

LIGHT FLIGHT FARM NOT SOLD – JANUARY 2015

A little over 2 years ago I signed an Agreement of Sale with Mr Price, the well known retailer. The sale was for 2 of 3 portions of Light Flight Farm totalling 55 hectares for the amount of R50 million. Mr Price wanted to erect a 100 000m² (670m x 150m) state of the art warehouse on runway 01. Apparently Light Flight airfield is the biggest, flattest, open space left in the Ethekeweni (Durban) municipality.

The offer came out of the blue quite unexpectedly. At the time Light Flight farm was not on the market. I was happy, the flying school was doing well and I had no intention of selling. Of course, when a price of R50 million was negotiated I signed pretty quickly. The deal did not include the hangars which I intended to move to a new site.

Mr Price then deployed their considerable resources by engaging the very best people available to complete the many studies and reports required to have the land usage changed from agriculture to logistics. Light Flight was prodded and probed and within 10 months Mr Price had poured R5 million into Environmental Impact Assessment, geotechnical, water, sewerage, power, traffic and other reports. They even managed to obtain a release from the department of Agriculture.

By November 2013 we were told everything was completed and the sale would be concluded before the end of the year. I had 2 options to move Light Flight School and all the hangars to. The flying school would continue and there would be hangarage for the 30 aircraft that would have to be moved from Light Flight farm.

To everyone's surprise and consternation, the Ethekeweni municipality refused the application on the grounds of sewerage, road access and that the project did not fit into their local area plan. Mr Price appealed and the matter was referred to a Provincial Tribunal. This process dragged on for the whole of 2014 until in mid December Mr Price was forced to move their warehouse project to the Keystone development in Hammarsdale.

So, Light Flight continues. New hangars will be erected. If anyone is interested speak to Geoff or Noel. Two portions of Light Flight are still for sale but the airfield will remain in the short to medium term.