

John Kistler Preserves Local History by Investing in Oakland Apartments Restoration Project

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, USA, June 6, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Restoration expert [John Kistler](#) is passionate about preserving local Minneapolis architecture and frequently invests in projects preventing historic properties from being demolished. Recently, Kistler helped save the Oakland Apartments from wreckage which were built by Harry Wild Jones in 1889.

When city code inspectors demanded that owners demolish the historic Oakland Apartments, local preservationists banded together to block the move. The Oakland Apartments, built in 1889 by master architect Harry Wild Jones, are recognized as the oldest downtown example of the shared-entrance style of apartment complex. Their demolition would mean a true loss of Minneapolis' rich history were it not for investors and preservationists like John Kistler.



“Everybody has looked at it to not make a [financial] loss. But the loss is going to be if we lose the building,” [John Kistler said](#).

Instead of appearing on the market after suffering a fire, the property was deemed beyond repair and listed for demolition by city officials. The Heritage Preservation Commission voted to deny the demolition permit requested by the city, and so the Oakland apartments went on sale. At first, most of the prospective buyers refused to pay the assessed \$600,000 the property was worth (due to its state following the fire). But then John Kister, Norman Kulba, and an unnamed partner struck a deal with the owner to purchase and restore what could be restored.

[John Kistler and](#) Norman Kubla have partnered in the past on historic restoration projects with huge success. Thanks to their combined efforts, the team saved the Eugene J. Carpenter and restored it to its former glory. For the Oakland apartments, they set out to remake the complex into 24 units of affordable housing downtown.

“The building itself is a really strong indicator of a different time and place,” John Kistler said. “It’s a really amazing building that was built at the height of when people were needing housing right downtown that was walkable to everything — because even the streetcar system wasn’t very developed at that time.”

Officials of Minneapolis preservation projects, as well as the Preservation Alliance, noted that Oakland is one of the last surviving remnants of the 19th-century residential architecture that once populated the downtown area. Much of this architecture was lost during reconstruction efforts in the 60s, and the Oakland Apartments along with Minneapolis' early row houses are all that's left of an era long passed.

Due to a faulty electrical outlet, the building caught fire in 2016 and seemed beyond repair--beyond showcasing its historical significance to future generations. Thankfully, John Kistler stepped in to protect one of Minneapolis' last architectural gems from the 1800s.

"We just like these old places and feel like Minneapolis is a cool city because of the history and what it's gone through," John Kistler said. "When we lose them, we lose a little piece of our city's heritage."

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