



S. Allen Design

SCOTT AND DIANE
MORRISON ARE SAVING
BUILDINGS AND
REVITALIZING THEIR
COMMUNITY IN
DOWNTOWN COLDWATER

Photos and Story by Phil Eich,
Storyville Social, as part of the
Michigan Main Street Story
Series

We own my father's building. It's the same building where he ran his business, and during the renovation, we actually found my name written on a wall. I like to renovate old buildings—they're a good test of what you can do—but there also were emotions attached to this place.

At first, people were like, 'Why would you want to renovate that?' But we took that deal because we fell in love with the building. I remember coming here for Thanksgiving when his parents owned it, seeing the old cash register and inventory, the old chicken wire his dad used to keep the products safe and all the history here. I just loved it.

Besides, saving these buildings is important to the entire community because when you

lose your urban density, you lose your place, that hometown feel. Think about the mason who laid these bricks by hand! One by one! You lose those bricks, you lose your character, and you can't build buildings like this today.

And in a dense area, with people living downtown, there are almost instant customers for businesses, and all the businesses can support and help each other out.

At one point, the city was talking about tearing Kerr building down – bricks were falling and things like that. So we worked on the financing; we needed multiple sources of grants, and as soon as you have a grant, you have restrictions and complications and time. It was a long process, but the DDA, Tim Hart, and MEDC gave

us a lot of help. It was a long process, but it was awesome.

The problem was that the first floor was not done, so even though the second and third-floor apartments were done, people could see it as a failure. But now we have two breweries there and that benefits the entire community, even if you don't go to breweries.

I didn't grow up here, but Scott did, so at first I felt like an out-of-towner. But I'm just so happy we moved here and raised our kids here.

We wanted to raise a family in a place like this. We're a family that likes to work, and doing good work takes a lifetime. I'm 63, and we haven't peaked yet."

- Scott And Diane Morrison of S. Allen Design, Coldwater, Michigan

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