

A historic house up for sale, piece by piece

The bank that holds the mortgage rushed to change the locks after an estate sale that bordered on devastation alarmed neighbors and preservationists. But future of the 1906 mansion is far from secure.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have just learned this afternoon that the parrot mentioned in this report is no longer abandoned and has been moved to a temporary

home. Stay tuned for details on this part of the story.

John Tevlin.

The leaded stained glass front door still had the price on it -- \$2,500. So did the fireplace surrounding in the study, \$9,000. "Sold" signs dotted rich paneling and ornate woodwork around the walls, and the delicate four-panel painting on terra cotta above the fireplace, worth perhaps \$150,000, was wrapped in cardboard, ready for delivery.

But the exquisite estate sale over the weekend at 2008 Pillsbury had a bizarre windup Tuesday.

Advertisement



Send flowers for any occasion
Bouquets \$19.99
from **19.99**^{+s/h}
ProFlowers®

Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1-877-888-0688

Workers hired by the bank that holds the mortgage were busy changing the locks on the 1906 mansion Tuesday afternoon to protect what remains of a piece of the city's history. Their work was punctuated by the squawks of a parrot the owners left behind in the basement.

TCF sent investigators to the home after calls from a neighbor and the Star Tribune. Owners Peter Sturm and Kendahl Sweet have two mortgages on the house that total about \$500,000, according to public records. They recently moved and couldn't be reached for comment Tuesday.

TCF spokesman Jason Korstange said privacy issues prevented him from discussing the matter in depth, except to say that "we own this house and we will be watching this closely."

Some neighbors have already been on the case.

When Piccadilly Estate and Moving put up banners for a large sale, few thought much of it. But when neighbors saw sale signs on items structural to the house, rumors spread on a Minneapolis issues forum, and preservationists began making calls, including ones to the newspaper.

Advertisement



Family Value Health
30 Day
FREE Product Trial

SAVE 10 - 60%
ON YOUR HEALTH EXPENSES

- DENTAL DISCOUNTS
- VISION CARE DISCOUNTS
- DOCTOR & HOSPITAL DISCOUNTS
- PRESCRIPTION DISCOUNTS
- 24/7 PHYSICIAN ACCESS - TelaDoc™

WWW.FVHCARD.COM

By Tuesday, one neighbor, who asked not to be named, walked through the empty home and turned to the locksmith who was preparing to change the locks.

"Luckily, you got here in time," the neighbor said.

The scene on Saturday had been different. Antique lovers had flowed through the interior, some marveling at the luxurious fixtures while others asked Piccadilly dealers what would happen to the house.

"The owners are remodeling," said Chad Lage, a Piccadilly staff member who, according to the

company's website, has been on PBS' "Antiques Roadshow."

One gawker looked at me and shook his head. "Something funny is going on," he said.

He wasn't alone in his suspicion. Members of several different preservation organizations began burning up the phone lines. A woman renting an apartment next door made calls.

This spring, the Whittier Alliance started a project to identify all potential historically significant homes in the area, which was once where Minnesota's wealthiest residents lived. They

Advertisement



Send flowers for any occasion
Bouquets \$19.99
from **19.99**^{+s/h}
ProFlowers®

Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1-877-888-0688

photographed 2008 Pillsbury as part of their initial efforts.

"The crime, or irony, is we were in the process of identifying treasures just like this to help protect them," said Marian Biehn, executive director of the Whittier Alliance. "We're just sick about it."

Minneapolis City Council Member Robert Lilligren said city inspectors were checking to see whether any laws were violated and whether a demolition permit was obtained.

The house was designed by Kees & Colburn with T.P. Healy as the

contractor, the "master builder of Queen Anne" style housing in Minneapolis. Renowned designer John Bradstreet, who is credited with ushering in a new era of innovation, did the interior. The restaurant at the Graves Hotel is named after Bradstreet.

"The more we find out about this home, the more we find out what a unique and valuable house this was," said Madeline Douglass, a member of the Minneapolis historic Home Owners Association.

Douglass was at the home Saturday, taking pictures. She said she has seeing more historic

Advertisement



Send flowers for any occasion
Bouquets \$19.99
from **19.99**^{+s/h}
ProFlowers®

Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1-877-888-0688

homes stripped of valuable fixtures as owners are unable to keep up with mortgages and turn to raffling off pieces to the highest bidders.

"I believe the value of this house as an example of excellence in Arts and Crafts design and as a masterwork of John Scott Bradstreet, Long and Kees and T. P. Healy is greater than the individual rights of the owners," Douglass said.

Brad Boyd, an attorney specializing in real estate, said that while it's been increasingly common for owners to "whittle away" at a home before it goes

into foreclosure, "this goes way beyond that."

As of early Tuesday, it looked like nothing could be done to stop the gutting. The house is not locally designated, there were no inspections violations, and a survey in 2001 did not recommend it for protection.

But what calls to the city could not stop, calls to the bank did.

Preservationists shouldn't get too excited. If the bank takes the home, it could be faced with selling it damaged for a fraction of its value, or selling it off piecemeal.

Advertisement



Send flowers for any occasion
Bouquets \$19.99
from **19.99**^{+s/h}
ProFlowers®

Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1-877-888-0688

But for now, a few people who
cared are celebrating just a little.

jtevin@startribune.com • 612-
673-1702

Advertisement



Send flowers for any occasion
Bouquets \$19.99
from **19.99**^{+s/h}
ProFlowers®

Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1-877-888-0688