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Historic Shaw school building approved for condo conversion sells to different developer

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The historic former Shaw home of Hospitality High School has been sold, but, in a twist, not to the developer that recently earned approval for its conversion to condos.

Rock Creek Property Group paid \$7 million for 1851 Ninth St. NW, a building designed by architect Albert Cassell and originally constructed in 1932 for the D.C. chapter of the Grand United Order of the Odd Fellows in America.



COURTESY: GOOGLE STREET VIEW
1851 9th St. NW, the former Hospitality High, has sold to Rock Creek Property Group.

The Washington Hospitality Foundation, the seller, had acquired the building in 2012 for \$7.5 million.

Hospitality High opened at 1851 Ninth, the former home of the Maya Angelou Public Charter School, in 2012. Donations from the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, Hilton Worldwide Inc. and the D.C. Hotel Association helped renovate the building.

It shut down prior to the start of the 2015-16 school year.

Hollow Creek Investment Group LLC (of Chantilly, according to D.C. records) last fall earned the Board of Zoning Adjustment's approval to convert the building to 27 residential units, though the BZA, citing the site's residential R-4 zoning, rejected Hollow Creek's proposal to add a fifth floor.

It appeared it was only a matter of time before Hollow Creek, the "contract owner," closed on the acquisition. That is, until last week, when Rock Creek stepped in.

"We bought the building," said Gary Schlager, Rock Creek principal. "We are buying it as a rental property, for a charter school or institution that will lease it from us." He said there are "a lot of great improvements on the interior that we believe will be very useful for a charter school, a private school or an institution that can reuse it."

Schlager said his firm only recently learned that the building was on the market.

"We jumped on it pretty quickly when we heard about it and tied it up," he said.

When it originally filed its application with the BZA, Hollow Creek argued that the "history of the building proves that a school use cannot be sustained." It is possible, given the complicated, expensive nature of converting a historic school to residential, that losing the proposed fifth floor drove the developer away.

Hollow Creek representatives were not immediately available

for comment.

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