

# Former WTS building for sale in Lewiston

Hall selling unique waterfront property; Talarico running point

**BY JOSHUA MALONI**

GM/Managing Editor

One of the Village of Lewiston's most unique properties is for sale.

Gary Hall is selling the former DeChantal Hall at 435 N. Second St. The almost 15,000-square-foot property was recently used as the headquarters for Waste Technology Services, a non-asset-based waste and by-product management company. Northstar Recycling Company LLC announced its acquisition of WTS last fall.

The building offers an assortment of rooms suitable for offices, recreation or lodging, as well as a gymnasium. There is ample parking and, out back, a majestic view of the Niagara River – as well as green space leading up to the water (267 feet of frontage).

Real estate professionals Sam Talarico and David Pascucci have the listing and are working with Hall to find a buyer.

In their parcel package, they noted, "The property features a well-maintained commercial building offering a unique blend of executive office space, residential-style layouts, and flexible commercial functionality. The layout includes multiple conference rooms, private executive offices, a full kitchen, seven restrooms, four fireplaces, and a six-bedroom configuration – creating strong potential for corporate, hospitality, wellness, residential, or mixed-use applications."

"There's not many pieces anymore on the river that they give you that kind of frontage, and the word 'acreage,'" Talarico said. "I mean, you might find 1 acre, you might find an acre and a half. You don't find 2.65."

The asking price is \$4.5 million.

"Every time you walk in there, it just gets better each time," Pascucci said. "Especially now after Gary cleared a lot of the (equipment) out for the office space, you can see it more so as being converted to a house. On the right – the historical side of the building – Gary had his office, but each room on that side, being able to see the water and everything like that, you could see it as a bedroom and being easily converted to a residence. The finishes – it's got a modern feel, but it still has the hardwood throughout, and it just gives it a nice, historical look."

"Gary had it designed for his business," Talarico said. In the main area where WTS workers were located, "Now that it's empty, it could be a lot of things: It could be a home theater; it could be a breakfast nook or a boutique hotel."

"I would say that if it's a single-family residence, it needs a kitchen."

He noted, "If, indeed, it was an office building, or any other use, I think not much you'd have to do, unless you want to do it for your business."

Talarico and Pascucci cited the oak trim and copper roof among many amenities Hall made since purchasing the property more than 20 years ago.

"It's an exceptional piece ... but unique. You're not going to march into three of these in your lifetime," Talarico said.

The north side of the building is designated historic. The south side was added on later, and is where the gym is located.



## HISTORY OF 435 N. SECOND ST.

Lewiston Museum Curator Tom Collister shared, "In 1832, a young Horatio Stow was a student of Bates Cook at his law office on Center Street. It was his dream to own a major property on the Niagara riverbank and build a mansion. In 1848, that dream came true. He was able to build the mansion we see today – although it has been added onto. It took two years to build and cost around \$15,000."

"Judge Stow enjoyed his home he called 'Graystone' until his death in 1859. The property was bought by William Tweedy, Esq., and he had ownership until 1882 when it was bought by John Craige, a respected railroad

conductor. In 1891, the home and grounds were to be turned into a club known as the Lewiston Club. Its intention was to bring attention to Lewiston. It was to be a fishing, boating, bathing, coaching, athletics club. Members were to share in the ownership of the club.

"Judge Lewis lived there in early 1900. The Robinsons of Tonawanda lived there next before it was owned by the Roman Catholic Church. Sometime in the 1940s, the Catholic diocese bought the estate and established a residence for young men training for the priesthood."

"In 1979, Rev. James Thorne and his wife bought the property to live in and run their church known as the Niagara Frontier Bible Church. The church was a nondenominational, fundamentalist approach."

A newspaper article from 1979 noted Niagara Frontier Bible Church planned to use the mansion to expand its congregation. Also of note, the Jaycees were allowed to hold an Easter egg hunt on the front lawn.

A second story, from 1981, cited the church's intent to use the building as a Protestant school for children in grades K to 4.

### Time for a change

Hall said, "It was the right time" to sell WTS. He and Michael Oliver "started the business back in 1982. I'm 78 years old now, and it was time to move on."

Hall said he wasn't looking to purchase the Second Street property when he first saw it in 2003.

"Originally, we had an office; it was at 640 Park Place; it was kitty-corner from the Main Street post office in Niagara Falls; and we had really outgrown it," he said. "Business was doing well. We needed more office space."

"I was just driving around on a Sunday, and there was a 'For sale' sign up on the property. At the time, it was owned by (Niagara Frontier Bible Church), and they were building a new church over on Upper Mountain Road. I inquired and made an appointment, and went in and sat down with the pastor, and he told me about what his construction plans were and how quickly they'd be moving. But in the meantime, they needed the space. We just made a handshake on the property and, eight or nine months later, we consummated the deal."

"We kind of stayed where we were for a while, because we needed to make a lot of changes, a lot of improvements in the building. I'm not really sure how long they had been there, but before them it was called DeChantal Hall, and the seminarians from Niagara University, that was their residence. The seminarians were also teachers at the university. That's where they lived."

Upon taking ownership of the building, "We pretty much rewired it and added air conditioning and the like, but we actually preserved a lot of the original woodwork – and we, in areas

where we couldn't preserve it, we actually sent it out to the specialty places where they actually could mold and frame and make the woodwork just look like it was originally, going back into that era – the late-1800s – when it was built middle- and late-1800s," Hall said. "When you walk around and you look at the woodwork and some of the areas – the hardwood floors and things – we really took good care of it and preserved a lot of what was there originally."

"What's amazing is, when I walk around other offices and buildings in the community, in the village and whatnot, they're not nearly as nice or well-maintained as what we've been able to do and to preserve. It'll be a good find," he added.

### What could be

Hall said, "We looked at doing

apartments or condos out of it. We could easily convert it to like eight apartments or eight condos. It would be, roughly, 2,000 square feet each. We would have to add some garage space."

He added, "We actually have two lots. You could build homes on either side. If someone wanted to do that, you could build homes. If you wanted to build something between them – the original building and the water – there's space there where you could be building. We cleared the bank, pretty much. There's no current there

in the river. It's like a back-eddy area, so it's amenable to dockage and dock space. ...

"Anyone that was interested in the property, or developing the property, or having a home site on the property, we could easily create it so that they would have waterfront and access to the water, and kind of dock space. There's a lot of possibilities there."

Hall said, "I've had numerous people come to me and say, 'Gary, convert this to condos.' A lot of **SEE FORMER, continued on Page 20**



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