

# Mismatch in Mentor story



**Brian Sokutu**

From a staircase to a pillar – almost none of the features of the Saxonwold Gupta compound, said to have been visited by ex-ANC MP Vytjie Mentor 10 years ago – matched a description she made during her testimony before the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture, according to a building expert.

Mentor claimed that she flew from Cape Town to Johannesburg in 2010 to meet president Jacob Zuma to discuss implications of the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor – a project which entailed the construction of a demonstration power plant at Koeberg, near Cape Town – which was abandoned by government in 2010.

The meeting, she said, ended up in a visit to the Gupta family home where she was offered the position of public enterprises minister by Ajay Gupta.

Led by the commission’s senior counsel Mahlape Sello about an in loco inspection in August at four of the Gupta-owned homes in Saxonwold, department of public works chief architect Erna Wiese yesterday said Mentor’s description of the home could not match any of the features her team saw. This excluded only the foyer towards the kitchen from where a chef emerged

The inspection was undertaken to determine whether there was any configuration made to the property since 2010.

Wiese said: “After doing a visual inspection of four adjacent properties, divided by a wall, we settled for property number five.

“But when we first arrived at the property, Miss Mentor was unsure if that was the one she visited and we had to move to other properties before returning to property number five – a double-storey house she settled for.

“She was adamant there was a staircase of five to six steps leading to the main entrance when she visited but we saw 10. She described steps she walked on as wider, fewer, made of marble and being light coloured,” she added. “Miss Mentor couldn’t find the pillar of the room with a larger open space where she sat before her meeting. She could also not point out where the pillar should have been.”

Wiese said the house did not appear to have been configured between 2010 and 2018, adding that her team’s research on the property revealed the configuration of the house had not changed since 2005.

Mentor also maintained that the house she visited had a large garden and was not subdivided by a wall from other properties.

The public works team, said Wiese, were unable to provide opinion on the features mentioned by Mentor.

“You need more probing into the structure to identify the features that were in the house and that would require a team of specialists to be appointed,” said the chief architect Wiese.