

Northern News (Goodwood/Parow) - 31 Jan 2018

Mossel Street mess

The property is in a state of disrepair with widespread dumping. Mossel Street mess House fell into ruin after police left MIKA WILLIAMS Asstateowned house in Mosel Street was once home o police officers, but now, gutted by fire and with squatters living there, it has been declared a problem building by the City. Willem Botes, chairman of the Parow Park Neighbourhood Watch, said 56 Mossel Street had been a headache for a year and a half. The house, which is owned by the national Department of Public Works, had fallen into ruin after the police stopped using it. Mr Botes said Public Works had emailed him in October last year to say palisade fencing and barbed wire would be erected around the property to keep intruders out. But that had not happened, and "myself and members of the neighbourhood watch continually have to chase vagrants off the property". Continued on page 3DPW could be served contravention notice From page 1 Mr Botes said squatting, prostitution and drug use were rife at the property. He claimed robbers were using the house as a hideout and that there had been an increase in robberies in the area. One of the squatters had set fire to the house in December, causing "extensive damage", following a domestic row. "The second fire took place on Wednesday January 3. Residents have become very upset about this and have been coming to me asking what I am doing about it," he said. Parow police and City law enforcement patrolled the area regularly, he said. Resident Deborah Stevens said the "problem building" was a disgrace. "It was a lovely property that could have been used for good. I am fed up with the prostitution and vandalism at the property," she said. Mr Botes said that at any given time there were up to eight squatters on the property. "I have tried in earnest to sort out the property, but my complaints have fallen on deaf ears. They have vandalised the metal windows and the fire caused a lot of damage to the roof. My feeling is that they should demolish the property if the department does not have money to renovate it," he said. Ms Stevens said she had seen the squatters standing on the corners buying drugs from people in cars. "They just don't Above and top right: The firedamaged shell of 56 Mossel Street in Pa row. care," she said. Richard Bosman, the City's executive director of safety and security, said the national Department of Public Works would be served with a "contravention notice" and prosecuted if it didn't promise to clean up the problem building. "If we deem the remedial action that they put forward as acceptable, then the contravention notice will not be served," he said. "They will be afforded the opportunity to remedy the contraventions laid out on the declaration notice." Ward 2 councillor Leonore van der Walt said she had visited the building with a Public Works official. "He took notice of the serious decay of the house which had been occupied by a member of the police. "A problem building is a building that is abandoned, dilapidated, in contravention of national building regulations, overcrowded or housing illegal squatters. "The Problem Building Unit will investigate the building and serve a notice to the owner listing any contraventions, ordering that they be corrected. If the owner does not do so within

the appropriate time, further steps are taken to declare the building a problem building. This entails a heavy fine which will be added to the municipal bill," she said. Parow police spokesman Captain Kevin Williams said they patrolled Mossel Street regularly. He was unable to confirm whether there was a spike in robberies in the area. The national Department of Public Works did not respond to emailed questions by the time this edition went to print. Have your say SMS NNP with your message, name and area you live in to 3CCN3 32263 SMSes charged at R1 each

Dimensions: