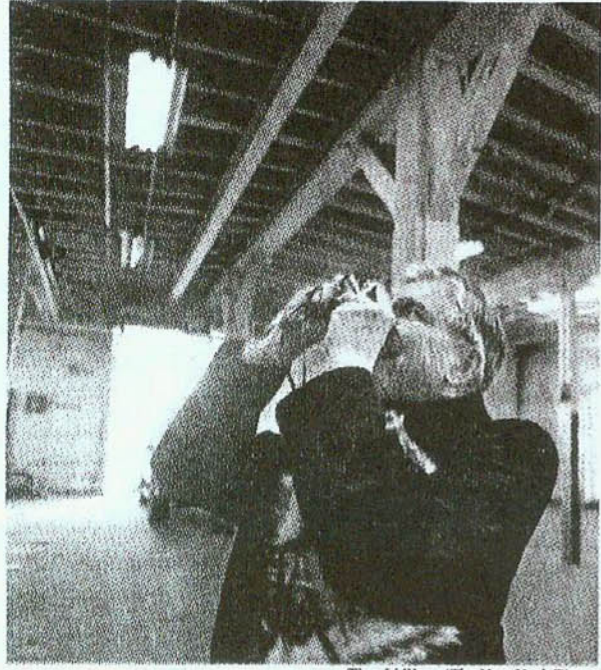


SKETCH PAD



Ting-Li Wang/The New York Times

A LONG, DARK INTERIOR

The architect Hugh Hardy agreed to come up with a vision for this stable in Long Island City.

Reinventing A Stable As an Essay in Light In Light

By TRACIE ROZHON

WITH the cacophony of pile drivers and backhoes in the background, Hugh Hardy and Darlene Fridstein emerged from their rented black sedan and surveyed one of New York City's fastest-gentrifying neighborhoods: the waterfront of Long Island City, Queens.

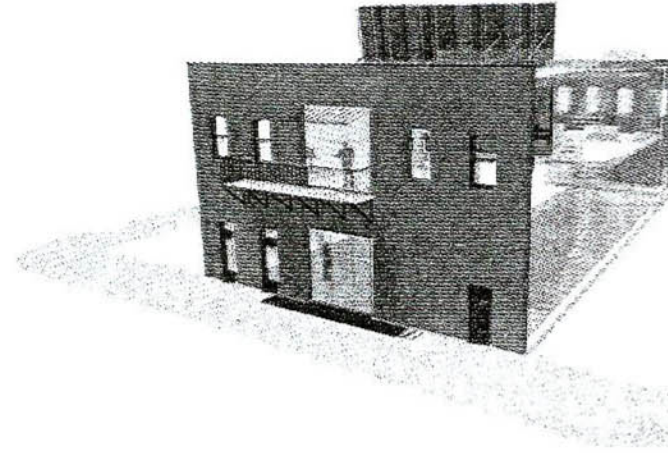
The two-story red stable they came to see, for sale for \$3 million — to any enterprising artist, writer, small businessman or anyone else interested in urban pioneering — possesses one of the world's best views of the Manhattan skyline.

At least for the moment. Those pile drivers are, fortunately or unfortunately, hard at work on a series of condominium buildings that will line the Queens waterfront opposite the United Nations; no one is quite clear about what will eventually be the view from the 10,000-square-foot stable. But at least in the short term, it looks as if there will still be a stunning view over rooftops to the Queensboro Bridge — and at the very least, glimpses of the Chrysler Building immediately across the way.

And Mr. Hardy, the architect who transformed the New Amsterdam Theater and Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan, and who is working on lofts on West 21st Street, was about to remake this huge, plain-fronted empty stable building into a first-floor art gallery with second-floor living quarters. "After all," he pointed out, "your best view is from the second floor." Ms. Fridstein, who works for his firm, would design the interiors — designs imagined, and transferred to paper.

But first, they walked around the block, past still-operating freight companies and plumbing contractors, past Gem Metal Spinning and Stamping, past piles of sand, past aluminum-sided row houses and lovely

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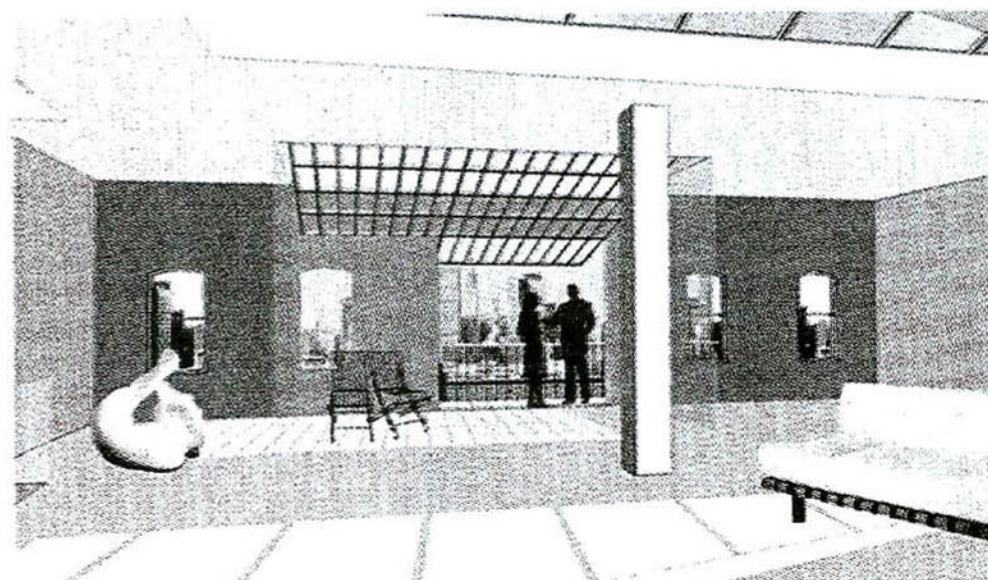
INCREDIBLE VIEWS

The stable, at left, is shown in a rendering with an art gallery on the first floor and a living space above, with skylights and a smaller footprint to accommodate a long narrow pool in the back. The best views from the building are on the roof, where Hugh Hardy, the architect, and Darlene Fridstein, the designer, considered the possibilities.



SKETCH PAD

Reinventing a Stable As an Essay in Light



Continued From Page 1

late-19th-century brick buildings with giant cornices intact and — wait, can it be? — a spanking new Internet bistro. Ah, progress!

The real estate brokers made jokes. With the area rezoned for residential use as well as manufacturing, they assumed the stable would be razed to build condos, although they mentioned that an artist had been very interested in buying it at one time. What about that deserted coffee shop on the corner, adjacent to the stable — Anna's Italian Coffee — might that be for sale? "Well, they're sure not selling any coffee there anymore," one broker remarked, wryly.

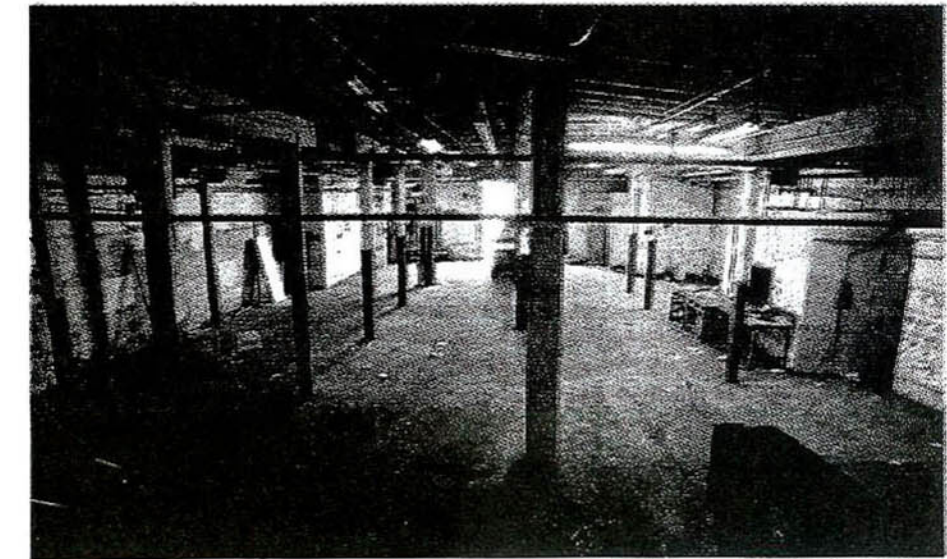
Back in the disused stable building, with its gutsy wood beams and tarred-over skylights (four, including

two really big ones), Mr. Hardy speculated on the building's age. The brokers, from Greiner-Maltz, a large Queens firm that specializes in commercial properties, guessed 1940. Mr. Hardy said he thought the first floor, especially, was much older, perhaps the late 1800's. Walking to the darkest part of the first floor, he wondered whether that section, possibly added on, could come off again, creating a courtyard oasis open to the sky: outdoor space, a rare backyard piazza in this still-gritty neighborhood.

Exactly one week later, Mr. Hardy and his staff produced plans for a wowie-zowie renovation of the space, as well as a verbal blueprint of the couple who would live in it.

"He's abandoned Merrill Lynch and she's left her job with Cosmo," the architect postulated. "They've embarked on their second careers; he's a sculptor with a ground-floor gallery. He designs his sculpture with a computer. She's writing an extraordinary book about his work."

As to the plan for the stable, "it's an essay in light," he said. "We've opened up the hayloft," Mr. Hardy continued. "We've done a little glassy balcony in the front,



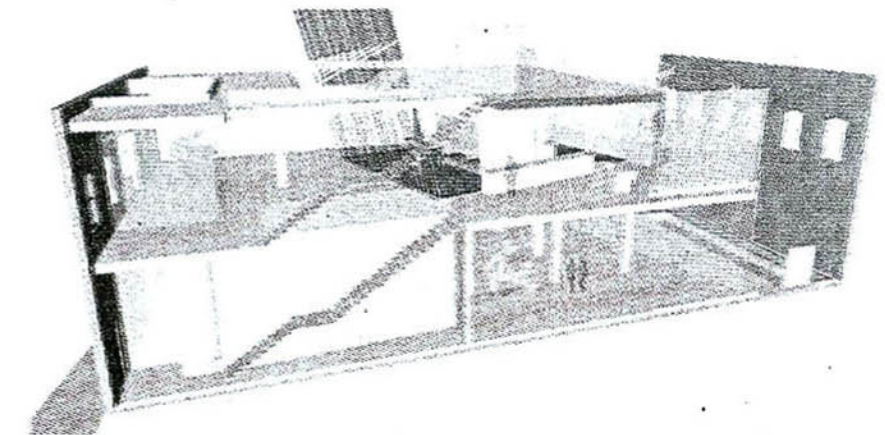
Photographs by Ting-Li Wang/The New York Times

OPENING IT UP

The architect let light into the long dark space by cutting a hole in the roof and slashing through diagonally, using a translucent sheath of plastic. The whole second floor except for the toilet is open. The roof is a terrace, providing the best place to take in the expanse of the waterfront and Manhattan.

The Specs

ARCHITECT
Hugh Hardy of H3
Hardy Collaboration
Architecture
(212) 677-6030
PROPERTY
An old stable at
47-05 Fifth Street
Long Island City,
Queens, N.Y.
Price: \$3 million
RENOVATION COST:
\$1.5 million to \$1.7
million, not including
furnishings
REAL ESTATE AGENTS
WHO SHOWED IT:
Michael Prange and Ken
Dowd of Greiner-Maltz
(718) 786-5050



Renderings by Matthew Jogan and Natalie Hyde, H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture

somewhat subdued openings that take place here, they can throw a wild party!"

To bring light to the center of the building, the architect went beyond the existing skylights, untarred and made to gleam. He cut a hole in the roof and slashed through diagonally, with what he called "a great translucent sheath of some extruded plastic material, with little cells in it for insulation, so the couple doesn't freeze." The light would bounce around the space, softening the light in the only real bedroom.

The whole second floor space except for the toilet would be open. "After all, it'll just be the two of them; they're used to each other," he said. "When they take a

with sort of an Italian feeling, to admire the staggering view. We carved out the back, and threw it away. The couple now has a long and narrow pool with a spigot — a fountain — a tree and a fabulous spiral staircase. After the

shower, the water flows down out of the sky, and along the floor. They are the kind of couple that doesn't need middle-class enclosures."

Wherever there are partitions, they would be made of the recycled beams removed for the backyard piazza.

In the ideal renovation, the roof, which would always have the best view, would be turned into a terrace — for more intimate parties, perhaps.

The interior, Ms. Fridstein said, would be sparse, but elegant. "She's a French furniture collector; there's no matchy-matchy in this space," she said. "They like tables and chairs from the 30's and 40's; Jean Prouvé; beautiful iron folding chairs. The carpets are woven from combinations of linens and silks, with a slight sheen."

She paused. "There will be no dog."

Wherever they are in the building, the new owners will hear the fountain, Mr. Hardy concluded, standing, looking at the finished renderings tacked up on the board in his conference room. "They will always have the experience of water, the tranquility of water," he said.

And no barking.

ON THE WEB

An audio interview with Hugh Hardy, and more photos: nytimes.com/realestate