



Mutual Heights

News from your Trustees

Edition 45: 28th September 2019

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Your Trustees' focus at the moment is SECURITY management, but the LIFT project is ramping up slowly – it is not going to be a quick project – and VISITOR MANAGEMENT pervades much of our activity. Some details follow.

Security

Security gates

The level of vagrancy around the building has increased recently, and while we are not aware of any serious incidents, people are concerned. A specific problem is that the recesses at the retail shop doors in Longmarket Street temp street folk to bed down and sleep there, and there is clearly some smoking of stuff going on. Attempts to get them to move have very limited results, and we have agreed that security gates can be installed, subject to Heritage concerns of course. In the meantime, we have agreed for *temporary* gates to be installed at the tenants' own cost.

Anyone with ideas about a design for a *quality* stainless steel security gate is welcome to [get in touch](#). Do you like the idea here? The design is scaled to the actual dimensions of the building, and the horizontals are roughly at the level of each floor.

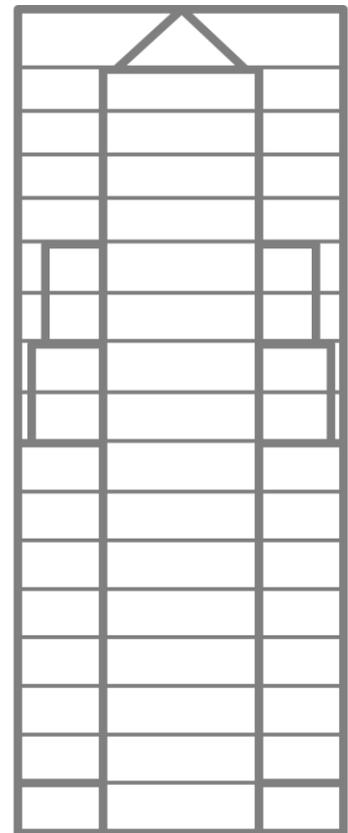
Front desk

At the front desk, I have spoken with Jose (the concierge) and he is fully engaged with security matters. His cell phone is enabled on WhatsApp and he confirms that anyone is welcome to message him at any time (**067 027 5411**) although his working hours are **08h00** to **17h00**. In the event of an emergency, out of hours, he will do what he can.

The way that we receive and keep an eye on visitors is also under review and we want to improve the facilities at the Reception desk (the "Pill Box") so that identities can be checked and the necessary data can be captured (see the note following).

More generally, I met recently with the [Central City Improvement District](#) (CCID) to discuss security matters, and the managing agents have been attending the CCID meetings. CCID should be our best partner in working with outside agencies such as the police and the city.

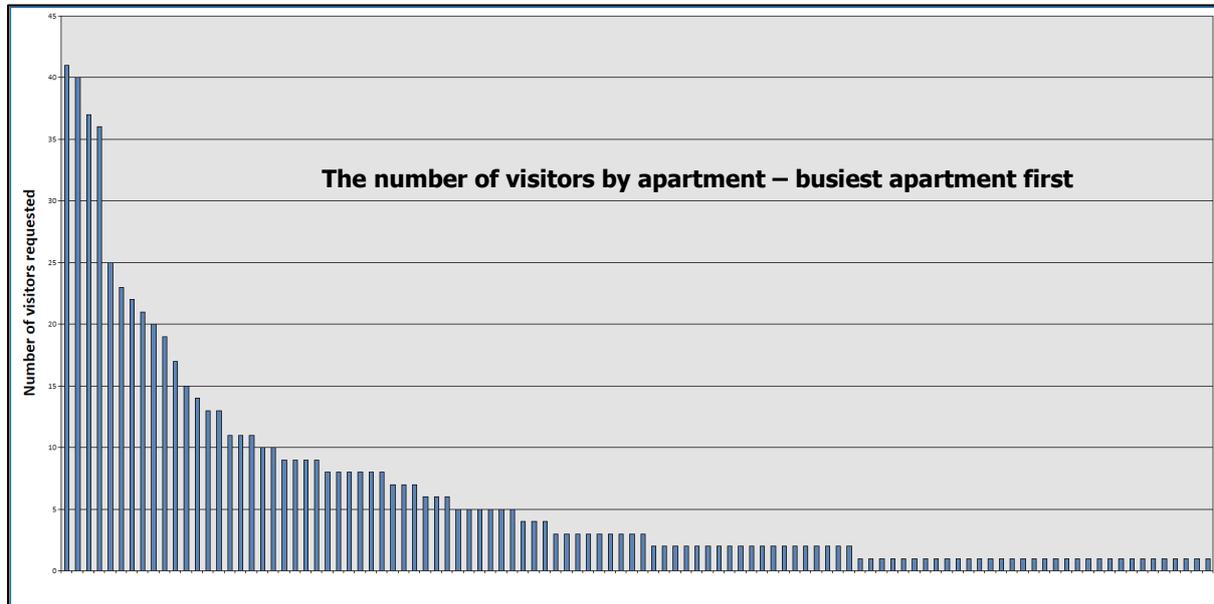
Finally, we are commissioning an independent professional review of the security risks, that will indicate the mitigating steps that we can take to improve the way we work and protect ourselves. Security is a multi-faceted issue that touches upon contracts, building management, visitor management, and costs of course. All input from owners and residents is welcome. Please [talk to us](#).



A candidate design for a security gate

Visitor management

We are doing what we can to understand the cost and consequences of short-stay visitors. Some are “booked in” by owners or agents directly (so that the data is validated automatically, and the concierge and the office are not involved), but the vast majority are either booked in by the simple “Easy-add” option. This way, the mandatory visitor details have to be written on a form at the front desk, transcribed from that form, checked, and then loaded into the database. Let’s look at this “easy” route: first, here are the easy statistics:



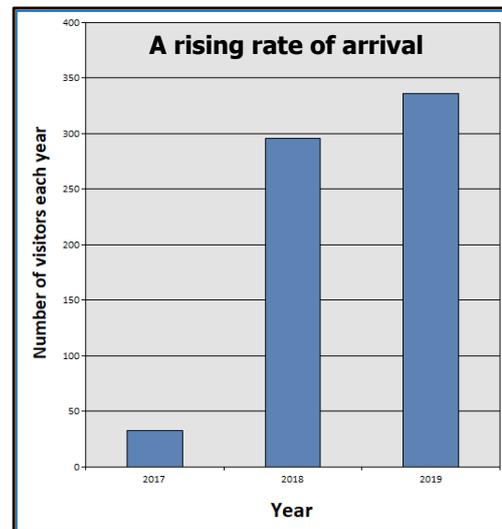
A total of 672 visitors were checked in since the procedures began (20 months ago) – 399 by the concierge (the full procedure as described) and 273 by the owner or an agent (avoiding the transcription of written details); during that time (2017 to 2019) the numbers arriving have increased:

We have to bear in mind that in 2017 we were just exploring the options, but on the other hand 2019 is not yet done, so that number will rise.

The cost of short-stay visitors

We would appreciate any input from the community about how to manage the concomitant costs. If we allow R300 as the cost of registering and then managing one visitor (your doctor probably charges you much more than that for a 20 minute consultation?) then the total based on these statistics would be almost exactly R10,000 per month. This could be defrayed by encouraging owner- and agent-self-registration to avoid the burden on the concierge and the office, by going for the direct registration route. That would mean that with no effort on their part, every day, the security will have a complete list of visitors arriving soon, visitors arriving that day, and visitors already present (that report is already in place).

There is of course a different cost, when there is needless disturbance during the quiet hours. Notices in the lifts have made a difference for a while, but we are working on specific penalties that will be incurred when the conduct rules are broken. The new resolution agreed at the last AGM is still with the Ombud (who has to approve it) but we are trying to accelerate that process.



The Lift project

We have made it clear that the Lift Project is the next "big one", because it will be expensive, it will take a long time, and there will be disruption to our movement around the building. Here is a summary of the situation:

- We requested and received indicative quotations from putative suppliers and from three smaller organisations that might be able to manage the project for us. This is not a project that we want to manage ourselves, and Property Exponent's experiences elsewhere have made it clear that the risks and problems that occur are challenging, disruptive, and always increase costs.
- A special levy has been initiated based on the indicative costs and the timescales that we can tolerate.
- [TUV Nord](#) have been appointed as Project Managers and we have had the first initial meeting with them to go over the project, our requirements, and our expectations. As with all such major projects it is exciting to be starting, and we are content that we have appraised ourselves of the major issues. Anyone with experience or competencies in this area is welcome to step up and assist; Elleke (on the fourth floor) are already involved. If you did not know, they specialise in the re-purposing and refurbishment of heritage buildings.
- From our discussions, it is clear that one of the principal issues is with the management of sub-contractors. No single lift manufacturer or installer has the resources to do all the work and there will be a range of entities involved.
- Finally, TUV are in touch with Western Cape Heritage who must approve the plans and the design. This is already the first major road-bump, this process of approval is not going quickly.

Communications channels have been agreed, and news of the lift project will be posted on our web site as it becomes available.

Other matters

We hope that users of the gym are pleased with the new treadmills. Servicing and repairs of the other equipment is waiting (at the time of writing) on spare parts but soon everything should be ship-shape.

Finally, in case you were not aware be assured that we now have a 10-year maintenance and expenditure plan in place, as required by the amended Sectional Title Schemes Management Act. Yes, the cost of the lifts is included ...

With good wishes,
on behalf of the Trustees,



Andy Bytheway,
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Check out "Mutual Building" on Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_Building