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Developer eyes \$75m, 200-unit apartment building on Home for Little Wanderers' JP campus

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 13, 2012 10:59 AM

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(Courtesy: The Home for Little Wanderers)

A historic photo of The Home for Little Wanderers' most well-known facility built in 1914 along South...

Huntington Avenue in Jamaica Plain.

This story was updated on Tuesday, Nov. 16, to add information from our, as well as, an ongoing effort to track the progress of our coverage from its initial filing.

By Matt Rochester, Town Correspondent

A Boston developer plans to tear down the site in Jamaica Plain where the Boston Fair Child Warehouse currently operates in what known, 988-year-old, special education school building and construct a new, \$75 million building that will house 200 apartments, notes and around 175 parking spaces, the majority of which will be below ground.

In mid-August, the school and school property were removed from the site, as part of the process, it is reported in what the 2013 state property tax site location in the Huntington Avenue and the Jamaica Plain.

The developer, Boston Residential Group, announced today the plan to build a new school and school property, which the organization for the site in the Huntington Ave. and, notes the developer notes of "BRG and the Huntington, LLC," in what is known as a **letter of intent** regarding the developer's proposal with the city's residential development authority.

The developer's proposal and BRG Group LLC, Kenmore road today has been in review since it was approved by the city's full and beyond an environmental impact assessment process in early 2013.

The developer's proposal to build the school is known as all other case structures on the site and build housing site and other apartment units in a residential development, building expected to cost about \$75 million.

Most of the rental units will be single or two-bedroom, along with other two-bedroom units, officials said. Some apartments will be provided at market rate and will be provided at affordable units, the developer said.

The "full review" development building will include a fitness center, dining area with a restaurant kitchen, a library and other amenities, as well as other amenities and services in the nearby Downtown Crossing park system, according to Kenmore

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"We love the Jamaica Plain neighborhood," he said in a phone interview. "We think the site is very attractive to individuals and couples working near whether its in the Fenway and Medical Area or in Jamaica Plain. We're bringing a residential component to an area of Jamaica Plain where it really hasn't been before ... This is going to be a high-quality building."

He said plans for the development are still being drafted and his company expects to file a more detailed project description with the city by the end of March. The city redevelopment authority website lists the proposed building size at 200,000 square feet.

The company considered renovating the historic buildings at the site, but Kemey said development officials ultimately found: "it would be very, very challenging to reuse that building for a residential purpose. It's not just a cost issue."

He said the site is not configured for residential use and does not comply with current legally-required standards that the site would need to update to if renovations were made.

(To see historic photos of the Knight Children's Center, [click here.](#))

He said his company went through a competitive process to secure the site, declined to say how much the property cost to purchase, citing a confidentiality agreement within the deal.

The "building will embrace the Emerald Necklace and provide [a] new residential face on South Huntington Avenue ... [and it] will become [a] residential anchor on South Huntington Avenue and extend [the] residential character of adjacent JP neighborhoods," the developer said in a statement.

The building's height will be "similar" to two nursing homes situated along South Huntington Avenue, the Sherrill House and Goddard House, development officials said.

For the proposed project, the developer said it has chosen ADD Inc. as its architect, John Moriarity & Associates as its contractor, Nixon Peabody to oversee legal aspects and Epsilon & Associates to oversee obtaining needed permits.

The Boston Residential Group said it is experienced in local, urban development, citing projects the company has led in Boston and Cambridge, including: 360 Newbury St., 285 Columbus Ave., Church Park, Navy Yard and 1008 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge.

The Boston-based real estate development and management company founded in 2003 has ownership interest in or manages over 1,100 luxury apartments and condominiums representing \$350 million in real estate assets, according to its website.

In a move announced in August and anticipated to happen in the fall of 2013, The Home for Little Wanderers will relocate some programming and services from its oldest and most-well known facility -- the Knight Children's Center to a section of its 166-acre site at Longview Farm in Walpole that is undergoing \$19-million in new construction.

Home for Little Wanderers, a 213-year-old nonprofit, has held other programming at other sites, including on former farmland in Walpole since 1940.

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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