

# City, provincial aid sought for co-op housing project

Renovation costs for the dilapidated apartments have been estimated at \$3.5 million.

By Hank Daniszewski and Steve Green  
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The city should help defuse the "time bomb" at the run-down Cheyenne Avenue apartment complex, a London council committee was told Monday. Community worker Susan Eagle said turning the four northeast apartment buildings into co-op housing would provide a final solution to chronic problems there.

"This has been going on for eight years, it could go on for another eight or 80," said Eagle.

The community and protective services committee recommended city staff prepare a report on assistance the city could give to the project.

The buildings at 95 and 105 Cheyenne, owned by London landlord Elijah Elieff, are for sale for \$1.19 million. The other two buildings at 85 and 75 Cheyenne, owned by an Ottawa firm, are for sale for \$1.2 million.

Eagle said the buildings are mainly occupied by recent Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrants who have to put up with cracking walls, cockroaches, and defective plumbing and wiring.

"We are sitting on a time bomb, wait-

ing for a real catastrophe to happen."

Tenant Seng Seang said the close-knit immigrants do not wish to move out of the buildings because they are close to neighborhood schools and the food processing plants where many of them work.

**POINT TO FLAWS:** When a Free Press reporter toured the complex earlier Monday, he found residents ready to point out flaws:

□ Sang Yuk pointed to missing chunks of plaster in his bathroom ceiling and walls.

□ Chippeng Hom showed where water constantly leaks underneath her kitchen sink.

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## APARTMENTS: Tenant wants to live in a home not 'broken all the time'

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□ Laura Young complained of having no lock on her ground-floor apartment patio door and of a plumbing system that has the hot water flowing out of the shower head and cold water out of the bathtub faucet.

**HANDS TIED:** "I'm a little more laid-back about it because I know the superintendents' hands are tied," said Young. "The owners just won't put out the money for repairs."

The buildings at 75 and 85 Cheyenne are in slightly better shape than the other two.

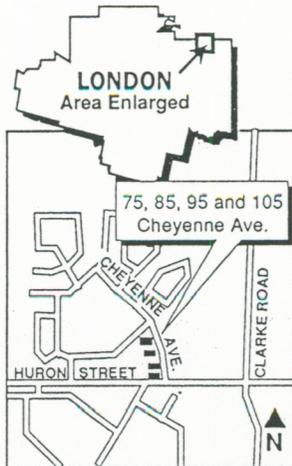
At 95 Cheyenne, Yuk said he sometimes gets angry and "very, very frustrated" over the lack of repairs.

"I have told him (Elieff) but he never comes. And what can I do?" said Yuk, who moved here last November after the tool company he worked for in Windsor closed. "... I'm afraid to say anything in public because I don't know Canadian law."

Upstairs, in the third-floor apartment where she has lived for four years, Hom was also upset.

"I want a nice apartment, not one that's broken all the time," she said, putting loose floor tiles in her kitchen back into place.

**AID SOUGHT:** Provincial officials have been approached to provide funding to purchase the buildings so they can be renovated or demolished. The new



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apartments would be managed by the tenants and renovation costs have been estimated at \$3.5 million.

But Eagle said the project needs city support to lobby the provincial government. The city could also help relocate the tenants during renovation or rebuilding.

Councillor Gary Williams cautioned it might be difficult to justify using public funds to buy the buildings. He said the city might consider simply condemning the buildings and moving the tenants out.

Owners of the buildings couldn't be reached for comment.