

■ HOUSING

Darling Street evictions continue

MARVIN CHARLES

marvin.charles@inl.co.za

RESIDENTS who have been occupying dilapidated 104 Darling Street, close to the Castle of Good Hope building, are living in fear of what the new year has in store for them.

Before the end of last year the Department of Public Works said it was still in the process of evicting residents after announcing plans to renovate the building and turn it into office space. However, no eviction date has been set, leaving residents on edge.

“We protested the whole of last year to ensure that the department listens to us and knows that we still exist. They have not been communicating about anything or about their plans or anything at all,” said resident Maria Jacobs, who has lived there for seven years. She said the anger of the frustrated residents was growing.

“We are all angry because the building has not been fixed at all and no effort has ever been put in to assist any one of us. Now we are scared because we don’t know what’s going on,” Jacobs said.

The Department of Public Works is

under pressure to fix the dilapidated building at 104 Darling.

Residents and housing advocacy group Reclaim the City held pickets outside the derelict building last year, and in 2017 the department had said it planned to evict the residents who had occupied it.

Many of the tenants are elderly or disabled, and there are also a number of children. The building is in a state of disrepair and has become something of an eyesore. Last year, its roof caught fire and the damage has yet to be repaired by the department. The City has declared it a problem building according to its by-laws.

Ward councillor Dave Bryant said: “I have visited the site on a number of occasions. The problem is that there is very little the City can do because the building belongs to the Department of Public Works.”

Public Works spokesperson Thami Mchunu said the evictions are still on the cards.

“The department intends on using that site and is in the process of evicting people. It still intends evicting the residents, but will follow the correct procedures in doing so,” Mchunu said.