

## PLANNING OFFICE FOR URBAN AFFAIRS AND FENWAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION GAIN OWNERSHIP OF OUR LADY'S GUILD HOUSE

Terry Donilon <tdonilon@rcab.org>

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To:Lois Alksninis <LA@poua.org>

### Planning Office *for* Urban Affairs

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

Contact:  
Lois Alksninis  
Planning Office for Urban Affairs  
(617) 350-8885 x112  
[LA@poua.org](mailto:LA@poua.org)

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### **PLANNING OFFICE FOR URBAN AFFAIRS AND FENWAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION GAIN OWNERSHIP OF OUR LADY'S GUILD HOUSE**

*Development partners close deal to make permanently affordable  
housing in the Fenway*

[POUA.org](http://POUA.org)

Two non-profit Boston-based affordable housing developers, the Planning Office for Urban Affairs (the Planning Office) and Fenway Community Development Corporation (Fenway CDC), have purchased Our Lady's Guild

House (OLGH), in order to preserve the building as permanent affordable housing in the Fenway neighborhood. This acquisition was made possible by financing provided by the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Housing and the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC) and the support of community and public sector partners.

The purchase of OLGH builds off a decade of efforts by Fenway CDC and the residents of OLGH to protect the building for safe, affordable housing in one of Boston's most desirable and expensive neighborhoods. With additional public funding and low-income housing tax credit equity, POUA and Fenway CDC will rehabilitate and modernize the building as 100% permanent affordable housing and protect the tenancies of long-term residents. The partnership will be investing significantly in rehabilitating and renovating the OLGH property to create housing that is welcoming, inclusive, universally accessible, energy-efficient, supportive of healthy living, and rich in shared amenity spaces for residents.

Located just outside of Kenmore Square in the Fenway, Our Lady's Guild House is a 140-unit single resident occupancy-style residential building. In 1946, the Archdiocese of Boston purchased the 20 Charlesgate West property at the urging of female parishioners for the purpose of providing affordably priced housing for women in Boston; following the purchase, Archbishop Richard Cushing created a Massachusetts charity, now known as Our Lady's Guild House, Inc. to own the property and to fulfill its charitable mission. Since 1947, OLGH has provided safe, affordably-priced housing for female Boston residents. In recent years, OLGH has been a home to many students, as well as long-term residents who have resided in the building for decades. During its history, OLGH has received significant operational support from the Daughters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception, a New Britain, Connecticut-based religious order.

"Affordable housing is crucial to building strong and equitable communities, and the Planning Office for Urban Affairs and Fenway Community Development Corporation are taking an important step in preserving and expanding access to affordable housing in the Fenway neighborhood," said Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing. "Our Lady's Guild House is a unique property that has for decades been a home for low-income residents. We are glad that the City of Boston, with these partners, is able to continue our work towards the goal of ensuring that everyone has access to safe and affordable housing."

“We are delighted to have this opportunity to increase the amount of quality affordable housing available in the Fenway. Fenway CDC has a long history of advocating for and working with Fenway residents to create affordable housing. We look forward to working with the City of Boston, the Commonwealth and mission-aligned quasi-public entities, banks, and investors to make this project a reality,” said Leah Camhi, Executive Director of the Fenway CDC.

“We are grateful that OLGH has been willing to work with us in the acquisition of the property and its preservation as an important affordable housing resource in the City. This acquisition aligns with our mission to respond to the urgent need for affordable housing in the City of Boston, and our moral obligation to ensure that everyone has a roof over their heads,” said Bill Grogan, President of the Planning Office for Urban Affairs. “This work often gets done by creating partnerships, and we look forward to partnering with Fenway CDC and continuing our close relationship with the City to make this preservation a reality.”

“Preserving long-term affordability of existing housing is a central part of CEDAC’s mission. The acquisition of this historic lodging house in the Fenway neighborhood and proposed creation of permanent housing with services is a major accomplishment by our non-profit community development partners,” said Roger Herzog, Executive Director of The Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC). “CEDAC was proud to join the City of Boston to provide critical acquisition financing that will help to advance the project’s development and looks forward to continuing to work with POUA, Fenway CDC, and other community partners as the project moves forward into construction.”

The Planning Office and Fenway CDC are committed to preserving the homes of long-term residents who have lived at OLGH, along with maintaining shared amenity spaces that have been a key component to the existing community. The Planning Office and Fenway CDC (operating within constraints from funding sources and applicable laws) will seek to create homes that are affordable, inclusive, accessible, healthy, and sustainable, and that continue to foster a sense of community that has existed at OLGH for decades.

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**About the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, Inc. (the Planning Office)**

The Planning Office for Urban Affairs, Inc. is a social justice ministry affiliated with the Archdiocese of Boston that creates vibrant communities through the development of high-quality affordable and mixed-income housing and economic development efforts. As a prominent regional non-profit developer and a leading diocesan housing development ministry for the Catholic Church in America, the Planning Office has completed over 3,000 units of affordable and mixed-income housing and has undertaken several neighborhood revitalization initiatives in Massachusetts.

**About Fenway Community Development Corporation (Fenway CDC)**

Fenway CDC is a 50 year-old organization that works to preserve the Fenway as a vibrant and diverse neighborhood by developing affordable housing, providing programs that enrich lives, and ensuring that community voices shape decisions about the neighborhood. Fenway CDC helps community members not only find affordable housing, jobs and educational opportunities but also access fresh food, financial coaching, and wellness programs. The CDC's community planning and organizing efforts advocate for policies that address housing insecurity and affordable housing shortage across the city. Fenway CDC, on its own and in partnership with others, has developed over 600 affordable homes over the last four decades. Fenway CDC owns 415 units across 10 properties providing housing for over 650 people, with another 27 units nearing completion.

**About CEDAC**

CEDAC is a public-private community development financial institution that provides project financing and technical expertise for community-based and other non-profit organizations engaged in effective community development in Massachusetts. CEDAC's work supports two key building blocks of community development: affordable housing and early care and education. CEDAC is also active in state and national housing preservation policy research and development and is widely recognized as a leader in the non-profit community development industry.

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