

U.S. Steel buildings in Joliet will be demolished, Mayor D'Arcy says

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Bob Okon

D'Arcy said company wants to tear down and grade site so it can be put to new use

By [Bob Okon](#)



Buildings at former U.S. Steel site continue to deteriorate along Collins Street in Joliet. (Gary Middendorf/Gary Middendorf)

September 11, 2024 at 2:21 pm CDT

U.S. Steel, in the aftermath of a fire that destroyed the historic Main Office Building at its former [Joliet](#) steel works, plans to demolish all remaining buildings on its Joliet site, [Mayor Terry D'Arcy](#) said.

The [Saturday fire](#), which destroyed the one building local preservationists sought to keep, was the latest in a series of problems on the old steel mill site on Collins Street that has been vulnerable to repeated trespassing and where [a dead body was found in July](#).

Clearing out the old buildings still standing on the property could remove the temptation that has made the site susceptible to trespassers.



Only the brick walls remain standing at the historic U.S. Steel office building after a fire on Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024 in Joliet. The historic building along Collins Street was engulfed in flames early Saturday. (Gary Middendorf)

D’Arcy said U.S. Steel is going through the city permitting process now and wants to begin demolition immediately.

“They are permitting as we speak to tear down every building and grade that property,” he said.

D’Arcy said U.S. Steel began an environmental review of the Joliet property roughly a month ago in preparation for plans to demolish buildings and make the site available for other uses. He said the company is cooperating with the city in long-term plans to convert the 50-acre U.S. Steel site to new uses.

“We want to repurpose the property completely,” D’Arcy said.

U.S. Steel spokesman Andrew Fulton on Tuesday confirmed that the company plans to proceed with demolition.

In the meantime, Fulton said, U.S. Steel is working with Joliet “to increase patrols and prevent trespassing.”

Prevention measures, however, are coming too late to save the 1891 Main Office Building, located at 927 Collins St., that preservationists wanted to preserve as an architectural testimony to Joliet’s industrial history.



A wrecking machine on Saturday tears down the limestone exterior of the old U.S. Steel Main Office Building at 927 Collins St. in Joliet after a devastating fire that was reported at 3:11 a.m. Sept. 7, 2024
(Bob Okon)

Quinn Adamowski, a member of the city’s Historical Preservation Commission, described the destruction of the Main Office Building as “absolutely a loss.”

“I think the building told the story of Joliet’s industrial heritage,” Adamowski said.

The building was built of Joliet limestone and included an arch at its entryway that the city may try to recreate for future use of the property.

D’Arcy said he would like to see the front wall of the building, which included the arch, rebuilt as an entryway to the site when it is converted to a new use.

Just what the property could be used for is uncertain.

D'Arcy wants to see it converted to athletic fields.

In his 2023 campaign for mayor, D'Arcy talked about bringing in Bo Jackson, a former professional baseball and football player who now runs youth athletic facilities, to create athletic fields on the site.



A No Trespassing sign is posted on the gate of the abandoned U.S. Steel Mill on Saturday July 13, 2024 in Joliet. (Gary Middendorf)

At that time, former Mayor Bob O'Dekirk wanted to convert the site to an automotive recycling operation, saying users were ready to put an operation in place, but the plan died for lack of City Council support.

The cause of the fire on Saturday has not been determined.

The Joliet Fire Department said the two-story building was fully ablaze when they arrived at about 3:13 a.m. to try to combat the fire. Flames were shooting out as far as 15 feet from the second floor, and embers from the building were moving as far as two blocks south, the fire department said.



The Joliet Fire Department responded to 927 Collins St., the historic U.S. Steel office building, for a report of a structure fire on Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024. (Photo provided by Joliet Fire Department)

Joliet police and fire departments have responded to an ongoing series of incidents at the former steel mill site in the last 10 years.

A dead body was found in a pump house in July.

In February, police made arrests related to stolen tools found in a building on the site where a number of small fires were burning when they arrived to investigate after seeing smoke coming from the site.

Joliet police told The Herald-News in July that they had been called to the site 31 times since 2015.

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