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PETITION
**Buildings
in state
of neglect**

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THREE problem buildings owned by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPW) in Waterloo Green, Wynberg have reached such a state of neglect and decay that residents have banded together to force Parliament's urgent intervention.

In a petition to the public works and infrastructure portfolio committee, presented yesterday, ward 62 councillor Emile Langenhoven, on behalf of residents, said the neglect of the buildings on erf 66347-RE, 14 Cavan Road, had a severe impact on the community.

Granted heritage status in 1974, one of the buildings, a thatched-roof house, was gutted in a fire in 2017.

The Victorian house, Langenhoven highlighted, had been stripped bare, while the third building, closest to the busy Ellerslie Road, was in a reasonably good state, but also in the process of being dismantled by unknown suspects.

"During (2018) the building was registered as a problem building in the City of Cape Town and several notices were handed over to the DPW property manager, which ultimately resulted in the buildings being registered as problem buildings," he said.

In the petition, the community has recommended the buildings be subdivided into four separate erven and sold; that the third house be used, in the short term, for educational purposes or a dormitory for schools nearby; and the remaining space utilised as a parking space for four schools.

Resident Sam Wilcox-Diedericks, who has been living in Waterloo Road for the past 10 years, said the security risks associated with the neglect of the properties were impacting scholars, teachers and church-goers, among others, who used the road walk.

"We really are interested in trying to address these issues in a meaningful way to deliver resolutions for everyone. And I say this pivoting from a space of the importance of having spatial equality in the country and not just looking after the privileged," Wilcox-Diedericks said.

In the DPWs presentation, Penny Penxa, DPW Western Cape regional manager, highlighted that the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has expressed its interest in the third house as an office space, while they have engaged the Department of Defence on the utilisation of the thatched-roof and Victorian buildings. DPW Deputy Minister Bernice Swarts acknowledged the state of the buildings was having a negative impact on the community and asked that the department be given seven days to submit a detailed report on the matter, before the matter is raised in the National Assembly.