

Makeover coming for Kingsbury Building?

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SANDUSKY CITY HALL

Sandusky officials want to designate the Kingsbury Building (the left and middle structures) next to the former Calvary Temple church, as a local landmark. The designation could leverage state funds and tax credits for building upgrades.

Register photo/JASON WERLING

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SANDUSKY — Even if it doesn't become Sandusky's next home for City Hall, chances are the long-vacant Kingsbury Building will receive a major makeover. During a recent public meeting, city commissioners approved a recommendation to designate two adjoining downtown properties at 238-240 Columbus Ave. as a local landmark. The state now must approve this request. It's not known when a decision could occur.

About a year ago, the city created a landmarks commission to help protect and preserve Sandusky's most significant structures. If a location qualifies for the prestigious distinction, then it can receive state funds or tax credits for building upgrades.

Local landmarks commission members offered some reasons for pursuing this plan:

- “The Kingsbury Building was the home to dentists, physicians, attorneys, insurance companies, jewelers, and, for a short time, City Hall occupied the third floor.”
- “The Kingsbury Building also played a role in the history of telephone service in Sandusky. The telephone company, Home Systems, was founded in 1895 and located within the Kingsbury Block. (The company) then moved to their headquarters in Cleveland around 1922, when they merged with Ohio Bell Telephone.”
- “The contemporary design and construction of the county building and parking garage consumed the entire block fronting Columbus Avenue, therefore, the historic integrity of the west side of Columbus Avenue within its first block is lost. By retaining the Kingsbury Building, as well as the Commercial Banking & Trust Co., the east side of Columbus Avenue would be preserved.”

Sandusky officials envision parts of the Kingsbury Building and an adjoining structure, formerly housing Calvary Temple, becoming City Hall's next home.

About a month ago, city commissioners directed staff members to prepare for relocating all departments from their Meigs Street municipal building to somewhere else. The \$18.5 million publicly financed plan involves:

- Building an entirely new complex, or justice center, at an undetermined location for police and municipal court operations
- Moving administrative services into parts of the Kingsbury Building and Calvary Temple structures

If approved, the city would enter into a lease agreement with Marous Development, which owns and/or controls these longtime empty buildings, formerly housing Western Security Bank, Gail's Women's Clothes and Crosby Shoes. Marous representatives also vowed to commit an additional \$5 million in private money so they can construct 20 apartments and three storefronts beside a new City Hall. When city commissioners meet on Monday, they're expected to support legislation for the relocation plan. From there, Marous executives would prepare a lease and apply for about \$3 million in tax credits to rehab these structures.