

**MINISTRY**

**PUBLIC WORKS**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 71 [NW75E]**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.: No. 01 of 2017**

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**DATE OF REPLY: 24 FEBRUARY 2017**

**71. Mr A P van der Westhuizen (DA) asked the Minister of Public Works:**

(1) (a) Under which office of his department does the historic property situated at 18 Mark Street, Stellenbosch, fall, (b) who is the head of the specified office, (c) when was the specified property vacated and (d) why was the specified property (i) abandoned and (ii) severely vandalised;

(2) whether any plans have been put in place to perform any maintenance tasks on the specified property; if not, why not; if so, what are the (a) relevant details and (b) envisaged timelines in this regard;

(3) whether any disciplinary processes have been instituted against any of his department’s employees for allowing the specified property to be abandoned and vandalised; if not, (a) why not and (b) by when will disciplinary processes be instituted; if so, what are the relevant details of the outcomes of each disciplinary process?

 **NW75E**

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**REPLY:**

**The Minister of Public Works**

 (1) (a) The property situated at 18 Mark Street in Stellenbosch falls under the Property

Management Trading Entity (PMTE) of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and within the ambit of our Cape Town region.

(b) Mr Frederick Johnson is the Cape Town Office Regional Manager.

(c) This property was allocated to the South African Police Service (SAPS), who in turn allocated the property to an SAPS official. I am informed that the property was vacated in November 2013.

(d) (i) and (ii) The official to whom the residence was allocated reportedly vacated the property following a burglary in 2013. The DPW was, however, not notified of this. As the custodian of all State-owned properties at national level, the DPW allocates accommodation to User Departments based on their specified requirements. The allocation of residential accommodation to be occupied by officials, however, remains the prerogative of the User Department. No agreement therefore exists between the Department and the actual individual occupying the property. The User Department only informed the Department that the occupant had vacated the property in June 2014. During the handback, an inspection of property was conducted by the Department, and it revealed that the property had been abandoned and as a result had been severely vandalised and structurally damaged.

1. Yes.
2. The decision on whether to refurbish, let, dispose of, or demolish property will be based on the outcome of a condition assessment and a feasibility study.

However, in the interim, all openings to the property in question are in the process of being secured with shutter boards and the removal of rubble from the premises has commenced.

1. The process of cleaning and securing the site expected is set to be completed in March 2017.

(3) (a) (b) The PMTE is confronted with many cases of damaged property as part of the legacy of a Department of Public Works, which lacked the requisite skills and capacity to manage a huge property portfolio. As part of the DPW’s Turnaround Strategy initiated in 2012, the Department began the process of giving effect to a Government decision to operationalise the PMTE. This process would ultimately lead to the PMTE being established as a Government component, empowered to make decisions commensurate with the professional approach to the management of the massive DPW property portfolio.

The recent completion of a reliable and credible Immovable Asset Register (IAR) has enabled the PMTE to be more effective in managing the national Government property portfolio. This includes, inter-alia, verification, location, high-level condition assessments and identification of significant components and users of the properties. Taking into consideration the extensive nature of the DPW portfolio (92 593 properties), this was an almost impossible task in the past. The PMTE is now, for the first time, able to make informed and calculated investment decisions in line with our goal of optimizing our property portfolio.

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