

# Graves to be moved from Sophie's Place



By Paula-Ann Smit

About 175 graves are to be dug up and moved from a cemetery on Zuurfontein Road to make way for a new housing development.

This project, which intends to exhume and relocate graves from Portion 221 Zuurfontein Road 331R, also known as Sophie's Place, to Mooifontein Cemetery,

or any other cemetery located by the municipality, started in August last year.

Before construction can officially kick off, the developers need to receive a permit. For this, they must track down family members or relatives connected to the graves. This might be a difficult task, as some of the oldest graves on the site date back to the 1930s up to the 1950s and only five are marked with names.

"We haven't found any relatives yet," head archaeologist of

the project, Anton Pelser, told Express. According to him, this search has gone on for almost 10 months. "We've placed radio ads, newspaper ads, legal notices and notices on site."

If no one comes forward with information, the graves will be exhumed.

"We will try to determine a type of 'identity' for the deceased person by studying the skeleton," Pelser said.

"We can determine whether it was a man, woman or child. That

is if anything is left over, which it often is not after so many years."

The research will be done on site.

Once the remains have been moved and reburied, each deceased will receive a separate grave, a new coffin and a headstone. This will be either marked 'unknown' or with the correct names if family members come forward.

All this will be done in accordance with the National Heritage

Act and the Graves and Dead Bodies Ordinance.

The five marked graves belong to Cledis Mawaci, JSM Rampela, Sanah Mawasi, Abram Mawaci and Thise Shabalala.

Any person wishing to object to this proposal is urged to contact the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs on 011 355 5270/5456/5003 or 079 524 0733, or Avbob on 011 482 1027 or 083 302 7166, or SAHRA Burial Grounds on 012 941 4960.