Who wants a used mansion anyway?

The Watanabe home will be torn down to make room for two new houses.

By Christine Laue
World-Herald Staff Writer

The Watanabe mansion, one of Omaha's largest and most notable homes, will be demolished and the property divided to accommodate two single-family homes, a project manager said.

The Regency mansion at 3800 Harney Parkway South sold recently to Hartman Street Real Estate LLC, said Christian Christensen, a resident developer who will serve as manager of the limited liability company.

The owner plans to demolish the materials and donate as much as possible, as said Christensen, whose Bluestone Development, a downtown Omaha's new residential projects, including the SoMa and Towns at Little Italy. The owner will split the four-acre lot into two gravel lots, he said.

NP Dodge's Jeff Rensch, the property's listing and selling agent, said he could not comment on the buyer, the sale price or the plans for the property.

"We did inventory to the prominent Omaha families," he said. "Contractually, I cannot comment on it.

Christensen said he is talking to prospective buyers of the lots but currently has no deals.

Rensch said the sale closed July 18.

County records indicate that the property sold for more than $2 million less than the 2008 assessed value.

The real estate transfer statement, which accompanied a warranty deed filed on July 22, shows...
Mansion: Material from home will be donated

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Slated for demolition, the brick, limestone and slate Watanabe mansion has nine bedrooms and 18 bathrooms. Developers plan to recycle and donate as much of the mansion's materials as possible.

not been finalized, he said.

“Wendy’s an architect to create a master plan, which will position the homes in a suitable manner to the street, the surrounding neighborhood and the park,” Christensen said. “The goal is to create two beautiful home sites in one of the city’s most exceptional neighborhoods.”

Harney Street Real Estate LLC will strive to minimize disruption in the neighborhood during demolition and construction, Christensen said.

Godfather’s Pizza founder Willy Theisen built the home in 1983. In April 1999, Theisen sold the property for $1.8 million to Terry Watanabe, whose father, Harry, founded Orienta-Val Trading Co.

On Halloween 2000, Terry Watanabe retired from the company.

An expert hired by Douglas County officials in 2004 to rank the desirability of Omaha-area mansions put the Watanabe house at the top of its list. At that time, its main living space was 12 times as large as the average Douglas County house.

According to the Assessor’s Office Web site, the property was assessed at $4,989,600 in 2007 and at $4,871,700 in 2008.

Assessor records placed the home’s square footage at 18,045 square feet, but Rensch said in January that the finished space was 20,125 square feet.

The brick, limestone and slate mansion sits on 4.05 acres and has nine bedrooms, 18 bathrooms, a gourmet kitchen, a wine cellar, a whole-house energy management system and a three-story elevator. The lower level features a modern exercise facility and health spa with sunken Jacuzzi, steam room, dry sauna and massage room.

The property also includes indoor and outdoor swimming pools and tennis courts.

Fremont: Legal advice led mayor to vote ‘no’

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Fremont native who said she represented a coalition of local churches, schools and social service agencies. “Rather it will negatively impact Fremont.”

Severiano Franco of Lincoln said the council could distinguish itself by enacting the ordinance. “You’ll be No. 1,” he said. “You’ll be the biggest big-