

Howard Building proves popular as downtown address

Mixed-use redevelopment at corner of First & Fenn quickly fills residential component

BY JOHN TOWNES

The supply of market-rate upscale rental apartments in central Pittsfield increased by 14 units in June, with completion of the renovation of the upper floors of the historic Howard Building, on the southwest corner of First and Fenn streets.

The units very quickly were off the market, at least for the near future, after being snapped up by tenants in less than a week.

“We held an open house on June 15, which was attended by about 50 people,” said Ian Rasch, vice president of development at Allegrone Companies, which has spent the past year renovating and redeveloping the building. “By the end of the week, all the units were rented, and we had a waiting list of close to 15 people.”

The new occupants began moving in at the beginning of July.

Rasch said the response was a welcome affirmation of the company’s faith in the potential market for market-rate rental units in downtown Pittsfield.

“Our goal was to create condominium-quality units downtown, at prices that are market rate, but moderate” he said. “Some people had apprehensions about whether Pittsfield could absorb all these units. But we were confident, and the fact that this filled up so quickly demonstrated that there is a demand for this type of housing in the city.”

The Howard Building includes 10 two-bedroom units and four one-bedroom units at rents that range from \$950 to \$1,400 per month.

Onota Building on deck

Allegrone is now preparing to take the next step in their bet on this market, as it prepares to begin renovation this fall on the second, and larger, phase of their overall plan.

That phase is a similar redevelopment of the upper five floors of the six-story Onota Building at 74 North St. (on the north side of the corner of North and School streets near Park Square.)

The Onota Building will contain 25 total units, including 15 two-bedroom and 10 one-bedroom apartments. Their prices will be in the same basic range as the Howard Building, although Rasch said there may be some variations.

The company undertook the renovation of both buildings as an overall plan to develop a mix of 39 market-rate rental housing units, as well as 10 street-level commercial spaces downtown. Allegrone acquired the two properties in separate transactions, purchasing the

Market-rate apartments on the upper two floors of the Howard Building in downtown Pittsfield were snapped up within a matter of days after being offered for lease in June. This response bodes well for Allegrone Companies’ next redevelopment project, the Onota Building at 74 North St., where market-rate apartments are planned for the upper five floors of the six-story building. The vacant lot on the opposite side of First Street from the Howard Building (shown at bottom left) was repurposed as dedicated parking for tenants there.



Howard Building for \$400,000 in 2010, and the Onota Building in 2011 for \$375,000.

“Our plan was to complete the Howard Building first, to give us a comfort level, and then move on to the Onota Building,” Rasch said. He added that they expect to complete the Onota Building project by autumn of 2015.

With the residential portion of the Howard Building completed, the company is also shifting attention to its five street-level commercial spaces.

The renovation of those spaces, which are located along Fenn Street on one side and Federal Avenue on the other, is slated to be completed this summer, after which they will be placed on the market.

Rasch said Allegrone will occupy one of those spaces for its own use. The others are slated for retail and related uses.

“We’d like to have a food-related business like a cafe in one of the spaces, and a fitness or wellness business, as well as other retail tenants,” he said

He added that they have been in negotiations with potential commercial tenants, but have not yet finalized anything.

Market-rate incentive

The combined cost of the two projects is approximately \$14 million, including \$4.8 million for the Howard and \$9.2 million for the Onota Building.

The projects are partially funded by \$1.9 million in state and federal historic tax credits. Allegrone also received Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) tax credits from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

Rasch noted that these were the first projects to be approved for the HDIP program, which is intended to encourage new market-rate housing, rather than the more common focus of incentive programs for housing projects or units that are officially designated as “affordable.”

The HDIP program’s goal is to increase the diversity of housing to stimulate overall

economic development and neighborhood stability in designated “gateway cities” such as Pittsfield, which are midsize regional urban centers that are dealing with economic and social challenges.

Rasch said that, in addition to being business investments, the projects reflect company’s shared interest in the historic and economic goals for the two buildings.

“This is an example of a successful public-private partnership,” he said. “As builders and planners we feel a responsibility to preserve historic structures in ways that will also revitalize the urban core of communities. Our hope is that, by bringing more people downtown, it will also stimulate retail activity.”

He noted that the market-rate rental units will add to the base of people in the city center who will make purchases and utilize services, and have discretionary income. This will also increase the number of potential

customers downtown during evenings and weekends.

Rasch said that in their planning, they identified two basic target markets, based on contemporary demographic trends.

One group is older people, including baby boomers, whose families have grown and who have sold their family homes. They are either later in their careers or retired. The other market includes younger people in the generation known as “echo boomers,” a term that refers to the large wave of children born to baby boomers in the 1980s and beyond.

“A large number of people in both of those generations have become more interested in living within urban centers, and they want the amenities a downtown area can offer,” said Rasch. “Taken together, that’s a significant demographic.”

He added that this is reflected in the initial tenants of the Howard Building.

continued on page 23

GROWTH AREA OF PITTSFIELD

3 RETAIL STORE FRONTS WITH PARKING FOR 12 • \$224,500



High-visibility area of Pittsfield zoned for commercial, retail and professional business. Location features high traffic count with 22,000 vehicles passing by daily. Includes three store fronts, with one occupied by an operating T-shirt imprinting retail business, and 12 paved parking spaces. Low-maintenance block building with individual utilities for each store front and 400-amp service with natural gas heating. Total 2,537 sq. ft. of commercial space on 0.18 acre.

Call Paul Harsch today for details

TOWNHOUSE & PROFESSIONAL BUILDING

165 EAST MAIN ST. • NORTH ADAMS • \$395,000

A short distance from both MCLA and MASS MoCA in downtown North Adams, this handsome three-story brick residence is ideally positioned for a professional office or upscale in-town residence. Features such as 11-foot ceilings lend an air of elegance and stateliness to the first floor formal living spaces, which were converted for professional office purposes. Presently the second floor is configured as the owner’s townhouse with kitchen, dining room, grand master suite & bath, living room, library and laundry. The third floor has two bedrooms, an office, living space, and full bath. A separate two-car garage with automatic door openers has a 24x24 entertainment space above with dry bar.



Call Kevin White today for details



413-458-5000

info@harschrealestate.com
www.harschrealestate.com



ICC MC73444
US DOT 058227

SPECIALISTS IN RESIDENTIAL MOVING & WAREHOUSING.
LOCALLY & WORLDWIDE.

Proudly serving The Berkshires for over 90 years.

QUALITY SERVICE • COMPETITIVE RATES
A Family Owned & Operated Business Since 1923



OR TOLL FREE
413.499.4982 1.800.225.8068
visit our website at www.castinemovers.com

Berkshire County real estate transfers



Buyer: Gregory Knight +
Seller: Stuart Offner +
Price: \$305,000
Mortgage: \$289,750
Lender: MountainOne Bank
Date: 6/30/14

152 Cole Ave.
Buyer: Nelson Hajjar +
Seller: Alma NT +
Price: \$116,000
Date: 6/20/14

29 Crane Ave.
Buyer: Peter Myhal 3rd +
Seller: Mark Bean +
Price: \$145,000
Mortgage: \$142,373
Lender: Village Mtg
Date: 7/10/14

600 Crane Ave.
Buyer: Sarah Rennie +
Seller: Marites Wilbur
Price: \$189,000
Mortgage: \$151,200
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/11/14

21 Cromwell Ave.
Buyer: Robert Maloy +
Seller: Patricia Kinnas
Price: \$114,000
Mortgage: \$90,000
Lender: Patricia Kinnas
Date: 7/3/14

36 Dan Ave.
Buyer: Sunil Ramineni
Seller: Deborah Francis
Price: \$224,900
Mortgage: \$213,650
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/24/14

260 Dawes Ave.
Buyer: Megan Patton +
Seller: Dastoli NT +
Price: \$220,000
Mortgage: \$187,000
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 6/30/14

113 Deming St.
Buyer: Quincey Sobczyk
Seller: CR Librizzi
Price: \$90,000
Mortgage: \$40,000
Lender: FRJF NT
Date: 6/27/14

44 Demont Ave.
Buyer: Kristina Turner
Seller: Demont Avenue
NT +
Price: \$90,000
Mortgage: \$80,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/10/14

43 Downing Pkwy
Buyer: Berkshire Rentals Inc
Seller: Rufo Plastic
Products LP
Price: \$750,000
Mortgage: \$500,000
Lender: NBT Bank
Date: 6/20/14

324 E. New Lenox Rd.
Buyer: Leanna Pegorari +
Seller: Cindi Goldman-
Patin +
Price: \$249,900
Mortgage: \$245,370
Lender: Merrimack Mtg
Date: 6/26/14

23 Egremont Ave.
Buyer: John Sargent +
Seller: Joseph Pieropan +
Price: \$180,000
Date: 7/11/14

118 Elm St.
Buyer: Deborah Beligni +
Seller: 118 Elm St NT +
Price: \$83,000
Date: 7/8/14

181 Elm St.
Buyer: Ali Union Block LLC
Seller: Red Barn Road LLC
Price: \$510,000
Mortgage: \$565,000
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 7/15/14

42 Emerson Ave.
Buyer: Jason Hopkins +
Seller: Joyce Brown RET +
Price: \$146,500
Mortgage: \$141,500
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/7/14

38 Essex St.
Buyer: Valentina Litvinova
Seller: Natosha Macdonald +
Price: \$186,000
Mortgage: \$148,800
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/24/14

24 Evelyn Park
Buyer: Gerald Oconnor +
Seller: Todd Burdick
Price: \$145,000
Date: 6/26/14

216 Fort Hill Ave.
Buyer: Rebecca Miller +
Seller: Carla Gamarra-
Hilburn +
Price: \$360,000
Mortgage: \$342,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/27/14

198 Harryel St.
Buyer: Diane Vogel
Seller: Edward
Albuquerque Jr +
Price: \$180,000
Mortgage: \$120,000
Lender: Berkshire Bank
Date: 6/19/14

138 Jason St.
Buyer: Lisa Hill
Seller: Patricia Doherty
Price: \$157,000
Date: 7/9/14

64 Joan Dr.
Buyer: Alan Honig
Seller: Ernestine Bode
Price: \$172,000
Date: 7/14

29 Joseph Dr.
Buyer: Danielle Cardoso
Seller: Toni Farmer +
Price: \$195,000
Mortgage: \$189,150
Lender: MountainOne Bank
Date: 6/27/14

106 Lafayette St.
Buyer: Alton Driver +
Seller: Jamie Moore
Price: \$223,500
Mortgage: \$223,500
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/2/614

233 Lebanon Ave.
Buyer: Paul Keane
Seller: Crane Dorothy Est +
Price: \$167,00
Mortgage: \$153,640
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/27/14

25 Lowden St.
Buyer: Diana French
Seller: Nicole Knight
Price: \$176,000
Date: 7/7/14

87 Maple Grove Dr.
Buyer: Catherine Iuliano
Seller: Michael Meneil
Price: \$193,000
Mortgage: \$183,350
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 7/17/14

15 Michael Dr.
Buyer: Edward Martin +
Seller: Barbara Bissailon +
Price: \$136,500
Mortgage: \$100,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/11/14

15 Northumberland Rd.
Buyer: David Wehry +
Seller: James Campagna
Price: \$190,000
Mortgage: \$150,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/20/14

32 Northumberland Rd.
Buyer: Fabio Daniello
Seller: Mary Spina
Price: \$163,500
Mortgage: \$130,800
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/1/14

163 Partridge Rd.
Buyer: Berkshire Building
& Dev
Seller: Colleen Doran +
Price: \$87,000
Mortgage: \$72,000
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 7/2/14

67 Reuter Ave.
Buyer: Mikko Tagole
Seller: Stephan Foose +
Price: \$129,900
Mortgage: \$126,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/1/14

5 Southbrook Ln.
Buyer: Miss Halls School
Inc
Seller: Brate T +
Price: \$593,000
Date: 7/1/14

16 Spencer St.
Buyer: Ashley Fei +
Seller: Panetti Angelo Est +
Price: \$98,000
Mortgage: \$94,729
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/23/14

44 Stanley Ave.
Buyer: Robert Tynan
Seller: Sandra Tynan +
Price: \$100,000
Mortgage: \$80,000
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/23/14

68 Stearns Ave.
Buyer: Jessica Cowdrey +
Seller: Rita Burns
Price: \$85,000
Mortgage: \$83,460
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/17/14

1 Strong Ave.
Buyer: Kathleen Sullivan
Seller: Bryan Patton +
Price: \$157,500
Date: 6/30/14

39 Velma Ave.
Buyer: Dane Matthews +
Seller: Antonio Larson +
Price: \$198,000
Mortgage: \$158,400
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/16/14

63 Velma Ave.
Buyer: Dana Johnson
Seller: Cote Claire Est +
Price: \$118,000
Mortgage: \$114,460
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/11/14

1201 W. Housatonic St.
Buyer: Frederick Kickery
Jr +

Seller: Berkshire Stone
Works Inc
Price: \$237,500
Mortgage: \$252,000
Lender: Berkshire Bank
Date: 6/20/14

1389 W. Housatonic St.
Buyer: Alan Welch
Seller: Betty Harrison +
Price: \$140,000
Mortgage: \$133,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/27/14

233 Wahconah St.
Buyer: Raymond Cochran +
Seller: Christopher
Cochran
Price: \$140,000
Mortgage: \$105,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/16/14

50 Whittier Ave.
Buyer: Ryan Hood
Seller: Fabio Daniello +
Price: \$156,900
Mortgage: \$149,055
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/17/14

6 Williams St.
Buyer: James Wheeler
Seller: Daniel North
Price: \$150,000
Mortgage: \$147,283
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/20/14

68 Williams St.
Buyer: Lisa Stoddard +
Seller: Charles Hooker
RET +
Price: \$265,000
Mortgage: \$308,750
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/27/14

16 Wood Ave.
Buyer: Jason Deloye
Seller: Wendy Dubois +
Price: \$135,000
Mortgage: \$101,250
Lender: Berkshire Bank
Date: 7/7/14

33 Worthen St.
Buyer: Rupal Parmar
Seller: Richard Turner
Price: \$183,400
Mortgage: \$96,455
Lender: PHH Home Loans
Date: 7/8/14

48 Yorkshire Ave.
Buyer: Lori Cote
Seller: Martin Daniel Est +
Price: \$115,000
Mortgage: \$92,000
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/18/14

RICHMOND

248 Shore Rd.
Buyer: Barry Kellogg +
Seller: Jeffrey Kellogg +
Price: \$313,000
Date: 7/7/14

2500 State Rd.
Buyer: Benjamin Evans +
Seller: Kelly Lee Fairbank
RET +
Price: \$205,000
Mortgage: \$194,750
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/1/14

SANDISFIELD

175 New Hartford Rd.
Buyer: Roger Ball
Seller: Sarah Konikowski +
Price: \$292,320
Date: 6/27/14

306 Tamarack Trail
Buyer: Edward Bermant +
Seller: Eugene Wolfson +
Price: \$315,000
Mortgage: \$220,500
Lender: Salisbury B&T
Date: 7/17/14

SHEFFIELD

1335 Ashley Falls Rd.
Buyer: Timothy
Handlowich
Seller: Donald Perry +
Price: \$265,000
Mortgage: \$255,000
Lender: Nancy Perry
Date: 6/20/14

1152 Barnum St.
Buyer: Stephen Nesis +
Seller: Francis Garretson
Price: \$1,035,000
Date: 6/27/14

75 Clayton Rd.
Buyer: Village Mortgage Co
Seller: Todd Dudley +
Price: \$186,335
Date: 6/25/14

59 County Rd.
Buyer: Jennifer Smith
Seller: FHLM
Price: \$131,500
Mortgage: \$124,925
Lender: Salisbury B&T
Date: 6/24/14

202 Hillside Ln.
Buyer: John Wood +
Seller: Denise Riiska
Price: \$275,000
Mortgage: \$195,000
Lender: Salisbury B&T
Date: 6/19/14

59 Maple Ave.
Buyer: Boris Metternich +
Seller: Arlene Santana
Price: \$515,000
Date: 6/20/14

159 Polikoff Rd.
Buyer: April Marks
Seller: Phyllis Cavalli
Price: \$160,000
Mortgage: \$128,000
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 7/7/14

STOCKBRIDGE

4 Lake Dr.
Buyer: Annies Orchards
LLC
Seller: Jeffrey Winestock
Price: \$207,500
Date: 7/18/14

9 Mahkeenac Heights Rd.
Buyer: Petite Maison LLC
Seller: Shirley Cohen
Price: \$141,000
Date: 7/18/14

WASHINGTON

885 Washington Mountain
Buyer: Family Inty Intl Inc
Seller: Bucksteep NT +
Price: \$1,533,900
Date: 7/1/14

WEST STOCKBRIDGE

26 E. Alford Rd.
Buyer: Sally Kimball NT +
Seller: Susan Brennan
Price: \$250,000
Date: 7/2/14

164 Great Barrington Rd.
Buyer: Anissa Borezoski +
Seller: Donald Johnson
Price: \$400,000
Mortgage: \$250,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/30/14

49 High St.
Buyer: Kevin Coleman +
Seller: Sbraccia Caroline
Est +
Price: \$205,500
Mortgage: \$164,400
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/11/14

WILLIAMSTOWN

78 Candlewood Dr.
Buyer: Gerardo Torres +
Seller: Ramon Luttazi Jr +
Price: \$500,000
Date: 7/15/14

32 Danforth St.
Buyer: John Gordon
Seller: Donna Queeney
Price: \$167,000
Mortgage: \$100,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 7/9/14

530 Main St.
Buyer: Greylock FCU
Seller: Jeffrey Kurpaska +
Price: \$258,000
Date: 6/18/14

1097 Main St.
Buyer: Gage Mcweeny +
Seller: Edward Epping +
Price: \$705,000
Mortgage: \$100,000
Lender: Williams College
Date: 6/20/14

30 Mount Williams Dr.
Buyer: Alison Bost +
Seller: David Jowett
Price: \$400,000
Mortgage: \$220,000
Lender: MountainOne Bank
Date: 7/18/14

767 N. Hoosac Rd.
Buyer: Andrew Giarolo +
Seller: FNMA
Price: \$264,000
Mortgage: \$250,800
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/27/14

1039 N. Hoosac Rd.
Buyer: Ellen Harrison
Seller: Roos & Alice
Barber NT +
Price: \$109,000
Mortgage: \$80,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/30/14

58 Orchard Ln.
Buyer: Alexander Davis +
Seller: Peggy Brooks
Price: \$153,325
Mortgage: \$122,660
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/16/14

261 Pine Cobble Rd.
Buyer: Williams College
Seller: David Backus +
Price: \$507,950
Date: 6/24/14

196 Southworth St.
Buyer: Williams College
Seller: Wendy Mcweeny +
Price: \$467,300
Date: 6/18/14

489 Water St.
Buyer: Leon Alberts
Seller: Paul Giamborino
Price: \$175,000
Date: 7/15/14

Howard Building continued from page 21

“I’d say it’s split down the middle,” he said. “We have retired executives and other older people, as well as young attorneys, engineers and other professionals.”

Historic preservation

The renovation of the Howard Building was complex, both in terms of providing the quality of construction and amenities demanded by its target market, and because of its designation as a historic preservation project.

The Howard Building was constructed in 1916, and until 1960 housed a hardware and agricultural supply store, and a seed company, operated by Frank Howard. It then became an office building. In 2005, a local artist purchased the building with the goal of establishing a center for artist live-work lofts, but that project did not succeed.

Allegrone essentially gutted the interior of the building. While the goal was to create contemporary condominium-style apartments with modern amenities, they also were required to preserve the historic details of the building’s interior and exterior architecture.

“We had to do a complete inventory of the building and receive approval for everything we wanted to do,” Rasch said.

For example, one apartment is located in a portion of the building where there had been a hallway of small offices with glass interior windows. That hallway has been retained as part of the apartment’s design.

The builder also utilized the historic theme in its contemporary aesthetic elements.

For example, several large doors from old storage bins, as well as some of the tracks with mechanical rollers that had been used to move boxes, were retrieved from the basement and installed in the lobby in a manner that also gives them the appearance of contemporary artworks.

Ironically, just as work on the Howard Building was nearing completion, another historic structure on the opposite corner of the intersection First and Fenn streets, the former Plunkett School, was being demolished to make way for a new Dunkin Donuts store. Despite community desires to save that building, no development project surfaced to renovate that structure.

Rasch noted that Allegrone had looked at the Plunkett School property for a possible project at one point, but the firm decided that the characteristics of the building and site were not conducive to redevelopment. ♦



One of many historical properties we protect every day.

LEE AUDIO 'N SECURITY, INC.

Since 1970

1-800-369-3905

www.LeeAudioNSecurity.net

MA Lic #1468C • NY Lic #12000022800



413.458.0093

191 Water Street

Williamstown, MA

www.burnhamgold.com

Licensed in Massachusetts

NORTH ADAMS

Amazing historic 1880’s factory warehouse for sale

This former mill and warehouse complex offers a high-visibility Route 2 location on an 8.8-acre site between Williamstown and downtown North Adams. The multi-building complex has over 270,000 sq. ft. and is currently home to 15 business tenants. On-site parking for 50-plus cars. Plenty of opportunity for developers or investors... **\$950,000**

WILLIAMSTOWN

217 Main Street, Gateway to “The Village Beautiful”

The once-famous Four Acres, a wonderful long-time family-owned restaurant, is now ready for revival – **or perhaps put to an entirely different use** – by a new owner with both the right vision and an astute appreciation of the value of this prime commercial property. Commercially zoned. 43-acre site has excellent visibility and accessibility as part of the high-traffic Main Street business district. Includes ample parking for any number of re-use concepts, such as retail/ pharmacy, professional office, or other commercial uses. Priced to sell... **\$399,000**

Great business opportunity at 824 Simonds Road

This Williamstown property at the busy intersection of Simonds Road (Route 7) and Sand Springs Road represents a fantastic business opportunity! The 1,305 square-foot building and high-visibility corner lot offer wide potential for a number of unique businesses. Priced to sell... **\$159,900**

