



FUN AND FILTH . .
 Lucky Mashaba (13) and his friend Bafana Tibano (13) play with a white board they use as a toy boat in the polluted Jukskei River in Alexandra, Johannesburg. There are no playgrounds for children from the nearby informal settlement
Picture: Eric Malema

Green Scorpions and court bring luxury townhouse construction to a standstill

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PHASE one was sold out. Bulldozers had just moved in, ready for construction. And some foundations had been laid.

But the Pretoria High Court brought the construction work on a luxury townhouse complex in Silverton Ridge to a standstill.

Developers Aquarella Investments 83, Blue Moonlight Properties and Reyneke and Jacobus Cornelius did not apply for Gauteng department of agriculture, conservation and environment authorisa-

tion before starting construction.

On June 1, Gauteng environmental management inspectors, also known as the Green Scorpions, served compliance notices requesting the developers to cease construction until they had obtained permission from the department, but they were ignored.

The department then approached the court for an urgent interdict to stop the developers from building high-storey cluster units on the environmentally-sensitive Silverton Ridge, which overlooks the Pretoria National Botanical Gardens.

Judge Ronnie Bosielo ruled that the building should stop with immediate effect and that the necessary procedures be followed.

"At the time of the court proceedings, the developer had already spent millions of rands in preparation for the illegal development without first seeking the applicable authorisation," said Gauteng department spokesperson Sizwe Matshikiza

"Environmental legislation provides developers with various mechanisms to object against, and to apply for the suspension of such

compliance notices.

"(But) rather than using these mechanisms, the developer decided to simply ignore the instructions and blatantly disregarded the notice by proceeding with the illegal development."

Matshikiza said the developers prioritised their commercial interests above constitutional obligations.

Graham Read of the Silverton Ridge Coalition, which seek to protect the interests of the residents in the area, said they welcomed the judgment.