

# Fire not the end, owner hopes

## 'It's not something we want to see demolished,' official says

By Eric Bradley • [ebradley@enquirer.com](mailto:ebradley@enquirer.com) • December 2, 2008

**GLENDALE** - Fire may have ravaged the Century House, but the building's owner said Monday that she hopes to eventually reopen her boutique shop in the historic building on Glendale's Village Square.

Built in 1867, the two-story building quickly went up in flames Saturday as the business prepared to open about 10 a.m. An unattended candle is blamed for the fire.

As she prepared to meet with an insurance adjuster to assess the damage, owner Susan Sweeney Kreuzmann said the outpouring of community support has been heartwarming.

"I think what we're finding out is that there are a lot more people out there that knew us than we understood," Kreuzmann said, adding that the number of condolence cards at the site look like a "confetti stream."

"We always appreciated our customers, but what we didn't always understand was how much they appreciated us," she said.

Kreuzmann has no timeline to rebuild but said she intends to if the building can be repaired.

For now, Village Square will have to get by without the Century House operating as a corner shop as it has for at least 50 years.

Officials are eager to see the building repaired.

"This is a very important, pivotal structure for the village. It's not something we want to see demolished," Glendale Administrator Walter Cordes said.

According to Cordes, the Century House is one of 59 structures tracked by the village that existed around the time Glendale was founded in 1855.

The house was built by resident Tom O'Neill and is located in Glendale's National Historic Landmark District. The designation was awarded in 1976.

About two dozen such districts such as Glendale's are inhabited, according to Ralph Hoop, a trustee with the Glendale Heritage Preservation group, which worked to attain the designation.

This is not the first time that the Century House has had a brush with flames. The structure survived an 1870s fire that leveled other buildings on the village square. A photograph of the aftermath of that fire is in Glendale's administration building.

But Saturday, not even a quick discovery of the fire and the response of about eight neighboring fire departments could save the landmark from extensive damage.

The two occupants of the building Saturday morning, store manager Linda Skirvin and Toes the cat, escaped unharmed.

Kreuzmann said a lot of concern was expressed for Toes, who was a draw for customers and passers-by as she went about her life in the shop.

But not to worry - Toes will have a home while the Century House is closed.

"Linda and Toes are best friends, and Linda has taken her home and will keep her until we go back to the store," Kreuzmann said.

Damage to the building is estimated at \$400,000, according to Glendale Fire Chief David Moore.