

# Missing million for Brandfort Museum confirmed

By **MODIRI MICHAELS**

THE department of arts and culture yesterday confirmed that about R1 million is missing from the project to rebuild Mama Winnie's house in Brandfort, Free State.

The controversial project to convert the house where Winnie Madikizela-Mandela spent years under house arrest into a museum is no closer to being finalised than it was five years ago.

According to the department's statement, the Independent Devel-

opment Trust, part of the department of public works, was contracted to implement its infrastructure projects.

"The Trust was contracted to implement plans for the renovation of the house and the building of a new structure, refurbishment of the old house and turning it into an interpretative centre.

The site handover to the contractor was done on 11 November 2013.

"The project stalled as the contractor abandoned the site citing 'disputes' with the Trust."

An independent quantity surveyor was then appointed to look into how the Trust managed the project.

It found that of the R1 858 195,71, an amount of R593 622,29 was accounted for as it was paid to the contractor and the architect.

The department said four days before Mama Winnie's death she was told of the updates which took place earlier this year as her input was required for the project.

Risimati Consulting Engineers were hired last month to take over the project.

*Daily Sun* published the story: "Government has failed our Winnie" on 5 April after Free State Department of Arts and Culture MEC Mathabo Leeto distanced herself from the project.

New Free State Premier Sisi Ntombela during her speech at Mam' Winnie's memorial service in Brandfort on Monday said the museum would be finished next year.

She said R3 million was deposited into the project before she was in government. "We are busy with investigations," she said.