

Early fire ravages apartment above bar

Officials unsure what caused blaze above Kildare's Irish Pub

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WEST CHESTER — Borough firefighters were called to an early morning blaze Sunday on the third floor above a popular Gay Street bar.

The blaze started around 3 a.m. in the bedroom of an apartment above Kildare's Irish Pub at 18 W. Gay. All three West Chester fire companies, including Fame, Good Will and First West Chester responded to the fire along with the Goshen Fire Company. Also responding were Good Fellowship Ambulance and Chester County Medic 91, according to officials.

"18 West Gay Street sustained heavy damage, and we had to cut the roof open," said Fire Chief Sean Mitchell. "The fire was brought under control after 45 minutes through rapid intervention."

Police and fire units closed Gay and High streets in downtown West Chester until the fire was brought under control.

Although the fire's exact cause is still under investigation, Kildare's owner Dave Magrogan suspects the fire was caused by a cigarette. Magrogan also owns the two floors of apartments above the bar.

No one was injured in the fire, officials said.

"Management was there, but the bar was not occupied," Magrogan said. "Smoke started pouring out, and the third floor was completely destroyed."

The second-floor apartments were also partially destroyed, and while the second floor was not as extensively damaged, it sustained some fire, smoke and water damage.

"The fire department did a really great job because they covered my 110-year-old bar from Wexford, Ireland, and Guinness host stand that actually came from the Guinness factory over 50-years-ago, and they also covered some of our Irish antiques before they started," Magrogan said. "The greatest thing is that nobody got hurt."

While the fire damaged or destroyed the top two floors of the building, the bar and restaurant were left undamaged, and Magrogan plans to reopen the bar at 4 p.m. today.

"We have already had the (insurance) adjusters out, and we have restoration crews in there doing what they do," he said. "We will go ahead and renovate and repair the apartments."

The fire is under ongoing investigation by the Chester County Fire Marshal's office.