



Day shift security guards outside the house at 968 Bushbuck Avenue.
Photo: Siso Naile.

‘Messy’ properties an eyesore

Constantia Kloof — Why aren’t these properties sold? This is the mind-boggling question that most Constantia Kloof residents have been asking about the two shady unoccupied properties belonging to the Department of Public Works in the area.

The two properties, one at 968 Bushbuck Avenue and the other at 37 Duiker Street North, have been a cause for concern since they became vacant, consequently deteriorating into an eyesore.

According to Karen Poole, the chairperson of Constantia Village Residents Association, the property on Bushbuck Avenue has been a long-standing issue in the neighbourhood as it has been unoccupied for the over five years.

Meanwhile, the second property located close to the enclosed park has been vacant for almost a year.

“For many years now, the department has been paying for 24/7 security at the Bushbuck Avenue property. The house is a shell. I’m not too sure what they are guarding because there is really nothing in it,” she criticised.

The guards, who we believe are contracted to keep an eye on the property to prevent vagrants from occupying it, have not had it easy as there is no electricity or water on the property.

When the *Northsider* reported on the issue in 2019, the previous guards had to rely on neighbours for water.

The lack of services resulted in the death of a night guard who used a brazier the house in winter

and consequently died from smoke inhalation.

However, Karen told *Northsider* that the security company had installed a portable toilet for its staff which is cleaned once a week. Although the maintenance of this property fell on the budget of the RA, the chairperson explained with relief that, “Meantime, the gent who ‘bought’ the property has been ensuring that the lawn is mowed once a month,” she explained.

While the frustration was much less with the Bushbuck

Avenue property, Karen was more annoyed with the second property which she claimed is owned by the police.

“The one owned by the police is totally overgrown, and a

total mess and eyesore. A resident next door to the house is keeping the outside of the property mowed, but inside it is a jungle,” she complained.

She added that it’s been vacant for nearly a year now. “A woman was ‘renting’ this property but she moved out in February last year after living there for many months without electricity.

“Her curtains are still up in the house to prevent squatters from moving in,” she claimed.

“I believe that there is a dispute over rates and taxes, which is why the property is not being rented out again,” Karen speculated.

The Department of Public Works has been approached for clarity on these properties.

An update will be published as and when the entity reverts to us.

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