

What a disgrace

NONKULULEKO MBULI

Zoo Lake is known for its immaculately manicured lawns, popular eateries and family-friendly facilities. But in these pristine premises are pockets of vandalised property and grounds.

The *Gazette* joined members of the Zoo Lake Users Committee and City Parks on a walk around the park where areas that had fallen into disrepair were pointed out.

The tennis courts on Lower Park Drive behind the Zoo Lake training centre were in an appalling state. Squatters have turned the clubhouse into a residence. Laundry was hanging from the ceiling and the electrical box had been tampered with, while suspected stolen goods including phones and chargers were sprawled across the floor.

The basketball court had been vandalised and smelled of faeces. Sappi bird island was filthy.

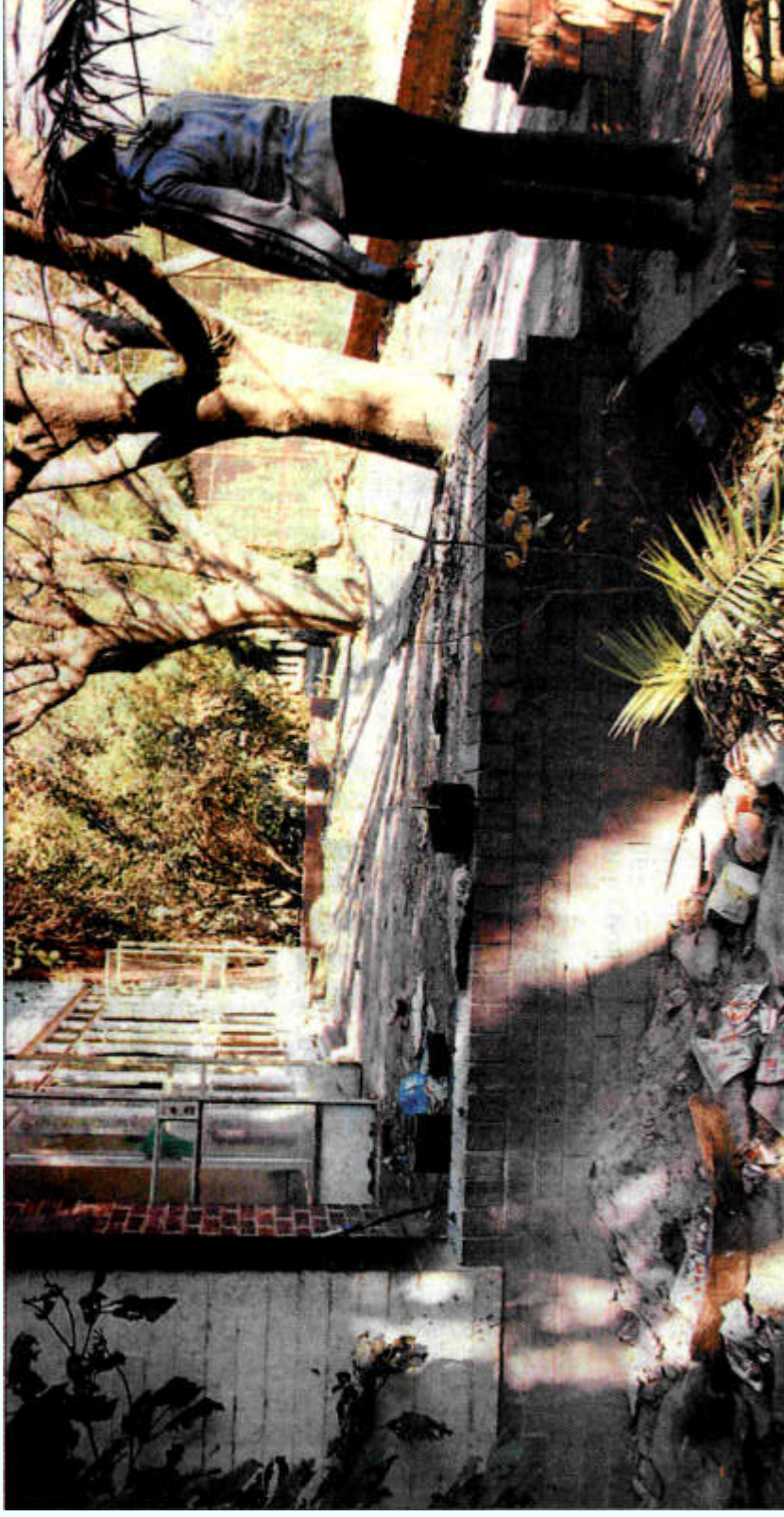
"No one wants to take responsibility for it," said Zoo Lake Users' Committee administrator Nomsa Ndlovu, even though it was suggested that the droppings could be used as compost. Despite the no fire signs around the park, ash was found near several trees.

"The good news is that City Parks is busy with the aerators," said councillor Marcelle Ravid after inspecting the park. Ravid promised that the fountain, which she described as an annual problem, would be fixed within the month.

"There is a build-up of silt, causing blockages, and there are serious water issues, most of which are linked to Westwold Way," admitted Ravid.

"There are five different departments involved and we need to get them on site, after the World Cup. But this is a start. We hope that the joint efforts of City Parks, Joburg Roads Agency, Joburg Property Company and Joburg Water will result in Zoo Lake looking like Joburg's favourite park again."

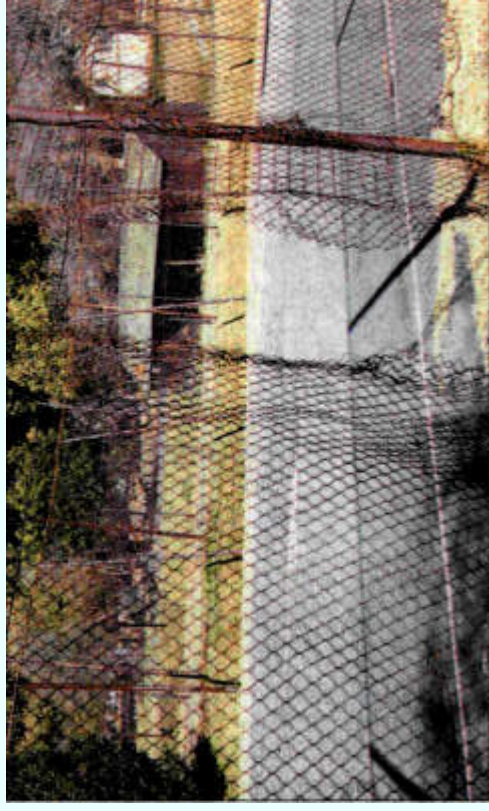
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Nomsa Ndlovu stares in disbelief at the state of the tennis court clubhouse.



A hadeda waddles near a stream of dirty bathwater from the illegally occupied clubhouse.



The vandalised basketball court.