

Ten moments that profoundly changed life in Toronto

By Katherine Ashenburg

Harry Stinson launches a loft revolution



TORONTONIANS HAD BEEN admiring New York's loft living space since Alan Bates invited Jill Clayburgh back to his place in *An Unmarried Woman*, but didn't manage to bring it home until the 1990s. In spite of plummeting land values and rents, the city's politicians were reluctant to give up

dreams of healthy industrial tax base and an army of blue-collar workers in the downtown's long unused factory buildings and warehouses. Then, in 1993, real estate developer Harry Stinson was approached by the owners of the Ce De Candy Company building at Queen and Shaw. The 1907 giant, which once turned out Rockets and Fizzie Hearts, struck Stinson as "the iconic loft-large, with regularly recurring windows, and in a marginal area of town," where no neighbourhood groups would throw up a fuss. The five-storey, block-long structure would translate into 121



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Harry Stinson plans boutique hotel, condos, commercial units at Cannon Knitting Mills

The developer who turned the 1894 Stinson School into condos now owns the 1854 Cannon Knitting Mills and is planning the derelict site's transformation.

Harry Stinson sealed the \$3-million deal for the sprawling group of old buildings on Cannon and Mary streets in the heart of the Beasley neighbourhood late Wednesday afternoon.

"We're calling it the Beasley Park Lofts," Stinson told *The Spectator*. "We're openly highlighting the neighbourhood."

Stinson plans to build a boutique hotel, bar/restaurant, condos and commercial units when he redevelops the 110,000-square-foot property.

He estimates the project will cost between \$20 million and \$30 million.

"I would say people would be moving in, in a year and a half."

In 2013, the Toronto developer built the Stinson School Lofts in the central Hamilton neighbourhood of the same name. He's also selling lofts at the old Gibson School on Barton Street East.

Who would end up with the Cannon Knitting Mills has been the subject of speculation for months.

The group of seven buildings was listed in late January for \$2.4 million.

In February, the city announced in a report that the owner of the property, Forum Equity Partners, had a "firm deal" to sell.

"I would say it's a catalyst for the Beasley neighbourhood," Glen Norton, the city's manager of urban renewal, said of Stinson's plans Wednesday.

Area residents had hoped to see something that would provide more housing and generate nearby jobs, such as a restaurant, Norton said.

"I'm glad he has plans and has a vision moving forward."



Developer Harry Stinson hopes to redevelop the Cannon Knitting Mills seen here in a historic photo as condos, a boutique hotel, restaurant and commercial space.



Central atrium will be converted into an event space plus an interior courtyard.