

# Owner won't convert huge rooming house

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Winnipeg lawyer Richard Fulham owns what could be the biggest rooming house in Winnipeg.

At a whopping 27 rooms, the Furby Street house dwarfs many apartment blocks in West Broadway. For local housing activists, it's a niggling worry that Fulham might one day flip the house, putting two dozen people on the street.

A decade ago, Fulham owned 11 rooming houses in West Broadway but slowly sold some as part of the gentrification that's now begun in the neighbourhood and because stagnant welfare rates can make running a rooming house a losing proposition. Fulham originally planned to convert the Furby Street house into 12 bachelor units, and he still gets offers to buy the property.

He is not selling. "I was going to convert them all, but there's such a need for housing," said Fulham, who also owns two smaller rooming houses nearby. "Where would these people go?"

Instead, he is working on upgrading the Furby house and should have it where he wants it in a year.

Rooming-house owners are a varied bunch. Many are slum landlords, so negligent it's hard even for seasoned fire inspectors to track them down. Others are neighbourhood agencies looking to fight poverty by running decent suites. Still others see rooming houses as the affordable way to get into the real estate game, unprepared for the social work involved and frustrated by government regulations and programs that routinely fail rooming houses and their residents.

For more on this story, [click here](#).

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