



The Smith Restaurant Supply building, at Erie Boulevard East and Townsend Street, is up for sale. (Rick Moriarty / rmoriarty@syracuse.com)

# Historic business to sell **LANDMARK BUILDING**

**The owner of Smith Restaurant Supply says the structure is too big for the current operation, which will most likely relocate or lease back space.**

**By Rick Moriarty**  
rmoriarty@syracuse.com

The Smith Restaurant Supply building, a Syracuse landmark that dates back to the Erie Canal days, is up for sale, but the 120-year-old business will continue on.

The building, at the corner of Erie Boulevard East and South Townsend Street, is listed for sale for \$875,000.

Situated near the elevated Interstates 81 and 690, the building is often cited by residents when giving directions to downtown Syracuse.

"You mention it and people know where it is right away," said Larry Van Der Bogart, a sales agent with CBRE, the real estate agency that is marketing the building.

John Kuppermann, whose great-grandfather-in-law, Hyman Smith, started the houseware and restaurant supply business in 1894, said he will continue to operate it, either in the same building or somewhere

else. Despite its name, more than half of Smith Restaurant Supply's sales are to consumers, as opposed to restaurants and other commercial customers.

Kuppermann said the decision to sell the building had nothing to do with the complaints he made to the city this summer about a group of homeless people living under the overpass. He said he and his parents decided to put the building up for sale because he is using only 12,000 square feet of the building's 32,000 square feet of space.

Technology allows him to order and sell supplies quickly, eliminating the need to store large amounts of merchandise in the building, he said.

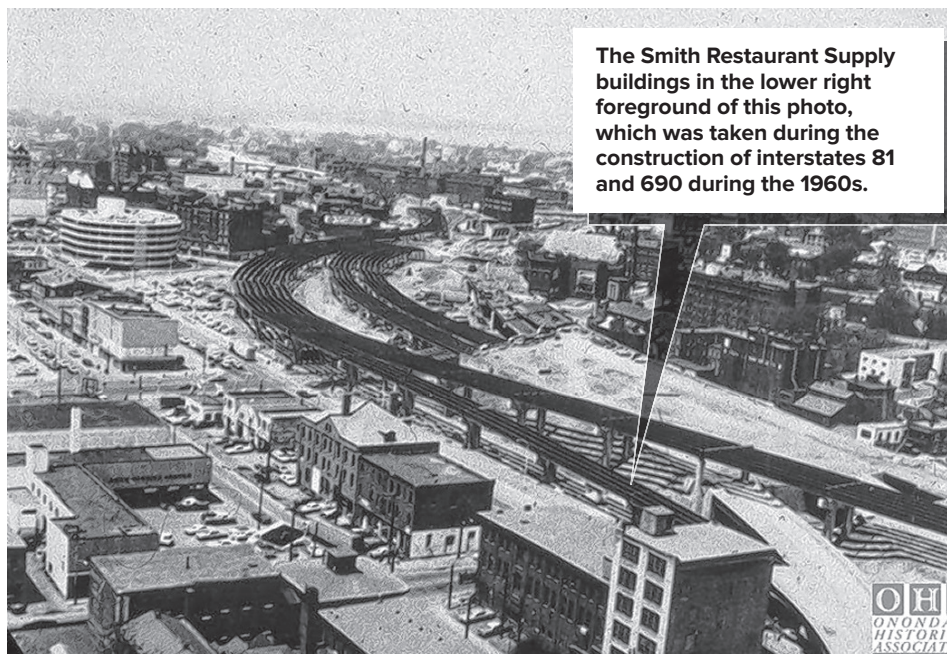
If the building sells, he plans to move his business to a new location or maybe lease back the space he needs from the building's new owner. He would like to keep it centrally located in Syracuse because his customer base is evenly split between the western and eastern halves of Onondaga County.



**A view of the Smith Restaurant Supply building (the six-story structure in the middle and the three-story one to the right) in the 1940s, before the current business moved in.** (Onondaga Historical Association)

SMITH, PAGE D-5





Onondaga Historical Association

# Smith Restaurant Supply owner is selling buildings

SMITH, FROM PAGE D-1

Kuppermann, 51, began working in the store part time when he was 13 and went full time after graduating from college in 1985. He has been full owner of the business for 10 years and opened a second store in Watertown eight years ago. He and his parents — Beth and Ellison Kuppermann, who are retired in Florida — have joint ownership of the building.

Kupperman said the building has the potential to be redeveloped for residential use. It has room for 22 apartments averaging 1,000 square feet each, with on-site parking for tenants, he said.

While downtown's office market is weak, developers have been very successful turning old, underutilized or vacant buildings into high-end apartments. Kuppermann said he may redevelop the building himself if it does not sell.

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sists of two buildings — a three-story structure built in the 1800s and a six-story warehouse built in the early 1900s, when the Erie Canal still flowed past the property.

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The original portion of the building has wooden floors and contains the restaurant supply business' store. It originally served as a warehouse on the Erie Canal. The canal was filled in in the mid-

1920s.

Hyman Smith, a Polish immigrant, started the business by selling crockery on the sidewalk in front of his home on Grape Street, which is now South Townsend Street.

Kuppermann's grandfather, Lester Serling (a second cousin to "Twilight Zone" producer and Syracuse native Rod Serling), moved the business to its current location in 1946.

The building is situated next to the overpass where the elevated sections of I-81 and I-690 converge. Kuppermann expressed concerns last year that his building would be put at risk of demolition if I-81 is ever widened.

However, he said those concerns are not related to the decision to put the building up for sale because any changes to I-81 are many years away.

Contact Rick Moriarty at 315-470-3148



5431 N. BURDICK ST.. FAYETTEVILLE