

UCP's quiet, steady expansion has Port Richmond up in arms

By ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS

Is United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of New York City biting off a bigger piece of Port Richmond than it can chew?

Established in a storefront at 296 Richmond Ave. for nearly eight years, UCP in the past week has raised the hackles of neighbors and Community Board 1 administrators as word has

seeped out of the organization's expansion of its property holdings and operations in the Port Richmond area.

The expansion encompasses four buildings bought within the past nine months by the non-profit organization, which offers rehabilitative services to the mentally and physically handicapped.

When UCP moved last summer to

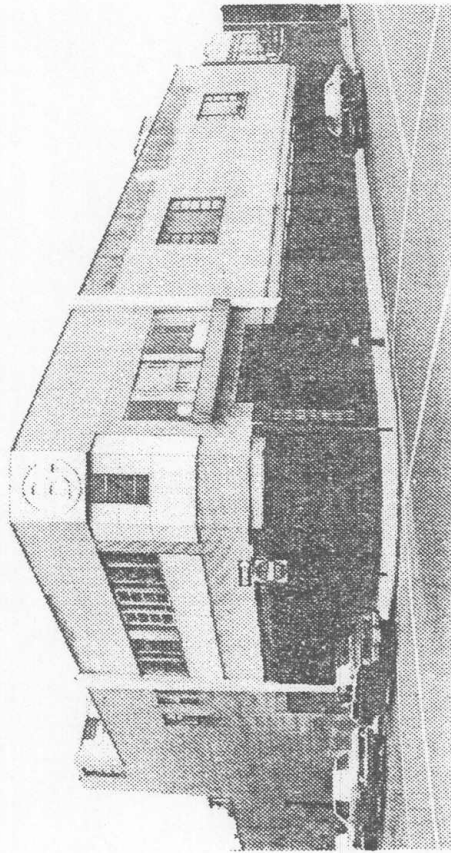
purchase the biggest building, the former Garber Bros. department store, its board of directors solicited and obtained discussion and ultimately good will from Port Richmond residents and the community board. Acquisition of the vacant building, at 281 Richmond Ave., was finalized Sept. 5.

In the same period, however, UCP was quietly moving to buy two occupied frame houses in lots adjoining the Garbers building. That transaction also was finalized Sept. 5.

All three structures were sold to UCP by Port Richmond resident and real estate speculator John Michelotti. A member of the Port Richmond Local Development Corp., Michelotti's relations with UCP, if any, beyond his role as the agent of sale are unclear. But to concerned people in the community, Michelotti, even since unloading the three buildings to UCP, remains a ghost to be reckoned with.

The fourth and apparently the latest acquisition by UCP was made in February. Again an occupied frame home, this building is located behind the Garber store, at 96 Albion Pl. It was

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The old Garbers building on Richmond Ave., Port Richmond, which was purchased by United Cerebral Palsy.

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