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Report on the rescue excavation  
of 5 structures, presumed to be  
graves, at the proposed  
Silverwoods Residential  
Development in eastern Pretoria,  
Gauteng.

Submitted by:

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SA HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY  
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*This report is submitted in fulfillment of SAHRA Excavation permit no: 80/04/01/001/51 and covers the excavation of five structures presumed to be graves on the proposed Silverwoods Residential Development in eastern Pretoria, Gauteng and is submitted to SAHRA and Tekplan Environmental.*

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## 1. Introduction

Archaeo-Info Northern Province (AINP) in consultation with W.C. Nienaber was commissioned by Tekplan Environmental to perform the rescue excavation of 5 structures presumed to be graves on the proposed *Silverwoods Residential Development* located in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria in Gauteng. These possible graves were recorded during the routine Heritage Impact Assessment<sup>1</sup> performed as part of the environmental impact assessment performed on the site for the development.

After extensive social consultation was performed and all the possible affected parties interviewed, no next of kin could be located for these possible graves. In consultation with the client it was decided to apply for a permit for excavation from SAHRA and to go ahead with the investigation of the graves through excavations. The client agreed to pay for the analysis of any remains found in order to determine their origin. The excavation of the structures presumed to be graves were performed on 10 February 2003.

## 2. Social Consultation

Due to the distance from the investigators at AINP Thohoyandou (the lead consultants) it was decided to sub-contract a Gauteng based social consultant form ARCH/MC, Mr. Johan Nel.

Social consultations with relevant parties were performed during August 2003 and a report on the structures presumed to be graves was received by September 2003<sup>2</sup>.

It was the finding of the social consultant that no next of kin could be identified for the five<sup>3</sup> possible graves.

## 3. Authorization of excavations

The possible graves affected by the developments at the Silverwoods Residential Project resorted under Section 36 of Act 25 of 1999 (National Heritage Resources Act) since they were not inside a cemetery administered by a recognised local authority and were thought to be older than 60 years and younger than 100 years.

The notice requirements set by Section 36 of Act 25 of 1999 (National Heritage Resources Act, 1999) and Ordinance 7 of 1925 (Exhumations Ordinance) were adhered to. The notices were dated August 1, 2003 and were effective for fourteen days and six weeks respectively.

As soon as the social consultation process was completed and the landowner had given written permission for the excavation of the affected structures and the exhumation and re-interment of any remains forthcoming, an excavation permit authorising the relocation of the graves was issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) (Permit no.: 80/04/01/001/51).

The South African Police Services at Pretoria Central were notified of the excavations and when this would take place, seven days prior to the excavations.

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<sup>1</sup> Gaigher S. 2004. *Heritage Impact Assessment for the Proposed Silverwoods Security Complex*. Unpublished HIA report.

<sup>2</sup> Nel J. 2004. *Silverwoods Country Estate Social Consultation*. Unpublished report.

#### 4. Excavation of the structures.

The structures identified and presumed to be graves were cleared from excessive grass and plant-growth to be photographed and documented. Surface structures were removed and blocks were marked out to be excavated in layers in order to identify any possible grave pits. These blocks were excavated down until sterile soil and bedrock were encountered. These excavated blocks were then photographed and documented. The description and results of each structure and excavation are as follows:

##### 4.1 Structure 1 (SLK/01)

GPS 25° 46' 37.7''S 28° 22' 41.1''E

##### Location of structure

See Addendum A for Location Map.

The structure was situated in an open clearing, next to a dirt road that crosses the game camp diagonally.

##### Surface features

The surface structure consisted of a large, rectangular shaped mound of packed rocks measuring 3.2m in length and 1.55m across. Large rocks were located on the southern end and on the corners of the structure and the middle was filled with soil and smaller rocks. Orientation was north to south (photo 1).

##### Description of excavated block

Orientation: North / South

Shape: Rectangular

Depth: 0.68 m

Length: 2.26 m

Breadth: 1.39 m

(photo 6)

##### Synthesis

This structure, which was presumed to be a grave, proved to be nothing more than a rectangular shaped surface structure. No evidence of a grave or any human remains were found. The purpose of the structure is unknown as no other indications of its origin and function could be established. No artefacts or any other cultural material were found.

##### 4.2 Structure 2 (SLK/02)

GPS 25° 46' 37.1''S

28° 22' 42.6''E

##### Location of structure

See Addendum A for Location Map.

Structure SLK/02 was situated approximately 30m north of structure SLK/01 in a cluster of trees.

#### Surface features

The structure was not very well defined and it seemed to be damaged/disturbed. It consisted of a collection of rocks that were packed to form a roughly rectangular shaped structure. More loose scattered rocks were placed to the east of this structure. It was orientated north to south and measured 3.1m in length and 1.2m across (photo 2).

#### Vegetation associated

Although the structure was found directly underneath a tree, it was not associated with it.

#### Description of excavated block

Orientation: North / South      Shape: Rectangular

Depth: 0.57 m

Length: 1.89 m

Breadth: 1.12 m

(photo 7)

#### Synthesis

This structure proved not to be a grave. Rocks, which formed the surface structure, did not represent the location of a grave. No evidence of a grave or any human remains were found. The purpose of the structure is unknown as no other indications of its origin and function could be established. No artefacts or any other cultural material were found.

#### 4.3 Structure 3 (SLK03)

GPS 25° 46' 40.7"S

28° 22' 45.8"E

#### Location of structure

See Addendum A for Location Map.

This structure was situated in an open clearing next to a small, bulldozed dam in the northeastern corner of the game camp on the property.

#### Surface features

The structure consisted of a large, stone packed, circular shaped single line of rocks. It structure measured 3.1m in length (E/W) and 2.7m across (N/S) with the middle filled in with soil (photo 3).

#### Description of excavated block

Orientation: east / west

Shape: Rectangular

Depth: 0.81 m

Length: 2.12 m

Breadth: 1.10 m

(photo 8)

#### Synthesis

Although this structure represented the traditional way of marking a grave it proved not to be one. No burial pit or any skeletal or cultural remains were found. The excavated block proved to be sterile and contained nothing but turf soil, on top of the white/grey bedrock. The purpose of the structure is unknown as no indications of its origin and function could be established. No artefacts or any other cultural material were found.

#### 4.4 Structure 4 (SLK/04)

GPS 25° 46' 31,6"S

28° 22' 35,1"E

##### Location of structure

See Addendum A for Location Map.

The structure was situated approximately 80m south of structure SLK/01. The structure was situated on the edge of a row of trees and underneath one of them.

##### Surface features

This structure was roughly circular in shape and consisted of small and large rocks. It was orientated from north to south and measured 2,2m in length and 1,9m across (photo 4).

##### Vegetation associated

Although this structure was situated underneath a tree it was not associated with it.

##### Description of excavated block

Orientation: North / South

Shape: Rectangular

Depth: 0,73 m

Length: 2,10 m

Breadth: 0,89 m

(Photo 9)

##### Synthesis

This structure, which was presumed to be a grave, proved not to be a grave. No evidence of a grave or any human remains were found. The purpose of the structure is unknown as no indications of its origin and function could be established. No artefacts or any other cultural material were found.

#### 4.5. Structure 5 (SLK/05)

GPS 25° 46' 39.8"S

28° 22' 38,6"E

##### Location of structure

See Addendum A for Location Map.

The structure was situated next to the western boundary fence of the game camp right next to the inspection road.

##### Surface features

The structure features consisted of a large, rectangular shaped, raised mound of packed rocks. The structure was orientated from north to south and measured 2,4m in length and 1,7m across. Large rocks were placed on the outside to form an outer line which was filled in with smaller rocks and soil (photo 5).

#### **Description of excavated block**

Orientation: North / South      Shape: Rectangular

Depth: 0,65 m      Length: 2,06 m      Breadth: 1,04 m

(photo 10)

#### **Synthesis**

This structure, as were the case with the other 4 structures presumed to be graves, also proved not to be a grave. No evidence of a grave/grave pit or any human remains were found. The excavated block was culturally sterile and was excavated down to bedrock. The purpose of the structure is unknown as no other indications of its origin and function could be established. No artefacts or any other cultural material were found.

#### **7. Rehabilitation of the site**

The excavations were backfilled after the investigations were completed.

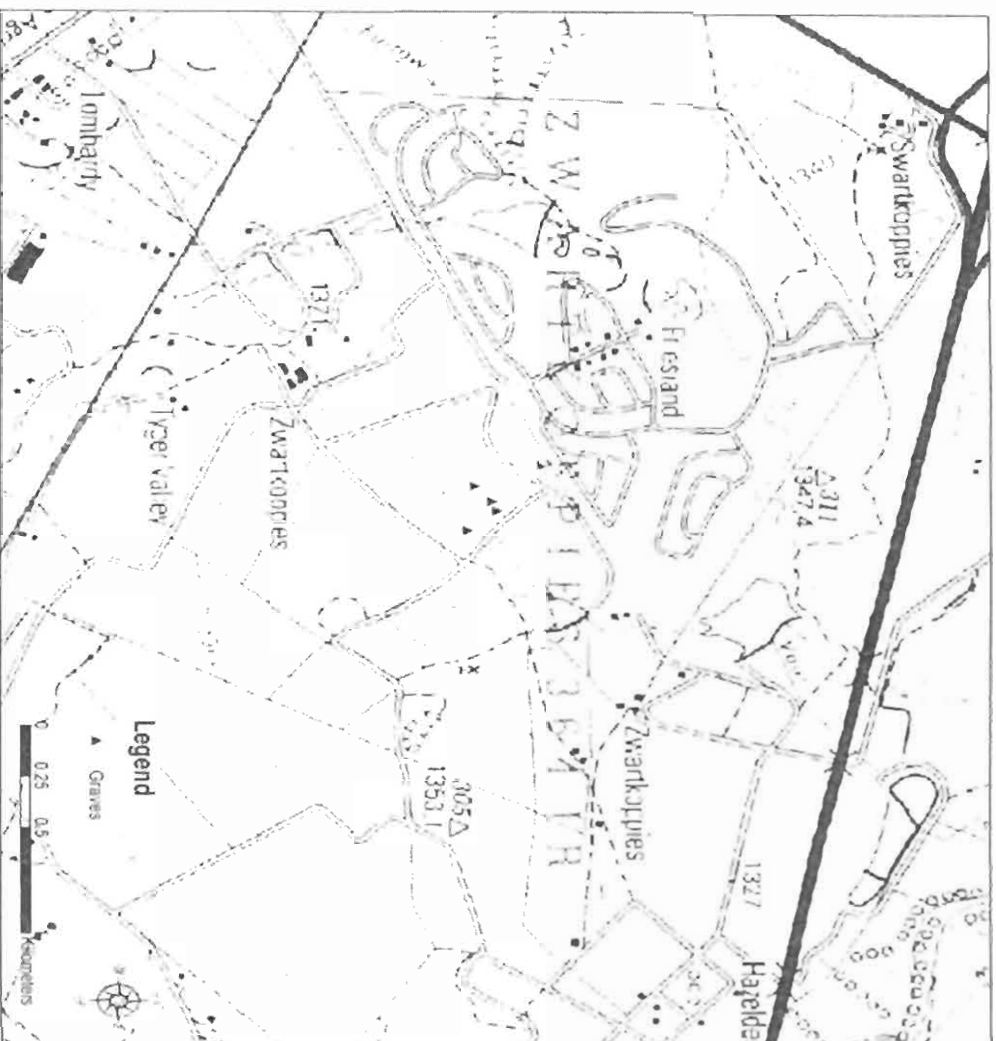


## 9. Literature cited

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- Hutten, M. & Nienaber, W.C. 2003. Report on the excavation and relocation of 4 structures presumed to be graves at Clapham 118KT, near Burgersfort, Mpumalanga. Unpublished report.
- Krogman, W.M. & Iscan, M.Y. 1986. The Human Skeleton in Forensic Medicine. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas.
- Nel J. 2004. Silverwoods County Estate Social Consultation. Unpublished report.

**ADDENDUM A**  
*Location Map*

SILVERWOODS GRAVES: LOCALITY MAP



# **АДДЕЛТУМ В**

*Photographs*

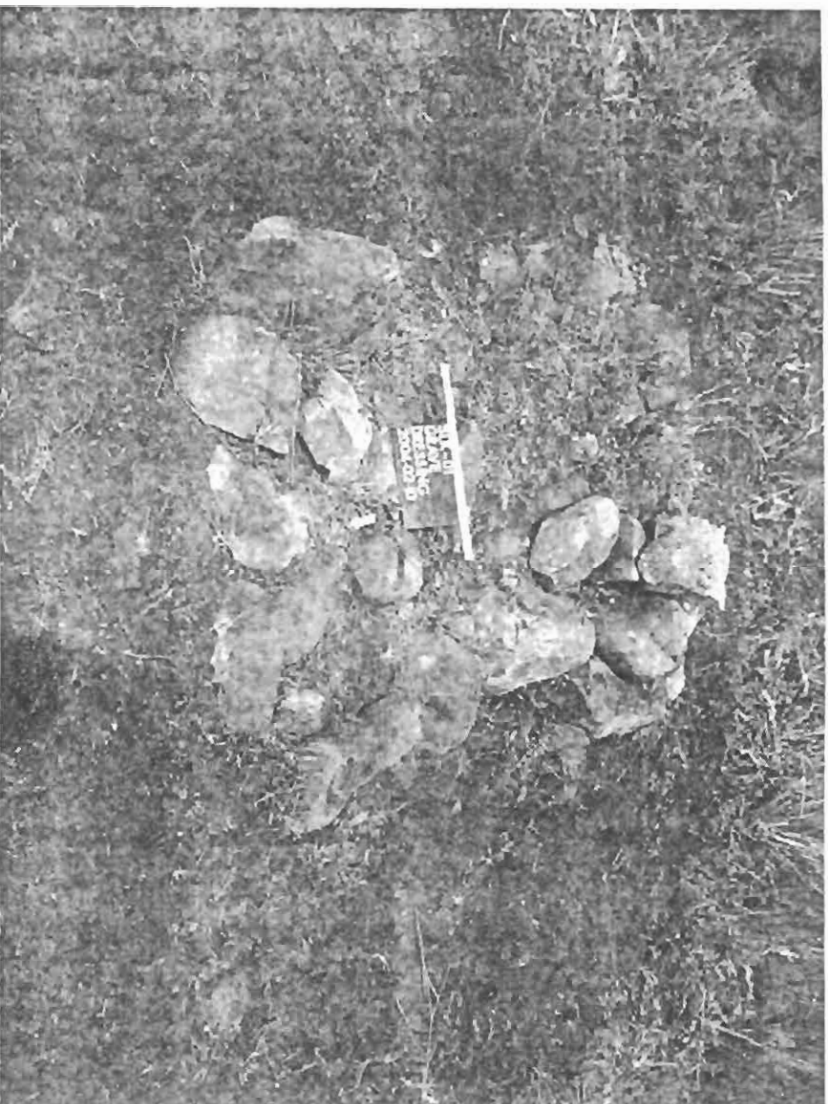


Photo 1. Surface structure at SLK 001



Photo 2. Surface structure at SLK 002



PHOTO 3. Surface structure at SLK 003

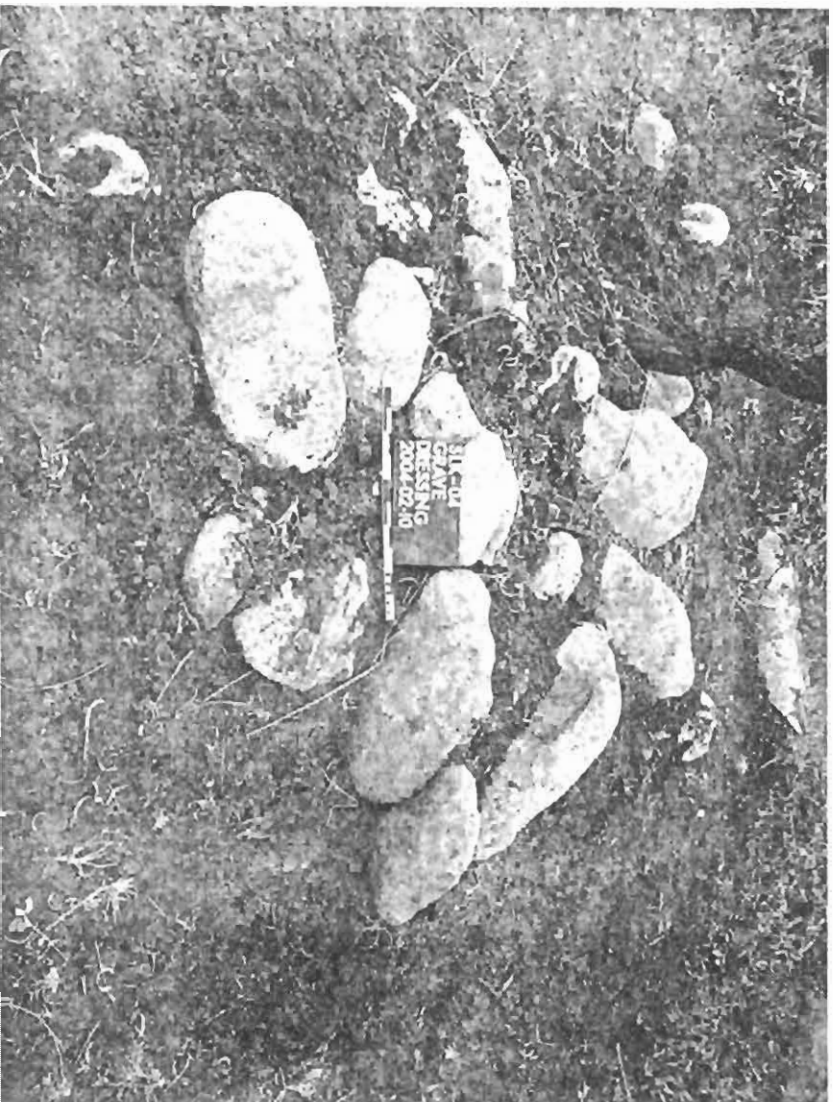


PHOTO 4. Surface structure at SLK 004





PHOTO 5. Boulder structure at SLN 005



PHOTO 6. Excavated pit at SLN 001



PHOTO 7. Excavated pit at SLN 002

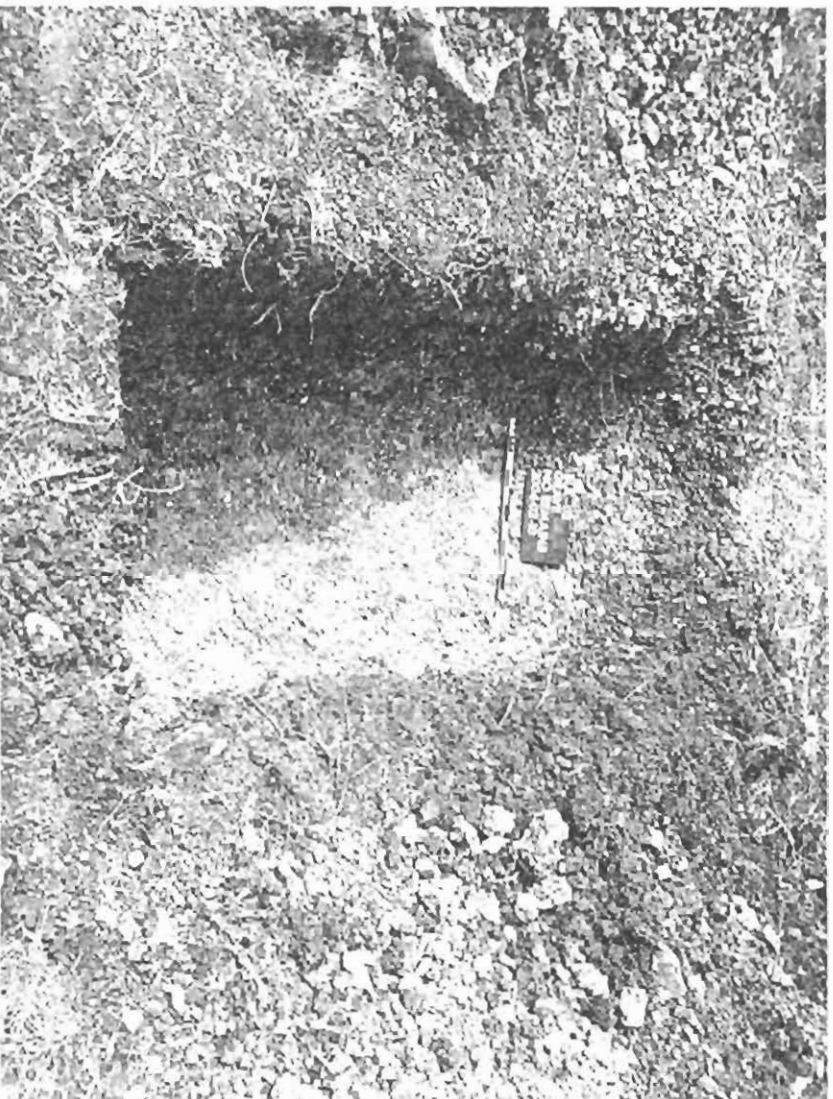


PHOTO 8. Excavated pit at SLN 003





Photo 9. Excavated pit at SLK 004



Photo 10. Excavated pit at SLK 005