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‘White elephant’ building finally home to police HQ

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The Telkom north towers complex in Pretoria central will soon house the SAPS headquarters. Authorities recently identified the R600-million building located at 152 Johannes Ramokhoase Street suitable for this purpose. Minister for Public Works (DPWI) Sihle Zikalala gave the planned move the green light during his visit to inspect the building following the conclusion of much needed renovations. The building will accommodate the minister, national commissioner and other police executives, according to DPWI. The building had been a ‘white elephant’ since it was bought about nine years ago when renovation suddenly started last year in preparation for the police to move in.

The department blamed aged ventilation systems and other issues for the delayed start of renovation work. Also last year, parliament was told that no direct funding to carry out the work at that stage was available. According to a *SAPS migration report into Telkom Towers in June 2022*, the other problems that caused the delay were: - the local community forced a work stoppage for 13 days August 2019 as the project began allegedly unhappy that it had not been informed of its involvement and what it stood to benefit. - the public service commission stopped work for 127 days from November 2019 to July 2020 due to unhappiness with subcontractor appointments and the rate the contractor offered. - a 42-day delay due to a value

chain backlog in orders and steel shortages as well as delivery of iron monger for fire doors. - delivery of international shipments due to Covid-19 lockdown imposed by government. “I can confirm now that the building is compliant,” Zikalala said. “We need to ensure that everything is in order for the occupation of the police hierarchy.” Zikalala said additional SAPS needs would be accommodated with the development of other state-owned properties within the proximity of the complex. The complex comprises 10 buildings that measure 221 954 square metres of lettable office accommodation with 2 234 parking bays. “There is more than enough space to accommodate total requirements of the SAPS.” He said government bought the complex for R645-million from the Telkom retirement fund when Telkom relocated its head office in 2015. “It was procured to be used for housing government departments,” Zikalala said. “The acquisition of the Telkom Towers buildings was envisioned to ensure the police are accommodated in a suitable office space which will not hinder their work and operations. “The positives are to help government avoid fruitless expenditure.”



The Telkom Towers Complex consists of 9 buildings. The 10th building that formed part of the Telkom Tower Complex is known as the PPR Building, which is a National Key Point Building and is used by Telkom. **Photo: SAPS migration report into Telkom Towers**



Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Sihle Zikalala briefs the media after his visit to the Telkom Towers North in Pretoria Central. **Photo: Twitter/DepartmentPWI**