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<https://www.bizjournals.com/kansascity/news/2017/03/08/butch-rigby-bitterman-candy-gillham-renovation.html>

## Sweet deal: Developer will transform Bitterman candy complex

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Butch Rigby, a developer who has played key roles in the revitalization of the Crossroads Arts District and East Brookside neighborhoods, has made a sweet deal that will increase his impact in another part of Kansas City.

Rigby said he recently spent \$615,000 to acquire the former Bitterman Family Confections complex at 3107-3111 Gillham Road in the North Hyde Park neighborhood.

That neighborhood is part of a broader swath of Midtown where Rigby and others are beginning to create a new wave of redevelopment.

Rigby's new project there involves three adjoining two-story buildings, which total about 37,000 square feet. The buildings, two with brick exteriors and one with polka dots, previously were occupied by a combination candy and antique store and the Bitterman family's wholesale candy distribution network.

Founded in 1936, the family candy business grew from a small gumball vending operation to a national distributor in the small-batch confection niche. But Alan Peterman, who led the business, decided to retire after selling the Bitterman brand in March 2016 to Lenexa-based Sunflower Food Co.



ROB ROBERTS | KCBJ

Now that developer Butch Rigby has purchased the Bitterman Family Confections complex at 3107-3711 Gillham Road, he plans to renovate the building and fill vacant space with a restaurant, small shops and perhaps artist studios.

Rigby, who has long been acquainted with the Bitterman family, said he bought the building with the idea of making modest repairs so that he can offer middle-market rents for artisans and small businesses, including a restaurant.

Holy Cow Market and Music, will remain in the south portion of the complex, which used to house a Nash car dealership, Rigby said.

Besides a restaurant, new tenants could include small shops and second-floor artist studios.

"I want it to be driven by people who would like to come in and do some of their own buildout," Rigby said, explaining that such a scenario would keep his costs and tenants' rents down. "It will be a cool, little, fun building that doesn't have to have a full \$2 million buildout."

Rigby plans to spend \$2 million renovating another building he has bought in the area, the vacant Luzier Building, a historic two-structure complex at 316 Gillham Plaza, which sits on the fringe of the North Hyde Park neighborhood. Rigby plans to lease the ground floor to restaurant and retail tenants and lease the top floor as offices.

### **MORE: Bitterman project is one wave of a rising tide in Midtown area**

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