



Everything Michigan

Sprinklers worked at old Kindel Furniture factory site, helped stop fire spread, investigators say

Published: Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 3:33 PM Updated: Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 3:34 PM



By **John Tunison | The Grand Rapids Press**

GRAND RAPIDS -- Fire investigators today determined the sprinkler system in the old Kindel Furniture factory, seriously damaged by fire May 9, worked properly and actually helped control the fire's spread.

The spectacular blaze destroyed the second and third floors on the west side of the building, **100 Garden St. SE**, and sent thick smoke billowing into the Grand Rapids skyline.

Fire investigators went into the building today to make a final determination of the cause of the fire and finish other analysis.

Investigator Ric Dokter said the evidence was consistent with previous accounts that a worker with a remediation crew was inside the vacant building, cutting apart a sheet metal duct with a reciprocating saw, when a spark ignited dried lacquer residue.

Dokter also said an examination of the sprinkler system -- initially reported as possibly not working -- seemed to be fully functioning. The system was in a dry



Chris Clark | The Grand Rapids Press

The smokestack on the Kindel Furniture Co. building was a reminder of an era when Grand Rapids was Furniture City, USA.

mode, meaning the pipes needed to fill with water once heat activated the heads, but the sprinklers operated and appeared to stop the fire's' eastward spread on the second floor and helped control flames on the third floor.

Dokter said he was not aware of any final decisions on whether the building would be demolished.

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