

The Valley Breeze

North Smithfield Blackstone Woonsocket Edition



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City officials hoping upscale housing will fuel downtown revitalization

WOONSOCKET – Word of the existence of more upscale living in Woonsocket has reached the ears of not only developers and people living outside the city but it seems even the birds know something.

A visit to the second floor of an old mill building on Allen Street, which is slated to become The Landing, a 36-unit condominium project whose plans boast a two-story atrium, reveals a hawk has taken residence in the building.

No ordinary pigeons for this place.

The Lofts at Allen Street is a redevelopment project slated to begin in April. The development will be located on the street which runs by the River Island Condominiums and the Boilermakers pub, and is situated between the Blackstone River and the Truman Drive, better known as the Main Street by-pass.

Plans presented by Brian Kelleher, partner in The Aspen Group of North Reading, Mass., show a 64-unit condominium complex within the Allen Street Historic District. A mix of loft-inspired and traditional layouts will be built in the 42,000-square-foot building once home to the Sydney Worsted Co. Mill built in 1910 and the 18,000 square foot former E.P. Herbert Knitting Mill built in 1922.



Kate Duggan, above, Principal Broker for Essex Properties is the exclusive broker for the project.



A third building will be newly constructed on the site.

Preconstruction prices start at \$169,000 for 700 square feet.

“This is an exceptional property with two distinctive and structurally fit historic buildings ideally dimensioned for condominiums, said Kelleher. “Since we own both sides of Allen Street down to the Court Street Bridge, with the Blackstone River on one side, and Truman Drive and the planned bike path on the other, we have an opportunity to create a special neighborhood that will be an integral part of the on-going resurgence of downtown Woonsocket.”

The first phase of the project will be the renovation of the last building on the left of Allen Street which will be known as Canal House.

The two-story building will be renovated into 16 one- and two-bedroom loft-style units ranging in size from 700 to 1,250 square feet.

They will feature oversized east and west-facing windows providing lots of natural light as well as unobstructed views of the river and the city, according to Kate Duggan, principal broker, at Essex Properties.

“We’re trying to preserve the architectural integrity of the building,” said Kelleher. “We’re trying to preserve as much as we can.”

The landing will be the largest building in the project with 36 studio, one and two bedroom units measuring 620 to 1,460 square feet.

A two-story atrium is planned on the first floor of the building as is a multi-purpose meeting room on the second floor for those who may work at home and need a meeting space to meet with clients. Storage units are also planned on the lower level of this building as well as a landscaped river walkway overlooking the Blackstone River along the east side of the property.

Allen Street

The last building will be known as Gate House and will be a newly-constructed three-story building housing 12 one- and two-bedroom units ranging in size from 850 to 1,100 square feet, according to Kelleher.

Part of the plans is to raze several buildings which are “structurally obsolete and have no real historical significance,” said Kelleher. “Some had historical significance but were too far gone to save.”

Also, the by-pass will be reduced to one lane so that the bike path can run alongside the condominiums.

Kelleher is not a stranger to Woonsocket. He originally began the Mill Street condominium project and also was an integral part in the building of Thundermist Health Center’s new home on Clinton Street, according to Jeff Polucha, Woonsocket’s director of economic development.

The developer said he likes working with the city and is thankful for the state

renovation tax program which he said allows him to come in and develop areas like Allen Street.

Polucha sees the project as a natural extension of the revitalization taking place on Main Street. Within the next 30-90 days, four new food establishments will be opening which will cater to people living and working in the area.

On tap to open is Vintage, an upscale restaurant whose menu, according to Executive Chef Brian Counihan, will be a progressive American fare.

The two-story restaurant has a contemporary feel with copper inlaid tables, cushioned and upholstered chairs and walls bathed in warm colors of green downstairs and blue upstairs. Contemporary sculptures can be found to complement the décor as well as innovative lighting fixtures that both capture one’s eye and imagination.

Two lounge areas with sectional furniture and lots of coffee tables on which to set a drink and a snack abound, especially in the upstairs lounge.

Owner Brian McGroarty said entrees will be priced in the \$15-\$20 range.

Further up Main Street, trades people are feverishly at work on Papa Nasuti’s Deli which will feature Boar’s Head deli meats; The Cakery, a café/bakery with a concentration on pastries, and Main Street Café which will serve breakfast and lunch.

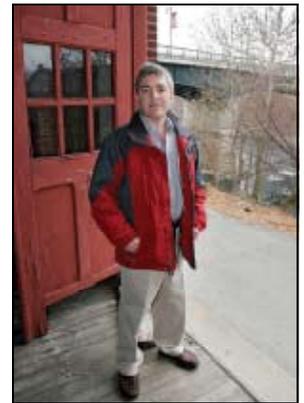
Polucha said he is hoping other businesses will begin infiltrating the area complementing the ambience the new businesses are trying to nurture.

“In two years you won’t recognize the city,” said Polucha.

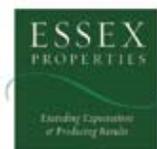
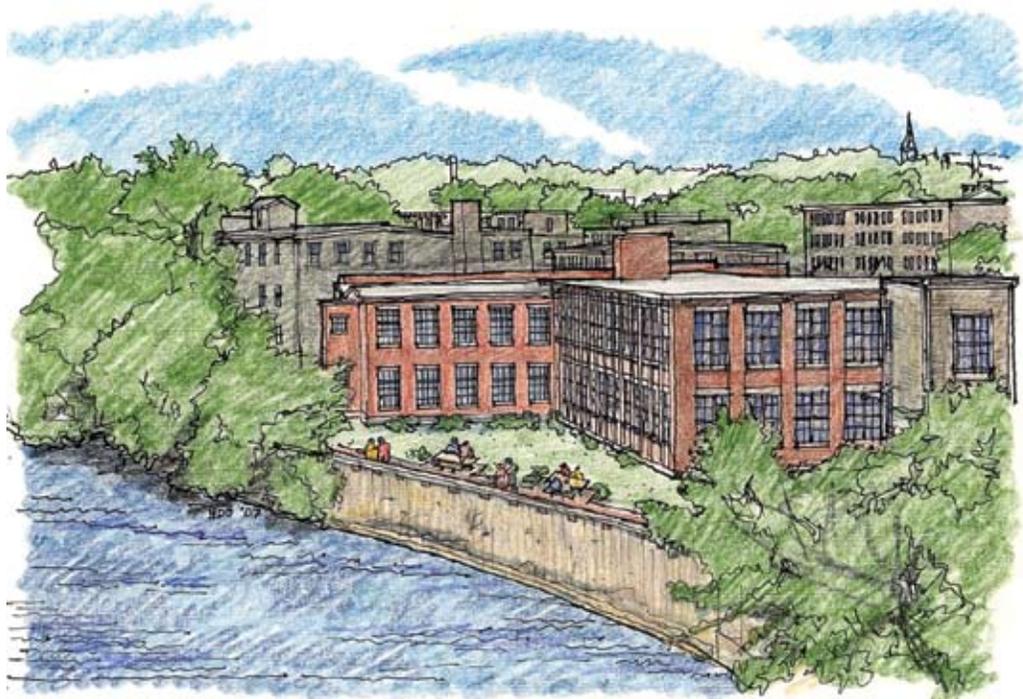


Future location of The Landing.

“...we have an opportunity to create a special neighborhood that will be an integral part of the on-going resurgence of downtown Woonsocket.”



Brian Kelleher, president of The Aspen Group, stands at the entrance of the cargo doors on the second floor of the future Canal House condominium. Kelleher is renovating the building into 16 one and two bedroom loft-style units.



www.allenstreetlofts.com