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## Different building, same buyer for Witnesses

**Sugar Hill Capital Partners snaps up a small 168-year-old residential building from the Jehovah's Witnesses for \$3 million, shortly after buying a larger one from them for \$7.1 million.**

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By [Amanda Fung @amandafung](#)

March 16, 2012 1:23 p.m.

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The latest of the eight Brooklyn Heights properties put up for sale by the Jehovah's Witnesses sold this week for roughly \$3 million, 13% shy of its asking price. The buyer, Sugar Hill Capital Partners, had scooped up another Witness property nearby earlier this year.

The sale of the five-story townhouse at 161 Columbia Heights to Sugar Hill closed this week. The 7,513-square-foot property has seven market-rate apartments, one rent-stabilized unit and two that are rent-controlled. Earlier this year, Manhattan-based Sugar Hill acquired [50 Orange St., a 20-unit, five-story elevator building, from the Witnesses, paying \\$7.1 million.](#)

The company seeks to invest in residential buildings in which it can add value to the property and the property's tenants, according to a Sugar Hill spokeswoman. "The buildings [we acquire] are characterized by sound cash flows and the potential to grow in value over the long term," she added.

Bob Knakal, chairman of Massey Knakal Realty Services, the brokerage retained to market 161 Columbia as well as 50 Orange St. and 183 Columbia Heights, confirmed the sale and referred comment to the Witnesses. A sales contract is also out for 183 Columbia Heights. A spokesman for the Witnesses could not be reached immediately for comment.

The Witnesses have owned 168-year-old 161 Columbia Heights since 1988, according to public records. Last year the Witnesses, which is thinking about moving its headquarters upstate, [decided to sell the property along with seven others in the area,](#) ranging from a carriage house to a seven-story apartment building.

The Witnesses have called Brooklyn home since 1909, and has become the largest landlord in the Brooklyn Heights area. The group has accumulated 34 properties totaling 3.2 million square feet there over the course of decades, creating a self-sustaining community there.

Sugar Hill is an investment and asset management firm focused on acquiring, repositioning and operating Manhattan and Brooklyn multi-family properties. It also manages its properties.

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## Reader's Comments

**Kelly wrote on 03/16/12 at 2:43 PM**

The Jehovah's Witnesses Watchtower society does not need to expand they are NOT growing in the USA. They cash out these buildings done up with volunteer labor built with tax free donations. They then go and build more rinse repeat ditto. The wealthy Watchtower multinational corporation is bloated with wealth. Land rich just like the Catholic Vatican and they are NO better either.  
Plain truth

[REPLY](#)

**emeth wrote on 03/16/12 at 5:09 PM**

Kelly must be misinformed. First of all they are growing in the U.S. As a matter of fact they are the fastest growing denomination for the last four years or so according to the National Council of Churches' 2011 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches.

Besides that they are an international organisation and worldwide growth is and has been steady for all decades since their start. And indeed they do need expansion :-)

Finally they did not build the buildings in Brooklyn but bought them over the last 100 years.

Kindest regards, Emeth , the Netherlands Europe

[REPLY](#)

**Kelly wrote on 03/16/12 at 5:19 PM**

Jehovah's Witnesses membership compilations are self reporting and exaggerated, they are not growing. The property in Brooklyn was purchased with donations from tens of thousands of followers including my own grandparents who gave up their retirement on the apocalyptic promise that the 'new system' would come before the 21st century.

The Watchtower is now cashing out and moving upstate.  
The Watchtower is a creed of greed just like Scientology.

[REPLY](#)

**emeth wrote on 03/16/12 at 6:27 PM**

Kelly is misinforming again. Independent studies, for example the one that is published in the Journal of Contemporary Religion by researchers RODNEY STARK & LAURENCE R. IANNACCONE & others say that membership statistics based on the average number of publishers offer a very conservative estimate and can be trusted 100%.

[http://www.theocraticlibrary.com/downloads/Why\\_Jehovah%27s\\_Witnesses\\_Grow\\_So\\_Rapidly.pdf](http://www.theocraticlibrary.com/downloads/Why_Jehovah%27s_Witnesses_Grow_So_Rapidly.pdf)

i... (more)

[REPLY](#)

**Kelly wrote on 03/17/12 at 2:20 AM**

Jehovah's Witnesses have stopped 'growing rapidly' in the USA for about 10 years due to false prophecy fallout and statistics about their growth are mostly manipulated.  
When they come knocking it's usually their elderly left overs.

Scientology claims millions of members too,realistically tops out at 50,000 worldwide.

More on Watchtower fleece the flock tactics <http://www.freeminds.org>

[REPLY](#)

**emeth wrote on 03/17/12 at 3:32 AM**

Kelly .. you must be counting JW's yourself it seems :-). But what you are saying is simply not true. And all sources (including many independent ones agree with me on that point). First you said they are not growing at all... then you said the statistics cant be trusted. After that you say.. they are not growing rapidly.. although all sources say otherwise. JW's fill stadions every year all across the globe.. a visible presence of about 19 million people at those stadions and for example on the memorial they hold every year. So if they say we are with 7.6 million.. you better believe it.

growth in the United States alone... (more)

[REPLY](#)

**Kelly wrote on 03/17/12 at 3:47 AM**

There are no 'independent sources' that tally JW membership figures head counts are made in individual Kingdom Halls by deacons and then this data is sent in to Watchtower HQ. Many of the JW conventions stadiums are 'filled up' due to more clever attendance 'stuffing' manipulation. The central doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses is Jesus 'invisible' second coming October 1914 if they can lie about that,anything goes....

[REPLY](#)

**emeth wrote on 03/17/12 at 4:04 AM**

whatever.... Kelly. Read the study of Rodney Stark in the link above. It tells you about independent surveys. Those surveys show that there are more people who claim to be JW than there are according to the Watchtower Society. Go to any Kingdom Hall and you will see the attendance there in every single one of them. Anyway.. i leave this subject now because i have better things to. Have a nice weekend. regards, Emeth

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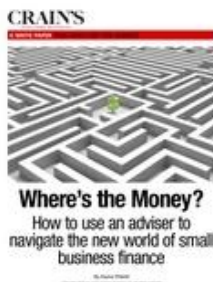
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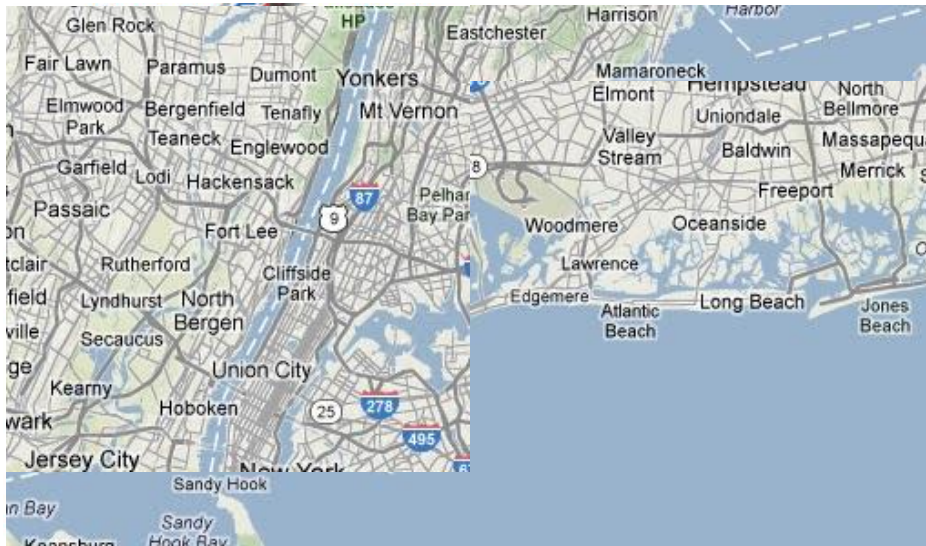
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