

# Rats and Leaks Plaguing Sheridan Avenue Apartments, Lawsuit Says



By [Eddie Small](#) | December 22, 2016 3:39pm

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Sheridan Avenue lawsuit

CONCOURSE — Joane Gary smells a rat.

In fact, rats are everywhere in Joane Gary's South Bronx apartment building, and she is fed up with them — particularly their smell, she said.

"The basement underneath my kitchen window is where the rats live, die, breed and eat each other," she said. "That stench comes upstairs into my apartment. Every day I have to burn incense."

Gary, 56, has lived at 1225 Sheridan Ave. for two years and recently joined other tenants in filing a lawsuit against their landlord Mike Silber to force him to make repairs at the building. A group of tenants at the adjacent 1221 Sheridan Ave. building have filed suit against him as well.

Problems at both buildings include rats and roaches, moldy walls and leaky ceilings, according to the lawsuits. The buildings currently have a total of 241 open violations with the [Department of Housing Preservation and Development](#) and five open violations with the [Department of Buildings](#), records show.

Tenant Luciano Manzueta, who is 67 and has lived at 1225 Sheridan Ave. for five and a half years, said he has dealt with multiple issues in his home since moving in, including leaks in the kitchen and living room and a malfunctioning front door.

"It doesn't lock," he said, speaking in Spanish through a translator, "and when it does lock, sometimes we've gotten stuck in the apartment."

Tenants had their first court appearance on Dec. 12 and are due back in court on Jan. 23, according to their attorney Addrana Montgomery, who works at the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project.

The landlord has agreed to make repairs in common areas, and they are currently working to set up dates for management to come into tenants' apartments and fix them, Montgomery said.

"The tenants want to live in habitable, decent conditions," she said, "so whatever is in the best interest of the tenants is what we're going to be pushing for."

Silber did not respond to a request for comment.

Gary said she was confident that by banding together in a lawsuit, the tenants would be more successful at forcing their landlord to improve the buildings than if they had gone to him one by one with complaints.

"I think that if we all come together, we will get more solved than if we try to do it individually," she said, "because he can duck each one of us, one by one, but I figure we go as a group, it will be harder for him to duck us."