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A 130-year-old Erie Canal-era ware-
house transformed into a loft apartment
and office is up for sale.

Built in 1885, the Grainery building
looks lonely sitting in the 100 block of
North Warren Street in Syracuse. But
that wasn’t always the case.

It was once surrounded by other build-
ings, including the Durston Block build-
ing built in 1883 and designed by famed
Syracuse architect Archimedes Russell.

The Oswego Canal flowed behind the
building and joined with the Erie just a
block to the south.

The Grainery is the block’s only survi-
ivor. That makes it North Warren Street’s
only remaining building because the street consists of only one block.

Its neighbors to the left and right are
now parking lots, the buildings that once
stood there victims of the urban decay
of the 1960s and 1970s. Just a few feet
behind the building, where the Oswego
Canal once flowed, thousands of cars
and trucks whiz by daily on Interstates 690 and 81.

In 1987, Daniel Leary, an archi-
tect and a member of the Syracuse
Landmark Preservation Board, turned
the building’s first two floors into his
office and the top two floors into a
three-bedroom loft apartment for him-
self. Leary left many of the building’s
original wooden beams exposed.

Leary sold the building to Benjamin
Ogden in 2006. Bart Feinberg, a real
estate agent with The Sutton Cos., said
Ogden used it as an artist loft. Ogden
moved to Manlius last year and has put
the 6,000-square-foot building up for
sale for $725,000.

The property includes a 17-car, fenced
parking lot. Feinberg said the building is
best suited for a single tenant who could
use the first two floors for an office
and the top two as living quarters. An
elevator serves the building’s first three
floors.

The building comes with 130 years
of history. Leary named it The Grainery
(an alteration of granary) because it
originally was used to store grain, likely
transported on the nearby canals.

The building started out with three
stories. The fourth floor, with its man-
sard roof, was likely added early in
the 20th century, said Dennis Connors,
curator of history for the Onondaga
Historical Association.

The owner in 1896 appears to
have been John Surbeck, a native of
Switzerland, who was running a flour
and feed business and made Swiss and
Lamburger cheese, Connors said.

Starting around 1914, the build-
ing became the home of Paul deLima
Coffee, which is now headquartered in
Liverpool.

A heating and plumbing contrac-
tor used it as its headquarters from
the 1930s to the 1960s, according to
Connors.

Its bigger neighbor, the Durston
Block, became mostly vacant by the late
1960s. Connors said it was acquired by
the city for back taxes in 1970 and sold
the following year to a private developer,
who tore it down for a parking lot.

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