

# Adirondack Daily Enterprise

## Historic group aims to turn old Trudeau home/office into museum



Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau's home and office at the corner of Main and Church streets in downtown Saranac Lake is seen around 1900. (Photo provided by the Adirondack Room of the Saranac Lake Free Library)

**SARANAC LAKE** — Historic Saranac Lake announced Wednesday that it

intends to seek state grant funding to buy the former home and office of Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau at 118 Main St. and turn it into a museum, next door to its current museum at Trudeau's old laboratory.



The building at the corner of Main and Church streets served as the offices of Medical Associates of Saranac Lake, a practice that dates back to 1876 when E.L. Trudeau began his work. Its most recent doctors, Jay and Dorothy Federman and Anthony Waickman, vacated it last year and joined Adirondack Health, moving into the Adirondack Medical Center hospital.

HSL Executive Director Amy Catania said the group intends to apply for state funding to support the purchase through the village's Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Saranac Lake officials intend to apply for a \$10 million downtown revitalization grant similar to the ones being used to revitalize Plattsburgh and Watertown.

*"This is an exciting opportunity for us to contribute to the revitalization of downtown and preserve an important historic building,"* said Catania. *"We are grateful for the willingness of the owners to work with us to make this happen."*

The building has been owned by the Church Street Building Association

since 1990, when Medical Associates turned it over to the group.

HSL is seeking pledges of support for the project to strengthen its application for state funding. The initial conceptual design is to restore the historic integrity of the building's exterior. The entry level will host museum exhibits, collections storage and a museum store that will expand upon HSL's existing exhibits at the Saranac Laboratory Museum. Additional possibilities for the first floor include public space for arts and cultural events, and office space. The second floor will host unique apartments to complement the historic location.

HSL is negotiating a purchase agreement with the owners of the building and is contracting with an architect to refine plans.

*"We have had great early success in the campaign," said Catania. "In just the first few days of the campaign, several donors have already come forward with very generous pledges."*

HSL board President Brandon Campbell said, *"It's an impressive building in great condition, and we are confident that this is the right thing for us to do."*

Built in 1894 after a fire consumed Trudeau's first home, the over 5,000-square-foot building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Trudeau's cousin J. Lawrence Aspinwall designed the Colonial Revival-style residence. The Saranac Laboratory, also designed by Aspinwall, was built the same year next door. Two more generations of Trudeau doctors and their associates continued to use the house for medical offices.

Medical Associates, led by the Federmans, closed its practice in the building in December 2017. Until then, the building was the oldest medical facility in continuous use within the Adirondack Park.

The Federmans donated the neighboring Saranac Laboratory to Historic Saranac Lake in 1998. HSL successfully raised and invested approximately \$500,000 for the lab's restoration and reuse, and opened the laboratory as a museum in 2007. Visitorship has steadily increased, and HSL recently extended museum hours to be open year-round, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

HSL plans to operate the Trudeau house and neighboring lab as an interactive museum campus interpreting Saranac Lake's rich history.

*"This project will serve as a catalyst for Saranac Lake's growing arts and culture economy. It will support the ongoing success of the newly reopened Hotel Saranac next door,"* said Catania. *"There are so many exciting things we will be able to do with more space, such as providing hands-on activities for children, presenting more aspects of our rich local history, and developing programs in partnership with Saranac Lake's arts community."*

Dorothy Fobare, one of the founders of HSL who currently serves as a board member, is ready to get the word out. *"Historic Saranac Lake has come a long way thanks to amazing community support,"* she said. *"We are excited to share this plan with our members and donors, and we look forward to tackling this important project together."*