

Danville's Historic 19th-Century Tobacco Warehouse to Be Demolished Despite Preservation Efforts

July 2, 2025

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Danville, VA – A historic building that has stood for more than a century in Danville's River District is set to be demolished, sparking debate between preservationists and city officials. The 19th-century tobacco warehouse at 601 Lynn Street, once a vital part of Danville's tobacco industry, will be torn down within the next few months despite opposition from the River District Design Commission.

The warehouse is a significant reminder of Danville's past. Constructed in the late 1800s, it served as a storage facility during the city's heyday as a major tobacco producer. Its brick walls, wooden beams, and iron details are typical of the industrial buildings of that time, representing an important part of the city's heritage.

Last year, the River District Design Commission recognised the warehouse's historic value and recommended that it be preserved. However, the Danville City Council overruled the commission's decision, approving the demolition to make way for new development in the River District.

City officials argue that the old warehouse poses safety concerns and limits opportunities for revitalising the area with modern commercial and residential projects. "While we respect the city's history, we must focus on the future and create spaces that meet today's needs," said City Council member James Holloway.

Local historians and preservation advocates have expressed disappointment with the decision. Karen Mitchell, a local historian, emphasised the warehouse's importance: "This building is a physical connection to Danville's history and the people who helped build this community."

As demolition approaches, preservation groups plan to document the warehouse and salvage key architectural elements for display or future use, hoping to keep its legacy alive even after the building is gone.

The removal of the tobacco warehouse highlights the ongoing challenge Danville faces in balancing historic preservation with economic growth and urban development. For many, the warehouse's demolition marks the end of an important chapter in the city's story.