

Dec 2012 - The Guardian - Stedman's Demolition

O'LEARY – Demolition equipment made quick work of a vacant building in the heart of O'Leary's business core Tuesday.

The former Stedman's department store building had most recently operated as a liquidation centre. It had gradually been stripped of its roof shingles and siding in recent months and was no longer in operation.

Its condition had prompted neighbouring businesses to raise safety concerns with the community council.

Council issued a letter to the property's owner on Oct. 22 ordering that the building either be fixed or torn down within 30 days.

Equipment moved onto the lot Monday and went to work Tuesday. Loads of debris were trucked to the former O'Leary dump property for subsequent disposal.

The Main Street property had been a scene of retail activity in O'Leary since early in the 1900s. Florence Turner said Bill Kennedy operated a store there as early as 1913 or 1914. It subsequently burned and Hal Jelley opened a large store there to sell furniture and other merchandise. When it burned, Jelley built another store on the property and sold half of it to Denziel MacNeill in 1963. MacNeill acquired the rest of the building the following year and operated a clothing and general merchandise store for many years.

It went through three more owners since then. A doctor's office occupied part of the property for about two decades. There was also a pharmacy in the building for a few years.

O'Leary Community Council chairman Stanley MacDonald expressed optimism that the owner will see fit to develop commercial space on the prime piece of real estate.

