

Laws

Windows are expected to withstand wind pressure. There is to be a window in the living room, dining room, and bedroom of area prescribed by the Residential Standards.

Plumbing facilities are required for every dwelling unit, installed according to Provincial Standards.

Where there is a piped water supply every dwelling unit is to have a kitchen sink, water-closet, wash basin, and bathtub. Where there is no piped water supply there is to be a sanitary privy and chemical closet. Where there is a means of treating water, there is to be piping installed to connect the heated water with a kitchen sink, wash basin and bathtub.

Habitable rooms are to be vented by natural or mechanical means. With mechanical means there is to be one air change per hour.

All buildings are to be equipped with heating devices capable of maintaining desired indoor temperature.

Electrical facilities are to be provided for every unit, having sufficient capacity to provide, without overloading, electrical energy for the lighting and appliance outlets provided.

Remember that these clauses apply to new buildings, that is those built after the building by-laws were passed on May 11, 1971. However, if you feel you have a legitimate complaint call the building inspector. He may be able to help.

DANGEROUS OR UNSIGHTLY PREMISES ACT

There is a by-law (number eighteen) which deals with dangerous or unsightly premises. It states that it is unlawful for a person who owns or occupies property to allow his place to become dilapidated or deteriorated so that it is in a dangerous, unsightly or unhealthful condition.

If such conditions exist the council may instruct the clerk to serve notice on the owner or occupier requiring him to remedy the situation. If the person fails to do so, any person authorized by the council may enter the premises and remedy the condition. Cost will be recovered through an action for debt against the owner or occupier of the premises.

If you feel that you have a complaint to make under this by-law then call the building inspector.

TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

A tenant is responsible for everything mentioned in the lease, if there is one. Rent must be paid on time or you can be evicted. (see Landlord and Tenant Act).

You are expected to keep your place clean. An unclean place may easily attract insects and rodents. Any damage incurred while you are a resident is your responsibility. I suggest you check the apartment you are about to rent and have in writing any damage done before you move in. Have the landlord sign it. If it is particularly important if you are asked to pay a deposit. Also get in writing, with the landlord's signature, any repairs that he agrees to make and pay for.

If you are not careful about such things before you move in, you may find yourself responsible for damages done before you moved in. Let the landlord know if your apartment needs repairing. It is to his advantage to keep the place in good repair. The longer things go unrepaired the more costly it becomes. A dilapidated apartment will not bring as much rent as one kept in good repair.

Often students have little respect for the place they are renting because of their transient nature. Remember you also have a res-

ponsibility to your neighbours. If you bother your neighbours with an unsightly mess outside your premises or excessive noise you may find that you will receive an eviction notice.

Sometimes the tenant is responsible for the repair or replacement of certain things in the apartment. If, for example, the stove which heats your apartment breaks down you may suddenly be confronted with the fact that it's up to you to have it repaired. It's better to be prepared for such things. For this we have enclosed a check list for apartments.

The fact that a tenants association will encourage tenants to be responsible should result in less hassles between landlord and tenant before bringing about improved relations. Also, if the tenant is satisfied he is apt to be stable and there is less turnover in apartments.

The association may serve as a bargaining agent in disputes. This will prevent direct confrontation between landlord and tenant which might result in bad relations.

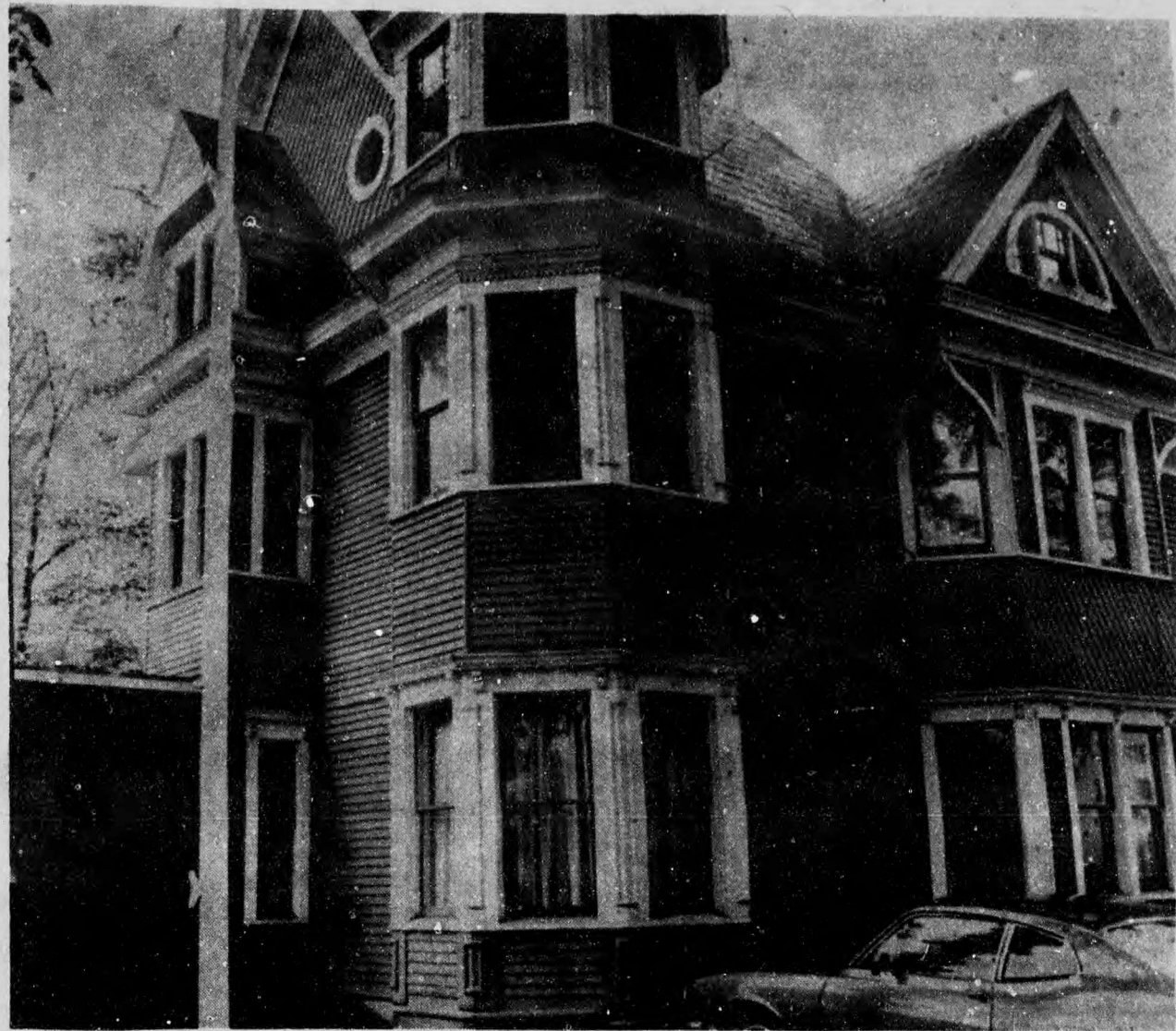


Photo by Bob Boyes

CHECK LIST FOR APARTMENTS

1. Check its proximity to supermarkets, laundromats, schools and transportation.
2. Try to get your landlord to guarantee any improvements you want in writing.
3. Rent only in a building which is completed. Promises of building completion are often not met due to strikes, etc.
4. Determine who is responsible for maintaining the yards, snow removal, garbage removal, etc.
5. Be wary of basement apartments. These are prone to bugs, floods, thieves and perverts.
6. Check the system of mail delivery. Make sure that your mail will be delivered safely and regularly.
7. Ascertain who pays for the electric bill and if the cost of hot water and heat is included in the rent or as part of your electric, gas or oil bill. Beware! Electric heat is expensive!
8. How is the heat in the apartment controlled? If you depend on an oil stove for heat, check to see who is responsible for repairs if it breaks down.
9. If you must pay a security or damage deposit, make certain that a) you receive a receipt for it, b) any damage to the place prior to your moving in written down and signed by the landlord and, c) that you have a signed statement (perhaps part of a lease) that the deposit will be returned promptly in full

unless you have caused excessive damage to the apartment. You should not be charged for regular wear and tear on the apartment.

10. When you sign a lease, make sure that you receive a copy of the lease (signed by the landlord) as soon as it is signed. Be sure that you understand the lease completely before you sign. If you find any unreasonable clauses ask to have them removed. Check to see if your lease is renewed automatically.

11. If you have a car, check to see that there is adequate parking, what cost there is if any for its use, and who is responsible for snow removal in the winter.

12. Get the name of the landlord's plumber, electrician, etc. when you move in, in case of emergency.

13. It's better to rent from a small time landlord, or one who lives in the same building. Real estate agencies and big time landlords are generally trying to make as much money as possible without worrying about your living conditions.

14. See if there are enough windows, proper lighting and ventilation, proper wiring, enough electrical outlets, check hot water, working order of electrical equipment and appliances supplied, condition of furniture if supplied, and schedule for trash disposal. Are storm and screen windows supplied?