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Porter of The Spencer Group Ltd. brokers \$600,000 sale of 2,236 s/f of land in Roxbury

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234 Roxbury Street - Roxbury, MA

Roxbury, MA This past summer, papers were passed for the sale of 17 Centre St. and 234 Roxbury St. in Fort Hill. The sale price was \$600,000 for the 2,236 s/f parcels and the city permits to build a five-story condominium of three floor-through units including a garden parlor duplex, with an underground garage and a common roof deck with a city view.

The seller was Center Hill Associates LLC of Allston. The buyer/developer is Celiberti Realty LLC of Medford. The listing broker and co-owner of the property is Dr. Jack Porter of The Spencer Group Ltd. The buyer's broker is William Laferriere of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. Designed by Hacin + Associates in a contemporary style with "a big splash of windows," the two-bedroom,

two-bath units will range from 1,230 to 1,800 s/f, according to Laferriere.

“We can sell an inexpensive product with a lot of space, which you can’t get in the South End or South Boston,” said Laferriere.

Centre Hill Associates LLC comprised the late Harold Brown, his son Jameson Brown, and Dr. Jack Porter, who had owned the land since 1984 and had held it for 35 years. “Before I bought the land from Larry Loffredo, George Dimsey, Jesse Balerdi, and David Stanley back in June of 1984, it consisted of three small houses,” Porter said. “But a fire was set by arsonists and they burned down. The owners were charged for the cost of tearing down the homes and did not have the money, so I was able to buy all three parcels for the unbelievable price of \$3,000.”

The area is very historic, Porter added. “There is the Spooner-Lambert House, an Underground Railroad passage for runaway slaves nearby, and the historic Eliot church, going back to Colonial times. Back then, the only whites living in this area were artists, hippies, gays, and other ‘street people’ not worried about the school system. It was an interesting area.”

The development itself occupies a historic site as well. “It sits on top of the Underground Railroad,” said Laferriere. “It’s timely with the release of the new movie Harriet, about Harriet Tubman.”

Porter had initially thought of building a park on the parcels and donating it to the city of Boston. “I hired the renowned African-American architect Theodore Johnson to design it,” he said. “It was to be called ‘The Porter-Wilson Memorial Park’ and dedicated to the ‘celebration and preservation of the African-American/Jewish Connection,’ the only one of its kind in the country. The Wilson brothers lived next door and had marched with Martin Luther King Jr., and the Porters, my parents Irving and Faye Porter, were Holocaust survivors.”

When the land became too valuable for a park, Porter decided to build on it instead. “At one time I even got permission to build six units, but funding fell through,” he said. “That plus other factors led to it being vacant for a long time. I am happy it will be built through Mr. Celiberti’s and Mr. Laferriere’s efforts. But I hope we can have a bench or a plaque dedicated to the Porters, the Wilsons, and Dr. King somewhere on the property. The Wilson brothers especially should not be forgotten. They were wonderful people, and old-time civil rights workers.”

The 2,236 s/f parcel at 17 Centre St. and 234 Roxbury St. in Roxbury that was purchased last summer for the construction of a three-unit, five-story condominium.

The parcel at 17 Centre St., Roxbury, sloping downward to the parcel at 234 Roxbury St. The parcel at 234 Roxbury St., Roxbury, sloping upward to the parcel at 17 Centre St.