

## Former Quincy church to become affordable apartments

Chinatown agency plans to construct 34 affordable units



The Asian Community Development

Corporation based in Chinatown undertakes its first-ever project in Quincy this month: an \$11.4 million renovation of a former office building and church into a 34 affordable rental apartments.

**By Chris Burrell**

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QUINCY —

A Boston agency devoted to helping Asian Americans and revitalizing Chinatown will begin its first project in Quincy this month – transforming a former office building and one-time church into 34 affordable apartments.

The Asian Community Development Corporation is the lead developer of the \$11.4 million project at 6 Fort St. near the Star Market in Granite Plaza.

Nearly three-fourths of the apartments will be available for people who earn from \$33,000 to \$63,000 a year, said Janelle Chan, interim executive director of the Asian community agency. The remaining nine units will be reserved for low-income renters, who earn less than \$30,000 a year.

The affordable apartments are not solely for Asian-Americans or Asian immigrants in Quincy, but they are the focus of the developer, which has watched the shifting demographics from Chinatown to Quincy.

“We’re at the point now where the community (in Quincy) is no longer burgeoning but established,” Chan said. “With folks displaced from Chinatown because of urban renewal and housing getting really expensive, they’ve moved on the transit line.”

Quincy has become a stepping stone from Chinatown as well as “an immigrant gateway,” a first stop for newcomers to America, Chan said.

Newly renovated and affordable housing is the best way to serve this population, she said.

Kathy McGilvray, the senior investment officer at the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation, which is helping to finance the project, described the affordable housing pressures in Quincy as intense.

“Recent market studies showed a huge need with more than 3,000 renter households spending more than 50 percent of their income for housing or living in substandard housing,” she said.

The building will have eight one-bedroom apartments, 23 two-bedroom apartments and three three-bedroom apartments. Monthly rents will range from \$835 to \$1,160 with some rents offset by housing subsidies for low-income renters.

The building was nearly empty two years ago when the Asian Community Development Corporation purchased it for \$1.86 million. The four-story structure had originally been two buildings – St. Paul’s Methodist Church, which dated to 1888, and an office building constructed in 1985.

The project is financed with state and federal grants and tax credits made available to housing agencies and the city of Quincy. The Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation, a Boston nonprofit agency that finances affordable housing, is putting up \$5.7 million.

State Street Bank will contribute \$1.8 million in financing from state tax credits designed to fund low-income housing. The city of Quincy will tap about \$450,000 of housing and community development funds available through federal programs, McGilvray said.

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