

Parish's 4 homes expected to go quickly at auction

Mortgage holders getting most of the proceeds

By Schuyler Kropf , Kyle Stock
The Post and Courier
Sunday, February 24, 2008



Wade Spees
The Post and Courier

Auctioneer Ed Roumillat shows Al Parish's condominium at the corner of Tradd and New Streets downtown.

If You Go

What: Auction of four of Al Parish's properties: his sprawling 8,500-plus square-foot mansion near Summerville, a downtown Charleston townhouse and a beach home and condo at Edisto Beach.

Why: The homes are being sold to help pay off some of Parish's debts, largely to banks.

Where: Roumillat's Estate & Business Auctioneers, 2241 Savannah Highway.

When: Bidding begins at 11 a.m. Tuesday.

Cost: Free to watch but bidders must bring a \$10,000 cashier's check to register.

Video



Al Parish's properties are up for auction - take a sneak look inside to see what they're like [Watch »](#)

Al Parish Archives



[In our special section](#) with every complete story on Al Parish.

Here's a warning for anyone interested in the auction of Al Parish's four homes Tuesday: Show up late and you might miss it completely.

Officials expect the auction to be fast, furious and finished in less than 20 minutes.

Most bidders have already done their homework on the properties they plan to pursue, which is why auctioneer Ed Roumillat is predicting the lightning-quick sale.

"They know where they want to be in the bidding," he said.

For the serious buyer, incremental jumps of \$25,000 to \$50,000 won't be unheard of, Roumillat added.

Up for auction are a South of Broad townhouse on Tradd Street in downtown Charleston, Parish's sprawling modern mansion near Summerville, a seaside beach house and a condominium unit, both south of the town at Edisto Beach. All are being sold individually.

Most of the proceeds from the sales will go to the banks that provided the

mortgages — not to the 600 or so investors defrauded by Parish's now-kaput offering of investment pools that, at one time, promised returns better than Wall Street.

The home sales will have to collectively garner at least \$4.5 million before the victims realize any return, officials say. The target figure is what is owed to banks, tax collectors, and other parties who have some sort of claim to the properties.

Parish, a former economist at Charleston Southern University, pleaded guilty in October to federal fraud allegations in a deal that reduced the number of criminal charges against him from 11 to three. Since 1997, he is reported to have collected \$112.5 million in his "informal pools" of investments from about 600 people and businesses, court documents say.

While Parish was claiming his huge, market-beating returns on the paper income statements sent to investors, he is alleged to have spent or squandered almost \$90 million of the investment money, partially on his own lavish lifestyle.

Parish's sentencing date has not been set. His attorney, Andy Savage of Charleston, has asked for additional time to review the loss calculations that could factor into prison time Parish receives. Meantime, Parish is free on bond and living with his family near Hollywood.

David Dantzler, an Atlanta attorney helping tabulate Parish's assets, said last week he doesn't think the notoriety of Parish's fraud will increase the auction's "hammer prices," in part because of the amount of money involved and the serious commitment needed when buying a home, including as investment or rental property.

No estimate is available for how many people will show for the auction, scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Roumillat's Estate & Business Auctioneers on Savannah Highway. Open

houses have been held promoting the sale and up to 40 people visited Parish's main home of about 8,500 square feet.

Though visitation logs were kept at the sites, not everyone who entered the homes signed the register. Also, word of mouth has spread through the ranks of real estate agents, and TV ads have been airing in advance of the sale.

Attending the event is free, but serious bidders will need to have their financial matters in order. To participate, bidders must submit a \$10,000 cashier's check, which will be returned to those who are unsuccessful. Also, buyers must be prepared to sign legal documents and supply a check for 5 percent of the bid price by the close of the business day. Roumillat and any buyer's agents will be paid from a 6 percent premium added to the amount of each winning bid.

The housing market might not be as robust as it was in April when Parish was arrested, but Dantzler said investigators didn't want to wait for an upswing because settling Parish's assets is a prime concern.

"It's really not part of our charge to be real estate speculators, for lack of a better word," he said.

Still he wants to make sure the right values are returned when the bidding begins.

"We may not get \$2 million for a property that's worth \$1 million," he said, "but we want to make sure we get \$1 million for a property that's worth \$1 million."

Local property sellers who endorse auctions as a quick way of moving real estate say a momentum factor is involved during these sorts of open events that isn't present in traditional selling methods.

Mike Harper, who specializes in property auctions, said, "The real difference between traditional real estate brokerage and the real estate auction process is that in traditional brokerage, we set a price at the top of the market and reduce the price until we find where the market actually is.

"In the auction process, we start the price low, and allow competitive bidding to drive the price to where the market actually is. If both are done properly, the resulting price should be the same, but the auction will get it done on a date certain."

*Reach **Schuyler Kropf** at skropf@postandcourier.com or 937-5551. Reach **Kyle Stock** at kstock@postandcourier.com or 937-5763.*

Copyright © 1997 - 2007 the Evening Post Publishing Co.