



BEACH FRONT: A storefront gardening business and other retail stores will anchor the Green House low-rise loft condominium project opposite Kew Gardens — the site of a huge fire more than a year ago, below.

Beaches condo to rise from ashes of six-alarm fire

BY ELVIRA CORDILEONE
REAL ESTATE REPORTER

Just over a year ago, it took 100 firefighters and 30 fire trucks more than six hours to douse a blaze that destroyed a residential/commercial building opposite Kew Gardens in the Beaches.

From the ashes of that fire will rise 12 residential lofts, behind and beside a new street-level storefront called Green House.

Designer/builder Bob Mitchell got involved in the project because his wife was looking for a new location for her Queen St. gardening business. And voilà, in about a year, Bev Mitchell, will be moving to her new location.

Mitchell's partner in the project is property owner Joseph Bordieri. Until the fire, he ran an upholstery business on the site and lived in an apartment above his store.

"All our belongings were gone," says Bordieri, who was also forced to find a temporary location for both his business and home.

But he plans to move back to the Beaches neighbourhood he has called home for years. He plans to make one of the lofts his home and will also move his business to

the new building.

Mitchell describes the project as a modern interpretation of a West Coast look and says it was a design challenge to configure the building so nine of the 12 units overlook the park and the lake.

"It will have heavy stone banding on the ground floor, but even the upper floors will have a street character," he adds.

As for the interiors, whatever the buyer wants, the buyer gets. Want to move the kitchen to the front, the bathroom to the other side? No problem.

"We customize everything we do," says Mitchell. "It gives you unique spaces because you're designing it for yourself."

And he's going to use reinforced concrete to make the building as fireproof and soundproof as possible.

The two-storey units will have 17-foot ceilings in primary living spaces, an interior mezzanine and a walkout to a large, private roof garden. They will come with individual high-efficiency gas furnaces, central air, fireplaces and maple flooring.

Units are 712 to 1,900 square feet and priced from \$239,900 to \$499,900. Maintenance fees are \$195 a month. On the mar-



DAVID COOPER FILE PHOTO/TORONTO STAR

ket barely a week, Mitchell said half the units have already been sold.

Mitchell & Associates has been creating new homes in Toronto since 1982, when it designed, developed and built the first legal loft conversion in the former Dominion Felt Co. on Shanly St.

The firm won the Ontario Renews Award for the project and has since converted factories, churches and other institutional buildings into residential condominiums, including 670 Richmond St. West and 15 Glen Manor Dr.

For information, call 416-698-7174 or visit www.Mitchell-lofts.com.



New condo rises from ashes

Nov. 12, 2000 is a date Joe Bordieri will never forget. At about 10:30 in the evening a fire started in the transformer box outside 2012 Queen St. E. Six hours later, Joe and his family had lost everything they owned, including Joe's business, Vienna Upholstery, which was on the main level of the building, and the apartment where he and his wife had lived for so many years and raised their family.

"You never think it can happen to you. It's always going to be the other guy," said Joe. After a year, Joe is still adjusting. "It hits me once and a while...the pictures, the memorabilia, even clothes, they're all gone...it'll never be the same...There are some tools [used in his upholstery business] that are so old, they can't be replaced."

Bordieri and his family found another place to live, and he moved his business to a new, temporary location on Kingston Road near Midland.

Now, however, Joe has something to look forward to. Later this year Joe will be moving both his family and his business back to Queen Street — to a new, and quite impressive residential/commercial addition to the streetscape across from Kew Gardens.

Joe's partner in this venture is award-win-

ning builder and local resident Bob Mitchell. Bob has designed a three story condominium to replace the building lost by fire, which will include 12 residential lofts with two businesses on the street level. The lofts, which will have 17 foot ceilings in the main living area, and walkouts to a private roof garden, range in size from 712 to 1,900

sq. ft. and are priced from \$239,900 to \$499,900. Nine of the units have a lake view. But don't get too excited. Mitchell barely had time to allow the ink to dry on the final plans before the units were all scooped up.

One of the stores on the main floor of the building will house Vienna Upholstery. The other business will be Gardenscape, which is currently located on Queen near Beech, and needs a larger space. Not coincidentally, the owner of Gardenscape is Bev Mitchell, Bob's wife.

While the residential units will not be ready for about a year, Joe said that he hopes that he can move Vienna Upholstery back to Queen Street some time this summer. While he can hardly wait to get back into the thick of things again, Joe did have one concern. "I drove my van down there recently...Are you sure they haven't made the parking spots smaller?"

By Carole Stimmell

