

By W. Brice McVicar

THE INTELLIGENCER

Once scheduled for a meeting with a wrecking ball, downtown's Filliter Building has been given a reprieve with the opening of the Boretski Gallery.

Located on Front Street, the building was erected in 1846 by Erastus Holden, manager of the Bank of Upper Canada. The four-storey red brick building was purchased in 2002 by Tom Boretski for \$30,000 after the city had purchased it in 1996 for \$89,000 with the intention of tearing it down to create a new entrance from Victoria Street to parking spaces along the Moira River.

Sitting in the building's ground floor which now houses an antique, collectibles and art store, Tom and his wife, Marina, said they were happy to save the building and restore it to its original condition.

"Everything in here is original," Tom said. He pointed to the hardwood floors and added the slate floors in other areas of the building came from the site of what is now Christ Church across the Moira River.

"I wanted to save this building. The Intelligencer wrote its 31st piece saying if a good Samaritan didn't save the building it would be destroyed, so I decided to save it," he said.

The Boretskis have a history of saving and refurbishing old buildings as they own a stone building on the Moira River which they converted into a triplex; they own a Victorian home on Bridge Street which has been turned into a four-plex and their Point Anne home was built in the 1800s.

"To me," said Tom, "I love it if it's old. It started with old furniture and old cars. It's a natural thing for me.

We buy (the antiques) and fix them up and sell them here."

Tom's love of antiques began, he said, as a teenager when he worked at an auction house.

The opening of the Boretski Gallery also keeps a downtown tradition alive as Marina, whose maiden name is Yoetes, is the third generation of her family to own a down-

town business. Marina's grandfather owned Uptown Billiards and her father, Bill, owned AQ Finances.

Marina's art — which is available for purchase at the store — ranges in style, she said. She began painting in 1980 as she "fell into it in university."

As years passed, she said, she experimented with various styles and mediums and eventually developed

her own style.

She still practises in a variety of mediums, but said watercolour is her preferred artistic method.

"It's a very eclectic style of paintings," she said.

The Boretski Gallery will be open Monday to Friday. The business hours will be posted in the near future.