



Architectural Salvage Demolition vs. Deconstruction Making Room in the Inn

I work with preserving Architectural Salvage all over America. I assist clients in finding someone to carefully deconstruct an historic building that can't survive anymore, to save whatever they can, rather than leaving it to the bulldozer and the landfill. I also help clients to find antique salvage to use for their new building projects. Unfortunately, these two worlds are temporarily way out of touch.

The salvageable items often don't make it from site to project. They sit in warehouses if they're lucky or they decompose in the field, while the client who intently wants to use architectural salvage often can't find the items or buildings they need for their project. That's what is so heartbreaking.

Often an owner is struggling to save whatever they can of an endangered building, sometimes the entire building itself, even when it means bearing the added time and expense of careful deconstruction. They are hoping to find someone who values the building or pieces as much as they.

At the same time, there are clients who start conceptualizing their new building project or restoration right from the beginning with dreams of using original, authentic salvaged materials; making a space that "works" while employing real antique building materials. It combines all of the advantages of the new with all the charm of the old. This is such an obviously wonderful concept that it now has its own term and its own magazine, "New Old House"

Okay, so what's causing the heartbreak, where's the problem?

Imagine the disappointment of "the deconstruction client" when they discover that the architectural salvage yards can't take on their treasures, can't take on another item, or another vintage building, that there is no room in the inn and no client waiting in the wings to transport their treasures to a new life and a new project.

Imagine the disappointment of "the project client" who has clipped magazine photos about re-using authentic salvage for years, read multiple books, done hundreds of napkin sketches and paid for lovely, professional drawings... imagine their disappointment when they discover that, although they are charmed by so many of the wonderful treasures they see in the architectural salvage yards, they can find very few which really fit.

What happens to the architectural salvage? It sits and waits. This beautiful, unique nostalgic, piece of craftsmanship and art... simply sits and waits. Or it faces demolition.

This is where our Yankee ingenuity comes in. Let's get this salvage moving into projects. Let's change the way we look at our historic house additions and "New to Look Old" building projects. Let's *start* by falling in love with some of the architectural antiques and buildings which are so abundantly available and then help the evolving design to contain and embrace the look they create. Then we can fall more in love than ever with the emerging design and let it send us back out to the salvage yards to find the pieces which fulfill the design thrust. Back and forth, staying fluid. If we begin to integrate the process of "designing and finding", we might just get absolutely everything we want. And the architectural salvage might just avoid demolition, flow out of warehouses and find itself inspiring us for yet another 200 years.

Jona Harvey
New PTN Member

Architectural Salvage Network: A Locating Service

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A Floor Joist System from an 18th century deconstruction /demolition. Difficulty placing it. It was eventually sawn for floor boards.