

Tenants still living in hazardous SAPS block

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IT STANDS tall in a plush Durban suburb and boasts idyllic city views, but 12-storey Excelsior Court, which is controlled by the SAPS, is a “condemned” building.



Excelsior Court.

Many inhabitants, mostly SAPS members, and those who live around it have labelled the face-brick building a “health hazard” because of its rundown state.

The SAPS have declared the building “unsuitable for human habitation”, and the fire and health departments have also made similar findings after inspections.

When the Sunday Tribune visited this week, Excelsior’s many structural defects were clearly visible. Both its lifts were out of order. There are no security lights, and plumbing and drainage are constant problems. Large rodents roam the yard, feasting in the rubbish piles.

In its glory days, Excelsior had a playground, pool and picnic area but, due to neglect, the old area of leisure is covered with thick bush, which has now become a hideout for criminals.

But repairing the building has become a thorny issue, with the SAPS claiming the building has illegal occupants, which makes it impossible for them to care for it.

The SAPS made an application to the high court to have the tenants removed, but that matter is still to be heard.

The Department of Public Works (DPW), the building’s owners, indicated its planned multi-million-rand upgrades have been on ice since 2010 and are waiting for SAPS to hand back a vacant building before repair work begins.

The SAPS were given charge of the building by the DPW in the 1990s to house their members.

As part of the agreement, the SAPS is required to conduct maintenance work up to a R100 000, according to prescribed guidelines.

Ward 31 councillor Chris Pappas was concerned there were no alternate housing arrangements for the tenants.