

Untitled Document

A R450-million hospital is planned for Grootfontein. This four-storey hospital plus a Town Lodge kind of hotel, which will act as a hospital step-down facility, will be built on the approximately 22 hectares of portion nine, Grootfontein 394 JR. Developer Carel Krog from the Krog Family Trust indicated that construction will start round about June, providing that all the appropriate approvals have been secured. It will take 12 to 18 months to complete the project.

 This aerial photo shows a part of the original farm Grootfontein that was measured out by General Dani Jacobus Elardus Erasmus in Paul Kruger's time.

The hotel next to the hospital will be for the use of patients who have been released from hospital, but are not ready to go home yet. These patients would be able to receive a degree of care, although the hotel will not be a clinic.

A substantial number of offices would also be developed as part of the project. The offices would not be located specifically on Garstfontein Road, but would be linking into the back of the property, adjacent to the residential area.

Housing

It seems as if the developers presented the proposal of building a hospital to the City Council after the Council approached them for a 20 ha piece of land for low-cost housing. The developers' proposal included the fact that the hospital will be the first in the country to offer a unique component of social responsibility – 28 beds will be reserved for the use of people who cannot afford hospital care. These beds will be available all year round.

However, the developers made it clear that this will not be a clinic where people will stand in line for consultation. The hospital will offer training to nurses, but no accommodation will be provided for nurses at the facility. According to developer Carel Krog, the presentation to the City Council went well and the City Council and the mayor have labelled the development as a red carpet project that has their full support.

 The Grootfontein Country Estate with Garstfontein Road extension in the foreground. Both aerial shots were taken in 2006.

Meeting

The public participation process for this development's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was initiated with meetings by environmental consultants African EPA on 6 November last year. During this meeting a number of residents' concerns were addressed. Carel reiterated that the developers are not interested in developing the ground as a low-cost housing site and need the support of adjacent landowners.

Residents indicated that they are uncomfortable about low-cost housing developments in this area. They feel that new developments will counter any low-cost or affordable housing due to the high investment rate in the area.

Residents would prefer if the council looked towards Bapsfontein, which is approximately 20 km from the area, as a possible location for low-cost housing. Dawie Pretorius, ward councillor for Ward 2, confirmed that there are a number of workers in the area that are urgently looking for housing. He said that the municipality is in the process of identifying 50 hectares of land at Donkerhoek to see if they can develop an affordable housing complex there.

He said that low-cost housing

Unique hospital-hotel planned for Grootfontein

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is a serious concern in the area and that a site must be identified where affordable housing can be located.

Infrastructure

Councillor Pretorius said that Wards 1, 2 and 3 have a Planning Area Committee which proposes to take over the function of the local municipality in this area to manage bulk services as well as funding for certain services.

He said that a Section 80 committee will soon be brought into being and that its first priority would be to look at the sewers in the area. A large sewer main linking to Zwavelpoort and to the Baviaans outfall sewer needs to be planned and, according to Councillor Pretorius, it would be beneficial if this development of Grootfontein portion nine could begin to support such a main sewer line towards the outfall sewer. In the interim a package plant could be considered but in the long term sewers would be required to connect to the main line.

Councillor Pretorius also said that there is a plan which secures both the volume and pressure of water in the area.

Residents of Grootfontein Country Estate indicated that they don't oppose the development of the hospital and step-down facility, but that they are concerned about the traffic as well as other services in the area. Residents stated that the upgrading of Garstfontein Road extension must be addressed. Councillor Pretorius indicated that the K54 road, linking the R21 into the N4, is planned for this area and that the developer will be required to contribute to road upgrades in the area.