

In Area no. Chelmsford Center	Form no. 243
-------------------------------------	-----------------

own Chelmsford

address 59-61 Central Square

name _____

present use stores

present owner Raymond & Virginia Osborn

description:

date 1922

Source Real state valuation lists

style _____

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric see attached

Outbuildings (describe) none

Other features 1 story; partial basement
roof - flat, tar & gravel

Altered yes Date 1972

Moved no Date _____

5. Lot size:

8037 sq. ft.
One acre or less x Over one acre _____

Approximate frontage 73 feet

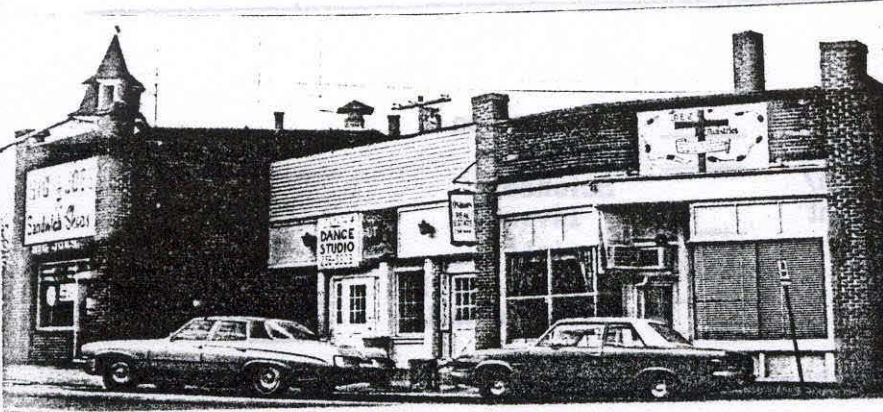
Approximate distance of building from street

ca 8 feet (width of sidewalk)

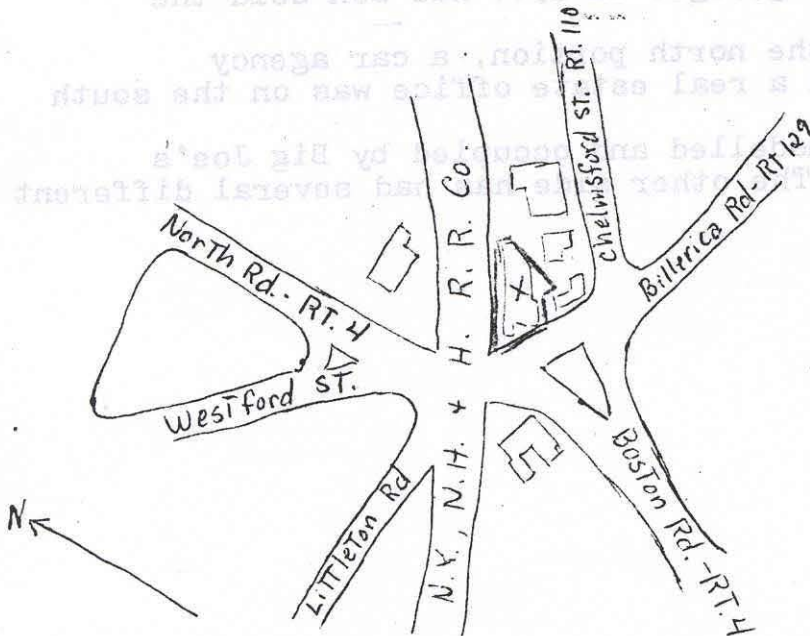
6. Recorded by Jane B. Drury

Organization Chelmsford Hist. Commission

Date March 6, 1977



4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
USGS Quadrant _____
MHC Photo no. _____

(over)

In Area no. _____
Chelmsford Center

7. Original owner (if known) Rothesay P. Kidder

Original use garage

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates stores, offices

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	_____	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	<u>X</u>
Commerce	<u>X</u>	Military	_____	Transportation	<u>X</u>
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	_____				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

In 1883 a house was moved here from Chelmsford St. by Moses C. Wilson and a new barn erected. In 1922 Rothesay P. Kidder purchased the property, moved the house to 41 Littleton Road, and erected the present building on the site of the house.

Kidder's garage was located in the southern (right) part of the building. He was a fireman and built the north portion to house the local fire engine at or soon after the same time as the garage. In 1944 his son sold the property to the present owners.

In 1955 a garage was located in the north portion, a car agency (Borrows Motors) in the middlese, and a real estate office was on the south side.

In 1972 the north portion was remodelled and occupied by Big Joe's Sandwich Shop, which is still there. The other side has had several different offices and stores in it.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

- Chelmsford Assessors' records & real estate valuation lists
- Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds: Bk.2069, p.110; Bk.658, p.176; Bk.216, p.43
- Mrs. Esther Kidder Heald
- Mrs. Margaret Mills
- Mrs. Julia Fogg
- Chelmsford Eagle: Dec. 15, 1883
- Chelmsford Newsweekly, 1955

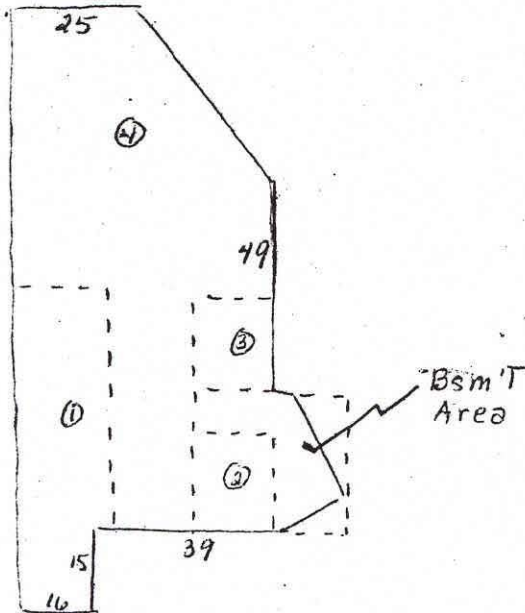
INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Chelmsford	Form No: 243
Property Name:	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

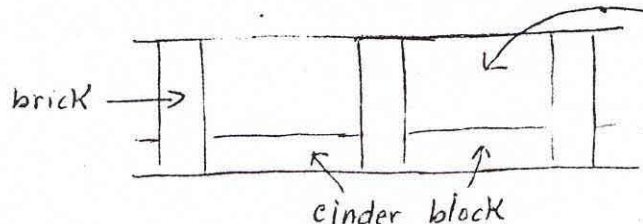
3. Description



Exterior wall fabric:

front - brick, except middle store, which is clapboard
left (north) side:
to about 14 feet from front - brick
rear portion:

right (south) side - same as north side, except windows are uncovered.



Staple to Inventory form at bottom

5. Chelmsford Assessors' Real Estate Valuation lists:
1922 Rothesay Kidder dwelling, barn Tuttle place
1923, 24, 25, 26, 27:
 Rothesay Kidder garage - Central Square \$5000
 dwelling - Littleton Street
 barn - Littleton Street
1930 Kidder garage \$7950
1928 Kidder garage (increase \$5000 to \$7000)

6. Mrs. Margaret Mills, 12/8/1974:
 Jennie Ordway was John Wilson's sister.
 Rothesay Kidder was a fireman (fire engineer) and his son Allan was later
 the fire chief.
 1974 location of Joe's Submarine Shop - held the fire engine and was
 probably built 1924-5-6ish.
 The other part of the building (south) was the garage.
 Moses Wilson's house was where Brigham's is in 1974. The ell of his
 house was the second half of the Noon House. John Wilson had a livery
 stable behind the Central Hotel.

7. Mrs. Julia Fogg, 12/6/1974:
 The garage was built shortly after (and on the site of) the house was
 moved to 41 Littleton Road. The Tutttles lived in the house before
 it was moved to Littleton Road.

8. Mrs. Esther Kidder Heald, 12/8/1974:
 The garage was built in 1922. The north portion, which contains Joe's
 Submarine Shop, was built for the fire engine. It may have been built
 at the same time as the garage.
 Mrs. Heminway and Mrs. Mitchell ran a tea room in the hotel block, and
 later probably moved it to the garage (side toward Parkhurst's store).

KIDDERS CHELMSFORD SQUARE GARAGE

**AUTO LIVERY, EXPRESS, STORAGE
SUPPLIES AND REPAIRING ALL DESCRIPTION**

Chelmsford, Mass. *July 1* 192*3*

M. *Edw Robbins*

THE RABBIT ALLIANCE CO.

Account
Forwarded

284

Lic. No. _____

Ready at _____

Wash _____

Storage _____

Gasoline _____

Oil _____

Labor *18.75 hrs 18.75*

Materials _____

2 B.G. Plugs 2.00

Exhaust

Packaging 60

21 3.5

Paid July 11-23

R.P.K.

Your account stated to date If error is found, return at once.

Telephone 4911-W

Chelmsford, Mass., September 1, 1934

M. r. Edward Robbins

CHELMSFORD SQUARE GARAGE

R. P. KIDDER, Proprietor

OFFICIAL INSPECTION STATION

Hardware, Paints, and Auto Service

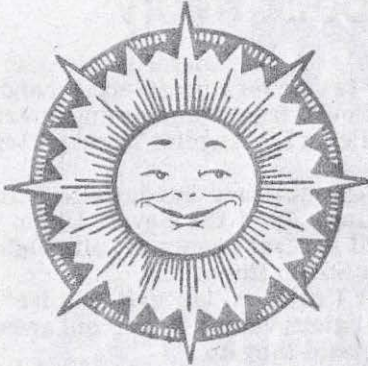
August account. ----- \$ 3.90

Paid
R.P.K.



Subw
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THE



SUN

Lowell, Mass.

MONDAY

December 21, 1987

Fair

— See BackPage

56 Pages

4 Sections

25 Cents



Interior of fire-ravaged Chelmsford businesses (Sun photo by Mike Pigeon)

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Suburban



Chelmsford fire causes \$200,000 loss

By PATRICK COOK
Sun Staff

CHELMSFORD - Eight businesses in the town center were destroyed today by a stubborn fire that caused an estimated \$200,000 damage.

The two-alarm blaze took firefighters more than an hour to bring under control. It destroyed most of a "mini-mall" in the town center.

Fire officials say they haven't pinpointed the fire's origin but say it was "not suspicious." The state fire marshal's office is also probing the cause.

No injuries were reported.

The building, located at 61 Central Square, is owned by George Kalos.

Destroyed were Angela's Sandwich Shop, J.E. Tax Accounting Service, H and H Painting Co., Bond Security and Investigative Services, Center Realty, the Cobbler Hut, Rose Salon, and Easy House-keeping.

Fire officials who set the damage estimate at more than \$200,000 said the building will have to be razed.

"This was a tough one," said Fire

Capt. James Spinney. "There was heavy smoke coming out of everywhere when we got there, through the bricks, the roof, the windows, the walls..."

"Gaining access to the fire was a real task," he said. "When we got in there, we could hear it burning overhead, but we couldn't see it because of the thick smoke."

He said the fire was roaring uncontrolled through a common attic shared by the businesses.

Related story, Page 13
Related photo, Page 2

The fire was discovered by police officer Scott Ubele while he was on routine patrol.

Capt. Spinney said the building's fire alarm system was not tied in to the fire department's alarm center.

The central fire station is about a block away from the fire scene.

Spinney said the law office of Dennis McHugh, located in a separate building about 10 feet from the fire, was not endangered.



nsford businesses (Sun photo by Mike Pigeon)

Lowell Sun Dec. 29, 1987

Chelmsford fire cause remains undetermined

CHELMSFORD — Fire officials today continued sifting through the charred remains of a town center "mini-mall" to learn the cause of a two-alarm blaze that destroyed eight businesses Monday.

"We've got a lot of sifting to do out there," said Capt. James Spinney. "We're still digging our way through the charring. There's so much stuff to pull aside before we can get to the point of origin."

The building, located at 61 Central Square, is owned by George Kalos.

Destroyed in the 12:20 a.m. fire were Angela's Sandwich

Shop, J.E. Tax Accounting Service, H & H Painting Co., Bond Security and Investigative Services, Center Realty, the Cobbler Hut, Rose Salon, and Easy Housekeeping.

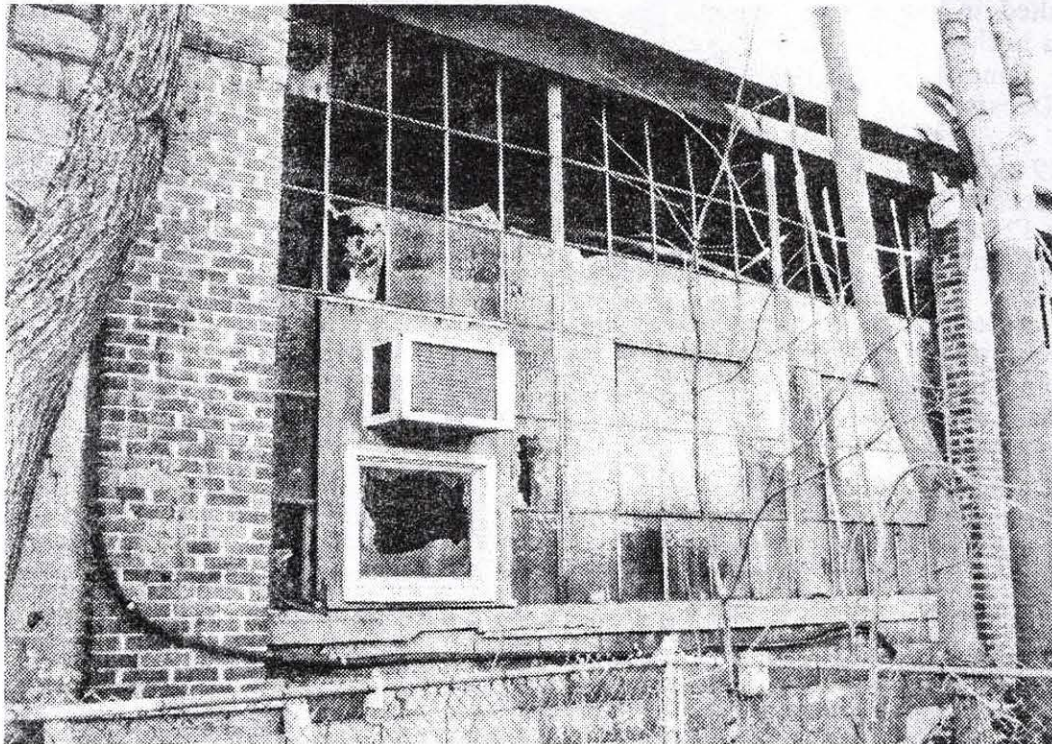
Officials estimated damages at more than \$200,000.

Spinney said the fire started in the tax accounting service office.

The fire is not suspicious, said Spinney, who is investigating along with the state fire marshal's office.

The building has been boarded up and will be razed soon, Spinney said.

Dec. 23, 1987

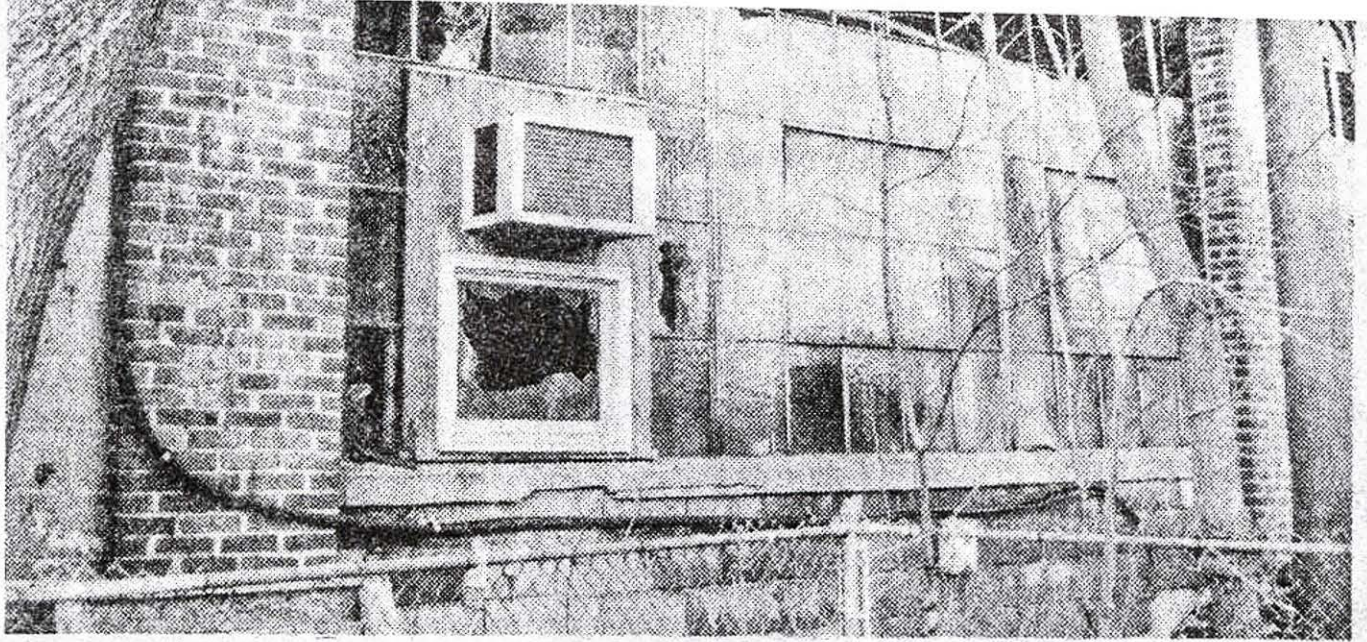


CMFD-THE CENTER MALL with its eight tenants is closed and boarded up after Monday's fire which caused an estimated \$200,000 loss. Extensive damage was caused to all of the shops and to the building itself which, when first built, housed the town's one piece of fire equipment in what was Angela's shop at the time of the fire. (Photos by Vern LeTourneau)

Heavy damage in Central Square mini-mall fire

CMFD-An early morning fire on Monday at 61 Central Square resulted in heavy damage to the seven shops in the building, according to Captain James Spinney of the Chelmsford Fire Department.

The first alarm came in at 12:19 a.m., Captain Spinney said, and a second alarm followed quickly at about 12:22



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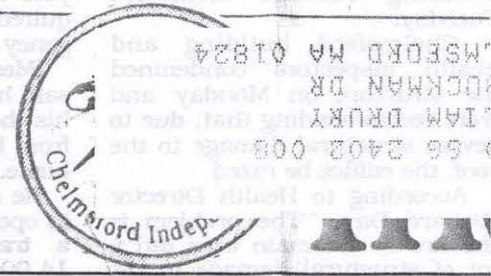
The first alarm came in at 12:19 a.m., Captain Spinney said, and a second alarm followed quickly at about 12:22. The fire was under control at 1:25 a.m. No injuries were reported.

The shops sustained heavy fire, water, and smoke damage Captain Spinney said. Cause of the blaze is being investigated by the State Fire Marshal's office. The building is the former Osborn garage, also known as Kidder's Garage, and is owned by George Kalos and Howard Hall. Loss has been set at 200,000.

The fire was discovered by police Office Scott Ubele patrolling the area. Eight small businesses were destroyed: Angela's Sandwich Shop, the Cobbler Hut, J.E. Tax Accountants, H&H Painting, Bond Security, Center Realty, Rose Beauty Salon and Easy Housekeeping Shop. □



Chelmsford



Vol. 8 — No. 48

32 Pages - 3 Sections

Thursday, December 24, 1987

Early morning blaze destroys Centre Mall

NO. 1 Built 1922
100-year-old building may have to be razed

By Ann Toda
Independent Assistant Editor

State and local fire officials are still investigating the cause of an early morning, two-alarm blaze that gutted the Centre Mall on Monday, injuring no one but putting eight businesses out on the streets.

Officials said arson isn't suspected at the Central Square site, which was not equipped with fire alarms.

Property damage amounts were not available Tuesday, while business owners still were seeking insurance adjusters' estimates. However, Chelmsford Fire Capt. James Spinney said damage to the 7,000-square-foot mall opposite the Central Square green was "in excess of \$100,000," and added that the amount probably is "well in excess."

"All... of the businesses were destroyed. The fire was so intense that it's all but gone," Spinney said Monday after several hours of investigation.

The owner of the building — which, ironically, was the town's own first fire station, at the turn of the century — also was awaiting damage estimates Tuesday.

Chelmsford building and health inspectors condemned the structure on Monday and were recommending that, due to severe structural damage to the roof, the edifice be razed.

Salon, H & H Painting, Guard Service Bond Security Investigations, Angela's Breakfast and Sandwich Shop and J E — Tax Accounting Service, where the blaze apparently started, near the center of the building, fire investigators said.

Janet's Dance Studio had recently moved from the mall.

George Kalos, who has owned the mall and two of its businesses for about 13 years, said he will renovate the mall or construct a new building.

"I didn't think it was going to be that bad. I want that [building and property]. I'd like to get it back and I'm still trying to figure out if we can save it. I guess it burned so hot that the support beams heated and twisted," Kalos said.

He said the building may be underinsured and that he hasn't any idea when the structure will be rebuilt or razed.

According to Chelmsford Fire Chief Robert Hughes, the building hadn't any smoke or fire alarms, and wasn't connected through emergency systems to the Fire Department. Hughes noted that the owner of the 100-year-old building wasn't required to install alarms or emergency systems.

Meanwhile, the mall owner said he will try to operate one of his businesses, Centre Realty, from his 13 Green Valley Drive home.

when it burned. He said he lost most of the goods there to be repaired, new men's shoes and other items. Major leather-working equipment appears salvagable; a sole stitching machine costs from \$12,000 to \$18,000, he said.

Kalos said he learned about the fire at about 1 a.m. Monday, when police called his home.

"I got real nervous because of my daughter, and the first thing I thought was she was in an accident. The only thing I'm glad about is no one got hurt — no people, no firemen. Shoes and a building you can replace, but you can't replace people," Kalos said.

Chelmsford Police first reported seeing smoke at the mall at 12:19 a.m. The discovery was made by Officer Scott Ubele on a routine patrol in Chelmsford Center. Police confirmed there was a fire at 12:24 a.m., and the second alarm was sounded at 12:26 a.m. All Chelmsford firefighting equipment was dispatched when firefighters aboard the ladder and rescue trucks and Engines 1, 4, 5, 2 and 3 responded. Ladder and rescue trucks from Lowell and Billerica covered the central and North Chelmsford fire stations.

The fire was brought under control at 1:25 a.m.

According to Spinney, the blaze moved upward from the

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Chelmsford building and health inspectors condemned the structure on Monday and were recommending that, due to severe structural damage to the roof, the edifice be razed.

According to Health Director Richard Day, "The problem is the fire in the main area did a lot of structural damage to the roof and supports. It may be too weak to build a new roof."

The businesses that burned or suffered smoke damaged were The Cobbler Hut, Centre Realty, Easy Housekeeping, The Rose

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Meanwhile, the mall owner said he will try to operate one of his businesses, Centre Realty, from his 13 Green Valley Drive home.

He also is seeking permission to operate The Cobbler Hut from a trailer on the 12,000- to 14,000-square-foot mall site.

After posting "No Trespassing" signs and buying plywood to close off the building, Kalos estimated that customers had between 50 to 100 leather goods to be fixed at the Cobbler Hut

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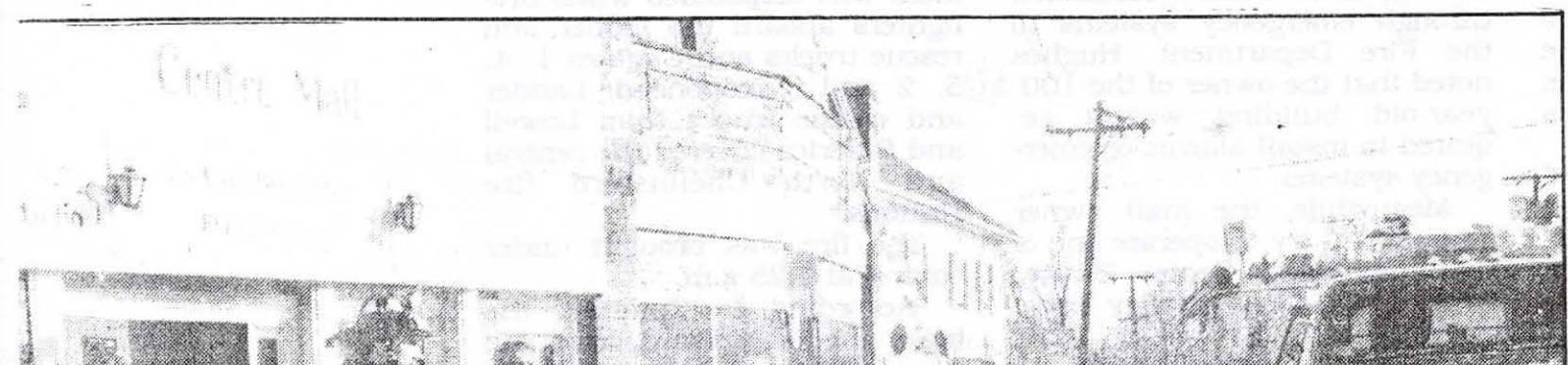
According to Spinney, the blaze moved upward from the tax office and into a common attic above a drop ceiling. Once the fire spread into the attic, flames "mushroomed" throughout the building.

Spinney and George Wilson of the state Fire Marshall's Office said the fire didn't appear to be of suspicious origin, but they

□ Fire, page 8



CHELMSFORD FIRE CAPTAIN James Spinney (above) inspects damage done to H & H Painting in the Centre Mall on Monday, while Chelmsford firefighters John Reid and Gerald Tonks (below, l-r) attend to cleanup following Sunday night's blaze which gutted the Central Square business complex. (Staff photos by Marc Holland)



Centre Mall gutted by Monday blaze

Continued from page 1

It wasn't determined by press time what caused the blaze.

Just hours after the fire, employees and customers wandered stunned through several inches of water and piles of charred debris, looking at the things they would try to salvage, and things destroyed by flames and smoke, which still stung nostrils.

"At first it sounded like it was a small fire. I didn't know it would be this bad," said Paul Lund, manager of Easy Housekeeping, which sells and repairs vacuum cleaners and sewing machines. The shop suffered smoke damage, but Lund didn't have an estimate on the amount of equipment or supplies lost in the tragedy.

"I'm sure we'll be able to cover some of

the damages," he said, noting that Easy Housekeeping has shops in Woburn and Haverhill. "We'll evaluate the repairs and they'll go to Woburn so we can get these people their things back.

"It's pretty depressing. It is. You don't prepare for it. You never can," Lund said as he inspected vacuums. Turning toward a sewing machine, Lund noted that it could be cleaned in time for Christmas; someone had bought the machine for her daughter's gift but left it in the shop so her daughter wouldn't find it.

"It's not a nice feeling at all, especially with it being the Christmas season. That was the most upsetting thing," said Angela Sarantakis, owner of Angela's Breakfast.

The Board of Health closed Angela's due to smoke damage. "I have no idea if I can or when I'll reopen," said Sarantakis, who operated the restaurant since April. She also had no estimate of damages since, because of heavy smoke in the restaurant, firefighters asked her not to go into the establishment.

"It's a tough thing to take, but thank God no one was in there," she said.

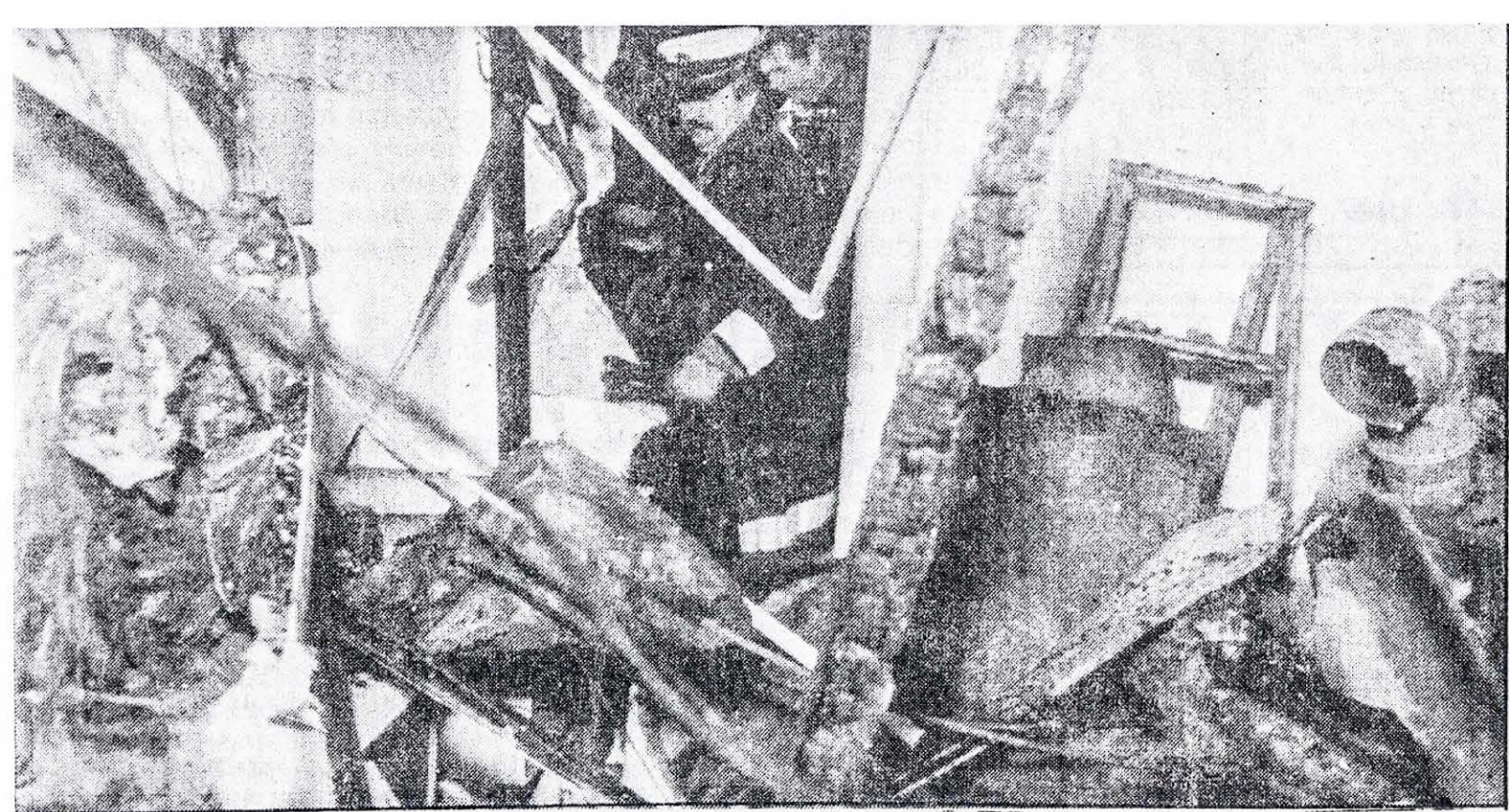
James Davis, owner of J E Tax, said his office was a residence until about five years ago. Davis moved into the building 1½ years ago. He also kept most of his clients' tax records at his home.

Davis said that, when firefighters sprayed the roof with water, soaked insulation and ceiling materials fell onto the tax records he had on his office desks. "In a way, I was lucky. But I've got some real smelly, smokey records. I've got about 2,000 hours of extra work to transfer information onto clean forms," he said. He noted that his clients are given tax form copies each year.

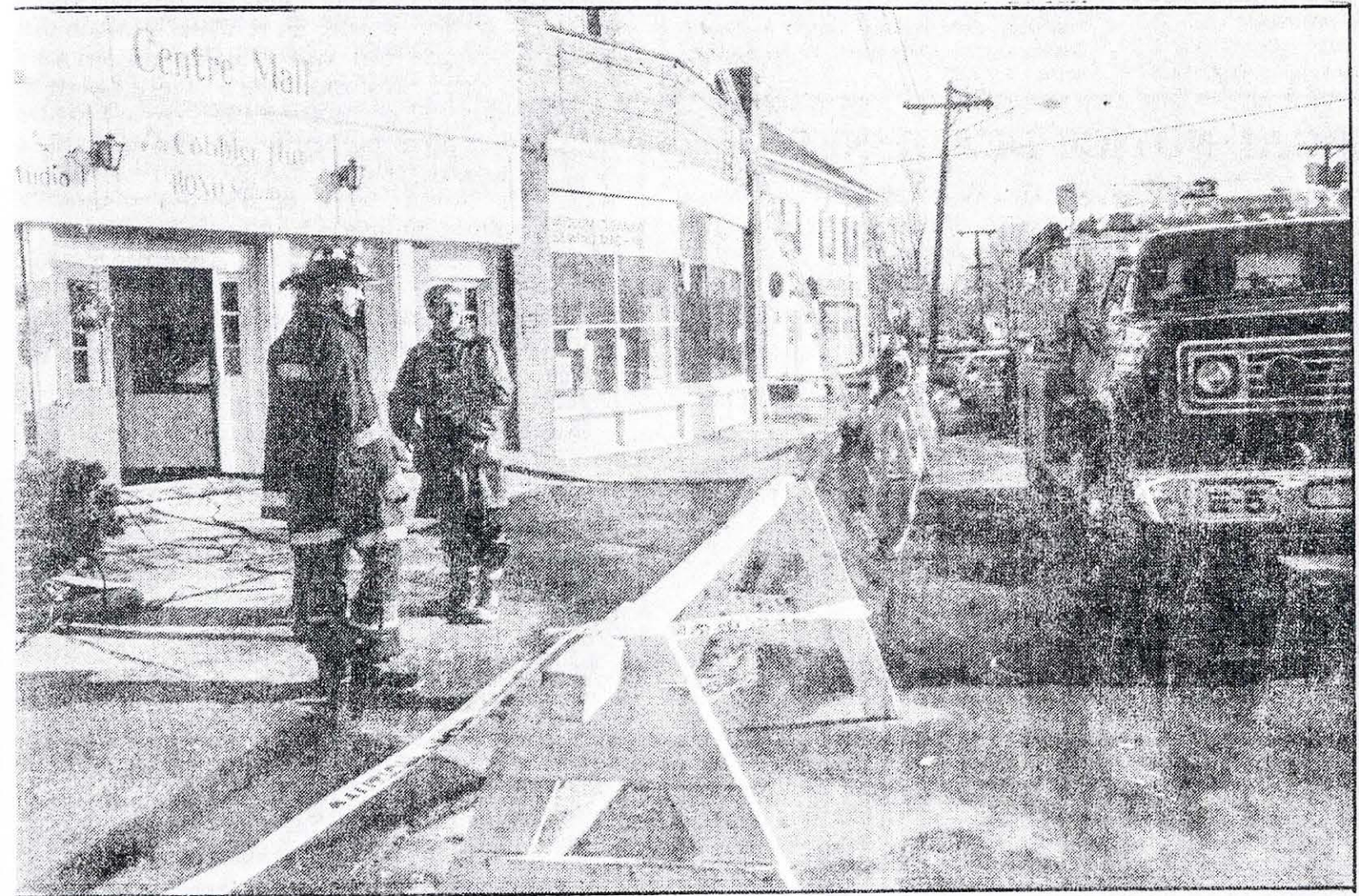
"How do you put a price on someone's tax forms," he asked. "There'll be plenty [of damages], I can tell you that. But thank God nobody was hurt. You can always make more pieces of paper," he said.

Davis and other merchants were working Tuesday to restore their business phone lines. The accountant said he will keep his business operating by travelling to his clients' homes.

"That's how I started 20 years ago, so I suppose I can do it again now," he said.



CHELMSFORD FIRE CAPTAIN James Spinney (above) inspects damage done to H & H Painting in the Centre Mall on Monday, while Chelmsford firefighters John Reid and Gerald Tonks (below, l-r) attend to cleanup following Sunday night's blaze which gutted the Central Square business complex. (Staff photos by Marc Holland)



Newsweekly
Dec. 30, 1987



CMFD-“CONDEMNED” reads the sign n Angela's shop's window at 1 Central Square after the devastating fire swept the building on Monday. Angela opened her shop in April and is inspecting what is left of it through soot-covered windows. (Photo by Vern LeTourneau)

Chelmsford Center ravaged in recent fire

By Sharon Weitz

Chelmsford Center was ravaged by fire last week in a blaze described by firefighters as "difficult to extinguish." The pre-Christmas, December 21 fire destroyed eight businesses before being brought under control.

Firefighters were called to the scene of the two-alarm fire at 12:19 a.m., a week ago Monday, by Chelmsford police officer Scott Ubele, who discovered the blaze while on routine patrol.

"It was under control at 1:25 a.m. and most of the firefighters left the site at 2:55 a.m.," Chelmsford Deputy Fire Chief James Sousa said.

Approximately 40 local firefighters, using five pumpers, a ladder and rescue truck, battled the

There were no injuries reported.

Although the fire is not believed to be suspicious, Sousa said "the investigation of the cause is not yet complete.

"Officials know the general area where the fire probably started. (But) it takes time to analyze the samples and collect background information. We have to be careful not to give anything to the press that could later be found to be incorrect," he stated.

The mini mall, located at 61 Central Square, is owned by George Kalos. Officials said the building, which was condemned, will have to be razed.

The businesses destroyed include Angela's Sandwich Shop, The Cobbler Hut, Easy Housekeeping, Rose Salon, J.E. Tax Accounting Service, H & H Painting Company, Bond Security and Investigative Services, and Center Realty

"It was a difficult one to fight because it had spread extensively throughout the building in concealed areas," Sousa said. "There was the potential for an explosion or a building collapse. It was a nasty, smokey fire to take care of."

Sousa said the building did not have a fire alarm system and that one was not required by law.

"People don't sleep there, it is assumed. People are awake and alert while they are in there."

One of the first officials to arrive at the scene, Chelmsford Fire Captain James Boermeester said "There was smoke pouring out of the building when we arrived. We entered through the front door and we could hear the fire above us, but we couldn't see anything because of the smoke.

"We had a hard time locating it (the fire) at first," Boermeester continued "and we called a second

alarm. We then opened the roof up which allowed the heat and smoke to escape through the vent hole. That allowed us in to fight the fire and put it out."

Sousa noted that firefighters broke several windows in order to release the heat.

Boermeester praised the firefighters' performance, saying "They knocked it in relatively quickly. We had to check all of the areas of business. It was one of the worst (recent) fires.

"All of my men did an excellent job. It was a difficult fire. There was a lot of smoke and hidden spaces."

The building is located approximately 100 yards from the central fire station. The response time of the firefighters was one minute, Boermeester said.

There was a complete physical study of the land itself. We've been looking at traffic, how you would protect abutters, how you would protect people using the trail."

She added that representatives from each town to the Rails to Trails Committee have been working with the state Department of Environmental Management on the project.

"In an optimistic line," Thornley said, "the design study will take a year, then it will take about a year to work out agreements with the towns concerning policing and maintenance. Then construction can begin."

Harvey Adams, of Lowell Road, Westford, said of the proposed bikeway, "this would be one of the biggest headaches the town ever had." He cited problems with motorized vehicles operating near his home.

Thornley responded "We would have better control" of the rail trail, because of clarified enforcement policies. She also stated that there would be physical obstacles to pre-

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Advertiser Dec. 30, 1987



Four days before Christmas, a fire roared through the Centre Mall in Central Square, gutting the structure, probably beyond repair, and putting eight businesses out on the street.

78/12/21 Independent

Fire destroyed piece of Center history

The multiple alarm fire in Central Square in the early morning hours of December 21st gutted a landmark with a history of 64 years.

In addition to being a garage (and most recently a mini-mall), it served for many years as the Center fire station and also housed a restaurant long before Big Joe's or Angela's Sandwich Shop.

It was in 1921 that the forerunner of our present fire department was organized. That year the Selectmen appointed a Board of Fire Engineers to administer the department and, pursuant to a vote of Town Meeting, "motor fire apparatus and equipment at a cost not to exceed in all the sum of \$15,000," was procured. The town was divided into five fire districts, along the then precinct lines, with one piece of motorized equipment garaged in each district.

District No. 1, comprising the Center section, was allotted a "motorized double tank combination chemical and hose car." This truck had no pump but did have two chemical tanks connected to a small hose line. Incidentally, it had no self-starter; a hand crank was used to turn over the engine.

The vehicle was originally equipped with solid rubber tires. In later years these were replaced with pneumatic tires, but the steering ratio was not changed, making it very difficult to steer, a fact that can be confirmed by the personal experience of the present writer. This piece of apparatus was retired to use as a spare truck in 1926 and

The way it was

By George A. Parkhurst



was replaced by a 500 gallon Maxim pumper that took over the stall in the garage.

In April, 1922, Rothesay P. "Ross" Kidder purchased the lot of land, "with buildings," between the railroad track and Parkhurst's Store (at Eriksen's corner). After moving the house to 41 Littleton Road as his residence, Kidder erected the existing brick building as the Chelmsford Square Garage for repairing automobiles. Gasoline pumps were installed at the curb.

The extension on the southwest corner (most recently Angela's Sandwich Shop) was rented to the Town and the new fire truck was garaged there with just barely room enough to walk around the vehicle.

That year, Wilhelm T. Johnson superseded Walter S. "Sam" Fletcher as District Chief. The year 1922 also saw the installation of the first electric fire alarm system in the center. (Previously the ringing of the Unitarian church bell had summoned available men to fight fires.)

The Fire Engineers, in cooperation with a

special committee, installed a large iron hammer to strike the church bell with the controls located in the new fire house in the garage. Thus for the first time a coded alarm could be sounded to notify the call firefighters, and the general public, of the location of the blaze. These controls were also used with the air whistle that the Village Improvement Association donated to the Town in 1923.

Since there were no full time firefighters, Mr. Kidder and the District Chief were engaged on a 24-hour basis, and extensions of the fire phone, as well as keys for sounding the alarm, were installed in their homes. Men working in the garage were available to drive the truck during the day.

The Cookie Jar Restaurant and Food Shop, run by Fanny Mitchell and Edith Hemenway, was opened in the mid 1920's in the store recently occupied by Easy House-keeping Shop. Later, it was a hardware store and still later a real estate office.

The building was sold in 1944 to Raymond T. Osborn, who had an agency for the new, smaller Studebakers, about the first automobiles on the market after World War II.

Unless it is rebuilt, we have seen the passing of one of our younger, but historic structures in the Square.

George Adams Parkhurst is a Chelmsford historian whose family has lived in town since 1654.

Independent Jan. 7, 1988

Nov. 17, 1988

CHELMSFORD INDEPENDENT

Centre Mall renewal begins

By Ann Toda
Assistant Editor

Some 11 months after the Centre Mall in Central Square was destroyed by fire, the building's owner has begun renovations that are expected to improve aesthetics in downtown Chelmsford.

Owner George Kalos said this week he will maintain the brick facade at Centre Mall, and will also use colonial-style windows and other materials to blend the building into its surroundings in the town's designated Historic District.

Once the \$390,000 to \$420,000 project is finished in mid-January, the 6,000-square-foot mall will house seven retail businesses, Kalos said.

"Everything has been approved. At this point here, I'm doing it for the historical reasons: to keep the look of the old fire station," Kalos said Tuesday. The building once housed the Chelmsford Center fire station.

"I really thought we'd be back in business in two or three months. This has been a long process," he added.

The Chelmsford Historic District Commission approved Kalos' plans last Monday, and within a week all that was left of the former fire station were support beams and brick walls.

"We started gutting it about



TOM LYNAM of Chelmsford nuts clapboard Tuesday for an exterior wall of Centre Mall, which is being rennovated for seven retail businesses. (Staff Photo by Marc Holland)

three months ago, and took to the outside last week," Kalos explained.

According to Richard Lahue of the Historic District Commission, "There's not a drastic change in the appearance. They're getting rid of the clapboard to expose more brick. And the looks will be more uniform. I think it will be an improvement.

"We think it's a good concept. It's better than what was there," even before the two-alarm fire on Dec. 2, said Lahue, the commission's liaison to Kalos.

Commissioner Paul Canniff noted that Kalos has presented several proposals to the commission and to the Board of Appeals, which rejected a plan for a two-story office building.

According to the most recent plan, bay windows for some of the businesses will overlook 18 parking spaces and Old Town Hall. Other businesses will be at the front of the building facing Central Square. Clapboard between the mall and the adjacent building already has been covered with brick.

"Part of the issue was to work with the brick," Canniff said.

"It'll dress it up. The thing is, the signs will be uniform, the same size and the same color. People don't realize that's a big problem downtown: signage. So it will look better," Lahue said.

Kalos said he proposed the two-story building, which would have required adding a pitch to the now-flat roof, to accommodate what he perceived as a growing need for office space downtown. But he would not

Center mall, page 10

Owner begins Centre Mall renovations

□ Continued from page 2
have been able to provide the required amount of parking, he said.

He said, too, that he considered for several months razing the mall and beginning anew, but felt that would threaten the historic flavor of the center.

"It sure isn't easier to do it this way. The price would be about the same. But we're doing the work with stuff we can't match right away. It takes a lot longer, but I think it will be worth it," Kalos said.

Kalos has owned the building

for about 14 years and had operated two businesses at the mall. The Cobbler Hut now is directly across the square, and he operates Centre Realty from his 13 Green Valley Dr. home.

Seven other business owners driven out by the fire have reopened elsewhere and are not likely to return to the mall. "I've moved enough. That's it. I'm sure they're settled, too, and probably won't come back. It'll probably be all new businesses. I've had a few inquiries, but nothing definite," Kalos said.

The fire began in the mall —

which was not equipped with fire alarms — at about 12:19 a.m., and was reported by a Chelmsford Police Officer who was on routine patrol. Firefighters brought the blaze under control at 1:25 a.m.

The state fire marshall has not yet determined the cause of the blaze. According to Fire Capt. James Spinney, who investigated, the blaze started in the J E — Tax Accounting office, and spread quickly into a common attic. Once there, the fire spread throughout the entire building, Spinney said at the time.

Centre Mall rising from

By MICHAEL O'CONNELL
Sun Staff

CHELMSFORD — As he watched his seven-store Centre Mall building go up in flames, George Kalos prepared for the worst.

"I really thought, at first, 'it's over, it's going to be a parking lot,'" the Chelmsford contractor said.

But then he got to thinking: The December 1987 fire didn't level the 75-year-old Chelmsford Center building altogether. Insurance would cover about two-thirds of the costs to rebuild the building as it was.

'What he has done is at least make the doors and windows uniform. He has improved it a lot. He has really satisfied the board and satisfy himself as to what he's trying to do there.'

— Richard Lahue
Chelmsford Historic
District Commission

Why not rebuild the ramshackle facility to look a little better than it used to?

One year later, the Centre Mall's reconstruction is well under way.

"It's a big relief now," Kalos said, looking proudly at his partially restored building from across busy Central Square. "Now we've got something new, something much better."

The building owner said he is shooting to complete renovations and open the building for tenants by early to mid-February.



George Kalos is shooting for a February opening of his renovated Chelmsford Center building.

Kalos, who shortened his name years ago from Kalogeropoulos, is starting over financially with the Centre Mall building.

His family had just finished paying off the building's mortgage when the fire hit. Insurance covered \$230,000. He figured the fire did about \$320,000 worth of damage. He said he expects to spend about \$450,000 on general rehab and various improvements.

Kalos is making improvements to the building's interior and exterior.

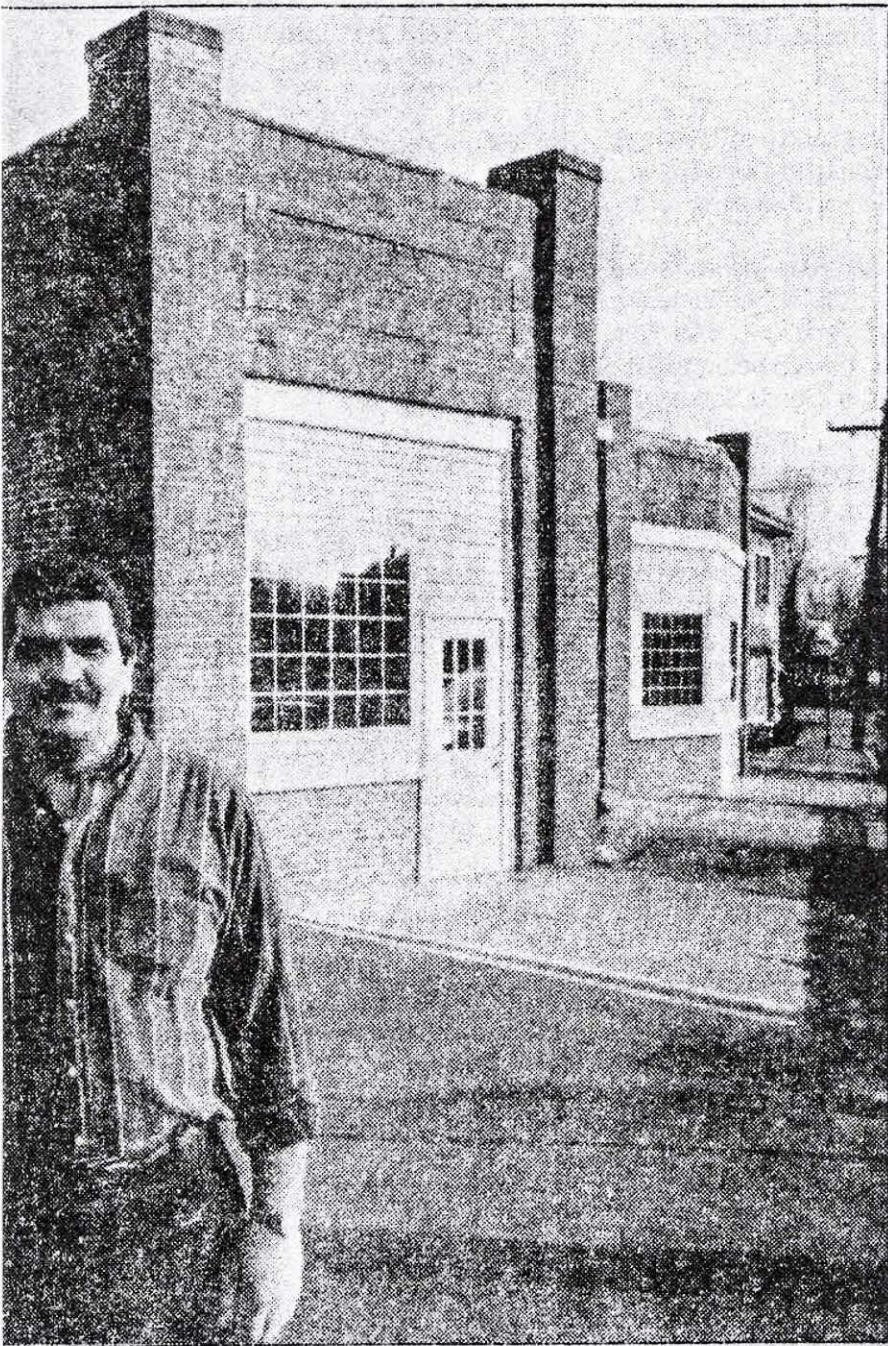
Inside, he is putting in new heating systems, firewalls, insulation and central air conditioning. He also has redesigned the interior, replacing the long hallway with more store space and adding exterior doors to each store unit.

Outside, he has taken down a piece of clapboard mansie to expose a brick sur-

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Block retail-and-lodging facility across the square. "It's certainly a major improvement over what it was before."

Richard Lahue, a founding member of the Chelmsford Historic District Commission, said the facility previously looked like "just a mish-mash of things."

"What he has done is at least make the doors and windows uniform," Lahue said. "He has improved it a lot. He has really satisfied the board and satisfy himself as to what he's trying to do there."

The Centre Mall facility had been used mostly as a service garage before owner Ray Osborn brought in retail in the mid-'70s. It had once housed the Fire Department's Engine One before the town built a new fire station. Kalos bought the building about 10 years ago.

New tenants

When the building reopens, Kalos will start with new tenants. Six tenants — The Rose hair salon, Easy Housekeeping vacuum sales and repair, Janet's Dance Studio, the J.A. Tax accountant, and Kalos' Center Realty and Cobbler Hut businesses — have moved to new locations. Kalos is negotiating with the seventh tenant, the Angela's restaurant, about returning to Chelmsford Center.

Kalos will bring his combination Center Realty/K Construction office back to the mall. Other tenants, he said, could include a video store, a carpeting store and any other retail uses that might be interested.

Kalos himself has done other building work through his K Construction business. Most of it has been in single-family housing in southern New Hampshire, Methuen and Westford. He also has rebuilt the old depot freight building across Central Square where he moved the Cobbler Hut after the fire.

of his renovated Chelmsford building

SUN/RICHARD HUNT

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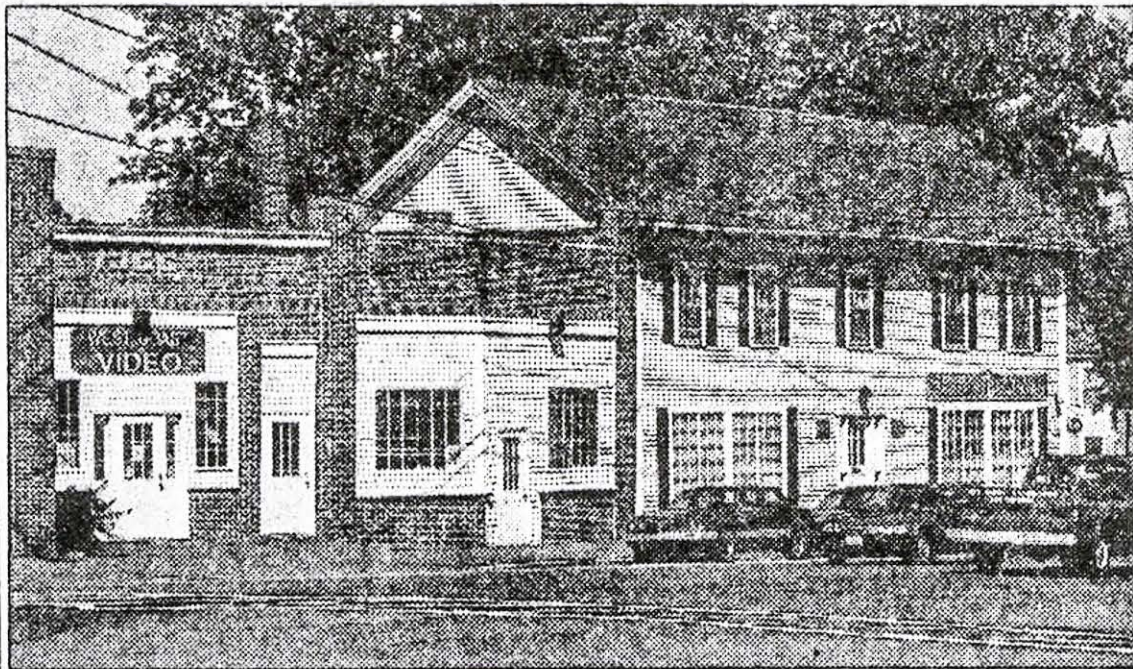
face underneath bearing the building's
birthdate, "1922." He has added to the
red brick columns matching brick
bases and new white clapboard sur-
rounding new thermal pane windows.
While the building itself has little
historical significance, Kalos' improve-
ments have pleased town officials.
"I am pleased with his renovation,"
said Selectman Bradford Emerson,
who is currently renovating the Wilson



CMFD-ANOTHER OVERHEAD CABLE has been added to the already spider web-like collection of utility wires that cross and criss-cross Central Square as power is transmitted from the pole in the center foreground to the far rear of the recently-completed Center Mall which suffered severe loss in a fire some months ago. The doors on the side of the building (toward the Town Hall) all have graceful half-windows over each one; the severity of the front may be partly due to the owner's preference for omission of these windows to make for a more stark exterior. Selectmen's Chairman Dennis Ready has had a special interest in urging that overhead wires be buried around the Square but utility representatives have cited the high cost associated with the operation. The Historic District Commission oversees work being done within the district and sets requirements for it. (Photo by Jean Sougnez)

*Newsweek
Feb. 23, 1989*

LOCAL NEWS



SUN/BRAD CAUCHON

West Coast Video in Chelmsford Center.

Judge: Lights out for video store

By CHRISTOPHER SCOTT
Sun Staff

CHELMSFORD — The white lights surrounding the windows of the West Coast Video shop in the Chelmsford Center Historic District cannot be lit without the approval of the Historic District Commission, a Middlesex Superior Court judge has ruled.

CHELMSFORD

The ruling by Judge Paul A. Chernoff, which took effect July 1, settles a case that began well over a year ago when the Historic District Commission

took the business to court over the lights.

Chernoff states in his two-page opinion that the lighting was installed without an application to the commission for a certificate of appropriateness, and that West Coast Video can apply for the certificate.

West Coast Video Manager Dennis Shemchuk, however, said it is unlikely that will happen.

"We're planning to take the lights down," he said. "We don't want to cause any problems with the town."

"Needless to say the commission is quite happy with the ruling," said Historic District Commission Chairman Robert LaPorte.

Court says lights out at video store

By Rick Lombardi
Staff Writer

Customers of West Coast Video are probably accustomed to picking out the video store by the flashing lights strung around the windows of the Center Mall building.

But back on July 1, those lights went out for good — another victory for the Historic District Commission.

The HDC asked Middlesex Superior Court to rule on the appropriateness of the video store lights in an historic district.

Middlesex Superior Court Judge Paul Chernoff issued a ruling in June that said the Historic District Commission has jurisdiction over what type of lights the video store

can install.

Chernoff said the lights are "exterior architectural features," within the meaning of state law giving jurisdiction to historical commissions.

The Historic District Commission was notified of the decision last month, as was West Coast Video, but the ruling was not disclosed to the public until last week.

The order to shut off the lights was set to commence July 1, which would have given the video store time to file for a certificate of appropriateness from the commission.

However, commission chairman Robert LaPorte said he received no word from West Coast Video that it





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