



a world class African city

City of Joburg Property Company SOC Ltd.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Orlando Power station building has collapsed due to rampant theft of the structural steel which resulted in the loss of its structural integrity.

The Orlando Power Station building has suffered rampant thefts of structural steel over time and it ultimately lost its structural integrity and collapsed in the early hours of the morning on Wednesday, 25 June 2014.

The Orlando Power Station was decommissioned in 1998 and the City of Joburg Property Company SOC Ltd (JPC) has been trying to facilitate its redevelopment as part of a larger development project over the past 10 years. The redevelopment plans culminated into an award being made by the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (CoJ) to the Soweto Power Station Mall Pty Ltd (SPSM). The building was handed over to SPSM in January 2012.

In order to mitigate the rampant theft of the structural steel the developer has had the site fenced off 4 times but the fencing has consistently been stolen, including electrified fencing. The developer has made all reasonable efforts to secure the site and to prevent illegal access to the site. Full time security was also employed to guard the site and steel thieves were regularly arrested. "The problem is that as fast as the thieves were arrested – they were released and were back in the building" said Mark Brown of SPSM.

The theft of steel has been a major problem in the building as the steel is of high value and scrap dealers know this.

Mr Mark Brown said that "at least 25 arrests were made and the steel on site attracted lawlessness which was impossible to manage. The site was re-fenced last month and the fence was again removed. The thieves even used old abandoned tunnels to gain access to the building. On many occasions our guard's lives were threatened."

Over the past 2 years JPC senior officials, the developer and community representatives have met with the SAP in the area to highlight the problem and to try and find a solution to the problem but with no success.

Mr Mark Brown was quoted saying, "The incident is a great loss and disappointment for the development and we truly believe the building could have been something special. No matter how



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Executive Directors: Helen Botes (Managing Director)
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much effort was placed on the security, the measures were never enough to deter the steel merchants from destroying an iconic remembrance of Soweto. No matter how many people we had arrested we could never stop the rampant theft of the steel within the building”

The JPC was in the process of undertaking a structural investigation and together with the Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (PHRA) the CoJ will formulate an emergency plan of action to make the remains of the structure safe as well as salvage some of the heritage portions not affected by the collapse.

As of last night the Johannesburg Emergency Management Services had removed six people with injuries from the debris, and the seventh person was fatal. Earlier in the afternoon another person had managed to free himself and escaped from the scene.

Mr Mark Brown from SPSM can be contacted on 082 895 1998 for comment.

Prepared and issued by and on behalf of Joburg Property Company SOC Ltd

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