

Frontier House to offer restaurant, short-term and longer rentals



From left: Another look at the future restaurant space. • The marvelous top floor. • The first-floor staircase. • The exterior of 460 Center St., Lewiston.

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 new restaurant tenant was announced in January, and construction has ramped up since then.
 "A building like this – 200 years old – a lot of unknowns, a lot of modifications were done over the years, so, peeling back those layers opened up a lot of stuff that we had to address," Fox said. "It could've been a structural issue somewhere, something – there's been a lot of that work in here to turn things up. It's a lot of exploratory work, which takes more time. Decisions have to be made. You've got to get the

proper consultants in to review things that you find, and address them properly."
 "Once you get to finishes, it's generally a lot quicker work. You can see plumbing rough has already happened in most cases. Electrical is about to happen, too. Once the stuff is set and they're boarding the walls – all the frosting – all the flooring and the paint and the trim – that stuff all generally happens pretty quick."
 "At this stage now, with the unknowns generally identified and addressed, I think we're in a position for an early-summer completion. Hopefully not too



much (phasing). I know that the restaurant's anxious to open, hopefully, by then – if not sooner. And I think we're in a position here to be able to do the same with the residential units."
 Fox noted, "We've got different groups of contractors working on both spaces, different templates, obviously; completely different finish work and scope. But they should pretty well align right now, if not right in alignment, maybe within a month of each other."
Frontier House basement
 Across from the kitchen and side porch door is a staircase leading down to the basement. A row of bathrooms will be found to the far right (in and just past the former birthday party room), as will another entrance (across from former outdoor playground area).
 The rathskeller is to the left, and the space will tentatively have a long seating area that is sure to be popular with guests.
Frontier House upper levels
 The "upstairs is all framed now, with the residential units" on the second floor. This is where longer-term rentals and apartments will be offered, with the units "a little bit bigger" than what's on the third floor, Fox said.
 One of the building's largest

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Frontier House photos

spaces is right off the staircase, a two-bedroom unit with one bath and a kitchen area.

A historic door and other fixtures will be preserved, as main and smaller hallways accent this level. Additional fireplaces may be reused here, too.

A former ballroom will retain its shape (no additional walls), and be converted into a one-bedroom unit. Fox said the New York's State Historic Preservation Office requested this space retain more of its original look. That said, Fox noted the unit has been designed with different treatments to break up the space and offer a "more open feeling" typical of a "downtown loft."

The Frontier House's third floor will offer "hotel-room-style" vacation and short-term rental units.
 Here again, main hallways are woven together with smaller corridors to blend history with functionality. This level also will include a common laundry room.

The fourth floor is another highlight of the building. It will be converted into a single long-term unit.



come up the stairs, you'll be in a short hallway. There will be a coat closet on the left. Then, as you continue down, you've got a bedroom on your right-hand side here, a living space in the middle, and then the bedroom on the other side, with a bathroom on the back."

Telling the tale
 Fox said the pathway to the Frontier House's future has not been easy to pave.

"I think initially, when we came through, we were hoping to not do this level of peeling the layers away, but it became clear once we started to really get into things that it became a necessary thing to do," he said. "It just became apparent that that's something that we

needed to do, to do it right." Ellicott Development's website describes the business as "a full-service real estate management and development company with over 40 years of experience," and with "extensive resources" to develop property.

But even still, Fox said, "It's a daunting task" rehabilitating an historically designated building.

"The types of projects we've completed are wide-ranging," he said. "We've done a lot of historic rehabilitation work similar to this. So, I think it fits well in our wheelhouse. And our knowledge in dealing with these things and knowing what to anticipate. We've got the experience and everything to be able



to take it on and do it right."

With the Frontier House set to reopen in its 200th year, Fox said plans are in place to chronicle the site's history and rehabilitation, partly to help guests appreciate the steps taken to honor the building's legacy while also making the structure viable for 2024 and beyond.

"Yeah, I think part of that is

on us, through our documentation of it, and being able to show before and after, I think, for those that don't know what it was before," he said. "I think a lot of people – our residents and our tenants ... in the residential units – may not be existing local residents who know the history of this place. More certainly, those frequenting the restaur-

ant space may know what it was before, in its last restaurant use as a McDonald's, and know what it looked like. So, I think they'll have a strong appreciation for seeing the transformation."

He added, "The history will not be lost. I think the way we document it – I know Fairbanks, too – I know they've done a lot of historic research, as well, and are trying to embrace the history of the building through their space."

"We have a commitment to making sure that that doesn't get lost – the history of the building – it's very important. Simply showing the visual before and after, I think, will be telling, for sure."

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