

Parkside's R32 mln 'an estimate'

'In line with costs for heritage buildings'

ONLY R821 000 has been spent to date on the renovations at the Premier's Parkside official residence, says the provincial Department of Public Works.

The department was responding to the reported plan by the KZN government to spend R32 million on repairs and renovations at Parkside.

The department said the R32 million is a "projected" and "estimated" figure over a seven-year period.

Spokesperson Kiru Naidoo said the projected costs were in line with stipulations for heritage buildings that have been in existence for more than 60 years. "The Department of Public Works has been constantly receiving ad hoc requests for the upgrading of this 137-year-old facility. A need arose to

consolidate all these requests [and an] assessment to audit all the maintenance requirements was undertaken in 2015," said Naidoo.

He added that the Amafa Heritage Council administered the alterations of protected buildings in line with the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act.

"Therefore, the Parkside residence, as an Amafa Heritage-defined building, had to fully comply with all recommendations as required by the council.

"This has a significant cost implication," he said.

Naidoo said the R32 million master plan includes the following:

- Upgrade of external water reticulation and groundworks;
- Repairs, upgrade, and resurfacing the

road network for about 1,8 km within the complex;

- Upgrades of two existing conference centres;

- Replacement of the precast concrete boundary wall, including security installations;

- Alterations and additions to convert the existing outbuilding into accommodation to improve security measures.

"Parkside is a unique facility worth preserving for use and posterity. As always, this is subject to affordability and prioritisation.

"It is precisely because we have many competing priorities that the programme is not final," said Naidoo.

— Witness Reporter.