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PPING UPDATE



CITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
EPPING

Refurbishments bring new life to old in Epping

During recent times the industrial property sector has shown excellent growth in South Africa, outperforming all the other sectors. For the last five years industrial property has been the top performing sector in South Africa. Total annualised returns of 15.0% (13.5% for all commercial property sectors) was achieved over the last three years, while 13.6% total annualised returns (12.6% for all commercial property sectors) was achieved for the last five years. (Source: IPD South Africa Annual Property Index).



Refurbishments breathe new life into old

Epping, being one of the oldest, and the largest industrial node in Cape Town, has seen a number of successful building revamps in recent months. Many of the buildings in Epping were originally built in the 1950/1960 era, when trucks were small and rail was a major form of transportation. Modern demands from tenants and owner occupiers has created the opportunity to revamp or completely rebuild buildings to cater for these up-to-date requirements.

Epping Property reports that the attributes tenants and owner occupiers are currently seeking include:

- Warehouses with floor-to-eaves height of 9m or more. The use of racking systems has increased the vertical utilisation of space in a far more efficient manner.
- Larger yard areas and loading/ turning facilities for interlink trucks.
- Construction using modern materials. Many businesses are falling in line with international norms which include buildings without any asbestos and various other up-to-date attributes.
- Compliance with the latest regulations – fire and other occupational health and safety issues. i.e. automatic sprinklers etc.

During the last year companies such as Green Cross, Oxford University Press and Lafarge (among others) have moved into newly completed buildings. These moves have ensured that not only are the staff far happier but the business efficiencies are significant. These businesses are now also able to plan for better expansion into the future.

There are currently a number of businesses looking for new facilities in Epping, especially due to the superior location of Epping in the very centre of greater Cape Town with access to all the major road systems.

The fact that space available for rent in Epping is at an all-time low is evidence of the popularity of the area. This will further fuel upgrading and revamping of outdated buildings.



Truckport

Epping-based Truckport Logistics has grown into a significant transport operator covering South Africa and neighbouring countries, but Gary Smith's humble beginnings has seen him take a keen interest in nurturing and supporting emerging operators who are willing to work hard.

'I started out merely as a transport broker, I had no trucks of my own,' says founder Gary Smith. 'Over the years we have consistently added trucks to the fleet but it is the development of owner/operator sub-contractors that has been probably the most rewarding aspect of this business.'

Trucks are costly items to purchase or finance, a new truck-tractor costs in the region of R1.3 million and the trailers another R450 000 or so. Fluctuating fuel prices, ballooning insurance costs, ever-increasing legislation and the chance of breakdowns in remote areas also add to the challenges of the trucking industry. Clearly it's difficult for any emerging entrepreneurs to get started in this business without some help or guidance from experienced operators.

'We offer our sub-contractors a total package: a guaranteed contract with monthly payments, vehicle branding, reduced maintenance costs whenever possible from using our own workshops, constant satellite monitoring and driver contact, and assistance with their administration and accounting system if required,' adds Gary. 'We've been delighted with the loyalty and service we've received from our sub-contractors in return.'

Hauling loads from A to B is just one part of Truckport Logistics' activities. They also consolidate smaller loads at their Cape Town and Johannesburg warehouses and provide a local distribution for part-loads, delivering them using smaller vehicles to destinations in and around the country.

The warehousing and distribution business has spawned another empowerment opportunity with the establishment of Likhawu Warehousing and Logistics. Shareholders in Likhawu include long-serving employees – both Black and White – and the company has grown to perform an ever-expanding role in logistics including delivering goods to mines along the West Coast and other areas of South Africa from its Epping base.

Driver training is a cornerstone of the business says Gary, and you can well understand that when a complete rig with load can be valued in excess of R2.5 million. Truckport Logistics operates its own driver academy with roughly only one in 10 applicants making it through the rigorous training and selection process. New drivers must spend a month as an assistant driver rotating with other drivers in the fleet to ensure they meet the stringent quality levels required by the Group.

Gary is clearly someone who lives his industry – trucking and vehicles are part of his very make up. He started the business 35 years ago and now includes vehicle and crane hire, warehousing



Samson Hlekiso (left) with Gary Smith. Samson started working for Cape Produce, the forerunner to Truckport Logistics 23 years ago. Gary has provided a mentoring role over the years and now Samson is the majority shareholder in HH Hauliers, a transport business that owns four long-distance truck and superlink trailer combinations. Samson's one son is a shareholder in Likhawu Warehousing and Logistics, while another has just passed his code 14 licence after training with the company.

and distribution, and de-stuffing of containers among his service offerings. A visit to his office sees it crammed with an amazing miniature assortment of model vehicles – everything from a pre-WW2 collection of tin plate military vehicles to scale petrol tankers – numbering some 400 in total.

But his passion for things with wheels is not restricted to the model variety. He also has motor raced extensively for around 20 years, driving Clubman's, Super Saloons, Wesbank Modified Races and finally in the Supercar Series. A serious accident 15-years ago, where he went through a barrier wall, curtailed his racing career though – much to his family's relief!

Gary has served on the ECID Board for four years and has been pleased with the transformation from a rather run-down Epping to the now desirable industrial node which has been achieved largely on the back of the ECID's good work.

'Now that we significantly improved the security and cleansing we can increasingly focus on projects that improve the infrastructure. The refurbishment of the traffic circles and erection of street name signs has made the movement of vehicles easier. We have plans to try and improve peak period traffic flow with the creation of additional entrance and exit points. This is taking some time though as we need to work through City Council and ensure our plans are in sync with theirs.'

'I am proud to own and operate a business from Epping. It's central location – all national roads lead to Epping – short distance to other local industrial nodes, improving environment, coupled with abundant public transport and access to a large workforce in close proximity are the ingredients that bode well for a sustainable future,' says Gary.

Message from the coordinator



The largest budget item for the ECID is clearly security and its related activities, and thus warrants some additional commentary.

Our unique geographical layout – intersected by an out-of-date rail spur system with a network of 21 gates/fences – creates some interesting challenges from a policing perspective. The ECID has not only installed these barriers to assist in securing these difficult to access areas but also 20 floodlights at strategic locations to ensure that the darkest zones are illuminated and so easier to monitor.

Other equipment includes 16 closed-circuit-television cameras that are monitored 24/7, four private security vehicles, two quadbikes, a mobile security office and two Law Enforcement vehicles. In addition we make use of in-vehicle cameras and have explored the use of personnel cameras to record interactions with suspects.

With all that in place it doesn't mean we have completed the task at hand. We are constantly evaluating systems

and procedures, building relationships with other security providers in the area and the Saps and Metro Police. At the same time the fences and gates require constant repairs. The cameras are approximately halfway through their expected lifespan and they too require constant maintenance. The continuous load-shedding is affecting the cameras and measures are being considered in order to alleviate the problems caused by these interruptions in power.

We are confident this strong ground-based presence together with rapid response team dispatched by an efficient and well-run Control Room is ideal for our area. In addition to general security duties we are also responsible for the enforcement of non-moving Council regulations in the area, and I think this is a focus that we have done particularly well. People must understand that if they break the law in Epping, the ECID Security or Law Enforcement will respond and there will be consequences for their actions.

However, as I mentioned this is a constantly-evolving discipline. Should owners or tenants in the Epping area have issues they should feel free to give the Control Room a call on 073 881 7781 for more information or action.

Who guards the guards?

With an estimated 50 service providers and 6 000 security guards operating within ECID's footprint it makes sense to bring some form of cooperation among the role players says Security Manager Ryan Ord.

'It's mind boggling that our area is serviced by so many guards from so many different companies and, what's more amazing, is that there is very little cooperation among the service providers. It also goes without saying that there is a huge discrepancy in the service offering and capabilities among these providers.'

'In fact, in many instances the ECID security team is providing the initial response when an alarm is activated – this before the security company that is contracted and paid to do the job. Clearly with around 50 different security companies in the area, the vast majority of those are not going to have response vehicles stationed in Epping. In some instances we have found that guards stationed on a site are instructed by their superiors to call the ECID 24-hour Call Centre before their own company's operations room!'

The ECID's core function is to supplement the basic services offered by the City of Cape Town, facilitate the upliftment of distressed business and mixed-use areas, promote economic growth and sustainable development, and facilitate investment in Epping 1 to 4. The cornerstone to these activities is the



ECID's security team, provided by Executive Risk Consultants, maintain a high profile 24/7 presence within Epping. In addition to the highly-visible patrol and response vehicles they also make use of quad bikes to patrol in accessible areas such as the railway lines.

provision of security and law enforcement in the area, a responsibility that consumes almost 73% of the ECID's total budget.

The ECID security contingent is made up of mobile patrol teams assisted by a rapid response vehicle. In addition four Law Enforcement Officers are employed through the City Council. These officers have the authority to police non-moving by-laws such as illegal dumping, parking violations and informal trading.

'The ECID's officers carry a large security load: the monitoring of the railway lines is a massive task that is hard on personnel and equipment. These areas are difficult to operate in and, if not patrolled, can be a security threat to properties that back on to them,' says Ord. 'We need to look at ways of maintaining or even improving security response and levels but ensuring that those operators who are being paid for providing a basket of services are actually delivering on them to their clients.'

Never put the cart before the horse

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the Cart Horse Protection Association (CHPA) has become an integral support service for the working cart horses on the Cape Flats, operating daily on Cape Town's busy roads.

Horse-drawn carts have been synonymous with Cape Town for many years but in numerous instances they were not properly cared for. Overloading of the carts, poor nutrition and inadequate health-care for the horses were common problems. While traffic authorities and the SPCA did have oversight of these infractions it was the establishment of the CHPA in 1995 that brought these diverse disciplines under one focused entity.

'We provide a wide range of services to this community of horses and cart owners,' says Megan, who also performs the role of CHPA general manager. 'We provide clinic, patrol, and call-out response, veterinary, and rehabilitation services to all working cart horses and donkeys living on the Cape Flats. And support, education and training to cart horse owners and drivers who use working cart horses as a means of generating income for themselves and their families.'

Subsidised services are provided at the clinics held at the Clinic and Training Centre and in outlying areas on the Cape Flats. The morning clinics take place between 08h00 and 12h00, Monday to Friday at the Epping offices. From there horse cart owners are able to access subsidised services which include:

- Feed
- A professional farrier service
- Harness repairs
- Basic veterinary care
- Free de-worming and tetanus vaccinations
- Cart repairs, owners are able to make use of a large range of repair tools and equipment
- Education and hands-on practical training on the proper care and maintenance of horses.

The CHPA inspectors police the cart-horse drivers by conducting road patrols, scrap metal yard inspections and also respond to reports of abuse and overloading from members of the public, law enforcement and traffic officials. Penalties for the contravention of the Animal Protection Act by cart-horse drivers vary, depending on the severity of the case and the working history of the owner and driver. These range from verbal warnings through to confiscation of the horse for rest and rehabilitation and, in extreme cases, prosecution.

'The community of owners has stabilised over the years with 420 registered horses and carts on our books. Each of these carries an individually-numbered licence plate on the back of the cart for easy identification. Most of the drivers are fully aware of the need to properly care for their horses, as their livelihood depends on



their mobility. However, we do need to constantly monitor and offer guidance where needed.'

'As with many NGOs we are on a constant lookout for funds and resources. Private individuals and corporates are invited to assist in whatever way they can. We have a number of different funding models on our website from a monthly donation to supplying items on our wishlist. We would appreciate the support so that we can continue the good work started two decades ago,' ends Megan.

For more information go to www.carthorse.org.za or call 082 659 9599 to report incidents of abuse.

