

## Crotona Park resident left in the cold

by DANIEL BEEKMAN  
Friday, January 16, 2009 9:21 AM EST



Gladys Archer, the building's tenant association president, will return to Bronx housing court this month. She wants a judge to appoint 808 a special administrator. The building is in disrepair. Photo by Victor Chu

Last month, 808 E. 175th Street burned. This month, the crumbling Crotona Park tenement shivered.

Con Edison shut off power to 808's public areas and boiler room Monday, January 5, citing landlord non-payment. So Gladys Archer and her fellow tenants burrowed under blankets and shuffled through dark hallways.

"We haven't seen the building manager since December," Archer said. "Truthfully, we don't know who our landlord is."

OCG VII LLC bought 808 in 2007 in a 22-building blockbuster deal. By September 2008, OCG VII had accumulated 900 building code violations at the property, including 296 c-level violations classified as hazardous.

In October, 808's tenant association took OCG VII to Bronx housing court and won. A judge gave OCG VII, one of city's worst landlords, 30 days to fix the c-level violations or cede control to a court-appointed administrator.

OCG VII found a buyer for the 43-unit building instead. In November, the Madison Avenue firm entered into negotiations with DDF Bronx Portfolio LLC and left 808's repairs to Hunter Property Management. DDF and Hunter operate out of the same Vintage Group, LLC office.

DDF asked Archer, the building's tenant association president, for an extension. She agreed, and Hunter promised to repair 808.

Now a month past DDF's December deadline, c-level violations remain. On December 11, 808 suffered an electrical fire. On January 1, the building's boiler ran out of fuel.

"Hopefully, we'll be back in court the week of January 19," said Garrett Wright, 808's attorney. "[DDF] has not shown itself to be a good landlord."

Alice Phillips-Delmonte, DDF's lawyer, didn't return phone calls the week of January 5. In December, Phillips-Delmonte painted DDF as an unlucky heir to OCG VII's mess.

Hunter, she stated, was hustling to make repairs. And 808's lingering c-level violations? Ask the tenants, suggested Phillips-Delmonte.

"We don't let ourselves in to damaged apartments," she said.

The Urban Justice Center's Wright disagreed.

"A lot of these violations have nothing to do with access," he said. "Paying the electrical bill doesn't involve tenant cooperation. I don't care about [DDF's] rhetoric. This is more of the same."

In November, the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development tagged 808 for its Alternative Enforcement Program. The program, created in 2007, nurses the city's 200 most decrepit dwellings.

On January 3, HPD refueled 808's boiler. On Wednesday, January 7, HPD paid Con Ed and restored power to the building's hallways.

"Lack of heat is a safety issue," said Seth Donovan, HPD spokesman. "People can freeze or become very sick. It's dangerous to have unlighted hallways in case of a fire. That's why HPD stepped in."

The city has OCG VII registered as the building's landlord. In March, HPD will re-evaluate the building. If 808 fails again, the city will embark on sweeping repairs.

Meanwhile, Wright will ask the Bronx housing court to appoint 808 a special administrator. The administrator would collect rent and mend the building.

The outstanding electricity bill was \$4,300, Wright said. Archer is furious. She showed Hunter employees a warning letter from Con Ed months ago. Con Ed spokeswoman Joy Faber confirmed last week's shut off.

Listed numbers for OCG VII have been disconnected.