

Deal struck to buy, replace Cheyenne apartment units

Only approvals for a housing co-op, demolition and construction permits still have to be obtained.

By Shelley Lawson
The London Free Press

A wrecking ball could be the triumphant weapon in the cockroach war waged by tenants in the Cheyenne apartments in London, if conditions on a proposed \$2-million deal to purchase the buildings are met.

A Cheyenne tenants' board needs Ontario housing ministry and London city hall approval to solidify a conditional deal to buy, bash and rebuild the buildings at 105, 95, 85 and 75 Cheyenne Ave.

Gathered around a four-litre jar crawling with the insects which have plagued residents at 105 and 95 Cheyenne Ave., about 30 tenants learned Monday a conditional agreement of purchase for all four buildings has been negotiated. Cost of rebuilding will be determined later.

Conditions — ministry approval for a housing co-operative and London's approval for demolition and construction permits — must be met by Sept. 6 for the deal to close the end of October. Demolition

could begin in March, 1993, with the first new units ready for occupancy six months later, said Michael Howe, president of London-based Norquay Homes, who negotiated the deal.

Howe said tenants now living in the apartments will be guaranteed accommodation in the new complex, which will have at least 80 units. He said he hopes to have tenant advice on the design of the new units, which need to be bigger than the present one- and two-bedroom apartments.

During demolition and construction, "we will try and find (tenants) accommodation nearby or as nearby as possible for a short time," said Howe.

COST AGREEMENT: The purchase price of the two pairs of buildings, 105 and 95 Cheyenne, owned by Elijah Elieff of London, and 85 and 75 Cheyenne, owned by Ottawa-based White Hall Estates, is slightly more than \$1 million a pair, said Susan Eagle, a tenants' advocate who is spearheading the co-op



initiative.

Rent in the new units will be negotiated with the ministry, said Marmie Coulson, executive director of Community Homes of Southwestern Ontario, who is helping the co-op organization. Subsidies will be available through the rent-geared-to-income program for families unable to pay full rent, she said.

ROACH PROBLEMS: Once concerns about rent and relocation were addressed, the gathered tenants had just one more question.

"What about cockroaches?"

The insects are a persistent problem on Elieff's properties and tenants wanted reassurance that the roaches wouldn't return to the new buildings.

Prizes of pizza and soft drinks were awarded earlier in the evening for the most cockroaches and largest cockroach caught in the complex.

"It's a tough way to earn a pizza," said Ward 3 Councillor Pat O'Brien.

Elieff refused comment on the deal Monday night.