

Shaq to bounce into top Hub digs Celtics co-owner condos in mix

By Thomas Grillo | Tuesday, August 10, 2010 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | Business & Markets

The **Celtics** [[team stats](#)] signed Shaquille O'Neal to help win another NBA title, but the big man could also score an assist by turning a team co-owner's luxury condo project into a winner.

Representatives for Shaq will soon be scouting Boston addresses for high-end rentals - including 45 Province, the slow-selling luxury condo project developed by Celtics managing partner the Abbey Group, the Herald has learned.

The property does not have listings for apartments, but the development team could make an exception for Shaq, who would provide just the critical mass - all 7 feet 1 inches and 325 pounds of him - needed to spark buyer interest in a tough luxury housing market.

The former Lakers star could also end up shacking up at the W Boston Hotel & Residences, another downtown condo development with sluggish sales.

Boston brokers agree that Shaq will be shooting for home-court advantage - a crib close to the TD Garden - and plenty of amenities.

"There are about a half-dozen places downtown that will suit Shaq," said Geoffrey Gibbons, a broker at First Boston Realty Group. "I expect he'd want space in a new building with security, concierge, valet parking and access to hotel services."

The contenders reportedly include the Clarendon on Stuart Street, where a three-bedroom unit can be leased by the month for \$19,900 - or roughly the amount O'Neal will pull down per game playing for the Celtics over the course of his two-year stay.

Rob Cohen, president of Boston Realty Advisors Residential, said it makes sense for Shaq to rent given his limited contract with the team.

"It wouldn't be prudent for him to buy, with a two-year deal with the Celtics," he said. "But I don't think he'll be looking at an apartment in a brownstone."

O'Neal could follow in the footsteps, literally, of another Boston sports star by renting the Ritz-Carlton pad of ex-**Red Sox** [[team stats](#)] slugger **Manny Ramirez** [[stats](#)]. His four-bedroom condo, on the sale block for years, recently hit the rental listings, for \$25,000 a month. The Ritz has 21 other luxurious units available.

Brokers say Shaq may also fancy the Residences at the InterContinental on Atlantic Avenue, the Residences at the Mandarin Oriental in the Back Bay, the Four Seasons on Boylston Street and the Residences at the InterContinental. Monthly rents at those toney properties range from \$14,500 to \$28,500.

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