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Facelift for Port Shepstone!

Dec 17, 2010 1 Comment by Karen



FACELIFT DUE FOR THE 'GRANDE DAME' OF PORT SHEPSTONE!

Residents of the South Coast can breath a collective sigh of relief at the news that the dilapidated Bedford Centre at the entrance to Port Shepstone is due to undergo an Extreme Makeover! This abandoned building has become an eyesore and a security concern for South Coasters who have been wondering what is to become of this coastal landmark.

The good news is that developer Dave Keal has exciting plans -which include an extensive R17 million restoration and redevelopment which will begin in January next year. *"The idea is to put Port Shepstone on the map again as the thriving town it once was,"* said Mr. Keal. This grand undertaking will include a complete renewal of not only the Bedford Centre, but also the Post Office and the block of buildings in Bisset Street stretching from Waltons up to the new SARS building (previously GG Glass, who have relocated across the road).



The SARS building is in the process of being substantially refurbished and is currently being fitted out as A grade offices with completion hopefully scheduled for the end of January 2011. SARS

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are preparing to open their 920/m2 Port Shepstone offices in February/March 2011 and are looking forward to providing convenient quality service to all tax payers in Southern KwaZulu Natal.

A key factor in the redevelopment of the Bedford Centre and this, "prime node of commercial properties" is the cutting edge design being used by leading Durban architect – Andrea van Dam. She has cleverly combined modern architecture with classical formal elements in layout, features and materials used. The architect's brief was to create a timeless but modern structure that does justice to the location and the history of the Bedford Hotel site. "I believe this has been achieved with her fresh approach to design and, once completed, these buildings will change the face of Port Shepstone," said Mr. Keal. "It is not enough to create a redevelopment strategy around individual properties. We hope that by extensively refurbishing four substantial buildings in close proximity to each other that our vision for this node will gather momentum amongst Port Shepstone landlords."



Despite their initial misgivings, the Keal Group reported that they have received unqualified support from the Hibiscus Municipality – from the Municipal Manager through to the building and planning departments. *"They have genuinely gone out of their way to assist us in the processing of our plans and have given us their full support and understanding."*

The Keal Group have recently completed R20 million of refurbishments in the Margate and Umtentweni areas as well.

Dave Keal is optimistic that this redevelopment and upgrading of the area will create a domino effect and he is hopeful that other landlords will look to renovate their buildings and in so doing, begin to change the negative perceptions that exist regarding South Coast towns. He said that refurbishments did not have to cost a fortune, and that small changes can be beneficial to both the tenant and the landlord.

Let's hope that this can begin a wave of optimistic and positive renewal of our area and that through this, we can once again be proud to live in such a beautiful place.

Business News



Karen

About the author

Karen Da Rosa graduated cum laude with a BA in English and Psychology, and has been involved in business on the South Coast in various capacities for the past 8 years. Karen has lived on the South Coast for over 25 years.