

Long wait for solutions

2018-04-10 06:03

Seven months later, residents say their quest to have a permanent solution to a neglected building at Students Way in Plumstead has reportedly fallen on deaf ears.

People's Post reported on complaints about the unsafe building and the call to have authorities come up with a permanent solution ("School to take over", 22 August). Reports have it that residents wanted the building to be demolished or put to use for the community.

The building belongs to the national Department of Public Works. It has stood unoccupied for some time and has reportedly been an eyesore to the community. Residents rolled up their sleeves upon noticing it was becoming a threat as Law Enforcement discovered that different criminal activities were taking place within the premises. Authorities were reportedly approached and the Department of Public Works promised to investigate and negotiate with a local school to use part of the yard as a sports ground.

However, this has not yet happened. According to residents only security guards have been posted at the premises, but everything else remains the same.

Resident Lauren Artus says: "We are sick of being ignored and need the Department of Public Works to realise the severity of the situation and to do something about it once and for all. "It is not only the building that is an eyesore – the fencing also has a big hole allowing free movement and the security guards cannot do much about the situation. The building remains filthy and a danger to the community."

She says they do not understand why it has taken so long to agree to demolish the building, as she believes it has no significant heritage background in the community.

Charmaine Lille, chairperson of the Plumstead Neighbourhood Watch, says the building has proven on numerous occasions to be dangerous and to attract vagrants.

She says during random patrols, stolen items and other suspicious elements were found within the building. She says the situation has improved a little with the presence of the security guards, but they do not know when their contracts will end.

Thamsanqa Mchunu, spokesperson for the Department of Public Works, has confirmed that the structure itself is not being maintained and that decisions about its future have not been made as yet.

"No amount is being spent on maintenance. The matter is receiving the necessary attention. A final decision has not yet been made. The relevant reports are to be sent to head office for further review before a decision is made," Mchunu says.