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A-ROD'S EMBATTLED NEW HOME

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Emily Smith, The New York Post

Updated Feb 18, 2011 8:09 PM ET

YANKEE slugger **Alex Rodriguez** is leaving his \$30,000-a-month rental bachelor pad at swanky 15 Central Park West - home to rock stars and hedge-fund billionaires - for a \$6 million apartment in a building embroiled in a bitter dispute with the state Attorney General's Office.

Sources say that A-Rod loves plush 15 CPW but that the pad is not "private enough." It was up for sale while he was renting it - and potential buyers and gawkers were disturbing him by poking around too much.

Now he has made a deal on a 35th-floor, five-bedroom condo at The Rushmore, a new building at 80 Riverside Blvd. on 64th Street with twin 41-story towers and Hudson River views, reports The Post's Jennifer Gould Keil. Amenities include a fitness center with indoor pool and a surrounding park with a nearby baseball field.

A-Rod, who has a 10-year, \$300 million contract with the **Yankees**, was recently on a huge property search in New York, including scouting expeditions downtown with girlfriend Cameron Diaz. They recently toured a townhouse at 153 Franklin St. with its own private garage, a theater, a gym and a spa - all for a mere \$13.995 million.

The Rushmore, built by Extell Development, has been mired in a legal struggle ever since it missed a key deadline to close its first apartment sale, blaming it on a typographical error in the offering plan. Then-Attorney General Andrew Cuomo didn't buy it and ordered Extell to refund deposits to 41 buyers. Extell is fighting the decision.

Extell yesterday confirmed the A-Rod deal: "We are thrilled to have Alex and his family buying at the Rushmore. He loved the building, the park and the water views, but we think that the clincher was the baseball field outside the front door." In fact, a children's ball field is planned.

It is not known if the reference to "his family" means he'll use it for visits with his two daughters from his previous marriage, to Cynthia Rodriguez. A-Rod's rep didn't get back to us.