



BUSHMAN'S RIVER MOUTH / BOESMANSRIVERMOND

Ratepayers' Association / Belastingbetalersvereniging

Ward 3 / Wyk 3

P.O.Box 50, Boesmansrivermond, 6190

7th March, 2006

Mr. G. Jordaan
Ndlambe Municipality
P.O.Box 13
Port Alfred

RDP Houses at Harmony Park, Bushman's River

Dear Mr.Jordaan,

We were invited to inspect some of the RDP houses at Harmony Park by the residents. We were shocked to see the complete lack of care taken by the construction contractors which has resulted in shoddy, poorly constructed sub standard housing, from excellent quality materials. These houses are going to require continuous maintenance from the day the houses are occupied, which very few of the residents will be able to do, let alone afford. These people have been waiting for years as to what would be their pride and joy for the rest of their lives and they are left with something which no one in their right mind would welcome as a new home.

The foundations we are told are only one spade width which is approximately 220mm where they should be at least 450mm. The houses are built in sandy soil which requires wider rather than narrower foundations. This can only be detrimental in the long run with the houses being susceptible to cracking because of poor foundations.

The walls of the houses are rarely straight and lean to one side or the other and the courses of the blocks are not even or level. Often there is almost no dagga between the courses. This is fundamentally poor construction and can only lead to cracking and even failure of the walls.

Some doorframes are put in so badly that they are bowed and it would be impossible to hang a door without reshaping the door to a similar shape. This is completely unacceptable workmanship.

The roof beams in some cases are so skew that only the very tips of the roofing nails secure the asbestos sheeting. The sheeting could therefore easily blow off in the sever winds that we experience in the area at particular times of the year.

The tops of the walls are not level in some cases and this has resulted in the whole pitch of the roof changing over the length of the house. In one case there are 9 sheets on one side of the roof and 10 sheets on the opposite side.

There are very few examples where the overhang on the gables of the houses is straight or consistent. The construction of the gables is shocking and bits and pieces are literally stuffed in place and plastered over.

The floors in some of the houses are not level or for that matter floated so they are not level or smooth which will make it impossible to fit Novilon or some other floor covering without it becoming damaged. The thickness of the floor above the damp course is not consistent.

What is even more troubling is that we are told that the construction contractors are signing off the houses themselves. To our mind that is fraudulent and should be stopped immediately and the parties acting in this way should be reprimanded and if necessary charged if this is found to be true.

We have taken photographs to illustrate what we are talking about and ask that you send a task team to investigate the situation. This should be done in consultation with the residents. We are willing to assist your team to get to the bottom of the problematic, if not dangerous construction practice. Remedial work will have to be done on a number of houses.

The infrastructure in the area is appalling. The roads are impassible with a normal vehicle. The sewerage system is shocking with the central sewerage drain flooding and stinking after each rainfall. The sewerage system in numerous houses is so bad that the sewerage flows into the house rather than away from it. The septic tank is above the level of the toilet outlet! A number of houses have no water supply and apparently have approached officials within Ndlambe Municipality and were literally told “ it was not their problem”.

We sincerely hope that you will take immediate action and let us know what is planned to arrest and remedy the problems.

Yours faithfully,

Johann Smuts

Chairman Bushman’s River Ratepayers Association.

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Cc Mr A. Schlemmer