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## **Redevelopment Agency's Commitment to Historic Preservation Helps to Preserve Key Historic Sites**

*These projects are an important part of the revitalization of  
Downtown San Jose*

**SAN JOSE, CALIF.** – Five Downtown San Jose historic sites—the *Sainte Claire Building, Wilcox Block Buildings, Fountain Alley Buildings, the pedestrian walkway at Fountain Alley, and the Bassler-Haynes and Beach Buildings*—recently received complete makeovers to turn them into the thriving retail and public spaces as they once were.

The five historic sites were built between the late 1800s and the early 1900s, and all were vacated for many years due to unsafe conditions or a failed business. Through the San Jose Redevelopment Agency's Facade Improvement Program (FIP) and Unreinforced Masonry Grant Program and private funding, \$30 million was infused into these buildings for extensive interior and exterior upgrades, seismic retrofitting, and tenant improvements to bring these treasures up to date.

“By working jointly with businesses and Downtown residents, the San Jose Redevelopment Agency has shown what can be achieved through community partnerships,” said Mayor Chuck Reed. “The completion of these projects is a major step forward in strengthening the economic vitality of our Downtown while enhancing the historic beauty of San José.”

The historic Sainte Claire Building's upper-floors were destroyed by a fire and remained vacated since 1973. They have since been rebuilt and the upper- floors converted to 36 luxury apartments. The same is true with the Wilcox Buildings, composed of three historic structures, remained vacant for eight years following the

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demise of the Crescent Jewelers retail chain. The renewed buildings now consist of more than 5,100 square feet of office space and retail space.

“Historic rehabilitation is a difficult endeavor to pursue as it takes a major commitment to time and resources, but the return is invaluable,” said Harry Mavrogenes. “I am very proud that our Agency was able to collaborate with faithful downtowners who are as truly committed as we are in restoring these forgotten gems.”

Vacant since 1999, the Fountain Alley Buildings are now a successful mixed-use project with nearly 11,000 square feet of office space and approximately 9,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space, and the Fountain Alley walkway’s new brick design and light fixtures serve as a welcoming public space.

“These historic sites add to the quality and character of downtown and their preservation and revitalization will significantly boost the character of our historic district and the overall vibrancy of downtown, said Councilmember Sam Liccardo who represents the Downtown San Jose area.”

The Bassler-Haynes and Beach Buildings are considered the oldest three-story brick structures still in existence in the Bay Area with the first building constructed in 1876. Damaged by the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, the buildings were deemed unsafe and boarded up. The buildings remained an eyesore for nearly 19 years.

“This is what historic preservation is all about. Bringing old buildings back to life as viable, revenue-producing businesses is not only good for business but it is also good for the environment,” said Brian Grayson, Interim Executive Director, Preservation Action Council of San Jose (PACSJ). “I look forward to many more successful restorations so everyone can enjoy these historic structures.”

Over the past two decades, the Agency has helped to rehabilitate more than 108 historic properties with an investment of over \$152 million to preserve San Jose’s historic sites.

### **About the San Jose Redevelopment Agency**

The Agency is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all who live and work in San Jose. Governed by the City Council, the Agency facilitates and oversees comprehensive programs for development to revitalize and strengthen quality of life and competitiveness for San Jose’s downtown, neighborhoods and industrial areas. [www.sjredevelopment.org](http://www.sjredevelopment.org)

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