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# 19th-century Boylston Street building could be turned into low-income apartments



By [adamg](#) on *Thu, 10/29/2015 - 12:53pm*

St. Francis House and the Archdiocese of Boston are seeking BRA permission to convert the old Young Men's Christian Union building at 48 Boylston St. into 46 apartments for residents making no more than 60% of the area's median income.

Some 26 of the apartments in the building, erected in 1875, would be reserved for people making no more than 30% of the median income, according to a filing with the BRA.



St. Francis House and the Archdiocese's Planning Office for Urban Affairs say they would keep and restore the building's exterior and rebuild and rent out the street-level storefront.

St. Francis House would move its administrative offices into the rehabbed building - in space that once served as a gym - freeing up space in its existing building across the street for more programs serving the homeless.

In their filing, the two groups explain the the project:

*Located in a critically important area of the City of Boston – between the Boston Common and the Chinatown community – the BYMCU building has an important link to the City's history. The building is architecturally significant as a notable example of the High Victorian Gothic style in Boston, and it is the most accomplished building in the High Victorian Gothic idiom remaining in the Central Business District of Boston. Vacant for several years, the adaptive reuse and renovation of this building will help revitalize this section of Boylston Street while achieving the City's*

*goals of providing additional affordable housing opportunities. The renovation will be completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards and will reinvigorate the streetscape to bring the recent revival of the area to Tremont Street. As an historic rehabilitation with a very elaborate façade, the work will be performed by a contractor who is experienced in historic rehabilitation work.*

*With the continued revitalization of the Boylston Street, Chinatown, and the lower Washington Street neighborhood, including the construction of roughly 2,000 units of market-rate and luxury housing, there is a critical need to expand affordable housing and homeless housing opportunities in this area. Our goal is to help this area remain vibrant by providing housing options for a diverse group of people, from the local Asian community, to lower income men and women who are served by the community but seek opportunities for long-term secure housing. Through the adaptive reuse of this former Boston Young Men's Christian Union building, this development will bring an additional 46 units of much-needed affordable housing, while preserving a key structure downtown.*

[48 Boylston small-project review application](#) (8.1M PDF).

Neighborhoods: [Chinatown](#), [Downtown](#)