

Historic Shin'enKan artifacts sold by Price Tower amid financial struggles

Gannett

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The Price Tower owners confirmed Thursday that they sold the few remaining artifacts from Shin'enKan, Joe Price's Bartlesville home designed and built by architect Bruce Goff, which burned down on Dec. 26, 1996.

The centerpiece of the collection, the Shin'enKan gate that has stood outside the Price Tower for more than 20 years, was sold — cut from its pillars, dismantled and loaded on a truck Thursday morning.



The Shin'enKan gate was put on display outside the Price Tower by the Friends of Shin'enKan in 2002.

The EE learned through an anonymous tip on Wednesday that two men were loading up a box truck with artifacts. Upon arriving Wednesday evening, the EE

reporter was accosted by Price Tower owner Cynthia Blanchard.

"Andy, what the f*** are you doing here? What the f*** are you doing?" Blanchard yelled from across the parking lot. "Are you trying to kill the Tower?"



Shin'enKan gate was sold, dismantled and loaded onto truck headed to Dallas Thursday morning.

At the time, Blanchard initially reported that the gate was being sent off to be restored and wasn't being sold, but confirmed that other pieces from storage and the museum were sold to keep the Price Tower afloat.

The EE observed multiple items, such as furniture and pieces of art, loaded into the box truck on Wednesday. At the time, Blanchard didn't confirm which items were sold.

"These people offered to help, and they are restoring it for us," Blanchard said. "It's long overdue."

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When pressed for further information Thursday, she confirmed that the gate had been sold to save it.

"In truth, the community should be thanking us for saving the gate," Blanchard replied in a text when asked if the gate had been sold. "Yes, someone has offered to help."

Mary Winn Dills, the former curator and caretaker of Shin'enKan, told the EE she was sick about what was happening.

"It's like we are reliving the loss all over again," Dills said. "The gate, phoenix and ashtray were all loaned to the tower by the Friends of Shin'enKan, and now they are gone."

Dills said the Price Tower told her they sold the artifacts and that they would have the first right of refusal once the gate was restored.

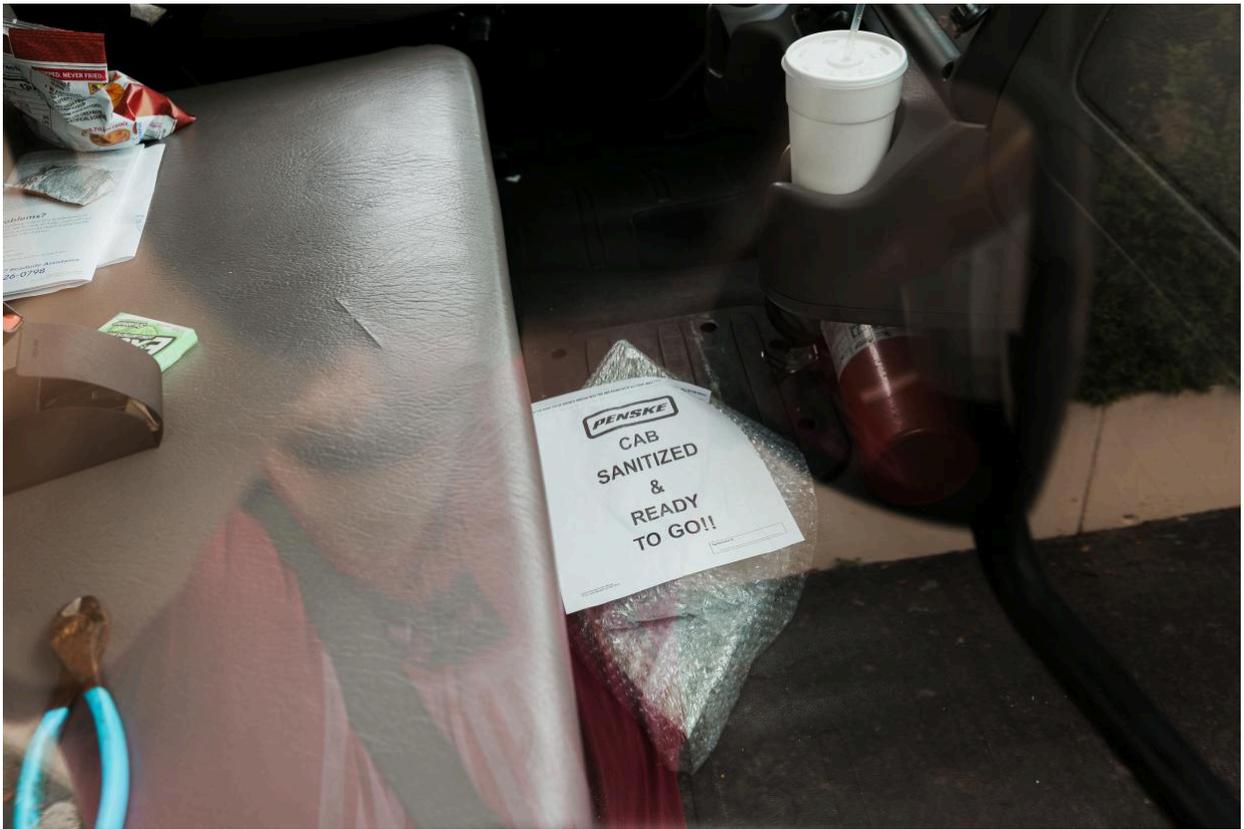
"I'm skeptical we will get it back; if it's gone, what difference does it make?" Dills said, "They don't have any money; how can they pay for the gate to be restored?"



The informational plaque for the Shin'enKan gate was dug up and removed.



Barry Gream, the new owner of the Shin'enKan gate from the Dallas area, highlights the rust repairs required on the structure.



In the cab of the truck, a diamond shaped object that appears to be the ashtray from Shin'enKan designed by Bruce Goff.



A large light was pulled out of the Price Tower storage and loaded onto a truck Wednesday evening.