

REVITALIZATION

# Gastown heritage project attracts new business and residents to restored area

\$46-million award-winning development includes residential suites, offices and retail space

BY BRIAN MORTON  
VANCOUVER SUN

For Fredrik Orling, it's a no-brainer: Opening his home-accessories store in Gastown three weeks ago was a smart move.

The icing on the cake? Setting up shop in a newly renovated heritage building at 28 Water St. is already paying off in growing sales.

"Our products are designed and produced by family-run businesses in Europe," Orling, co-owner of Orling & Wu, said in an interview Thursday.

"We believed Gastown was the perfect match for our brands. We wanted to be part of the revitalization and rejuvenation of the area.

"And it's working out great. We feel we're already contributing to the area and we're meeting our targets financially."

Orling and partner Julie Wu are leasing space in Gastown's latest revitalization project, five historic buildings at the corner of Carrall and Water Streets that were restored by Vancouver developer The Salient Group in a seven-year project.

The restoration, part of the Gastown Revitalization Project, cost about \$46 million, with the aim of keeping as much of the historic facades and character as possible while modernizing the buildings to 21st-century standards.

All told, 144,000 square feet was made available for retail, office and residential space in the Alhambra, Garage, Cordage, Grand and Terminus, among Vancouver's oldest buildings.

The last building was completed in December 2009 and 60 to 70 per cent of the retail



Julie Wu and Fredrik Orling of Orling & Wu in their home accessories store in a newly renovated heritage building in Vancouver's historic Gastown on Water Street. Sales are already growing.

and office space has been leased.

Project architect Mark Ostry, with Acton Ostry Architects Inc., was one of several people involved in the project who toured the finished buildings Thursday.

"This has already had an impact on Gastown's revitalization," Ostry said of the project, which has received the 2010 Canadian Green Building Award from *Sustainable Architecture & Building* magazine and a 2010 Lieutenant-Governor's Award gold medal in architecture.

"This is the nerve centre of Gastown. It was a real labour

of love, a very complicated project."

Ostry also noted that before the restoration started, nobody lived in the buildings, which were run down and had few commercial tenants.

"We doubled the density [of the buildings], but you wouldn't know that."

He said the key to the project is that while it contributes to the area's revitalization through careful rehabilitation and expansion of heritage buildings, it did not displace anyone or negatively impact the historic character.

The restoration project includes, among other things, a

lovely courtyard behind one of the main buildings and a hallway leading to an elevator dominated by original tin ceiling panels, removed and restored for decorative purposes.

"Part of the challenge was preserving the heritage, and yet bringing it back to life with new uses," said Donald Luxton, president of Heritage Vancouver Society. "This is the birthplace of Vancouver."

Leanore Sali, executive director of the Gastown Business Improvement Society, said the development and others like it are bringing a lot of new residents and businesses to the area.

"And these are young, dynamic entrepreneurs who are changing the face of Gastown."

One new resident is Adrian Keough, who moved into a converted loft apartment.

"It's amazingly quiet," Keough said of his south-facing home. "And I love the area. It's changed so much. Now, you have everything you need here."

ARLEN REDEKOP/PNG

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The Byrnes Block has been a key part of Vancouver's historic Gastown community. Restorations are continuing in the area.

ARLEN REDEKOP/PNG

OIL LEAK

## Enbridge to begin fixing ruptured Michigan pipe

BY SHAUN POLCZER

Enbridge Inc. could start replacing the damaged section of pipe responsible for an oil leak in Michigan as early as this weekend, company officials said Thursday.

According to company president Pat Daniel and senior vice-president Steve Wuori, the site of the break has been excavated and various U.S. government agencies will begin inspecting the damaged section of pipe starting this morning. Pending the outcome of those initial examinations, the pipe section will be cut out and sent to Washington, D.C., for further testing and analysis.

"It could be as early as late tomorrow," Daniel said from Marshall, Mich.

However, the Enbridge CEO said he still has "no idea" when the line, which ships about 190,000 barrels per day of Canadian oilsands production to refineries in the U.S. Midwest and southern Ontario, will be reopened.

In addition to the National Transportation Safety Board, the pipe break has to be inspected by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the State of Michigan and Enbridge's own inspection crews before the ruptured section will be shorn with hydraulic cutters and lifted out of the ground.

Susan Hedman, a spokeswoman for the EPA said the organization continues to investigate Enbridge for possible infractions or negligence related to the July 26 rupture that spilled about 18,000 barrels into the fast-moving Kalamazoo River.

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CONSTRUCTION

## June good for building permits in B.C.

A small surge in residential building-permit applications in June pushed British Columbia to the second-highest month this year for stated building intentions.

Builders took out \$612.2 million worth of building permits for new homes in June.

Add \$248 million in non-residential permits and the \$860.2-million total made it

the best month for the province since February, when builders took out \$876.5 million in permits.

Keith Sashaw, president of the Vancouver Regional Construction Association, said the numbers were encouraging, but cautioned that the construction sector may see numbers ease in the coming months.

"The underlying trend

remains level for the local construction sector, though some softness is coming in the residential and government sectors with declining housing sales and the ending of [government] stimulus plans," Sashaw said.

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With a file from Derrick Penner, Vancouver Sun

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