

Bridge soon to be brand new

Odette Venter

The renovation of a bridge in Centurion, which is desperately needed according to local ward councillors, could happen soon.

The said bridge is situated on the R101 Old Johannesburg Road close to the intersection with Wierda Road, between Ruimte and Wierda roads, in Eldoraigne.

“The bridge, built in 1891, is a heritage preservation site,” said local DA ward councillor, Cindy Billson.

“While the bridge is still in use,

it had deteriorated considerably in recent years due to a lack of maintenance.”

DA shadow roads and transport MEC Fred Nel met Billson on Friday morning at the site to have a look at the state of the bridge.

“I have discussed renovation of this particular bridge with the MEC of the provincial roads and transport department and received feedback that the tender to maintain bridges and roads had been advertised recently. The tender will include renovation of this bridge. Because it

is a monument, the government has a responsibility to attend to the state of the bridge. We want to prevent damage due to rust as well.”

Nel said the bridge was constructed at the wagon drift at the then Zesmylspruit, now Hennops River, because there was a wagon route there. It used to be called Zesmylspruit because of its distance from Pretoria.

“The first structure, while the bridge was still being constructed, was damaged by a flood, but was re-built soon afterwards. The bridge was then also extended.”

He said at the moment the bridge was still safe to use, “but should we not renovate it, it might pose a danger when used in future”.

Billson said in the 1950s, the road to Johannesburg was widened in some areas.

“Here a second parallel bridge for the south-bound Johannesburg traffic was built, while the existing bridge was kept for north-bound Pretoria traffic, in order to keep the historic bridge preserved.”

According to Dutchfootstep’s website, the steel girder bridge is one of the first of its kind to be built in South Africa.

It was built based on the hinge system, with heavy hinge-and-nut-bolts connecting the main parts at the knot points. The technical design and construction was done with great care and skill, with the footings being lower than the water line.

The bridge was designed in the offices of the Department of Public Works, ordered from Germany, delivered to Natal and then transported by ox wagon to the site.

The architect was Sytze Wopkes Wierda, born in the Netherlands.



DA ward councillor Cindy Billson with DA shadow MEC for roads and transport, Fred Nel, at the Wierda Bridge in Eldoraigne, Centurion, which is in dire need of renovation.