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**FINAL REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION & EXHUMATION OF A
NUMBER OF KNOWN AND UNKNOWN GRAVES
FROM PORTIONS OF THE FARM WITFONTEIN 16IR
NEAR KEMPTON PARK,
EKHURHULEMI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY
TO BE IMPACTED ON BY TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT
(WITFONTEIN EXTENSIONS 88 & 96).**

For:

**M&T Developments
11 Byls Bridge Boulevard
Building No.14, Block C – 2nd Floor
CENTURION**

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REPORT: APAC019/40

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Pel' or similar, written in a cursive style.

SUMMARY

Anton Pelsler (of APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING cc) was appointed by M&T Developments in conjunction with AVBOB Johannesburg to undertake the archaeological investigation & exhumation of a number of known and unknown graves located on a site located on a Portion of the farm Witfontein 16IR, near Kempton Park in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng. The graves are to be impacted on by the proposed development of Witfontein Extensions 88 & 96. A total of 90 graves were initially identified on two grave sites (Site 1 and Site 2) on the farm. At the conclusion of the investigations and exhumation work **122** graves were uncovered and the remains removed.

Social consultation, which included the erection of Site Notices, Newspaper advertisements and Radio Announcements (undertaken for well over a 7 months period) was unable to trace any descendants or family members related to these graves. Most of the graves, except four (4), were unmarked (without any headstones) and only demarcated with stones. Of those with headstones only some provided evidence (inscriptions) on the deceased and their dates of death. These ranged between 1964 and 1969 (all located on Site 2). It is believed that many of the others fall within a similar time-frame (early 1960's to 1970's). Grave goods found with some of the others seem to concur with this finding. There is however also some graves that might date to a much earlier period at Site 1 (1940's) as well as a later period (1970's to 1990's). After the various required permits were obtained work was done in conjunction with AVBOB Johannesburg during the end of March and early April 2019. This document discusses the results of the fieldwork and investigations carried out.

During May some previously unidentified remains were found by contractors working on the services (pipelines and road) for the development, close to Site 1 (IWF). APAC & AVBOB were contacted to investigate and the remains of 3 individuals were discovered in the area. Two of these were adults in unmarked burials, while the 3rd represented a small infant whose remains were discovered on the soil spoil heaps next to the pipeline trench where the other 2 burials were found.

The archaeological portion of the work was carried out under SAHRA Permit No.: 2894 – Case ID No.: 13428.

It is concluded that the work was done successfully and that the planned & ongoing development actions in the area can continue, taking cognizance of the conclusions & recommendations put forward at the end of this document. All the remains are to be reburied in the Bredell Municipal Cemetery.

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INTRODUCTION

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During May some previously unidentified remains were found by contractors working on the services (pipelines and road) for the development, close to Site 1 (1WF). APAC & AVBOB were contacted to investigate and the remains of 3 individuals were discovered in the area. Two of these were adults in unmarked burials, while the 3rd represented a small infant whose remains were discovered on the soil spoil heaps next to the pipeline trench where the other 2 burials were found.

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AIMS

The main aims with the investigation and exhumation of the graves from Sites 1 & 2 (in this case) situated on a Portion of the of the farm Witfontein 16IR were the following:

- (a) the detailed investigation of all possible burials located on the sites,
- (b) the successful exhumation and relocation of all the burials and remains recovered to the Bredell Municipal Cemetery in Kempton Park.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

1.1 The National Heritage Resources Act

According to the above-mentioned law the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artifacts, structures and sites older than 100 years
- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites
- g. **Grave yards and graves older than 60 years**
- h. Meteorites and fossils
- i. Objects, structures and sites of scientific or technological value.

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Section 35(4) of this act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;
- b. destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;
- c. trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- d. bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or

- recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- e. alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years as protected.

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

Human remains

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position of otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;
- b. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- c. bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations. Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925).

Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (i.e. where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

Unidentified/unknown graves are also handled as older than 60 until proven otherwise.

1.2 The National Environmental Management Act

This act states that a survey and evaluation of cultural resources must be done in areas where development projects, that will change the face of the environment, will be undertaken. The impact of the development on these resources should be determined and proposals for the mitigation must be made.

METHODOLOGY

Background information – The results of previous work carried out in the area (Heritage Impact Assessments) are normally used to provide background to the project and the graves identified and recorded in the area under discussion.

Mapping and Photographing – A Google Earth image of the area, providing a location for the area and both grave sites, are produced. Photographs of the area, as well as each individual burial, any skeletal remains and grave goods that are recovered were also taken as part of the documentation process.

Investigation and Exhumation – Normally graves are exhumed by hand using picks and shovels and where possible remains are documented photographically in position. Remains are then removed, placed in coffins, described and documented. In cases where no skeletal remains or cultural material are found in a burial a soil sample is taken for reburial as standard practice. In this case, an earthmoving machine (TLB) was used to open up the trenches up to the level of the burial pits and to assist with removing of soil overburden and remains.

Burial Forms – A Burial form for each individual burial is normally completed. Basic information on burial position, grave goods, general preservation and other general observations are included on these forms. These forms will not be reproduced in this report while the information on the burials will be summarized and interpreted at the end. The forms will however be archived for future reference if required. Photographs of all the graves and the remains from the each burial are provided as well.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA AND SITE

APAC & AVBOB Funerals Johannesburg was appointed by M&T Development, in conjunction with Nali Sustainability Solutions, to undertake the assessment, exhumation and relocation of an estimated 90 graves located in two informal cemeteries from the above land parcel. The establishment & development of townships (Witfontein Extension 88 & Witfontein Extension 96) is being undertaken here and will impact on the graves situated here (named Grave Site 1 & 2). This necessitated the appointment to conduct the work and the follow the required processes to successfully exhume and relocate the graves from here prior to the development commencing.

The grave sites were identified and recorded during Heritage Impact Assessments conducted for the proposed developments (reported on in separate HIA Documents). Originally the two sites (Grave Site 1 & Grave Site 2) were estimated to contain around 30 and 60 graves respectively. All the graves and the remains contained in them were to be exhumed and relocated to the Bredell Municipal Cemetery.

Grave Site 1 (1WF)

Grave Site 1 contained a number of unknown, stone-packed graves without headstones, located in a clump of wattle trees in the north-eastern section of the study area. The site was fairly densely vegetated during the initial HIA study and the exact number of graves was difficult to determine at the time. It was estimated that there could be as many as 30 graves here. During the site visit of September 2018 the site was more open, with a section recently burnt as well. A total of 56 graves were identified and numbered in the process. No inscriptions with names or dates could be identified on any of these graves. It was thought at the time that it was very possible that these graves are all older than 60 years of age. Prior to the physical investigations and exhumation work trees in the area was removed and a number of the graves were disturbed to some extent (with the stone-packed demarcations covered by branches and soil and some stones removed). This made determining the exact location of all the individual graves difficult and in some areas a number of test pits had to be dug to find the graves. In the process (with test trenches also dug in spaces between visible and known graves) a total of 78 graves were found at the end of the exhumation process. A 79th unknown burial was found by contractors working on a sewerage pipeline some distance away from the identified graveyard. This was the recent unmarked burial of an infant or still-born child.

During May some previously unidentified remains were found by contractors working on the services (pipelines and road) for the development, close to Site 1. APAC & AVBOB were contacted to investigate and the remains of 3 individuals were discovered in the area. Two of these were adults in unmarked burials, while the 3rd represented a small infant whose remains were discovered on the soil spoil heaps next to the pipeline trench where the other 2 burials were found.

GPS Location - S26 00 41.30 E28 15 40.60.

Grave Site 2 (WF)

Grave Site 2 is located on the western boundary close to the R21 and contained a fairly large number of graves. Because of dense grass cover it was difficult initially (during the HIA) to determine the exact number but it was estimated at the time to be as much as 60 graves. Although most of the graves were stone-packed and without headstones, there were four graves with formal demarcations and headstones with inscriptions. The following individuals and dates could be identified:

1. Nimrod Ngwenya (born and died in 1964)
2. Belesia Ngwenya (born 1966 & died 1967)
3. Winei Mathibatsolo – died 1968

The 4th headstone could not be read clearly but it seems as if the individual was either born in 1952 or passed away in 1952. During the September 2018 site assessment a total of 43 possible graves were identified and numbered at Site 2. After the physical

exhumations and relocation process was concluded the final number of graves were 40, with the other 3 clearly not graves.

GPS Location: S26 00 51.50 E28 15 30.20.

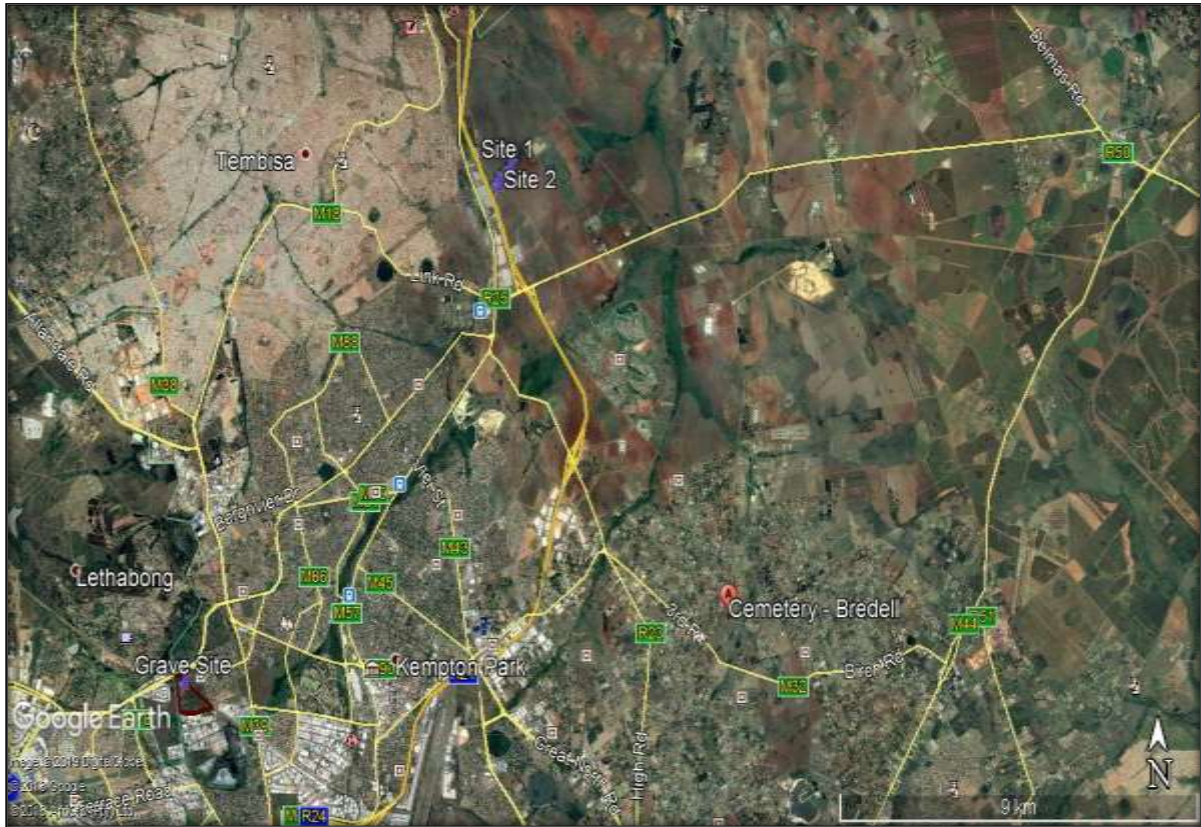


Figure 1: General location of Grave Sites 1 and 2, also showing the Bredell Cemetery where the graves were relocated to (Google Earth 2019).



Figure 2: Partial view of Site 1 location (in 2018).



Figure 3: General view of Site 1 in March 2019.



Figure 4: Site 1 completed.



Figure 5: Site 2 in March 2019.



Figure 6: Site 2 completed.

INVESTIGATION AND RELOCATION OF THE BURIALS

Site 1 (WF1)

Initially **56** graves were identified and recorded on the site during the earlier assessments and documentation of the graves. Most of the graves were demarcated with stones without any headstones, with only a few having single upright stones at the head. None of the graves had any inscriptions on them to help identify the deceased individuals buried here or to determine the age of the graves or site. It is believed that the graves (based on the cultural material found in some of the burials and placed on the graves) date to between the 1940's and 1980's, with some maybe even more recent. However, as all of them were unidentified and unclaimed by any community members or descendants the graves were declared as Unknown & therefore older than 60 years of age.

Before the exhumation work was undertaken large trees were removed from the site by contractors and a number of the known and marked graves were covered by tree stumps, branches and other debris (soil and rocks) and some grave's locations/positions on the site disturbed. The stone heaps on them were accidentally removed and in order to find these graves again test trenches had to be dug next to and in between known graves and rows of graves. Clear spaces in between rows of graves were also investigated as a standard exercise to determine if they contain any possible unmarked graves. As a result a number of previously unknown graves were found on the site as well and in the end a total of **78** graves were exhumed from the site, while a **79th** grave (Grave 1W61A) were also found away from the grave site in a trench excavated for the installation of sewerage pipes by contractors for the development. No other burials were identified in the pipeline trench and it is believed that this might have been a recent unknown and illegal burial here recently.

In general the preservation of the remains (of the adults) were either poor, fair and fragmented or good, while for the small infant/baby or children's graves the preservation was poor to very poor with barely any skeletal remains present. Determining the age and sex of some of the unknown individuals were made possible through dental (tooth), cranial (skull), pelvic remains and cultural material. A wide range of grave goods were recovered including corrugated iron sheeting, coffin wood, nails, screws and coffin handles, as well as some personal items. These will be discussed in the next section where every burial will be presented in more detail.

Of the total of **82** burials the following regarding age & sex can be provided:

- (a) **Infants/Babies/Juveniles:** 29 (not counting soil samples)
- (b) **Young Adults/Adults:** 9
- (c) **Middle Aged/Senile Adults:** 13
- (d) **Males:** 16
- (e) **Females:** 4
- (f) **Only soil samples taken and reburied:** 31

The graves from which the soil samples were recovered were mainly those of infants or children (based on the size of the stone-packed graves on the surface) although some could be of adults as well. With children (due to a variety of factors) sometimes no skeletal remains are preserved and only material such as coffin remains or clothing is found.

The graves were all dug up to the level of the original bedrock or up to the level where remains were found and the remains then excavated and removed by hand and then placed in the coffins for reburial. The depth of the burials was on average around 1.60m below the present surface level, although in some cases remains were found at less or more than that. Sterile, undisturbed layers were characterized by gravel & undisturbed clay and other soil layers.

All the graves were laid out in an E/W direction with the headstones and heads in the west, facing east. The individuals were buried on their backs and most of them in coffins. The remains will be reburied in the Bredell Municipal Cemetery in Kempton Park. In cases where no remains were found in clear burial pits a soil sample was taken for reburial as is standard practice. Some of the test trenches dug was clearly not graves and declared as such.

Each grave/burial will be discussed briefly below, with photographs of each showing the skeletal remains and cultural material found where applicable provided at the end.

- 1WF01:** Stone-packed grave with a single stone at the head. Some coffin wood fragments and skull fragments and some long bones of a child recovered (2-6 years of age?).
- 1WF02:** Same demarcation as above. Coffin wood & nails found, as well as skull fragments, ribs and long bones of a child of around 5 years of age.
- 1WF03:** Grave indicated by slight soil heap. No remains found and a soil sample taken for reburial.
- 1WF04:** Same as above. Soil sample taken for reburial.
- 1WF05:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood and handles found. The skeletal remains are that of an Adult Male individual (based on the pelvis).
- 1WF06:** Partially stone-packed with soil heap. The headstone consisted of a single upright stone. Size indicated a possible infant or young child. No remains found and a soil sample taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF07:** Stone-packed with a single upright stone as headstone. Coffin wood, coffin plastic and corrugated iron sheeting found. The skeletal remains (nearly complete) of a Middle-Aged Adult Male (based on the pelvis)

were recovered from the burial. Teeth fairly well worn and some lost pre-death (gaps in lower mandible closed-up with bone growth).

- 1WF08:** No stones demarcating grave, but slight soil heap indicating position. Possible infant or young child. No remains found and a soil sample taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF09:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood, plastic and nails recovered. The nearly complete skeletal remains of a Young Male Adult (based on the pelvis and robust long bones) were recovered from the grave.
- 1WF10:** Stone-packed grave. Size indicates possible infant or juvenile individual. Coffin wood and plastic found, as well as some clothing fragments. The fragmented remains of an infant/juvenile of between 7 -10 years of age were recovered.
- 1WF11:** Grave indicated by a slight soil heap. Coffin wood fragments, a coffin nail and a copper name plate (inscription not readable) were recovered. The fragmented skeletal remains of a baby between 1 and 2 years of age were also recovered. One deciduous (milk) tooth (molar) was also found.
- 1WF12:** Grave stone-packed and a single upright stone at the head. The well-preserved remains of a Middle-Aged Male individual were recovered (based on pelvis). The individual had an autopsy (cranium sawn off) indicating a possible unnatural death.
- 1WF13:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood, coffin nails and a coffin handle was recovered. The fairly well-preserved remains of a young child of between 5-7 years of age were found. The teeth of the child had not all fully erupted yet, while the skull also had not fused completely yet as well.
- 1WF14:** Stone-packed grave. The size indicated a possible young child or infant buried here. No skeletal or other remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF15:** Stone-packed grave. Some coffin wood fragments, coffin plastic and a coffin nail were found, as well as the poorly preserved skeletal remains (top part of skull) of an infant were recovered.
- 1WF16:** Grave indicated by a slight soil heap. Coffin plastic fragments were found, No skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. This was more than likely the burial of an infant or young child.
- 1WF17:** Soil heap. Coffin nails and some fragments of cloth found. The fairly well preserved skeletal remains of a child between 2 – 5 years of age were recovered.

- 1WF18:** Small stone-packed grave. No remains were recovered and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF19:** Grave indicated by a slight soil heap. No remains recovered and a soil sample taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF20:** Grave stone-packed and with a single upright stone at the head. The fragmented remains of an infant or young child were recovered, including some skull and long bone fragments.
- 1WF21:** Small stone-packed grave. Although a small medicine bottle was found in the grave no skeletal remains were found. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. This might have been the grave of an infant or young child.
- 1WF22:** Stone-packed grave. Corrugated iron sheeting found, as well as the well preserved skeletal remains of a Middle-Aged/Senile Female individual (based on pelvis). The teeth of the individual are very worn.
- 1WF23:** Small stone-packed grave. Some fragmented skeletal (skull) remains of an infant between 1 and 2 years of age were recovered.
- 1WF24:** Small stone-packed grave. Coffin wood, coffin plastic and coffin handles recovered, as well as some clothing remains (yellow-colored baby jersey). The fragmented skeletal remains of an infant (possibly a girl based on the yellow jersey) were recovered.
- 1WF25:** Stone-packed grave. The fairly well-preserved skeletal remains of an Adult Male individual (based on pelvis) aged probably between 19 to 25 years of age were recovered. The teeth are not badly worn, while the sutures on the skull have not yet fused completely.
- 1WF26:** Grave indicated by a slight soil heap. Coffin wood fragments and coffin handles were recovered, as well as a fairly large number of blue glass beads. The skeletal remains of the individual was fairly well preserved and indicated that this was likely the burial of a Middle-Aged/Senile-Aged individual. The pelvis indicates a Male person, although the beads might be indicative of a female. The teeth are well worn with some lost prior to death. The individual also had an autopsy, with the top of the cranium sawn off.
- 1WF27:** The grave was stone-packed and had a single upright stone at the head. Some coffin wood fragments and a button were recovered. The fairly well preserved skeletal remains were those of a Young Male Adult between around 19 to 25 years of age. The skull had not fused completely yet and

the pelvis (sciatic notch) indicated a male individual. This was another individual had an autopsy as well.

- 1WF28:** The grave was stone-packed and had a single upright stone at the head. Coffin wood fragments, coffin nails and brass button and some clothing/fabric were recovered. The skeletal remains are that of a Middle-Age Male individual (pelvis). The individual's teeth were very worn down as well.
- 1WF29:** The grave was stone-packed and had a single upright stone at the head. Corrugated iron sheeting fragments, coffin wood and coffin handles were recovered from the grave. The skeletal remains are that of an Adult Male (based on pelvis) individual.
- 1WF30:** The grave was stone-packed and had a single upright stone at the head. The fairly well preserved skeletal remains of an infant/young child of an estimated 2 – 5 years of age were recovered from the burial pit.
- 1WF31:** The grave was stone-packed and had a single upright stone at the head. No remains were found and a soil sample was taken. This might also have been the grave of an infant or young child.
- 1WF32:** Same as the above grave.
- 1WF33:** Grave indicated by a slight soil heap and a depression. Some coffin wood fragments and pieces of clothing were recovered. The skull fragments of an infant were found in the burial.
- 1WF34:** Grave indicated by a slight soil heap. Baby coffin handles, coffin wood fragments and coffin nails recovered. The fairly well preserved skeletal remains of small infant were found.
- 1WF35:** Slight soil heap. Although no skeletal remains were recovered, a porcelain cup was found inside the grave. This might have been the grave of an infant or young child.
- 1WF36:** Grave indicated by a slight soil heap. Coffin wood fragments and coffin nails were recovered from the grave. The skeletal remains were poorly preserved and represent a small infant of between 1 – 2 years of age. The infant's teeth are still deciduous and not all erupted completely yet.
- 1WF37:** Grave indicated by a slight soil heap. Coffin wood fragments and the fairly well preserved skeletal remains of a small infant were found in the grave.

- 1WF38:** A slight depression in the soil indicated a possible grave. Some coffin wood fragments and coffin nails were recovered from the grave. Again the fairly well preserved skeletal remains of a small infant of between 1 and 2 years of age were found in the grave.
- 1WF39:** A depression in the soil indicated a possible grave and although no remains were found it is located in between identified graves and might have been that of an infant or young child. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF40:** A slight soil heap and depression indicated the location of a possible grave. Coffin wood, coffin nails and some medicine bottles were recovered from the grave. Poorly preserved skeletal remains of a small infant were found.
- 1WF41:** Again a depression in the soil indicated a possible grave and although no remains were found it is located in between identified graves and might have been that of an infant or young child. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF42:** A depression in the soil indicated a possible grave. Coffin wood fragments and coffin nails, as well as the fairly well preserved skeletal remains of an infant aged between 1 and 3 years of age were recovered.
- 1WF43:** Again a depression in the soil indicated a possible grave and although no remains were found it is located in between identified graves and might have been that of an infant or young child. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF44:** The same as the above, although a single upright stone at the head was also present.
- 1WF45:** Again a depression in the soil indicated a possible grave and although no remains were found it is located in between identified graves and might have been that of an infant or young child. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF46:** Again a depression in the soil indicated a possible grave and although no remains were found it is located in between identified graves and might have been that of an infant or young child. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF47:** A slight depression in the soil indicated the presence of a possible grave. Coffin wood fragments and some coffin nails were found in the grave. Based on the fragmented skeletal remains, including the teeth this individual was a juvenile (teen-aged) individual.

- 1WF48:** A depression in the soil indicated a possible grave and although no remains were found it is located in between identified graves and might have been that of an infant or young child. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF49:** Stone-packed and depression in the soil. The size of the grave indicated an Adult burial. Coffin wood and nails, as well as a metal name plaque were found. The fragmented skeletal remains were those of a possible Middle-Age Male (base on skull). Most of the teeth of the individual seemed to have been lost prior to death with barely any teeth present and the cavities in the jaws covered by bone growth.
- 1WF50:** A depression in the soil indicated a possible grave and although no remains were found it is located in between identified graves and might have been that of an infant or young child. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF51:** Same as the above.
- 1WF52:** Some stones on the surface of the area, but disturbed. No remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF53:** A depression in the soil indicated a possible grave and although no remains were found it is located in between identified graves and might have been that of an infant or young child. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF54:** Same as the above.
- 1WF55:** Stone-packed grave. Although no grave goods (cultural material) were recovered, the remains of an infant/small child of between 1 and 3 years of age were found.
- 1WF56:** A possible grave was indicated by a depression in the soil. No skeletal remains were recovered, but a glass bottle was found on top of the grave. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF57:** A possible grave was indicated by a depression in the soil. Coffin wood fragments were recovered, as well as the fairly well preserved skeletal remains of a Middle-Aged Adult. The pelvis seems to indicate a female individual. Her teeth had been badly worn down, with some lost pre-death. A skull with severe deformities could be the result of syphilis.
- 1WF58:** A few stones seemed to indicate the location of a grave here. This could have been the grave of an infant or small child. No remains were recovered and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.

- 1WF59:** Same as the above.
- 1WF60:** A few stones seemed to indicate the location of a grave here. Although no human remains were recovered, some coffin wood fragments, coffin nails and part of a plastic dummy or teething ring were found in the grave.
- 1WF61:** There were a few stones on the surface here that indicated the location of a possible grave. Coffin wood, coffin nails and coffin handles were recovered. The well preserved remains of an Adult Male (based on the pelvis) were found. The individual had a bullet entry hole in the left temple of the skull, with the exit wound on the right. As with many unnatural deaths an autopsy had been performed, with the top of the cranium sawn off.
- 1WF61A:** This grave had been numbered 61 before the physical exhumation work on the Grave Site had commenced and was located nearly 150m south of the main site. The grave/burial was exposed during work on the sewerage/water pipeline related to the Witfontein development. There were no surface indicators of the presence of a burial here. The remains are those of a very small infant (possibly still-born) and could be that of a baby girl (based on a yellow jersey and pink blanket & dummy). A plastic cradle, some glass, baby bottles, dummy, medicine bottles, as well as baby clothing and blankets were also recovered from the burial.
- 1WF62:** Some stones and a slight depression in the soil indicated the location of a grave here. Besides coffin handles the fairly well preserved skeletal remains of a Middle-Aged/Senile Male were recovered.
- 1WF63:** Some stones and a slight depression in the soil indicated the location of a grave here. A coffin nail was found, as well as the remains of a young child.
- 1WF64:** Again some stones and a slight depression in the soil indicated the location of a grave here. Corrugated iron sheeting was found on top of the burial pit, while fragmented coffin wood was also recovered. Termites had destroyed most of the coffin and also some of the skeletal remains. The fragmented remains were those of a possible Male (based on the pelvis and skull) of Adult age.
- 1WF65:** A slight depression in the soil indicated the location of a possible grave. No remains were found but a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF66:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. No grave goods/cultural material was found, but the fairly well preserved remains of a Young Adult Male (based on the pelvis) between an estimated 19-25

years of age were recovered. The sutures on the skull had not completely fused yet.

- 1WF67:** A slight depression in the soil indicated the location of a possible grave. No remains were found but a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF68:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Coffin wood fragments were found, as well as the poorly preserved remains of a Juvenile individual. Some of the teeth of the individual were still erupting prior to death.
- 1WF69:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. No remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF70:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Coffin wood fragments, coffin nails and some glass medicine bottle pieces were found in the grave. The poorly preserved remains of a small infant estimated to be between 1 and 2 years of age were recovered.
- 1WF71:** Again a few stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Coffin wood fragments and coffin nails were found in the grave. The poorly preserved remains of an infant/young child estimated to be between 3 and 5 years of age were recovered.
- 1WF72:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Corrugated iron sheeting was found on top of the burial pit, while coffin wood fragments and the remains of a glass vessel were found in the grave. The poorly preserved remains of a small infant were recovered.
- 1WF73:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Corrugated iron sheeting was found on top of the burial pit. Once again the poorly preserved remains of a small infant were recovered from the burial pit.
- 1WF74:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Besides some porcelain plate pieces, only one skull fragment of a Young Adult individual was recovered from the grave.
- 1WF75:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Besides coffin wood fragments and a glass cup, no skeletal remains were recovered. This could have been the grave of an infant or young child, and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 1WF76:** Stones on the surface indicated a possible grave. Corrugated iron sheeting was found on top of the burial pit, while coffin wood fragments and coffin screws were also found. The fairly well preserved remains of an Adult Male (based on the pelvis) were recovered.

- 1WF77:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Coffin wood fragments and coffin nails were found in the grave. The poorly preserved remains of a small infant estimated to be between 1 and 2 years of age were recovered. The teeth found were all deciduous (milk teeth) and not all erupted yet.
- 1WF78:** Some stones on the surface here indicated a possible grave. Coffin wood fragments and a coffin nail were found in the grave. The poorly preserved remains of a small infant estimated to be between 1 and 2 years of age were recovered (based on the individual's teeth).
- 1WF79:** No visible stones. Coffin wood fragments and nails. Some clothing (shawl) found around neck. Skeletal remains fairly well preserved, although some long bones not complete. Possible female (based on the shawl). Middle-Aged Adult.
- 1WF80:** This individual was represented by remains found on the soil spoil heaps next to the pipeline trench close to 1WF80 & 1WF81. Besides skeletal remains some coffin wood fragments, nails and clothing pieces were also recovered. The human skeletal remains were fairly well preserved and based on the teeth (all deciduous and not yet erupted) and other skeletal parts are that of a small infant between 1 and 3 years of age.
- 1WF81:** 1WF81 was found right next to 1WF79 (the initial one identified in May by contractors) and was nearly complete and well preserved. Besides the skeletal remains some coffin wood and nails were also recovered. The human remains represent a Middle-Age Adult. The individual was most likely a Male based on the pelvis and robustness of the long bones. A post-mortem had been carried out on the individual as evidenced by the sawn-off cranium.

Site 2 (2WF)

During the original assessment it was thought that the site could contain as much as **60** graves. In September 2018 (after site clearance) this number changed to **42** graves, with a possible **43rd** one marked during the physical exhumation work undertaken. After the physical work it turned out that 3 of these were not graves and the final number of graves exhumed and relocated from Site 2 is **40**.

As indicated earlier only 4 of the graves had formal headstones, with 3 of these containing good and legible inscriptions on them to assist with identifying the name, date of birth or date of death of the deceased individual. The fourth one had a headstone with the inscription barely readable. The graves with headstones were:

- 2WF11:** The inscription on the headstone was difficult to read, but it was possible to determine that this was the grave of Mr. Efaem Moqoatho, who was either born in August 1957 or who passed away in August 1957.
- 2WF26:** The inscription on the headstone indicated that this was the grave of Nimrod Ngwenya who was born on the 6th of August 1964 and who passed away on the 12th of December 1964.
- 2WF33:** This was the grave of Belesia Ngwenya, She was born on the 9th of January 1966 and passed away on the 27th of January 1967.
- 2WF37:** The inscription on the headstone identified this individual as one Winei Mathimbatsolo. She was born on the 11th of September 1968 and passed away on the 1st of January 1969.



Figure 7: Headstone on Grave 1WF11.



Figure 8: A close-up of the headstone inscription on Mr. Efaem Moqoatho's grave.



Figure 9: Nimrod Ngwenya's headstone.



Figure 10: Belesia Ngwenya's headstone.



Figure 11: The headstone of Me. Winey Mathimbatsolo.



Figure 12: Glass bottles, metal and ceramic objects from the area of 1WF42 and WF43. These areas (as well as 1WF41) turned out to not be graves but a refuse midden.

In general the preservation of the remains (of the adults) ranged between poor, fair and fragmented or good, while for the small infant/baby or children's graves the preservation was poor to very poor with barely any skeletal remains present. Determining the age and sex of some of the unknown individuals were made possible through dental (tooth), cranial (skull), pelvic remains and cultural material. A wide range of grave goods were recovered including corrugated iron sheeting, coffin wood, nails, screws and coffin handles, as well as some personal items. These will be discussed in the next section where every burial will be presented in more detail.

Of the total of 40 burials the following regarding age & sex can be provided:

- (a) **Infants/Babies/Juveniles:** 17 (not counting soil samples)
- (b) **Young Adults/Adults:** 6
- (c) **Old/Senile Adults:** 5
- (d) **Males:** 4
- (e) **Females:** 8
- (f) **Only soil samples found and reburied:** 12

Once again the graves from which the soil samples were recovered could be mainly those of infants or children (based on the size of the stone-packed graves on the surface) although some could be of adults as well. With children (due to a variety of factors) sometimes no skeletal remains are preserved and only material such as coffin remains or clothing is found.

The graves were all dug up to the level of the original bedrock or up to the level where remains were found and the remains then excavated and removed by hand and then

placed in the coffins for reburial. The depth of the burials was on average around 1.60m below the present surface level, although in some cases remains were found at less or more than that. Sterile, undisturbed layers were characterized by gravel & undisturbed clay and other soil layers.

All the graves were laid out in an E/W direction with the headstones and heads in the west, facing east. The individuals were buried on their backs and most of them in coffins. The remains will be reburied in the Bredell Municipal Cemetery in Kempton Park. In cases where no remains were found in clear burial pits a soil sample were taken for reburial as is standard practice. Some of the test trenches dug was clearly not graves and declared as such.

Each grave/burial will be discussed briefly below, with photographs of each showing the skeletal remains and cultural material found where applicable provided at the end.

2WF01 to 2WF10: All 10 of these graves were either marked by stones or slight soil heaps and depressions. They are situated in a definite row and it is believed could have been the graves of infants or small children. Although no remains were recovered from these graves, soil samples were taken for reburial purposes.

2WF11: This was the grave of Me. Efaem Moqoatho. The size of the grave indicated an Adult burial. An enamel butter vessel and milk can, as well as a saw was found on top of the grave that had a concrete headstone and was demarcated with bricks and cement. Coffin wood, nails and handles were recovered. The skeletal remains represented a Middle-Aged/Old Age Male individual.

2WF12: Stone-packed grave. Corrugated iron sheeting, coffin wood and coffin nails were recovered from the grave. The poorly preserved and fragmented skeletal remains were those of a possible Female Individual (based on the pelvis) estimated to be between 30 to 40 years of age.

2WF13: The grave was stone-packed and had a single upright stone at the head. A coke bottle was placed on top of the grave, while some coffin nails were found in the burial pit. The well preserved skeletal remains was those of a possible Male (based on the pelvis) Adult individual.

2WF14: Stone-packed grave. On top of the grave was a drinking glass and a concrete/cement object in the shape of an clothing iron. The skeletal remains were those of a Young Juvenile Female (again based on the pelvis). Not all the bones had fused together prior to death.

2WF15: Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood fragments, handles and screws were found, as well as a dress, plastic, purple ribbon and a modern pottery fragment. The skeletal remains were very fragmented and represented a Young Adult Individual.

- 2WF16:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood and nails, as well as a baby blanket were found. No skeletal remains were recovered and a soil sample was also taken for reburial purposes.
- 2WF17:** Stone-packed. No remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. This was likely the grave of an infant or small child.
- 2WF18:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin plastic wrapping with remains of a small infant inside recovered. Two plastic hospital name tags were also found, but the writing on it could not be read.
- 2WF19:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood fragments, nails and handles were found, as well as some clothing, buttons and other material. The fairly well preserved skeletal remains were those of an Adult Female individual (based on the pelvis as well as the clothing found).
- 2WF20:** Stone-packed grave. Enamel bowl found on the grave, as well as a medicine bottle, coffin wood, nails and screws in the grave. The skeletal remains represented a possible Middle-Aged Male individual (based on the pelvis)
- 2WF21:** Stone-packed graves. The size of the grave indicated an adult burial. Coffin wood, nails, handles and plastic found, as well as remains of a jersey/vest, some woolen socks and a Vaseline bottle. The skeletal remains were poorly preserved and fragmented, but represented a possible Young Adult Female (based on the pink color of the vest found).
- 2WF22:** Stone-packed grave with a single upright stone at the head. Coffin wood fragments, a coffin nail, baby socks, pieces of a jersey and some glass (on top of the grave) was found. The skeletal remains were fragmented but represent a small infant or young child.
- 2WF23:** Stone-packed grave with a single upright stone at the head. Coffin plastic, pieces of corrugated iron sheeting and the remnants of a possible comb was recovered. The fragmented skeletal remains represent a small infant or young child.
- 2WF24:** Stone-packed grave with a single upright stone at the head. Coffin wood, nails and handles were found, as well as a Vaseline bottle and parts of a plastic Illovo Brown Sugar bag. A bead bracelet and two shoes were also recovered. The fairly well preserved skeletal remains are those of a Young Female Adult individual (based on the pelvis, as well as the ladies' shoes and beads).

- 2WF25:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood and nails, as well as corrugated iron sheeting, some clothing fragments, an Opel wheel cap and an enamel lid of a vessel was found in the grave. The skeletal remains were poorly preserved and consisted mostly of skull fragments and some deciduous (milk) teeth of an infant or young child.
- 2WF26:** The grave was demarcated with bricks, cements and tiles and had a cement headstone. It is the grave of Nimrod Ngwenya who died in 1964 aged 4 months old. Coffin handles, nails and part of a jacket was found. No skeletal remains were preserved and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes as well.
- 2WF27:** Stone-packed grave. A glass vessel was found on the grave, while some plastic fragments, corrugated iron sheeting and a porcelain telephone-line conductor was found in the grave. The skeletal remains were very fragmented but represented a small infant or child.
- 2WF28:** Stone-packed grave. On top of the grave was a porcelain cup, while some coffin wood fragments were also recovered. The fragmented skeletal remains were those of a small child.
- 2WF29:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood, nails, handles and plastic were found, as well as a green jersey and a piece of lace. The fragmented skeletal remains were those of a Young Adult individual. The exact age and sex could not be determined.
- 2WF30:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood, nails, handle and plastic recovered, as well as fragments of a jersey and the lid of an enamel pot. No skeletal remains were recovered and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- 2WF31:** This was a stone-packed grave with an enamel coffee mug on top. Coffin wood, plastic and handles and a purple ribbon was recovered from the grave. The fragmented remains were those of a possible Adult Female. The remains of an infant (still wrapped in coffin plastic) were also recovered from the same burial pit and could represent the still-born child of this female who could have died during child-birth as well.
- 2WF32:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood fragments, nails and plastic, as well as some fabric pieces and a cattle bone was found in the grave. The skeletal remains represented those of a juvenile individual.
- 2WF33:** The grave was demarcated by cement, bricks and tiles and had a cement headstone. This was the grave of Belesia Ngwenya who died in January 1967 aged just over 1 year old. A glass jar was found on top of the grave, while some coffin wood, plastic, screws and a purple ribbon was found as well. No skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken

for reburial purposes as well.

- 2WF34:** Stone-packed grave. A modern ceramic vase was on top of the grave, while some corrugated iron sheeting fragments and fabric pieces were also found. The skull fragments and pieces of long bones represent an infant/small child of between 2 and 5 years of age.
- 2WF35:** Stone-packed grave. Pieces of corrugated iron sheeting, blue dummy and piece of a baby jersey was found. No skeletal remains were recovered and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes as well. The blue dummy indicates a baby boy.
- 2WF36:** Stone-packed grave. Some coffin plastic and the poorly preserved remains of an infant/young child were recovered.
- 2WF37:** The grave was demarcated with cement, bricks and stones and had a cement headstone. This was the grave of Winey Mathimbatsolo who died in January 1969 aged just over 3 months old. Coffin nails and coffin plastic were recovered, as well as the lid of a glass sugar bowl. Poorly preserved skeletal remains were found in the grave.
- 2WF38:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood fragments, nails, plastic, handles and screws were found. The fairly well preserved skeletal remains represent a possible Young Adult Female (based on the pelvis).
- 2WF39:** Stone-packed grave. Coffin wood fragments, nails, handles and plastic and corrugated iron sheeting were found. The fragmented skeletal remains and child-sized coffin bag represents a child between 10 to 15 years of age.
- 2WF40:** Stone-packed grave. A glass jar was found in the grave, but no skeletal remains were recovered. As this could have been the grave of an infant or small child a soil sample was also taken for reburial purposes.

PHOTOS OF THE INDIVIDUAL BURIALS AND THE CULTURAL MATERIAL AND SKELETAL REMAINS RECOVERED WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT AND WILL BE PROVIDED IN SEPARATE FOLDERS FOR INFORMATION AND PERUSAL.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Anton Pelsler (of APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING cc) was appointed by M&T Developments in conjunction with AVBOB Johannesburg to undertake the archaeological investigation & exhumation of a number of known and unknown graves located on a site located on a Portion of the farm Witfontein 16IR, near Kempton Park in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng. The graves are to be impacted on by the proposed development of Witfontein Extensions 88 & 96. A total of 90 graves were initially identified on two grave sites (Site 1 and Site 2) on the farm. At the

conclusion of the investigations and exhumation work 122 graves were uncovered and the remains removed.

Social consultation, which included the erection of Site Notices, Newspaper advertisements and Radio Announcements (undertaken for well over a 7 months period) was unable to trace any descendants or family members related to these graves. Most of the graves, except four (4), were unmarked (without any headstones) and only demarcated with stones. Of those with headstones only some provided evidence (inscriptions) on the deceased and their dates of death. These ranged between 1964 and 1969 (all located on Site 2). It is believed that many of the others fall within a similar time-frame (early 1960's to 1970's). Grave goods found with some of the others seem to concur with this finding. There is however also some graves that might date to a much earlier period at Site 1 (1940's) as well as a later period (1970's to 1990's). After the various required permits were obtained work was done in conjunction with AVBOB Johannesburg during the end of March and early April 2019.

During May some previously unidentified remains were found by contractors working on the services (pipelines and road) for the development, close to Site 1 (IWF). APAC & AVBOB were contacted to investigate and the remains of 3 individuals were discovered in the area.

The archaeological portion of the work was carried out under SAHRA Permit No.: 2894 – Case ID No.: 13428.

All the remains are to be reburied in the Bredell Municipal Cemetery.

Initially **56** graves were identified and recorded on Site 1 (IWF) during the earlier assessments and documentation of the graves. Most of the graves were demarcated with stones without any headstones, with only a few having single upright stones at the head. None of the graves had any inscriptions on them to help identify the deceased individuals buried here or to determine the age of the graves or site. It is believed that the graves (based on the cultural material found in some of the burials and placed on the graves) date to between the 1940's and 1980's, with some maybe even more recent. However, as all of them were unidentified and unclaimed by any community members or descendants the graves were declared as Unknown & therefore older than 60 years of age.

Before the exhumation work was undertaken large trees were removed from the site by contractors and a number of the known and marked graves were covered by tree stumps, branches and other debris (soil and rocks) and some grave's locations/positions on the site disturbed. The stone heaps on them were accidentally removed and in order to find these graves again test trenches had to be dug next to and in between known graves and rows of graves. Clear spaces in between rows of graves were also investigated as a standard exercise to determine if they contain any possible unmarked graves. As a result a number of previously unknown graves were found on the site as well and in the end a total of **78** graves were exhumed from the site, while a **79th** grave (Grave 1W61A) were also found away from the grave site in a trench excavated for the installation of sewerage pipes by contractors for the development. No other burials were identified in the pipeline

trench and it is believed that this might have been a recent unknown and illegal burial here recently. **The recovery of the remains of three more individuals from unmarked burials at Site 1WF during the 27th of May brings the total number of known burials here to 82.**

During the original assessment of Site 2 (2WF) it was thought that the site could contain as much as **60** graves. In September 2018 (after site clearance) this number changed to **42** graves, with a possible **43rd** one marked during the physical exhumation work undertaken. After the physical work it turned out that 3 of these were not graves and the final number of graves exhumed and relocated from Site 2 is **40**.

As indicated earlier only 4 of the graves on Site 2 had formal headstones, with 3 of these containing good and legible inscriptions on them to assist with identifying the name, date of birth or date of death of the deceased individual. The fourth one had a headstone with the inscription barely readable.

In general the preservation of the remains (of the adults) ranged between poor, fair and fragmented or good, while for the small infant/baby or children's graves the preservation was poor to very poor with barely any skeletal remains present. Determining the age and sex of some of the unknown individuals were made possible through dental (tooth), cranial (skull), pelvic remains and cultural material. A wide range of grave goods were recovered including corrugated iron sheeting, coffin wood, nails, screws and coffin handles, as well as some personal items.

The graves from which the soil samples were recovered could be mainly those of infants or children (based on the size of the stone-packed graves on the surface) although some could be of adults as well. With children (due to a variety of factors) sometimes no skeletal remains are preserved and only material such as coffin remains or clothing is found.

The graves were all dug up to the level of the original bedrock or up to the level where remains were found and the remains then excavated and removed by hand and then placed in the coffins for reburial. The depth of the burials was on average around 1.60m below the present surface level, although in some cases remains were found at less or more than that. Sterile, undisturbed layers were characterized by gravel & undisturbed clay and other soil layers.

All the graves were laid out in an E/W direction with the headstones and heads in the west, facing east. The individuals were buried on their backs and most of them in coffins. The remains will be reburied in the Bredell Municipal Cemetery in Kempton Park. In cases where no remains were found in clear burial pits a soil sample were taken for reburial as is standard practice. Some of the test trenches dug was clearly not graves and declared as such.

It can be concluded that the work was done successfully and that the proposed development in the area can continue as planned.

However, it needs to be stated that although all efforts are made to identify all possible graves in an area of impact, and to remove all possible remains from these graves, there is always a possibility that previously unknown and unmarked graves and remains could be present in the area. Should any be uncovered during the development actions, work in the area should be stopped and an expert be called in to investigate and provide recommendations on the way forward.

REFERENCES

Location of Study Area and Grave Site: Google Earth 2019.