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SAFETY CONCERN

State properties worth R33m neglected

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THE Department of Public Works and THE Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPW) has apologised for allowing three of its properties in Waterloo Green Road, Wynberg, to deteriorate to the extent they have. The state of the buildings, which have heritage status, became so dire that it became a haven for drug addicts and criminals, residents told Parliament's confessions.

ment's portfolio committee on public works and infrastructure yesterday. They presented a petition calling

SANRAL

for the properties worth R33 million to be demolished or for them to be sub-divided into four parts, among others. Ward councillor Emile Lan-genhoven said: "Residents are crying about crime and safety. We recommend: that the properties be disposed of on the property maker. disposed of on the property market; potentially utilise the remaining house, in the short term, for educa-tional purposes or dormitory for students living far from Wynberg schools and that the remaining area be utilised by the four schools for parking or other

ROADMAC

Resident Sam Wilcox-Diedericks said her husband was robbed near the

said her husband was robbed near the properties.

"We can no longer run or take walks in the area. Such activities outside our door have stopped.

"We have to go to other areas. Those properties also pose a risk to children. We have schools nearby. They have become a den for drug abuse and other activities," she said.

DPWI regional manager Penny

DPWI regional manager Penny Penxa acknowledged the negligence, saying "we are very sorry that as the department we have allowed these properties to deteriorate to the current

"There are some efforts that the department has been making. It's not that we have been sitting and doing nothing."

Penxa said there were six houses, of which three were returned to the department between 2016 and 2017

when they had already been vandal-ised and illegally invaded. "In 2021 we appointed security personnel to try and contain the illegal occupation and other activities.

"The Justice Department has reg-istered their interest to use one of the houses as an office. We are in the process of engaging with a client with regards to renovations," Penxa said.

"In terms of the open vacant land and other two properties we are in consultation with the Department of Defence to extend their services because it is a stones throw away from 2 Military Hospital. It could become a village for their doctors.

These are all subjected to a budget and their confirmation to be registered formally. We were also waiting for state approval to demolish the houses.

An investment analysis was done and the department was given the green light but we have to observe the heritage processes due to their status. We have advertised tenders twice to appoint a heritage consultant and we have not been successful in the market



o Green Road have turned into a haven for drugs and criminal activities. | LEON LESTRADE Independent Newspapers

because eternally we don't have such

Penxa said the department was now reconsidering demolishing the houses after meeting with the City which shared its concerns about the value of the buildings.

"We are looking at preserving them and another positive thing is that the number of occupants decreased to five people. We will be approaching the State Attorney's office for eviction and will be approaching the City to join us in the application.

"If all fails, the plan will be to

subdivide the properties because some of the houses there are being used by the SAPS and just put others on the market," she said.

market," she said.

ACDP MP Wayne Thring said:
"What we are seeing here is the consequence of what this committee has been speaking about for many years and this is for the department to know where its properties are and their con-

"There was an admission by the "There was an admission by the department that they have allowed these properties to deteriorate and this is a risk the department has placed the community in. We see this across the country. If three of those six were maintained, the department would have received a rental of R10 000 to R15 000 per month, so this is a wastage of income that could have been age of income that could have been generated."

generated."

Committee chairperson Nolitha
Ntobongwana expressed dissatisfaction that the department had no written presentation.

"The committee would have loved
to have a written submission from the

department because the committee

could not follow on what was being said so that we could interact better." Ntobongwane gave the department seven days to provide a report on some of the unanswered questions and other

