

CDCs to Acquire Fenway Roominghouse in Discrimination Case

By [Steve Adams](#) | Banker & Tradesman Staff | Mar 24, 2023



Photo courtesy of Google Maps

A pair of Boston-based affordable housing developers will acquire a Fenway roominghouse that was accused of targeting elderly residents for eviction.

Attorney General Andrea Campbell announced that the current owner, a Connecticut-based religious order, and its property manager agreed to pay \$115,000 and freeze rent increases pending the sale of 20 Charlesgate, known as Our Lady's Guild House.

A deed restriction will ensure the property's permanent use for affordable housing.

Fenway Community Development Corp. and the Archdiocese of Boston's Planning Office of Urban Affairs have an agreement to buy Our Lady's Guild House and maintain it as income-restricted housing, said Rich Giordano, director of policy and community planning for the Fenway CDC. The two nonprofits jointly submitted a bid on the property, and expect to close on the transaction by the end of the year, Giordano said.

Containing 83 studio and 26 1-bedroom apartments, the property was established by the Archdiocese of Boston in the 1940s as a roominghouse for older women and is currently owned by the Daughters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception. The group hired brokerage Colliers to market the property last year, after residents filed an age discrimination complaint with the attorney general's office.

In the past decade, owners raised rents and [replaced many of the longtime residents](#) with college students, according to the complaint filed by Greater Boston Legal Services. The complaint also alleged that property manager MRR Management of Boston engaged in discriminatory marketing practices.

The investigation concluded that the owners and managers illegally targeted elderly residents for no-cause evictions, imposed residency time limits and advertised discriminatory restrictions based upon age and ability.

The six existing long-term residents will be allowed to remain under terms of the settlement. Giordano said the range of income restrictions on future residents will be determined by the type of acquisition financing, which is expected to include a mix of public subsidies. The property

also will require renovations and updates to improve accessibility and energy efficiency, Giordano said.

The acquisition price is undisclosed. The sale is subject to approval by the attorney general's office under the state's public charity law.