

BOULDER

# RECLAIMING ITS HERITAGE

*How Boulder's pioneer deconstruction model can inspire architectural circularity and preserve local history right here on Nantucket.*



## RETHINKING THE MODERN BUILD

For decades, the life cycle of most buildings followed a straight, predictable line: design, build and demolish. It was a traditional "take-make-waste" model that treated valuable, finite resources as temporary.

Faced with shrinking landfill space and rising climate challenges, the community of Boulder, Colorado, decided to pioneer a more resourceful approach. This is the story of how one city began turning a structural dead end into a continuous, sustainable loop.

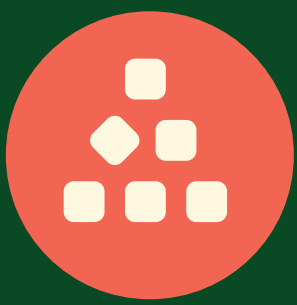




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94%

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## DECONSTRUCTION IN ACTION

Boulder's shift began with a local challenge: the former Boulder Community Health hospital. Instead of clearing the site with heavy machinery, the city chose to meticulously take the building apart, piece by piece.

### The Result

A remarkable 94% of the hospital's materials were successfully diverted from the landfill.

### The Rebirth

The structural steel was salvaged to form the framework for a new fire station, while interior fixtures were auctioned to local residents.



## DESIGNING A NEW STANDARD

What started as a single landmark project quickly became a city-wide standard. The city's deconstruction ordinances now require major structural projects to salvage or recycle **at least 75% of their materials**.

This policy does more than just reduce waste:

### Preserves Embodied Carbon

It honors and protects the energy spent manufacturing the materials decades ago.

### Boosts the Local Economy

Carefully dismantling a building creates 6 to 8 times more local jobs than traditional demolition.



## BUILDINGS AS MATERIAL BANKS

To bridge the gap between salvage and reuse, Boulder relies on partnerships. Digital platforms and local nonprofits like Resource Central connect residents directly with reclaimed materials.

There, salvaged lumber, vintage doors and architectural hardware are available for 50–75% less than retail—making home repairs affordable. By viewing its standing architecture as "material banks," Boulder is building a resilient future. They've proven that the resources needed for tomorrow are already safely tucked within the walls of today.



## SETTING THE TARGET FOR RENEWAL

Boulder's model succeeds by establishing a clear, practical framework that balances accountability with opportunity. By requiring major structural projects to **divert a minimum of 75%** of their material weight from the landfill, **backed by a refundable deposit system**, the city rewards builders for successful salvage. A digital marketplace matches supply with local demand in real time and turns a traditional job site into a highly efficient source of shared resources.

