

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. Mgrs. 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,

BY DEBORAH KOLBEN
DAILY NEWS WRITER

but HUD officials insisted they had no idea about the drug dealing.

"We have not heard from any sources that there may be any type of drug activity taking place at the building," HUD spokesman Adam Glantz said. "This is an active tenants group, and I'm sure they would have contacted us if there was a problem."

But police have long known about drugs there. Every month, Powis and local leaders hand over a list to local cops of a dozen drug dealers and locations.

Parishioners at St. Barbara's are so scared of local drug dealers they leave anonymous tips in the church's collection box.

"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 brown brick building. The Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, a nonprofit that receives city funding, took over the building nine months ago from the city's housing agency.

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

"But without a conviction, it's very hard," said Joseph Center, associate director of UHAB.

"There has been narcotics activity at those two locations in the past, and we have made several arrests."

LOUIS CAMACHO

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.



ANDREW THEODORAKIS

Rev. Mgrs. John Powis (photo r.), who has been leading a crusade to stop drug dealing in his neighborhood, says that a building at 135 Bleecker St. (above), across the street from his church, is a haven for drug addicts.

DAILY NEWS

YELLOW RIBBON WEEK

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We want our readers to see the names and faces of these local heroes, and perhaps learn a little about some of them.

Please send a photo of your loved one, along with the following information:

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- Neighborhood (e.g., Flushing, Queens)
- Military branch (e.g., Army, Army National Guard, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force) and whether he or she is in the active force or the reserves
- Name of his or her unit and the unit's home station or base (e.g., Fort Totten)
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And please jot down a paragraph or two about your hero that you'd like to share with our readers when the series begins in April.

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