

Conserving the Catsburg Country Store

Unique Places to Save Is Taking Steps to Disassemble & Conserve a North Durham Landmark

DURHAM, N.C. – April 27th, 2020 – [Unique Places to Save](#), a NC 501(c)3 non-profit, announced today the successful disassembly of Durham's Catsburg Store formerly located on Old Oxford Highway. The organization submitted an application to Horvath and Associates, a land-use planning company based in Durham, to become the new conservators of the store. M.M. Fowler, Inc., the previous owner of the Catsburg Store, conveyed the structure to Unique Places to Save earlier this year.

Although the building has never been formally designated as historic, it is an important landmark in Durham. For over a decade, Dr. Lee Barnes, President of M.M. Fowler, Inc, offered seed funding to anyone who presented a viable plan for removal and conservation of the store.

Tim Sivers, who fielded the applications for Horvath and Associates, stated "People and companies said they could move the store, but when push came to shove, they all backed out. That's when Unique Places to Save came in with a simple plan that could work: disassemble and conserve the store to enable the community to buy time to try to find a new home."

Unique Places to Save, with input from many stakeholders, determined that the building would likely not survive a move. When removing the roof and siding, additional damage was uncovered that confirmed that the structure was in a severely weakened state. A piece-by-piece disassembly allowed the team to collect and wrap important artistic elements, like the iconic Catsburg sign and the hand painted "Catsburg Country Store" lettering.

"The restoration and relocation of the building were estimated to be well in excess of \$250,000, and we were told by both Durham County and the City of Durham that no funds would be committed to relocate or restore the Catsburg Store," Unique Places to Save Board President, Jeff Fisher explained. "We're so thankful that Dr. Barnes and Mr. Sivers gave us the time needed to conserve the structure, and for the weeks of hard work exerted by the local team that carefully disassembled the store."

"The Catsburg Store is an important Durham icon with a complex past. We want to help the community build a new, inspiring story and a community asset," said Ben Quinn, Vice President of Unique Places to Save's Board. "We encourage anyone who cares about the Catsburg Store to get in touch with our nonprofit organization, and help us chart that future together."

If you wish to be a part of the Catsburg Store effort, please send your contact information to Unique Places to Save's Director of Community Engagement, Tana Chitwood, tchitwood@uniqueplacestosave.org. Unique Places to Save, and a few private individuals, fronted the \$30,000 required to disassemble and store the structure. Unique Places to Save will seek support for the conservation costs, as well as the community vision and plan for next steps.

To learn more about the store and the community interest in the property, see:

<http://preservationdurham.org/saving-places-the-catsburg-country-store/>

This is Unique Places to Save's second historic structure project in Durham. A few years ago, Unique Places to Save acquired and moved the Hollow Rock Store to its permanent home at the Hollow Rock Nature Park off Old Erwin Rd. on the Durham and Orange County line. To learn more, see:

<https://www.uniqueplacestosave.org/hollow-rock-store>

To learn more about Unique Places to Save and their efforts, see:

<http://www.uniqueplacestosave.org>

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