

HOUSING

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Won't pay \$6,000 fine for not making repairs, London landlord says

The owner blames conditions at his buildings on the tenants, mainly

Asian immigrants, saying 'they're like little pigs.'

By Greg Van Moorsel
The London Free Press

A London landlord fined \$6,000 for not completing city-ordered repairs to his Cheyenne Avenue buildings says he won't pay.

Elijah Elieff largely blamed his tenants and their children — mainly Asian immigrants — for conditions at the two buildings at 95 and 105 Cheyenne Ave.

"They're like little pigs," he said Tuesday. "They think they're still living in the jungle."

CITY'S OPTIONS: If Elieff refuses to pay, city officials could try to seize or freeze his business assets.

"We don't do it too often, but we would certainly do it in this case," city solicitor Bob Blackwell said. "It makes a mockery of the system if somebody doesn't pay."

On Monday, Justice of the Peace Ron Trachy fined Elieff Investments Ltd. \$3,000 on each of two counts of failing to comply with 1987 orders to bring the buildings in line with London's property standards bylaw. He or-

dered payment within 15 days.

The work orders, issued in May, 1987, remain in effect.

Elieff's apartments, home to many Cambodian families, have a history of complaints ranging from bug infestations to broken plumbing and general disrepair. Last month, health officials ordered the 40-unit complex evacuated to spray for cockroaches.

CONDITIONS DEPLORED: "The conditions are deplorable when (tenants) move in there — certainly, it's a mess," said Rev. Susan Eagle, a United Church minister and volunteer worker with the Asian tenants, many of whom speak little or no English.

In 1988, Elieff was fined \$500 on each of two counts stemming from the same work orders.

He paid those fines this year, but said the latest penalty is unfair because he does everything he can afford to maintain decent living standards.

"Why should I pay it? What I mean is, other people are wrecking my property."

Persons fined under the Provincial Offences Act can be arrested and jailed for not paying, but enforcing corporate fines is more difficult. Available options include applying to the Ontario supreme court to order property liens or seizure of business assets.

Assistant city solicitor Patricia Cox said a hearing will be held at city hall Tuesday to determine whether any new work orders should be issued.