

Suburban high-rise student digs boon

By [Guy Rogers](#)

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A new R145m student accommodation block is rising on the beachfront, promising some relief to the city's crippling student accommodation crisis.



Artist's impression of CampusKey Scarborough in Summerstrand, PE

The seven-storey CampusKey Scarborough development is nearing completion at a crucial time for Nelson Mandela University (NMU) with next year's student intake looming and funding for a new on-campus residence not yet finalised.

Not everyone is happy with the project, however, with neighbours citing damage to property prices and going concerns.

The 300-bed CampusKey Scarborough is the latest project from Stellenbosch-based CampusKey group. The company has built student accommodation in Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Stellenbosch and Cape Town and this is its second in Port Elizabeth. The first went up a year ago in 9th Avenue, also in Summerstrand.

CampusKey Scarborough will comprise 296 single fully furnished rooms with their own shower and basin. The rooms will be divided into clusters of five, six and 10, each with a communal kitchen.

The company's managing director, Leon Howell, said that the model was intended to be "safe, inspiring, modern and personal". The facilities range from Wi-Fi, study nooks, lounges and braai facilities on the roof to bicycle storage and a

token-operated laundry service.

NMU spokeswoman Zandile Mabela said the university welcomed the development. "[It] will go a long way to mitigating the perennial student accommodation issue," she said. Demand for student accommodation far outweighed capacity, particularly at historically white universities not geared for an influx of boarding students.

"The reality is there are not enough on-campus residences to meet demand.

"This is why the university secured and accredited off-campus accommodation sites."

Mabela said NMU was working towards construction of a new 2000-bed on-campus residence with funding from the Department of Higher Education. "The university is looking at raising a loan or equity funding to cover the balance needed to make this long-term solution to accommodation challenges a reality.

"The university also wishes to develop a student village within the city that will essentially be a hub of accredited off-campus accommodation establishments with easy access to an integrated transport system."

The Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber says the provision of adequate, safe accommodation for an ever-growing number of students is crucial, and spokeswoman Cindy Preller said they welcomed the new development. "We welcome the investment made by the developer and trust it will add value to growing the economy of the region."

Visiting the area this week, *The Herald* found that, where before the beachfront end of Scarborough was quiet and sun-soaked, it is now noisy, dusty and cloaked in shadow, jammed with machinery and construction materials.

Walter Mazano, the managing director of the five-star Isango Gate Boutique Hotel and Spa on the corner of Scarborough and Bournemouth, said the development was a blow to their establishment. "Bookings have dropped drastically and I am concerned for the job security of staff if it continues."

Established seven years ago by Eastern Cape-born attorney and businesswoman Nothemba Mlonzi, Isango Gate includes a range of facilities including a pool and jacuzzi deck. But this area was now overlooked by CampusKey, Mazano said. "My guests are not happy. At the moment it's the construction workers looking down, but when the building is finished it will be students. Our privacy is gone."

Mazano said the other problems were dust and drilling, cutting and hammering which continued from early morning until evening.

Abu Munshi, a resident in The Bay complex, said residents had been alerted to the development two years ago, and had together lodged objections with the metro.

"One of the many negative effects is the decline of property prices.

"Why was this student accommodation not erected rather on the university's land?"

Munshi said dust, noise and heavy trucks and machinery had characterised the construction since it began and the only consolation was it was due to be completed soon. Building began in October last year and is due to finish in October.

Bay Language Institute director Shaun Fitzhenry said while he was not opposed to the development, the construction process was causing problems for his business. "Their vehicles, machinery and materials are encroaching onto the road...causing a mess, damaging the road and making it difficult for our students to park."

Municipal spokesman Mthubanzi Mniki said residents' concerns had been considered, but the plans put before the municipality were in line with the development parameters and the provisions of the National Building Regulations Act.

"These regulations address the land-use rights and restrictions which include, inter alia, height, building lines and coverage."

Howell said the contractor had allocated an employee to manage road usage to minimise disruptions. There was also a team of workers cleaning the road every afternoon.

"The road will be reinstated to the original condition when the project is completed, at CampusKey's cost."

Source: Herald

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