

## Archstone mold might have triggered boy's ills

by Laura Rivera And Matthew Chayes, Newsday

About five months before her first child was born, Tiara McCray and her husband left Manhattan to settle in the Archstone apartments in Westbury, hoping to give their infant son a safer, more stable life in the suburbs.

After moving into a two-bedroom, \$2,000-a-month apartment, McCray, 26, painted the nursery a lively blue, stenciled her son Isaiah's name on the wall and placed a rocker in a corner.

"Everything was just set," said McCray, 26. "I was so excited about it."

Their suburban dream was marred within months by water damage so extensive that parent company Archstone-Smith of Colorado has told tenants of the 400-unit complex that they must move out by March 31.

What is worse, McCray said, is that mold and mildew that overtook their apartment may have made Isaiah sick.

The 3 1/2-month-old was hospitalized twice last month, first when he suffered a seizure, then for breathing problems, a persistent cough and a rash all over his body, conditions McCray said the baby's pediatrician traces to environmental causes.

"You don't think to inspect everything with a fine-toothed comb, especially because you see the com-

munity and it looks so gorgeous," McCray said.

McCray had lived in Archstone properties since 2003, when she rented a studio apartment in Washington D.C., while attending law school at Howard University.

A spokesman for Archstone-Smith, which is giving tenants their last month's rent free and between \$1,300 to \$1,900, said the company does not know how many residents have left their apartments and could not estimate how much closing the complex would cost.

"The cost is not our primary concern," spokesman David Pendery said in an e-mail from the company's headquarters in Englewood, Colo.

"Our primary concern is vacating the community so that the reconstruction project can be done quickly, safely and effectively," Pendery said.

The company set up a Web site, [www.archstonewestburyproject.com](http://www.archstonewestburyproject.com), with information on moving companies and brokers to assist tenants looking for new homes.

Last week, Town of Hempstead building inspectors determined that the Westbury complex is safe for occupancy until residents leave.

The town has asked Archstone for documents from the company's self-inspection of the complex's construction.

"The situation that existed earlier last week still is the current situation," Mike Deerly, spokesman for the Town of Hempstead, said. "We're having conversations on a daily basis and we've asked for progress reports and we expect to receive them shortly."

Town of Hempstead officials defended its building department, saying their inspections ensure compliance with state safety and structural codes and could not have detected problems that led to the water damage. Town officials said there is no indication of wrongdoing and no allegation that the buildings did not meet code.

The McCrays moved yesterday into a rental apartment in Glen Cove.

As movers rolled in a bureau, television and mattress, Isaiah, his hands covered with socks to keep him from scratching at his rash, awakened from a nap.

Musing about what she might do with his new nursery, McCray said: "Well, we do have some paint left."

Staff writer Carl MacGowan contributed to this story.

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