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MOTHBALL INVENTORY

Site Documentation

Determine what sort of site documentation exists

- Photographs
- History of building/site
- National Register nomination
- Building/site plan
- Legal description
- Historic Structures Report
- Emergency Management plan
- Archaeology report
- Fire and Security information
- Water quality information
- Septic system information
- Master plan

Prioritize the buildings on site—most significant

Prioritize the collections on site—most significant

Define character-defining elements and rate on a scale of their importance to the integrity and significance of the building/site

Building Information

- Check for recent conditions assessments that have been completed for the building(s)
- Construction of the building (foundation, walls, roof, etc.)
- Heating system—type, condition of equipment/pipes/ductwork, concerns or problems, quirks to the system, temperature the building is kept, air exchanges
- Insulation in the building
- Cooling system—type, condition of ducts/equipment, concerns or problems, quirks to the system, temperature the building is kept
- Electrical system—size of service, location of panel, location of power main, concerns or problems

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- Plumbing system—types of pipes, areas piping is located, location of main shutoff valve, concerns or problems, location of hose bibs on outside of building
- Phone system—type, number of lines into the building
- Interior finishes—wall construction, decorative trim, finish material on walls, floors, ceilings
- Pest management—type of pest control used in building, if vendor is used list who and how often
- Exterior envelope—windows, doors, locks, roof, sidewalks, stairs, etc.
- Building contents—materials stored in building(s) including paint, chemicals, equipment, etc.
- Collections/exhibit contents—number and types of collections, artifacts vs. program use materials, loaned collection items, exhibits both long and short-term

Fire and Security

- Type of system in each building, location of security panel(s), location of detectors, monitoring company contact(s), lock box location, call list for security calls after hours

Site information

- Parking lot—size and construction, location, concerns or problems
- Develop a site plan if one is not currently available
- Water/well/septic—testing, locking to prevent public access, testing after re-opening
- Other site features—trees, fencing, signage, exterior lighting, trails, other items on site (tables, trash cans, etc.)

General Closing Questions

Closing Buildings

- Is it appropriate to close the building as it stands?
- Anything in particular that needs special treatment? (interior and exterior)
- Are there any conditions that need to be addressed as part of the mothballing process?
- Any repair costs that will be incurred before closing the building(s)?
- Any building parts need to be removed from the building and put into storage?
- Any special ventilation/HVAC issues?

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- Any current/past pest problems?
- Any areas of the site or building that need to be fenced or blocked off for safety reasons?

Fire/Security

- Are there special security considerations for the site or building(s)?
- What is the level of security to be maintained?
- Are there any particular security risks for the site or building(s)?
- Is there someone to monitor the site or building(s) on a regular basis?
- Where are keys to the building(s)?
- Who will answer security calls? What is the call list?
- Do the locks/codes have to be changed?
- Have there been low temperature/water sensors been installed? Do they tie into the existing security system?

Exhibits/Collections

- Do artifacts need to be removed from the building(s)?
- Do props have to be removed from the building(s)?
- Any exhibits need to be taken from the building(s)?
 - Where will any or all of this be stored?
 - How does this get disassembled?

Maintenance

- What maintenance duties are necessary as part of the periodic work done during mothballing time? What are current maintenance duties?
- Are these duties completed by staff or hired out?
- Are maintenance personnel trained in security, fire and utilities found at each site?
- What specific training needs to happen for maintenance/surveillance crews?

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FURTHER READING

Cotton, J. Randall. "Mothballing Buildings." The Old-House Journal. July/August, 1993.

Fisher, Charles E. and Thomas A. Vitanza. "Temporary Window Vents in Unoccupied Historic Buildings." Preservation Tech Note (Windows, No. 10). Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1985.

Frazier Associates. "Mothballing Historic Buildings." Preserving Prince William, 2. County of Prince William, VA, 1990.

Mitchell, Eleanor. Emergency Repairs for Historic Buildings. London: Butterworth Architecture. 1988.

"Mothballing Vacant Buildings," An Anti-Arson Kit for Preservation and Neighborhood Action. Washington, DC: Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1982.

Park, Sharon C. "Mothballing Historic Buildings." Preservation Briefs No. 31. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1993.

Solon, Thomas E. "Security Panels for the Foster-Armstrong House." Association for Preservation Technology Bulletin. Vol XVI no. 3 & 4, 1984. (note the design of the panels, but be aware that additional louvering may be needed on other projects).