

No plans to donate buildings: department

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THE KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works has denied claims that it has donated three buildings to the municipality.

This was said on Tuesday by the department's spokesperson, Mbulelo Baloyi.

The eThekweni Municipality announced at its executive committee (Exco) meeting on Tuesday that three buildings had been donated to it by Public Works.

Baloyi said they were still in negotiations with the city about the buildings.

The buildings said to be donated were the West Point Lodge, the Palm Beach Hotel and the Seaman's Institute.

Baloyi said the only building the department had donated previously was one in Msinga.

"It used to be a shoe factory for Bata Shoes. It was donated to a women's group that wanted to revive the factory to manufacture school uniforms and to supply linen to hospitals," he said.

Vandalised

This was done for economic empowerment reasons and to prevent the building from being vandalised.

"It (donating) does not often happen and there are no plans to do so in the immediate future," Baloyi said.

In 2014, the Daily News reported that the municipality and the Department of Public Works were in talks about the sale of West Point Lodge on Margaret Mncadi Avenue (Victoria Embankment).

The building has a view of the harbour and the Bluff.

The department had paid R7 million for the building.

eThekweni, however, rejected the offer, saying that the building had been condemned.

In 2012, two children died when a fire ravaged the 12-storey building.

The department also offered the building to the Durban University of Technology which did a technical assessment and also rejected the building.

In a statement yesterday, the city stuck to its guns and said Public Works had donated the building and that this was announced at its Exco meeting.

The municipality said it would cost about R5.5 million to redevelop the buildings.

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