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**REPORT ON THE EXCAVATION, EXHUMATION & RELOCATION OF A
NUMBER OF KNOWN & UNKNOWN GRAVES FROM THE
WATERVALSPRUIT EXT.37 DEVELOPMENT SITE LOCATED
ON THE REMAINDER OF PORTION 2 OF THE FARM RIETSPRUIT 152IR
EKURHULENI, GAUTENG**

For:

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SUMMARY

Anton Pelsler (of APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING cc) was appointed by Cosmopolitan Projects Johannesburg (Pty) Ltd, in conjunction with Roseleigh Funeral Home, to assist with the investigation, exhumation & relocation of approximately 104 known & unknown graves from the Remainder of Portion 2 of the Farm Rietspruit 152IR. These graves will be impacted on by their Watervalspruit Extension 37 development.

After a Public Participation Process, which included the erection of Site Notices and Newspaper Advertisements, during which no individuals came forward to identify and claim the graves after the stipulated time-frame of 60 days-notice period, permit applications was done at all the relevant departments and authorities.

After obtaining permissions from the various authorities to undertake the physical work, including SAHRA, Department of Health, COGTA, SAP and Municipal, the work was scheduled and completed during the 2nd week of August 2022. The work for all the unknown graves and those known ones older than 60 years of age was conducted under SAHRA Permit (**Case ID#18537 & Permit ID#3618**). A total of 102 graves were covered by the permit, with 2 graves positively identified as being younger than 60 years of age.

During the last day of exhumations some community members (individuals) approached the Heritage Specialist and Undertakers on site, claiming that some of the graves might be those of their deceased loved-ones. Based on the map drawn for the site and graves they were able to indicate to some extent which ones it might be. Their details will be included in a Final draft of the report once all information and written affidavits have been corroborated. This process is being handled by the Undertaker in conjunction with the family representatives.

Finally, it can be concluded that the physical investigation, exhumation and relocation work was conducted successfully to the satisfaction of all parties involved. Although 104 graves were estimated to be located on the site, only 96 could positively be identified and exhumed. Two further test pits (No.'s 97 & 98) were dug in areas where graves were suspected, but nothing was found. These were therefore declared as No Graves in the end.

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AIMS

The main aims with the excavation and exhumation of the graves/burials were the following:

- (a) The detailed investigation of all the identified and claimed graves/burials located on the site,
- (b) The successful excavation, exhumation and finally relocation, of each grave/burial & recovered remains, to the Boksburg Subregional Municipal Cemetery in Boksburg South.

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 grave site, is produced. Photographs of the area, as well as each individual burial, any skeletal remains and grave goods that are recovered are also taken as part of the documentation process.

Excavation and Exhumation – Normally graves are excavated & 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 was used to remove overburden (soil, etc.) from the grave/burial locations to assist with the process.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA AND SITE

The grave site/informal cemetery were located on the Remainder of Portion 2 of the farm Rietspruit 152IR, in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng. The site was located around 1km south-east of the Sky City Mall. The graves were to be impacted by the Watervalspruit Extension 37 (also known as the Sky City) Residential development, necessitating the exhumation and relocation of the graves located there.

Although most of the graves were stone-packed without any headstones or inscriptions, there were a few graves here with formal headstones and demarcations, including identificatory inscriptions. Details on these and other graves will be supplied in the next sections. After completing the legal requirements for the placement of site notices and newspaper advertisements (Public Participation) the various permit applications were done. After all permissions were obtained the work was then scheduled and undertaken. It needs to be stated here that no individuals or community members came forward during the time that the notices were erected or newspaper ads were run and the grave were therefore all deemed as unknown and unclaimed. All the individual grave markers (placed at each grave at the time of the erection of the Site Notices) were also removed (stolen?) when the specialist team returned to the site for the grave exhumation work in August 2022.

The remains from all of the graves were relocated to and reburied at the Boksburg Subregional Cemetery in Boksburg South.



Figure 1: General location of the grave site. The positions of the site notices in relation to the site are also indicated. Each grave was also individually marked prior to the exhumation work (Google Earth 2022).



Figure 2: Closer view of the grave site location and footprint. The site was not fenced at the time of documentation (Google Earth 2022).



Figure 3: General view of the site in January 2022.



Figure 4: Example of the individual grave markers used to document the graves in January 2022.



Figure 5: A view of the demarcated site in August 2022. All the individual grave markers had been removed prior to work being undertaken.

EXCAVATION AND EXHUMATION OF THE BURIALS

Although a total of possibly 104 graves were initially identified on the site, the final number of graves positively identified, exhumed and relocated from here totaled 96. Two additional areas (97 & 98) where possible graves could be located were also tested, but no evidence of any burial pits or remains were found and these were declared as No Graves. These areas were open spaces in between known graves.

In general it was found that rock bands stretches across the site, which made the original digging of the graves most likely difficult. In some parts of the site this was less evident, with soft soils going down to fairly deep below the Present Surface Level (PSL). Most of the burial pits were between 1.60m and 1.90m deep (when sterile levels were reached), with some slightly deeper. A large percentage of the graves were those of small infants or young children and in those graves very little skeletal or other material were found. In many of the burials where preservation was good the remains were found still wrapped in either coffin plastic, other plastic wrapping, blankets and parts of coffins. Some burials pits had sheets of corrugated iron placed on top of the remains. Where no remains were found soil samples were taken for reburial purposes.

Three graves with headstones, found on site during the documentation process, indicated dates of death of 1998 (Grave 18), 1973 (Grave 41) and 1957 (Grave No.50). Two additional graves with headstones that were invisible prior to the exhumation process,

provided dates of 1951 (Grave 36) and No date (Grave 11). It seems therefore that the graves on the site date to between the early 1950's and late 1990's. The remains from the other unmarked graves, based on preservation and the types of material found, seem to confirm this assumption. All the graves were orientated in an E/W direction, with the headstones to the east.

Although an earthmoving machine (TLB) was used to assist with the removal of overburden from the graves, digging was only done up to the level of the burial pits or when remains were exposed. All further work was then done by hand, with remains removed from the burial pits and then placed in new coffins for reburial.

On the final day of exhumation representatives of two families came to the site and indicated that they might have deceased members buried at the location. They were however uncertain and only indicated that the graves were unmarked (no headstones) and packed with stones. As nearly all the graves had by then been removed from the site they were shown the hand-drawn map of the site showing the position of all the graves on it. Based on this they then indicated the possible grave numbers that their family members were buried at. The graves they claimed are No.40 and No.68 on the map. Both these were already removed and relocated. Details on these graves and their possible identities will be discussed in the section below. For grave No.40 a date of death could not be provided (except that it was possibly more than 60 years ago), while for grave No.68 a date of death of 1976 was given. The family members both indicated that they would want to discuss the possibility of reburying the remains from these graves at another cemetery. It was then decided with them that the way forward will be discussed and that more proof of their claims needed to be provided. This process is ongoing and will be finalized in due course.

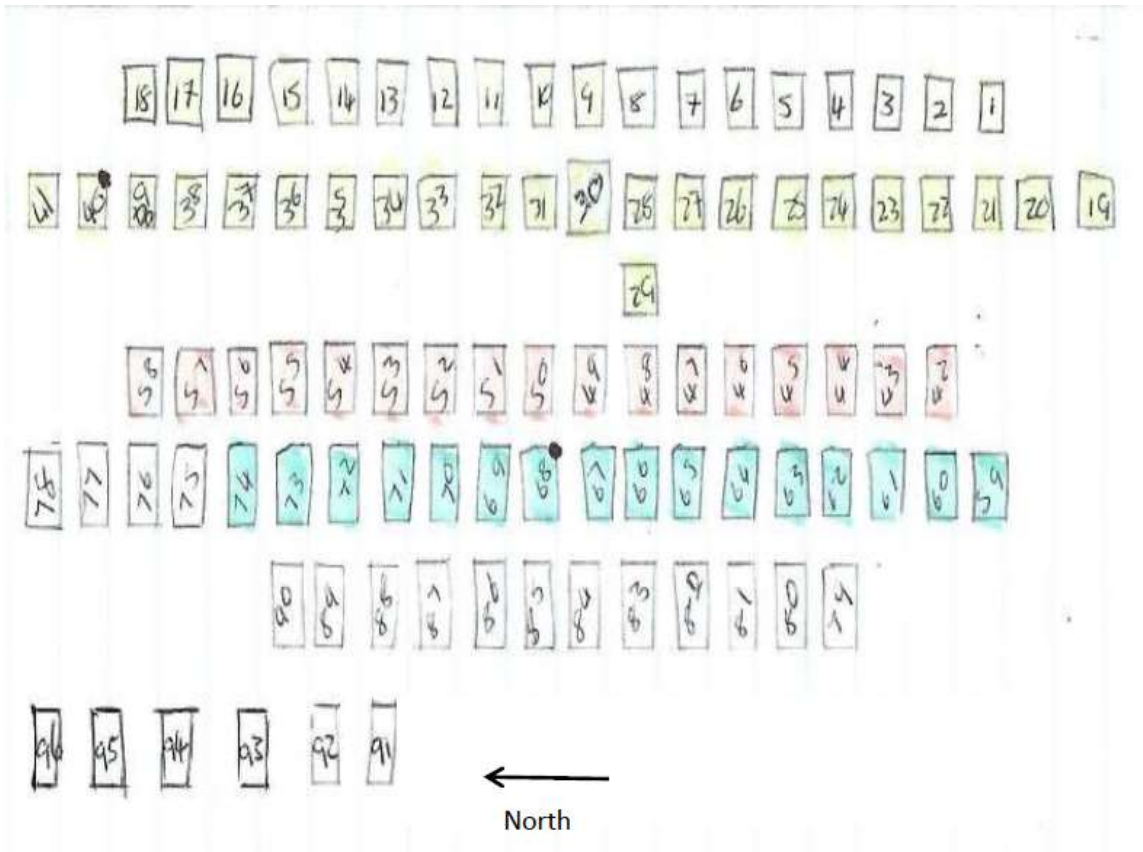


Figure 6: Hand-drawn Site Map showing the position of each grave at the site (no to scale). The grave numbers correspond to individual graves discussed below.

The Grave Site was located at S26 25 04.60 E28 07 27.73.

The physical investigation, exhumation and relocation work was conducted during the 2nd week of August 2022. The remains recovered from each of the graves were relocated to and reburied in the Boksburg Subregional Cemetery in Boksburg South, with the old headstones from those graves that had them also relocated there.

Photographs of the individual graves, burial pits and the remains recovered from each will not be placed in the report, but will be supplied in a separate folder as part of the report

The details for and results of the investigations/excavations & exhumations are as follows:

Grave 1 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Pieces of corrugated iron sheeting recovered, as well as coffin plastic & blanket fragments. The fragmented skeletal remains of a young (juvenile) individual were found still wrapped in the plastic. Termite activity was observed in the burial pit. New grave number RC1A.

Grave 2 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Besides the metal head piece of a pick, no other grave goods were recovered. A single chicken bone and the fragmented longbone (femur) of an adult individual were recovered. New grave number RC1B.

Grave 3 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or small child being buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were recovered and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC1C.

Grave 4 – Stone-packed with no headstone. One fragmented longbone of an adult individual was recovered from the burial pit. New grave number RC2A.

Grave 5 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Besides some pieces of corrugated iron sheeting, only a small bone fragment was recovered and a soil sample was also taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC2B.

Grave 6 – Stone-packed with no headstone. A coffin nail was recovered, as well as some fragmented longbones (femurs, tibias) of an adult individual. New grave number RC2C.

Grave 7 – Stone-packed with no headstone. No skeletal remains or any grave goods were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC3A.

Grave 8 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. Again, no skeletal remains or grave goods were recovered and a soil sample was taken for reburial. New grave number RC3B.

Grave 9 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. A hessian bag, baby blanket and small girls dress was recovered from the burial pit, but no skeletal remains. New grave number RC3C.

Grave 10 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. White coffin plastic, coffin screws and baby clothing fragments were recovered only. New grave number RC4A.

Grave 11 – Stone-packed grave with an asbestos (roof tile?) as headstone. The name Molahleni Mofokeng could be seen on it, but no date of birth or death was visible. The remains were still found wrapped in coffin plastic, with the size of the wrapped remains indicating an infant. New grave number RC13A.

Grave 12 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic wrapping & coffin handles were recovered, with the fragmented skeletal remains of an adult found in the plastic wrapping. The sex of the individual could not be determined (no usable pelvic remains). Based on the teeth found the person was fairly young, with the teeth not badly worn. New grave number RC4B.

Grave 13 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. Besides some small fragments of coffin plastic, no

other grave goods or skeletal remains were found. Soil sample taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC4C/

Grave 14 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic and pieces of a baby blanket was found, as well as the fragmented remains of an infant. The milk teeth (still not completely erupted) seem to indicate a baby between 6 and 9 months old (maybe). New grave number RC5A.

Grave 15 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic wrapping and a blanket was found, with the remains of the infant still wrapped inside. New grave number RC5B.

Grave 16 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic wrapping was found inside the burial pit, with the skeletal remains of an adult still wrapped inside. A blue dress recovered indicates that a female adult was buried here. New grave number RC5C.

Grave 17 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic and a baby blanket was recovered, with the remains of the infant still wrapped inside. New grave number RC6A.

Grave 18 – This grave was formally marked with a granite headstone and dressing and contained the burial of Baby Daughter Khambule who was born 1988-06-22 & passed away 1998-08-29. She was therefore just older than 10 years of age. Her remains were recovered still wrapped in coffin plastic and was not opened. New grave number RC14A.

Grave 19 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. Coffin plastic wrapping, a baby blanket and clothing was recovered, as well as some fragmented skeletal remains. New grave number RC6B.

Grave 20 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. Coffin plastic, a baby blanket and baby clothing was found. The blue colour of the baby grow (pants) indicate that this might have been the burial of male infant. New grave number RC6C.

Grave 21 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. Coffin plastic and fragments of baby clothing was found. New grave number RC7A.

Grave 22 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC7B.

Grave 23 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The fairly complete but fragmented remains of an adult individual, still wrapped in coffin plastic, were recovered. The “hair” (wig) found with the skull indicates that this was an adult female buried here. New grave number RC7C.

Grave 24 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The fairly complete but fragmented remains of an adult individual, still wrapped in coffin plastic, were recovered from the burial pit. The sex of the individual could not be determined without a doubt, but based on the robust longbones it was possibly an adult male. New grave number RC8A.

Grave 25 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Some metal coffin handles, blanket fragments and coffin plastic was recovered. The remains of an adult individual were found still wrapped in thick black plastic. New grave number RC8B.

Grave 26 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Pieces of corrugated iron sheeting, coffin handles and clothing was recovered, as well as the fragmented remains of an adult. The pants found indicate that this was likely an adult male buried here. New grave number RC8C.

Grave 27 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Baby clothing (a dress) was recovered, but no skeletal remains. The burial was likely that of an infant girl. New grave number RC9A.

Grave 28 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. Besides some pieces of corrugated iron sheeting, no grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC9B.

Grave 29 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC9C.

Grave 30 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. Besides a small piece of a red plastic vessel, no other grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC10A.

Grave 31 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC10B.

Grave 32 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The fragmented skeletal remains (mainly longbone shafts) of an adult individual were recovered from the burial pit. No other grave goods were found. New grave number RC10C.

Grave 33 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The fragmented skeletal remains (of an adult individual) were recovered from the burial pit. No other grave goods were found. New grave number RC11A.

Grave 34 – No stones, but unmarked gap in between graves 33 & 35. Possibly an infant or child burial. No remains or grave goods were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial. New grave number RC11B.

Grave 35 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC11C.

Grave 36 – This grave was formally demarcated with a cement border and cement cross as headstone. It was the grave of Elizabeth Thamagolo. A date of 11.06.51 could be seen inscribed and it is assumed this is the date of death. No skeletal remains or any grave goods were found and a soil sample was taken or reburial purposes. New grave number RC15A.

Grave 37 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an infant or small child was buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC12A.

Grave 38 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The fairly complete but fragmented remains of an adult individual were recovered from the burial. Small pieces of a blanket were also found, with the individual probably wrapped in this originally. The teeth indicate a fairly young person. The sex of the individual could not be determined by using the skull or pelvis as these were too fragmented, but based on the gracile nature of the longbones it is possible that this was an adult female that was buried here. New grave number RC12B.

Grave 39 – Stone-packed with no headstone. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial. New grave number RC12C.

Grave 40 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size indicated a possible adult burial. Corrugated iron sheeting as well as pieces of asbestos ceiling board was found in the burial pit, but no skeletal remains or any other grave goods. This was one of the graves that a community member indicated as possibly being that of a deceased family member. The representative indicated that it could be the grave of one Simon Phuti (his father) that died when he was still very young (more than 60 years ago). New grave number RC17A.

Grave 41 – This grave was formally marked and demarcated with a granite border and headstone. The grave was that of one Makhatha Petrus Mofokeng, who was born 28-02-1908 and passed away 07-08-1973 at the age of 65. The fragmented remains of an adult person, still wrapped in plastic, were recovered, as well as some metal coffin handles. New grave number RC16A.

Grave 42 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated a small child buried here. The blanket and coffin plastic, with the remains of a juvenile individual still wrapped inside, was recovered from the burial. New grave number RC17B.

Grave 43 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. A blanket and coffin plastic, with the remains of the individual still wrapped inside, was recovered from the burial. New grave number RC17C. The blue colour of the blanket could indicate a baby boy had been buried here.

Grave 44 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. A small piece of a plastic bag with a tag written 26.00 on it was found in the pit, but no other grave goods or skeletal remains were recovered. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC18A.

Grave 45 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. A blanket and coffin plastic, with the remains of the individual still wrapped inside, was recovered from the burial. Items of clothing were also found and these could indicate a female infant. New grave number RC18B.

Grave 46 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Although the size of the grave indicated an adult possibly buried here, no remains were recovered. The only grave goods found were a small piece of coffin plastic. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC18C.

Grave 47 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC19A.

Grave 48 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. The remains were found still wrapped in plastic and blanket, with baby clothing also recovered. This included plastic baby bibs and baby clothing in blue and pink. This seems to indicate the possibility that both a girl and boy could have been buried here and if that is the case it is possible that they were twins that died at birth (still-born). No skeletal remains could be seen in the wrapping. New grave number RC19B.

Grave 49 – The grave was only marked by a few stones and a slight depression in the soil. It is a possible that an infant or small child could have been buried here. Besides a small fragment of coffin plastic, no other remains could be found. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC19C.

Grave 50 – This grave was formally demarcated with a cement slab and headstone, with a granite inlay containing the inscription. It is the grave of Phakathi Kleinboei Makhangolo born 24-03-1859 & passed away 26-07-1957 at the age of 98 years. Some plastic fragments, pieces of clothing and a cloth “bag” tied with rope were recovered from the burial pit. The fragmented skeletal remains (mainly longbones) of an adult individual were found. New grave number RC20A.

Grave 51 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC21A.

Grave 52 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC21B.

Grave 53 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC21C.

Grave 54 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC22A.

Grave 55 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Although the size of the grave indicated an infant or small child possibly buried here, the very fragmented remains of an adult individual was found in the burial pit. These consisted mainly of longbone shafts and skull fragments. No other grave goods were recovered. New grave number RC22B.

Grave 56 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC22C.

Grave 57 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC23A.

Grave 58 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No grave goods or skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC23B

Grave 59 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Although the size of the grave indicated a possible adult buried here, the remains that were found were those of an infant or young child based on the size of the coffin wrapping. The remains were still enclosed within this wrapping. The baby clothing found was pink in colour and this was therefore likely a baby girl buried here. New grave number RC23C.

Grave 60 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. Coffin plastic, with the remains of an infant still wrapped in it, was recovered from the burial pit. New grave number RC24A.

Grave 61 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic wrapping, a large blanket and a hessian bag was found in the burial pit. No skeletal remains were visible in the

wrapping, but the size indicates an adult individual was buried here. New grave number RC24B.

Grave 62 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The fairly complete although fragmented remains of an adult person was found, still wrapped in coffin plastic and a blanket. Metal coffin handles were also recovered. New grave number RC24C.

Grave 63 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic and metal coffin handles was recovered, while the skeletal remains of an adult individual was found still wrapped inside the plastic. New grave number RC25A.

Grave 64 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic was recovered as well as metal coffin handles, with the skeletal remains of a young adult individual (based on the teeth) found still wrapped inside the plastic. New grave number RC25B.

Grave 65 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic was recovered as well as metal coffin handles, with the skeletal remains of an adult individual found still wrapped inside the plastic. New grave number RC25C.

Grave 66 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an adult was possibly buried here. A large amount of clothing remains and a blanket was found, as well as coffin plastic wrapping. The skeletal remains were still wrapped inside. New grave number RC26A.

Grave 67 – This grave was formally demarcated with a cement slab and small cross. No inscription could be seen on the headstone. Coffin handles were found, as well as coffin plastic wrapping. The fragmented remains of an adult individual was found in the wrapping still, with a plastic hospital bracelet on the one arm. No identification could be seen on this. Based on the v-shaped sciatic notch on the pelvis this individual was most likely an adult male. New grave number RC26B.

Grave 68 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated that an adult could have been buried here. Although some metal coffin handles and the fragments of a jersey or woolen blanket were recovered, no skeletal remains were preserved. This was the 2nd grave that was claimed on the final day of fieldwork by a community member who visited the site. Paul Mokhachane indicated that his father Isaak was possibly buried in this grave based on the map of the site he was showed on the day. Grave 68 had already been removed when he visited the site. According to him his father passed away in 1976. New grave number RC26C.

Grave 69 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic, coffin nails, blanket pieces and items of clothing were recovered, as well as the fairly well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual still mostly wrapped in the plastic, blanket and clothing. The clothing (pants etc.) indicate that this was an adult male buried here. New grave number RC27A.

Grave 70 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin handles as well as blanket and clothing fragments were recovered together with the fragmented skeletal remains of an adult individual from this burial pit. New grave number RC27B.

Grave 71 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The very fragmented skeletal remains of an adult individual were recovered with some coffin plastic. It is possibly the remains of an adult female based on the gracile nature of the longbones found. New grave number RC27C.

Grave 72 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. The remains of an infant/small child were found still wrapped inside the coffin plastic. New grave number RC28A.

Grave 73 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. Besides some small pieces of plastic, no skeletal remains or any other grave goods were recovered and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC28B.

Grave 74 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. Pieces of corrugated iron sheeting, coffin plastic, coffin handles and clothing fragments were recovered. However no skeletal remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC28C.

Grave 75 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. Coffin handles were found as well as a blanket in which the small fragmented remains of an infant were still wrapped. New grave number RC29A.

Grave 76 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic and a blanket. Some of the clothing items (shirts) indicate that this was an adult male buried here. New grave number RC29B.

Grave 77 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The remains of an adult person, wrapped in plastic and a blanket, was recovered, while the clothing (a robe/garment) found with it is typical of those that would be worn by a male member of the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC). New grave number RC29C.

Grave 78 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Plastic coffin handles were found together with the skeletal remains of an adult individual still wrapped inside plastic. New grave number RC30A.

Grave 79 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic and a blanket. Plastic coffin handles were also recovered. New grave number RC30B.

Grave 80 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic. Coffin handles as well as the lid of a plastic bucket was also recovered from the burial pit. New grave number RC30C.

Grave 81 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic. Plastic coffin handles was also recovered from the burial pit, as well as a plastic snuff container. New grave number RC31A.

Grave 82 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The fairly well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, together with fragments of coffin plastic wrapping and metal coffin handles. New grave number RC31B.

Grave 83 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic. A plastic hospital arm bracelet was found as well, but did not contain any identification anymore. New grave number RC31C.

Grave 84 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic. Plastic coffin handles was also recovered from the burial pit. New grave number RC32A.

Grave 85 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic. New grave number RC32B.

Grave 86 – Grave demarcated with cement hollow-bricks and small cross as headstone. No inscription could be found on it. The fairly well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic. Plastic coffin handles was also recovered from the burial pit. New grave number RC32C.

Grave 87 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic and a large blanket. New grave number RC33A.

Grave 88 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. The remains of an infant/young child was recovered in the burial pit, still wrapped in coffin plastic and a blanket. New grave number RC33B.

Grave 89 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The fairly well-preserved skeletal remains of an adult individual were found, still wrapped inside coffin plastic and a large blanket. Plastic coffin handles and screws were also recovered. New grave number RC33C.

Grave 90 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. Some coffin plastic wrapping was found, but no preserved skeletal remains were visible inside the wrapping. New grave number RC34A.

Grave 91 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. Besides a glass Chamberlain’s Cough Syrup bottle and some coffin plastic wrapping fragments, no skeletal remains were preserved in the burial pit. New grave number RC34B.

Grave 92 – Stone-packed with no headstone. The size of the grave indicated an infant or child buried here. No skeletal remains or grave goods were recovered from the burial pit and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. New grave number RC34C.

Grave 93 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Plastic coffin wrapping, a large blanket (fragments of), coffin handles and clothing fragments were found. The fragmented skeletal remains of an adult were recovered, still mostly wrapped in the plastic and blanket remains. Shoes found indicate that this was an adult male buried here. New grave number RC35A.

Grave 94 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic, blanket remains and clothing was found, with the fragmented skeletal remains of an adult individual mostly still wrapped inside. A blue dress indicates that this was an adult female buried here. New grave number RC35B.

Grave 95 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic and clothing was found in the burial pit, with some metal coffin handles as well. The fairly well preserved of an adult individual was found still wrapped in the plastic. A beer bottle found in the pit, as well as pants recovered with the clothing indicates that this was an adult male buried here. New grave number RC35C.

Grave 96 – Stone-packed with no headstone. Coffin plastic, coffin handles and nails, as well as fragments of clothing, were recovered from the burial. The fragmented skeletal remains of an adult individual were found mostly still wrapped in the coffin plastic. New grave number RC36.

Grave 97 – Open space in between two identified graves. No remains or indication of burial pit found and No Grave declared.

Grave 98 – Space in between 2 identified graves. Few stones noticed here. No remains or indication of burial pit found and No Grave declared.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Anton Pelsler (of APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING cc) was appointed by Cosmopolitan Projects Johannesburg (Pty) Ltd, in conjunction with Roseleigh Funeral Home, to assist with the investigation, exhumation & relocation of approximately 104 known & unknown graves from the Remainder of Portion 2 of the Farm Rietspruit 152IR. The graves will be impacted on by their Watervalspruit Extension 37 development.

After a Public Participation Process, which included the erection of Site Notices and Newspaper Advertisements, during which no individuals came forward to identify and claim the graves after the stipulated time-frame of 60 days-notice period, permit applications was done at all the relevant departments and authorities.

After obtaining permissions from the various authorities to undertake the physical work, it was scheduled and completed during the 2nd week of August 2022. The work for all the unknown graves and those known ones older than 60 years of age was conducted under a SAHRA Permit. A total of 102 graves were covered by the permit, with 2 graves positively identified as being younger than 60 years of age. Although a total of possibly 104 graves were initially identified on the site, the final number of graves positively identified, exhumed and relocated from here totaled 96. Two additional areas (97 & 98) where possible graves could be located were also tested, but no evidence of any burial pits or remains were found and these were declared as No Graves.

A large percentage of the graves were those of small infants or young children and in those graves very little skeletal or other material were found. In many of the burials where preservation was good the remains were found still wrapped in either coffin plastic, other plastic wrapping, blankets and parts of coffins. Some burials pits had sheets of corrugated iron placed on top of the remains. Where no remains were found soil samples were taken for reburial purposes. Three graves with headstones found on site during the documentation process, indicated dates of death of 1998, 1973 and 1957. Two additional graves with headstones that were invisible prior to the exhumation process provided dates of 1951 and No date. It seems therefore that the graves on the site date to between the early 1950's and late 1990's. The remains from the other unmarked graves, based on preservation and the types of material found, seem to confirm this assumption.

The remains from all of the graves were relocated to and reburied at the Boksburg Subregional Cemetery in Boksburg South. The formal headstones from the graves were also relocated to the new location. During the last day of exhumations some community members (individuals) approached the Heritage Specialist and Undertakers on site, claiming that some of the graves might be those of their deceased loved-ones. Based on the map drawn for the site and graves they were able to indicate to some extent which ones it might be. Their details will be included in a Final draft of the report once all information and written affidavits have been corroborated. This process is being handled by the Undertaker in conjunction with the family representatives.

Finally it should be stated that although all efforts are made to recover and remove all possible remains from any burials identified in the area, that there are always a possibility of something being missed. Unmarked and unknown graves/burials (not known to the families who identified and claimed the burials under discussion) could also still be located at the site. This aspect needs to be kept in mind when expanding mining operations into the area, as well as any other development activities, expose any remains or evidence. A Specialist should then be called in to investigate and provide recommendations on the way forward.

REFERENCES

General and closer views of Watervalspruit Extension 37 Grave Site Location: Google Earth 2022.