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Marolda sells three-building LES package

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Caspi Development and Black Bear Asset Management bought a three-building package on the Lower East Side from Marolda Properties for \$24.4 million. Marolda, a Chinatown-based landlord run by Lawrence Marolda, more than doubled its money with the purchase, having paid \$9.8 million in 2012 to a family that had owned the properties for more than three decades. The mid-rise buildings at 72, 74 and 104 Forsyth Street have a total of 56 rental apartments and six retail spaces. The apartments are a mix of market-rate and rent-stabilized units, with an average rent of \$1,859 per month. The buildings, all of which overlook Sara D. Roosevelt Park, span more than 31,000 square feet and offer 8,400 square feet of unused air rights. The buyers acquired the package under an entity named BP Forsyth LLC, paying \$773 per square foot. The price comes out to 16 times the rent roll and a 4.8 percent capitalization rate, according to Highcap Group's Josh Goldflam, who served as the broker on this deal as well as the sales in 2012. Caspi and private equity firm Black Bear plan to renovate the properties and raise rents. They are also exploring development options, said Caspi's Josh Caspi. Joe Sabbagh's Ultimate Realty, based in the Flatiron District, has a minority interest. The firm sold a five-story rental building near Union Square for \$29.5 million in the spring. Marolda is under investigation by the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal over claims that it forced tenants out of rent-controlled apartments. The firm also sold a three-building on the Lower East Side in May for \$24 million to Akelius Real Estate Management, a subsidiary of Swedish investment firm Akelius Residential Property.

