

**VACANT DETERIORATED HOUSING
IN CAIRO, ILLINOIS**

A Project Report

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by

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ABSTRACT

Empty deteriorated housing is a problem in Cairo, Illinois. This report examines factors contributing to housing vacancy and decline in Cairo and describes and discusses a code enforcement and demolition program carried out by the City of Cairo from June 1995 to April 30, 1996 to address the problem.

Part One of the report briefly reviews housing literature to identify factors related to housing abandonment. Loss of population, aging housing stock, poverty, tax delinquency, lack of mortgages, declining property values and rapid racial change are abandonment factors noted by housing researchers. U.S. Census Bureau housing and population data shows that these factors are present in Cairo.

Part Two describes the methodology and outcomes of a code enforcement and demolition program conducted by the City of Cairo to force property owners to either repair or demolish 110 vacant deteriorated houses. The program was successful in obtaining 66 voluntary and court-ordered demolitions. Few property owners completed required repairs to their vacant structures.

The paper concludes that low resale and rental values, lack of grants and loans for rehabilitation of non-owner occupied property and lack of demand for housing in Cairo are reasons property owners were reluctant to invest in housing repair. Alternative strategies for addressing the problem of derelict housing are briefly discussed.