

**JOINT VENTURE CLEAN UP** (from left) Cassim Lekhoathi, the chairman of the Ana Capri body corporate, Dick Breytenbach of Shepstone & Wylie Attorneys, Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed, the chairman of the Organisation of Civic Rights and Neville Schaefer, the chief executive of Trafalgar Property & Financial Services, hope the derelict block can be rehabilitated

Trafalgar Property and Financial Services has come to the rescue of a decaying inner city block of flats in a bid to prevent a pending sale to defray debts

## Durban tries to stop the rot

MARKIE INGES

Durban - Reversal of Durban's inner city decay has been given a shot in the arm with the launch of a project to salvage an Albert Park block of flats from a pending sale in execution.

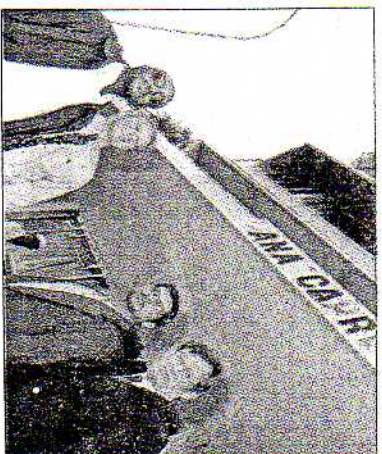
A Metro spokesman confirmed that all municipal services to Ana Capri in St Andrews Street had been cut off on December 3 last year after residents failed to settle their rates, electricity, water and refuse removal accounts, which had been outstanding for up to three years.

More than R232 700 in outstanding service charges is owed to the council.

The crisis has fuelled an entrepreneurial spirit in the area, where intrepid opportunists are flogging 10 litre canisters of water for R2 each and charging an extra 50c to carry them upstairs.

Tenants from other blocks are charging Ana Capri residents for the use of their bathrooms.

The rescue operation has been mounted by Trafalgar



Property & Financial Services, which manages 1 000 body corporates across the country, in conjunction with Shepstone & Wylie Attorneys and the Organisation of Civic Rights (OCR), a non-governmental organisation dedicated to inner city redevelopment and tenant rights.

Trafalgar would be responsible for recouping outstanding rates from the owners and using a portion of the levy to upgrade the building, at an estimated cost of R500 000. Shepstone & Wylie was handling legal issues pertaining to the pending sale in execution and would run educational workshops for the owners and tenants in sectional title schemes.

"Working together with the owners of Ana Capri, Trafalgar and Shepstone & Wylie have offered to manage the property free of charge in a pilot project aimed at rehabilitating the area," Neville Schaefer, Trafalgar's chief executive, said this week.

Shepstone & Wylie's Dick Breytenbach said the plan revolved around generating pride of ownership in one

block, which would hopefully have a spinoff effect on other buildings.

The Ana Capri project has been praised by Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed, the chairman of the OCR, who said several other upgrade initiatives in the area were being sponsored by Molovuso Holdings, in partnership with Nedcor.

"It is in the interests of the council to reach an agreement to prevent erosion of the rates base," Breytenbach said.

Schaefer pointed out that similar settlement terms had been negotiated with the Johannesburg and Pretoria city councils to help defaulting blocks rehabilitate themselves.

"It is pointless foreclosing on these properties and evicting tenants as all you are left with is an unsaleable, decaying eyesore which contributes to the growth of slums," he said.

However, Finn Nilssen, Metro's director of rates and administration, said the council had its hands were tied by the local authorities ordinance No. 25 of 1974 and the Durban extended powers consolidated ordinance No. 18 of 1976.