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Part of the roof of the Padua building falls to the ground as demolition continues.

Watkins' Padua hotel coming down

By The Leader staff

WATKINS GLEN — As a hotel, it was the site of lavish parties and peopled by famous guests in a bygone era. Then it became St. Anthony of Padua school, a function that ended years ago. Now it is nearly gone.

Workers continue this week to raze the old Glen Springs Resort hotel that 70 years ago hosted the likes of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and a long line of prominent officials and celebrities.

The complex later came under the control of the Franciscan Fathers of Pulaski, Wis., who used the building and the nearby natural springs as a friary and school.

But the upkeep on the decaying structure was too much, says Dominick Franzese Jr., the Watkins Glen broker who has tried to sell the building for several years.

While the fathers continue to search for a buyer, Franzese said, they had to raze the hotel building.

"It was in such condition that it became a liability," Franzese said. "They had no other choice."

The property continues to be advertised nationally, he said.

A year ago this month, a Hamburg man talked of turning a portion of the 283-acre parcel that encompassed the Padua friary, hotel and natural spring into a housing development and spring-water bottling business, but couldn't arrange the financing.

Purchase price of the long-vacant property was reported then to be about \$1.1 million.



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A cross with palm attached to it sits among the rubble at the Padua site in Watkins Glen.