

‘Nuisance’ motel in Canton demolished; what could replace it

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CANTON, Ohio (WJW) – An excavator tore through the shell of the former [Canton Inn](#) on Monday, erasing what the city calls decades of frustration with the property arising from crime, drug activity and other nuisance conditions.

The Motel, originally a Travel Lodge, was built in 1960 on the property where the stately mansion belonging to Canton Manufacturing Pioneer Joseph Dick once stood.

But in recent years, residents say it has become an epicenter for crime and other problems that spread out into the neighboring community.

“That hotel had every kind of drug; you could get any kind of drug in that hotel any time. Prostitution went on since the 70s that I know of,” said Dave Beisel whose family has lived in the area for 150 years.

“The people were standing on that wall. On the other side, drugs just up and down, up and down, up and down, in and out, in and out, 24-7,” said Reggie Brown.

“It was a place sometimes early on for people to stay temporarily until they could find housing, and then it grew to be a place for criminal activity,” said Wayne Slease whose church hosts the Shorb area Development corporation called Canton for All People that purchased the Canton Inn last year with the intention of closing it and tearing it down.

Pastor Don Ackerman said he brokered the deal in 2021 envisioning a new 54-unit affordable living apartment complex with commercial space and job training.

Along with the Canton Community Improvement Corporation, the economic development arm of the city, intends to help erase decades-old problems with crime and replace the troubling eyesore with housing and retail.

On Monday, many from the neighborhood happily watched as the old Canton Inn came down.

“I’m kind of glad it’s coming down, you know, maybe there will be something good in this area, you know make it look good.,” said Bruce McFall.

“It’s good that it’s coming down because there’s hope, there’s hope now with it being gone that pastor Don Ackerman is going to go ahead and get something good for the community,” said Slease.

Ackerman said an application for tax credits to develop the property is due in February, and he expects to know if it's been approved by May of 2023.

In the meantime, he says about half of the Board members of Canton for All People currently live in the neighborhood and have already been working to revitalize the community, building affordable housing, building a grocery store, and feeding those in need.

“Oh, this is heaven! I’m glad it’s gone, all the drugs and all the prostitution stuff that’s been in there. I’m so glad they are doing that; it’s a good thing,” said Brown.

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