

UPDATE: Fire Marshal investigating early-morning George Street blaze

News 08:26 AM The Hamilton Spectator

The Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal has been called to investigate an early-morning, multiple-alarm fire that caused extensive damage to a downtown Hamilton home.

Emergency crews were called to 74 George St., between Hess and Caroline streets south, for reports of smoke around 12:23 a.m. and found a "well involved" and fire at the back of the two-storey home, said Hamilton Fire chief fire prevention officer Bob Simpson. There was heavy smoke and flames that extended from the basement to the roof.

There were initial reports that someone could be inside, so the first firefighters on scene began an aggressive search, he said. No one was found and it was later discovered that all three occupants had fled prior to firefighters' arrival. No one was injured.

The fire was upgraded to a multiple-alarm, calling in more crews from across Hamilton.

The house is a middle unit in a row of three, with firefighters attacking the blaze from inside all three units. It took about 45 minutes to bring the "aggressive" fire under control, Simpson said.

The house sustained extensive damage and the adjoining units of 72 and 72 George St. sustained smoke and water damage.

Damage was initially estimated around \$350,000, but the exact figure is not yet clear.

The OFM has been called in to investigate the cause of the fire.

Hamilton police and fire are expected to remain on scene Wednesday morning. The Red Cross has also been called to assist those displaced find somewhere else to stay.

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No one was injured in a fire that gutted the back of a home near Hess Village

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No one was injured after a fire broke out at a house on George Street early Wednesday morning. Damage is estimated at \$350,000. - David Ritchie , Special to the Hamilton Spectator

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