



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, September 25, 2025

**Statement by Historic Kansas City
Demolition at the intersection of 31st and Main**

Historic Kansas City, like many local residents, neighbors, and patrons of Main Street, is disappointed to learn that the ownership group controlling the Jeserich building at 3041-45 Main and Ward Building at 3035-37 Main is expressing an intention to demolish both historic buildings. These historic commercial buildings, the last remaining from turn-of-the-century development along the corridor, create a unique sense of place by telling the important story of Main Street's early development. Identified by a KC Streetcar federal study as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, these buildings remain eligible to receive state and federal rehabilitation incentives as a means of achieving compatible redevelopment for the site.

Included on Historic Kansas City's "Most Endangered Places List" since 2019, the historic buildings were listed on the Kansas City Register of Historic Places in October of 2022 as part of the "31st and Main Historic District," providing a protective designation that prompts design review on street-facing exterior building alterations and forestalling the possibility of demolition. These protections were instituted by City Council leaders in partnership with the Union Hill Neighborhood Association, with the support of Historic Kansas City. By requesting that the buildings be designated as dangerous by the City, its ownership group sought to circumvent the established processes for review of demolition activities.

Current owners purchased the buildings after the historic designation was established, with full knowledge of the attendant requirements, yet deliberately failed to maintain the structures sufficiently. Whereas the buildings were found to be structurally sound in 2022, a dangerous building designation has become applicable solely as a result of intentional neglect. This flies in the face of city-wide building maintenance requirements and constitutes a clear case of "demolition by neglect."

Nearby residents recognize the extent to which the current dangerous building could have been avoided. Recalling its support for the local historic designation, the Union Hill Neighborhood issued a statement that underlines the centrality of the iconic Jeserich building to their identity as a community:

"many area residents hoped to eventually see the structures preserved by the new owners in some form as part a future development which retained the Victorian character of the existing neighborhood. Of particular interest was the corner Jeserich building with its signature turret.

Despite neighborhood attempts to persuade the ownership group to maintain the properties over the past few years, they were allowed to fall into further disrepair, resulting in the current situation."

While the buildings have been designated as "dangerous," rendering their protected status null and void, the City has not labelled the situation an "emergency," and notice issued to the property owner requests building stabilization or demolition within a period of 30 days. The ownership group still has time to meet with area stakeholders and determine what building elevations and elements can be successfully retained as part of a redevelopment plan for the site.

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**Jeserich Building
3041 - 45 Main**

- Built 1888
- Standard Plumbing and Heating
- Corner drug store
- Tower Lounge



3035 -37 Main

- Built 1905
- John Ward Hardware
- Southgate Hotel
- Lutfi's Fried Fish

