

Bossert on the block: Jehovah's Witnesses to sell Heights jewel

BY ADAM F. HUTTON
The Brooklyn Paper

The Hotel Bossert, the swanky Brooklyn Heights building that was the site of the Dodgers' knock-down, drag-out World Series victory party in 1955 and, more recently, has served as a dormitory for the Jehovah's Witnesses, is on the block.

The "For sale" sign is the latest one to be slapped on Witnesses buildings in Downtown Brooklyn, DUMBO and Brooklyn Heights, where the century-old faith is based.

Last year, the sect put up for sale six of its 18 Brooklyn Heights properties, including the Standish Arms Hotel on Columbia Heights, which sold for \$50 million in December.

The Bossert could go for twice as much, said Arlene Aways, whose Aways Realty helped broker the Standish Arms deal.

"The Bossert is double the size and it's a beautiful property, so it could easily go for twice the money as the Standish," Aways said.

The ongoing selloff by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society — the business arm of the Jehovah's Witnesses — comes as the Witnesses have moved most of their publishing and printing operations upstate.

Real-estate developers are salivating over the properties that have come on the market, but locals say they will miss the Witnesses.

"At the Bossert, and at all of their buildings, the Witnesses have set a very high standard in terms of taking good care of their properties," said Brooklyn Heights Association Executive Director Judy Stanton. "Brooklyn Heights has benefited from the care and attention that they have put in to their buildings and I hope that the new owners will keep up that tradition."



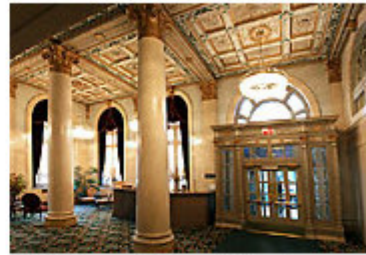
Stunning Townhouse Triplex
Private entrance, private garden, private parking* 2800 square feet
*not included in price

There certainly is plenty of tradition to keep up. The Bossert, a 14-story Italian Renaissance Revival building at 98 Montague St., was constructed by Brooklyn lumber tycoon Louis Bossert in 1909.

After the Witnesses bought it in 1988, it underwent a complete rehab that included restoration of the crystal chandelier and stone columns in the hotel's lobby and the renovation of the famous Marine Roof restaurant on the building's top floor.

"When we bought the building, the Marine Roof was in complete ruin," said Richard Devine, the Watchtower Society's building manager. "But we rebuilt the space as a banquet hall for our events and, of course, that will be available to the new owners. It's a gorgeous space with stunning views of Manhattan."

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Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

The ornate lobby of the former Hotel Bossert in Brooklyn Heights, which was returned to its glory by its current owners, the Jehovah's Witnesses.



Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

The Hotel Bossert at the corner of Montague and Hicks streets in Brooklyn Heights.

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