

BELDEN SAWYER TENANT ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHICAGO – On Christmas Eve, the real estate firm 33 Realty began the process of displacing tenants from a recently-acquired apartment building in Logan Square, on the corner of Sawyer and Belden Avenues. A group of tenants received notice that they must vacate their current apartments by the end of March. 33 Realty has told some tenants that it intends to gut the property, a historic Chicago courtyard apartment building, in order to hike rents.

Tenants were blindsided two weeks ago when notices appeared in the building's lobbies notifying them that the building had sold. The previous owner, Bill Houck, of Oregon, did not communicate any information about the new buyers to tenants. Most tenants are working class Chicagoans, including artists, doulas, warehouse workers, and plumbers. All have immense love for the building and are shocked and saddened by the sale. Some have lived in the building for two decades or more.

Among the tenants who will be displaced by 33 Realty are elderly people and new families. The sale has provoked a crisis for all residents. Representatives from the company have shared contradictory information with residents, telling some that leases will be renewed, and others about the gut renovation plans. At least one tenant was promised a "pre-lease" which would allow for moving back into the building once renovations were complete, but no such promise was made in the Christmas Eve notice sent to tenants.

33 Realty personnel have engaged in verbal harassment and intimidation of tenants. Immediately after the company took control of the building, it stopped providing trash removal services, in violation of city code. In response to the company's negligence and abusive tactics, neighbors joined together to form a new tenant union, the Belden Sawyer Tenant Association, which is pleading with the public and elected officials to help its members stay in their homes.

Logan Square, like all of Chicago, faces an affordable housing crisis, exacerbated by the practices of companies such as 33 Realty. The company is owned by Poplar Homes, a California real estate conglomerate with links to Google and venture capital firms.

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