

R12m to be spent to refurbish president's residence in Durban

By **SUTHENTIRA GOVENDER**

MORE than R12-million will be ploughed into refurbishing the official presidential residence in Durban.

The Department of Public Works announced yesterday that it is “currently undertaking major renovations of the Dr J L Dube Presidential Residence” to address storm damage as well as a wood borer infestation.

The residence – which will be occupied by President Cyril Ramaphosa during his visits to the city – is a heritage building, which was first occupied in 1904 and has seven buildings within its grounds.

National Public Works Department spokesman Thami Mchunu said renovations to the historic residence began last month.

“These have been necessitated by the storms that ravaged Durban in 2016. Comprehensive investigations and feasibility studies had to be

done for the project to be registered. Also, to ensure that the heritage aspect of the facility was not compromised, the heritage council in KZN – Amafa – was approached for input and approval of the proposed repairs,” said Mchunu.

The renovations include roof repairs to the main house, upgrading of security installations including cameras and a scanner, repairs to the housekeeper's flat, repairs and renovations to the guest house and the house manager's quarters.

The work is expected to take eight months to complete at a cost of R12.7-million.

Mchunu added: “It must be noted that Dr J L Dube House is a heritage site, boasting well over 100 years of rich history. Therefore whatever is renovated or replaced will have to be restored to its original state by a competent specialist contractor with proven past experience in heritage facilities.” — *DDC*