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The Weird World of L.L.C. Names

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Are Elroy, Astro and Judy real estate investors? They all have L.L.C.'s named after them.

WHEN you see the words “Bubble & Squeak,” what do you think of? A child’s toy? Bathroom cleanser? Or does the traditional English dish of fried leftovers like potatoes and cabbage come to mind?

How about property in Chelsea? That is correct, because in addition to the dish, Bubble & Squeak is the name of a small company that owns real estate.

“We started off with a loft building, and the building itself was a bit of a fried-up leftover,” said John Dulfer, one of the owners of Bubble & Squeak L.L.C. “It seemed to fit quite well.”

Mr. Dulfer has since moved on to a brownstone in Chelsea, which is in much better condition, he said. But the name stuck.

“Most people don’t know what it is,” said Lori Feiler, a broker at Halstead Property who helps Mr. Dulfer find rental tenants. “They say, ‘What is that referring to? Does it have something to do with a bath?’ ”

Dov Treiman, a real estate lawyer, said the L.L.C., which stands for limited liability company, first appeared in New York State in the mid-1990s. They have been used in real estate transactions for a number of reasons, including liability protection.

But they can also serve to shield one’s identity, which has made them popular among celebrities. Deeds are a matter of public record, and if the name “Angelina Jolie” pops up on a condominium transaction, someone is going to notice. If she buys under an L.L.C. named, say, “37 Niños,” perhaps not.

“We absolutely advise people who want their identity confidential to buy in an L.L.C.,” said Shaun Osher, the chief executive of CORE Marketing Group, a real estate brokerage firm. “Most of the time, the L.L.C. name has some kind of a significance. Usually it’s personal, but it has some meaning.”

So who might have sold a building in Brooklyn under the name “Shabbos Goy L.L.C.”? (A shabbos goy is non-Jewish person who helps out on the Sabbath by doing things that are forbidden to Jews.) And what might “The Donkey Brothers L.L.C.” signify? That possibly left-leaning company sold a condominium in Midtown Manhattan this spring.

A recent perusal of deeds in Manhattan and Brooklyn revealed a number of other gems, including “the Worm In The Big Apple” and “Hot Potato.” Some names are sweet, like “Song For My Father,” or “Rabbit Properties.” Others are a little aggressive, like “Control The L.L.C.”

Pop quiz! What do these names have in common: “Elroy L.L.C.,” “Astro L.L.C.,” and “Judy L.L.C.”?

The answer: “Meet George Jetson ...”

The firm behind those L.L.C.’s, which own buildings in the tristate area, is Cogswell Realty, L.L.C., a commercial and residential real estate company named for Cogswell’s Cosmic Cogs, a competitor of George Jetson’s employer, Spacely Space Sprockets.

According to Arthur Stern, the chief executive of Cogswell Realty, the name did not come from a fanatical devotion to “The Jetsons,” but from a sense of fun.

“There was a competitive environment in ‘The Jetsons’ between Spacely Sprockets and Cogswell, and Cogswell was always on the victorious side,” Mr. Stern said. “There was one particular episode where they got into a zoning dispute, and it turned out that Spacely misread a zoning map. That was when we knew.”