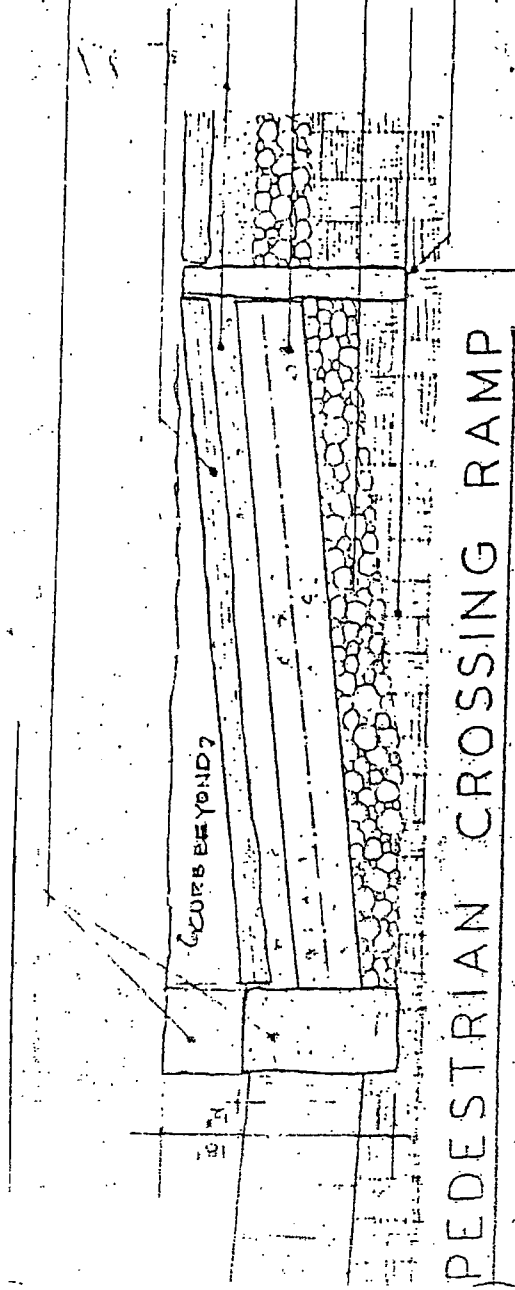


**On a County Road:**

\* The depressed curb face shall be 2" across the driveway opening.

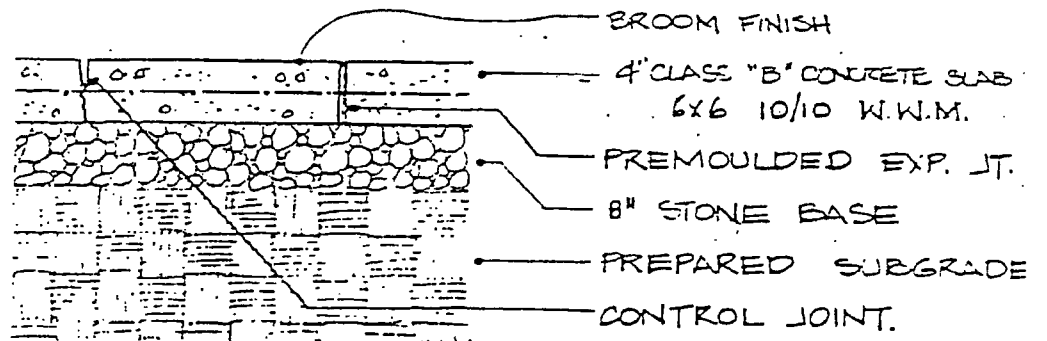
HISTORIC DISTRICT DETAIL A-3a  
CURB CUTS AND CROSSING RAMPS

- DEPRESSED GRANITE CURB
- DO SAW CUT JOINTS IN CROSSING RAMPS
- 4" BLUESTONE SLABS, OR BRICKS
- 2" SAND-CEMENT SETTING BED
- 5" CONC SLAB W/ 6x6 6/6 W.W.M.
- 4" STONE BASE
- PREPARED SUBGRADE
- 2 1/2" x 18" BLUESTONE CURB
- LINE OF EDGE SHOWN ON PLANS

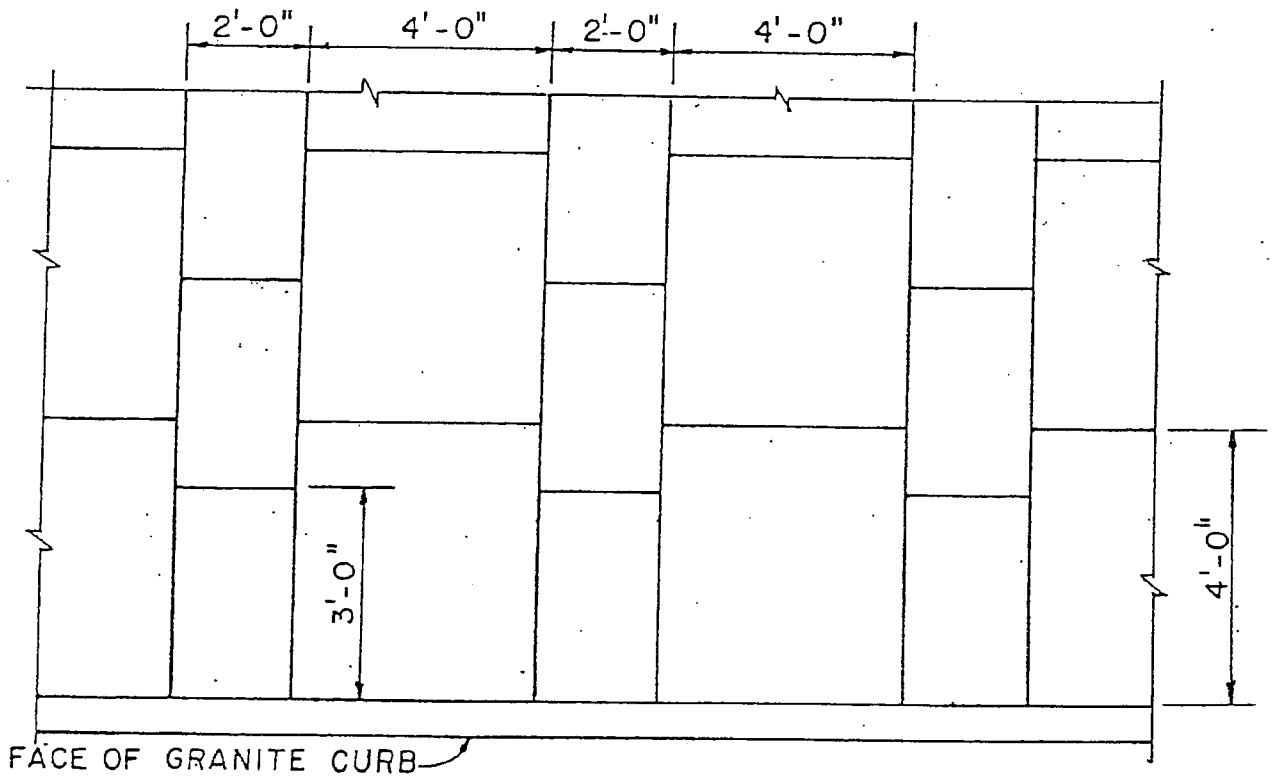


PEDESTRIAN CROSSING RAMP

HISTORIC DISTRICT DETAIL A-4  
SIDE-WALKS



(CONC. SIDEWALK)



TYPICAL SIDEWALK SURFACE PATTERN

N.T.S.