BROOKLYN

Drug building is gov't-owned

HUD: No idea of goings-on

A BUSHWICK APARTMENT building where neighborhood activists charge drug dealing was so rampant residents "live in hell" is owned by the federal government, the Daily News has learned.

A nearby apartment building where drugs also are being sold is subsidized with city funds.

"Gimme a break," fumed the Rev. Mgr. John Powis, who has been leading a crusade to stop local drug dealers. The tenants "live through hell day in and day out," he said.

"If it was another type of neighborhood — a high-class neighborhood everybody knows they wouldn't allow good families to live in those conditions."

The building at 135 Bleecker St., across the street from Powis' church, St. Barbara's, is owned by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Drug dealers operated out of the three-story building for more than five years until a fire ripped through the third floor last month.

Parishioners said they could hear drug addicts calling out the dealer's name.

"People come here from all over New York City to buy drugs," Powis said.

Powis received death threats after he wrote an op-ed column in the Daily News last month charging that drug dealers were retaking the Bushwick neighborhood. He mentioned the Bleecker St. building across the street.

"There has been narcotics activity at those two locations in the past, and we have made several arrests," said police spokesman Detective Louis Camacho.

He declined to comment on any ongoing investigations.

Down the street at 164 Bleecker St., dealers operate out of a six-unit brownstone building. The Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, a nonprofit that recovers funding, took over the building nine months ago from the city's housing agency.

The group, known about the drug problem and wants to sweep it out. They have notified the police, it said.

"But without a conviction, it's very hard," said Joseph Center, associate director of UHAB. "All we can say is 'alleged drug dealing' — and 'alleged drug dealing' does not mean anything in housing court," he said.

There have been more than 400 narcotics-related arrests this year in the 83rd Precinct in Bushwick.

"Eastern Brooklyn still has a very big drug problem, and police should put more effort in confronting it," Center said.

Residents and neighbors on the block were too scared to speak out about the drug problem last week.

We want news from your area

Do you have a story to tell us from your neighborhood? The Daily News is launching a new feature called "News from My Neighborhood." We are looking for short stories from Brooklyn neighborhoods with good news, funny anecdotes or a chance to thank someone for a good deed. Please send your stories — no more than 100 words, please — to brooklynnews@dailynews.com, with "News from My Neighborhood" in the subject line.