

Growing concern over Durban's vacant public owned buildings

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THE currently non-operating restaurant in Bulwer Park, Glenwood. Doctor Ngcobo African News Agency (ANA)

Durban - TWO years after its construction, the eThekweni Municipality is expected to advertise the tender for the restaurant in Bulwer Park, Glenwood.

This is one among several government-owned buildings that have been standing vacant and become run-down.

Ward councillor Mmabatho Tembe said the long-standing vacant restaurant was cause for concern, as the longer it stood vacant, the more it was prone to break-ins, vagrants and vandalism.

She added that a substation on Clark Road, which was built a year ago, would be energised in the next three years.

Other developed and vacant buildings include the Jungle Nursery site in Sherwood, The Star Seaside Home at North Beach and the Green With Envy nursery on Vause Road in Musgrave.

Musgrave councillor Chris Pappas said the Green With Envy nursery was on property owned by the Department of Public Works.

“It should be maintained by them. Unfortunately, they have simply abandoned the property and it has become a sore issue for surrounding residents. We have tried to get assistance from the Department of Public Works, but they have not been helpful or forthcoming with answers,” he said.

Pappas said they had proposed a number of uses for the property, including a base for non-governmental organisations, a youth development centre, and a site for the Berea police station.

Public Works spokesperson Thami Mchunu said the property had been set aside for the Department of Environmental Affairs’ Waste Management Bureau. “The structures on site (mostly not permanent in nature) were all erected by the tenant. It was hoped that the property would be quickly used after the tenant vacated it, but for various reasons that did not happen.”

Municipal spokesperson Msawakhe Mayisela said there were processes under way to have the vacant properties used productively. However, the processes which had to be followed were lengthy.

He said the city did not own the nursery in Sherwood, but acted as trustee of the estate of the late William Clark Trust, with the property being managed by the municipality’s Investments Division.

“At this stage the property is not available for lease due to unresolved legal issues with Durban Child Welfare, which will impact on the future of this property,” he said.

Mayisela said the city was investigating possibly resigning as trustee.

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