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Dockside Commune Has Brass Uneasy

NORTH BERGEN — It's called the Lord's Drydock.

But Mayor Angelo J. Sarubbi, whose luxurious ultra-modern business offices overlook the waterfront, thinks it's more like Desolation Row.

Whatever the designation, a group of artists ranging from hippie to clean-cut types wants to set up working, happening, and possibly living headquarters on barges anchored in the Hudson River.

An inspection of the string of rotting docks along the riverfront shows that conversion of the barges has already begun.

The township officials, who sent police,

fire, and health inspectors to the scene are alarmed at the prospect.

Describing the barges, Sarubbi said: "In the first place, they're unsafe, it's unhealthy, and they're an eyesore. I have contacted Frank Kelly of the state Department of Conservation and Economic Development."

Renovation Plans

The state has jurisdiction over the property, which is leased by Mrs. Audrey Boyer.

Mrs. Boyer, in league with an artist named Joey Skaggs, is renting out mooring spaces for the barges.

Skaggs has announced plans to install plumbing, wiring and heat in the barges. Mrs. Boyer said six are rented now and that plans call for renting up to 15.

In a telephone conversation yesterday, Mrs. Boyer said that no one is living on the barges yet, that township officials had informed her of no wrongdoing, but that she did receive a phone call from Police Chief George Lehman, who asked about her lease with the state.

Sarubbi said that the conservation department official would prohibit anyone from living on the barges. Mrs. Boyer's lease lasts through next October but is revocable on 30 days' notice, Sarubbi said.

Whether the new community can last is questionable. It may be forced to give way to progress.

On Tuesday, John Luciani, owner and builder of the Stonehenge high-rise, announced that he had agreed to purchase a portion of Lord's Drydock and intends to construct more than \$10 million in rentals in the form of a research center, a banquet and reception hall, and a marina.