

REAL ESTATE

Archdiocese, shelter team up for 19-story affordable housing development

The building will have 126 units: 70 for people coming out of homelessness and 56 for low- and middle-income households.



The development will have 126 units. *The Architectural Team*

By **Sury Chakraborty**

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Michael Stein and his wife, Nikki, dream of having “housing and a steady job.”

“As soon as people know that you are homeless, they kick you out of everywhere,” Michael said.

They said their situation is the result of unfortunate circumstances: lost sources of income, the pandemic, medical issues, and a sudden rent increase, to name a few.

The couple, who have known each other for about 30 years and have been married for 10, spend their days at **St. Francis House**, a day shelter, and evenings at the **Boston Night Center**. “We always take off and go to a hotel for a couple days, because we just have to clear our heads to get away from it and to just relax a little bit, because we’re always on the move in this lifestyle,” Michael said. They spent Thanksgiving at St. Francis House last year.

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They have applied for housing help, but to no avail.

“Everything that we could apply for, we’ve applied for, and anything that comes up, we try to jump on,” Michael said.



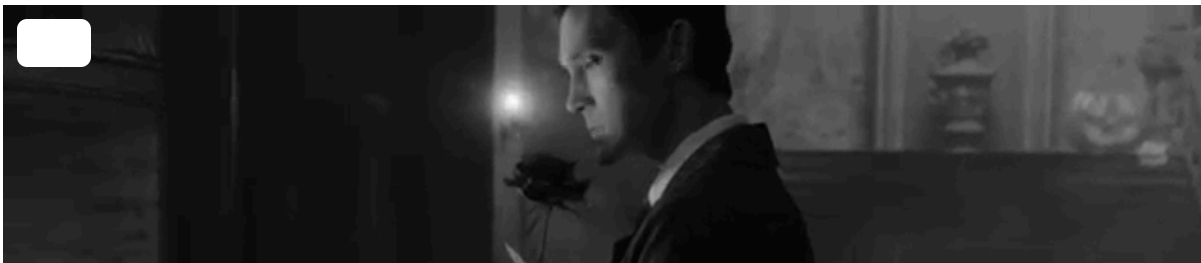
Nikki and Michael Stein spend their days at **St. Francis House**, a day shelter, and evenings at the **Boston Night Center**.

But there is a ray of hope for Michael and Nikki and others in their situation.

The Archdiocese of Boston has partnered with St. Francis House to construct a 19-story residential tower in the heart of downtown, according to a **story** Crux published on Sep. 26.

“We view housing as a human right ... we’re interested in providing **affordable**, safe, and healthy housing for our neighbors and communities, but particularly the most vulnerable,” said **Amarillys Rodriquez**, policy and development senior project manager at the archdiocese’s **Planning Office for Urban Affairs**.

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The development will have 126 units, Rodriguez said. Seventy will be set aside for unhoused people, who will receive financial assistance and case management services and support. The rest will be tiers of affordable housing “targeted to workforce and middle-income households, and will be restricted based on the federal government’s low income figures,” Crux reported.

“Those families or households will be coming through the city’s coordinated access system, and they could very well be individuals or households that St. Francis House is already working within their shelter or other providers in the city system,” Rodriguez said.

The Steins are two of many who have been waiting for their turn to have a roof over their heads.

“The one common solution to ending homelessness is to develop more permanent affordable housing, so that’s why we got into this business,” said **Karen LaFrazia**, president and CEO of St. Francis House, which Crux said serves 7,000 adults annually.

“We have to contribute to the creation of affordable housing if we’re going to really end this experience of homelessness for the people that are coming to St. Francis House,” LaFrazia said.

For the 70 units set aside for households experiencing homelessness, there are vouchers attached to them, LaFrazia added. The households will pay 30 percent of their income for the housing units, and vouchers will cover the rest.

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The remaining 56 units, LaFrazia added, “will be for people that are at 50, 60, or 80 percent of the area median income, and they will be able to access those units through the city’s lottery.”

This project is funded by various entities, she said. “There’s a combination of city and state resources that have come together to provide the financing that we would need to build it.” Crux said funding will come from:

The state Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

MassHousing Finance Agency

Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation

City of Boston’s Mayor’s Office of Housing

Neighborhood Housing Trust

Boston Housing Authority

Bank of America

The Life Initiative.

LaFrazia said the expectation is for people to move in by September 2026.

Rodriguez added that the planning office is already engaged with the St. Francis House on a development proposal in Charlestown. They are also partnering with St. Mary’s Center for Women and Children to redevelop their campus in Jones Hill neighborhood of Dorchester.

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