

A source in the city Department of Social Services, which also refers persons there, said "the people who are referred there have worn out their welcome everywhere else. There is just no place else for them to live."

A spokesman for South Beach, Rosemary Ahearn, said the center had "no alternative" to placement there. "They would be on the streets otherwise," she said.

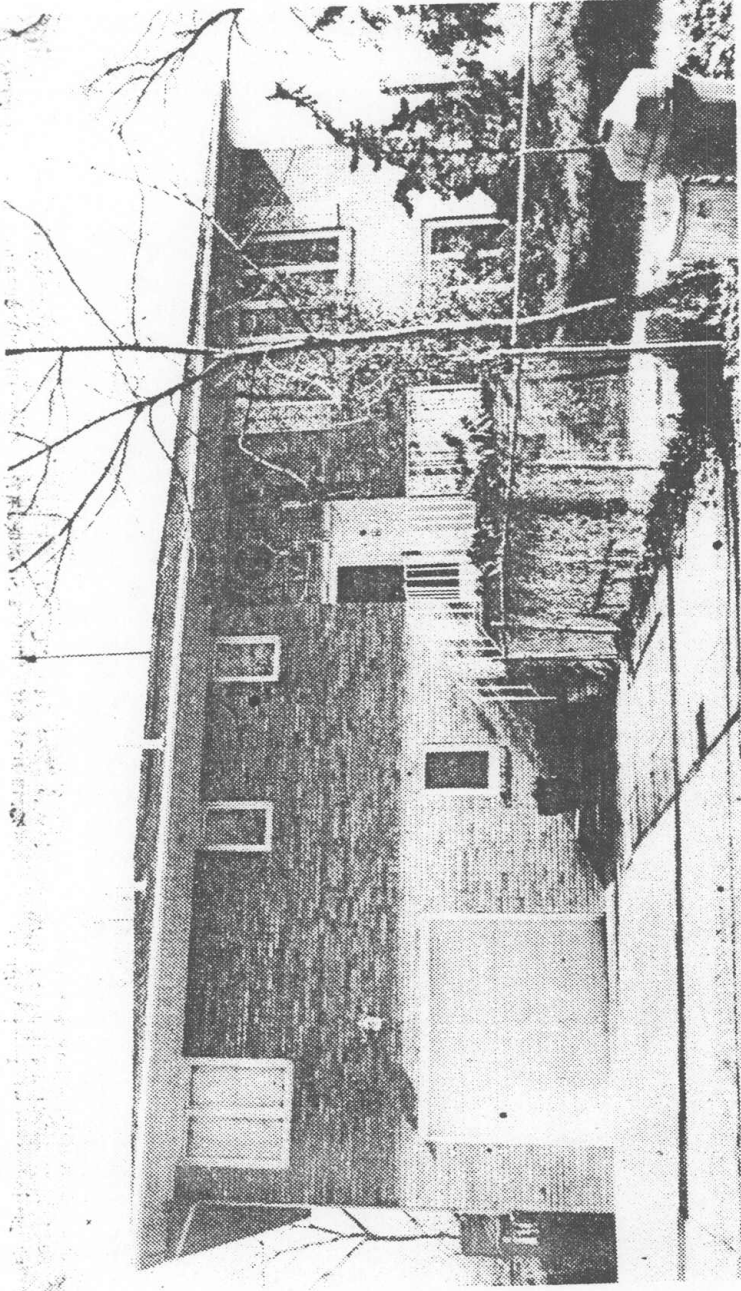
One resident interviewed, who was in her 60s, said that before she moved to the former Christmas Tree Inn three years ago "she lived in the park." She said the building was "better than the street."

During the interview, the woman was dressed in a man's raincoat, she wore slippers with soiled white socks, and a nightgown with stains. She had purplish polish from her nails down to her knuckles. She was missing most of her front teeth and hair sprouted on her chin. She was carrying a small, thin piece of fruitcake which she said she had just purchased for \$1 from the landlord's wife.

While the woman talked with a reporter on Wilber Street, hundreds of birds landed on the water at nearby Wolfe's Pond Park and other residents grouped at the building's front door. "I love trees," she said. "That's why I liked living in the park before this."

Mrs. Connelly said she learned of the residence from a constituent whose daughter, a former patient at both South Beach and North Richmond, had been referred there. The woman is a diabetic and her parents, both elderly and ill, said the building's living conditions threatened their daughter's life.

Although most of the residents are



The owner of the building, Anthony Guddemi, lives in this new brick house at 455 Segulne Ave., less than a block away from his boarding house.

considered mentally disabled there are no psychiatric, medical or social services at the boarding house. Richmond Memorial Hospital is less than a block away and a hospital spokesman said residents sometimes come to the hospital clinic.

A source at the hospital said, however, that many of the residents are treated, told to return, but don't and when they eventually do come back they are in much worse condition than when first

treated.

The source said the residents often attempt to steal items from the hospital's gift shop. He said they often sit in front of the hospital, drinking beer and bothering visitors.

A reporter who visited the building saw one resident with open sores on her legs. She said they "were getting better." Another resident had cuts on her face and arms. Many were thin. Some had glassy eyes, others reddened and

swollen eyes. One man, who sat on his bed rocking, said he never ate. Beer bottles were strewn all over his room. Sources said occasionally persons who attended Richmond Memorial's methadone clinic lived in the former Christmas Tree Inn.

Although none of the residents complained about the building's living conditions, they stated matter of factly that usually there was no food available, but that "Tony," the landlord, gave them