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Students digs just went upmarket

At last, getting a degree or a diploma doesn't mean you'll have to put up with years of living in cramped, unstylish digs.

Slumming it has been a part of student life for so many generations, that most students are resigned to the fact that they'll have to live like a church mouse while getting their qualifications.

It seems if you want an education, you have to be prepared to live in a tiny res room, enduring questionable canteen meals, and showering with your slip-slops on in the communal bathrooms. Or you have hole up with scores of students in a commune or dorm, living crammed on top of each other, fighting over who's is who's in the fridge.

The only alternative to these dodgy digs used to be staying at home with the folks. There is however, another solution, and it's right on the doorstep of Jozi's academic institutions.

The answer lies in the Braamfontein, where you'll find new, upmarket developments which are making it possible for students to live within their means, but with dignity, privacy and style.

Inner city developers are returning Jozi to her former glory, building by building. They completely refurbish old hotels, blocks of flats, or even warehouses, creating sought after new lofts and apartments that have people flooding back to the city.

And that's no exaggeration. Richard Rubin, CEO of inner city developer, Aengus Property Holdings, reports an almost untenable demand for upmarket housing.

The same thing is happening at its latest development, where it has upgraded an entire city block, bounded by Hospital and Smit Streets. Called the Argyle Precinct, it is at the centre of the Gautrain commuter belt, close to Park Station and Braamies. Four existing residential buildings – Skyways, Dudley Heights, Argyle Centre and Baker House – have been transformed into 427 stylish and contemporary one-bedroom and studio apartments.

The best part though, is that these are not just empty shells waiting to be filled with cast-me-downs and second-hand furniture.

Not only is each unit fully furnished with beds, desks and fitted cupboards, and finished with wooden floors, granite kitchen counters and a modern bathroom, it also has a fridge, 12-channel satellite, plasma TVs, and Wi-fi access.

And as they say on the home shopping channel: "But wait, there's more". The Argyle Precinct developments have 24-hour security linked by intercom to each unit, tightly controlled access, underground parking, and communal recreation areas. Some even have convenience stores and laundries on site. All tenants get an Aengus Lifestyle Card, which means great discounts and deals with a host of retail partners.

The buildings in the Argyle Precinct are also professionally managed, ensuring they're optimally maintained, clean, safe and secure. And with free daily transport to the myriad universities and colleges in the area, this is student accommodation on an unparalleled level.

What's most surprising about the Precinct though, is that it doesn't take a whole lot of cash to get through the door. Apartments go for as little as R2 300 per student per month. And since units are geared for two people sharing, they're even more affordable.

There are a limited number of these upmarket apartments still up for grabs. Leases for corporate or government bursary students are available. Call (011) 403-0554, or e-mail tenantinfo@aengus.co.za.