



an agency of the  
Department of Arts and Culture

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## **SITE INSPECTION REPORT: Brits Mall PGS Exhumation 2.1**

**BY**

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**HERITAGE INSPECTORATE UNIT**

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## 1. Introduction

Section 36 (3) (a) of the National Heritage Resources Act states that *“No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or provincial heritage resource authority- destroy, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such grave”*.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2016, South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) Burial Grounds and Graves Unit received an invitation from the PGS Heritage regarding the relocation of graves from portion 263 of farm Krokodildrift 446-JQ to a local municipal cemetery in Brits. With regard to section 50 of the National Heritage Resources Act, Burial Grounds and Graves unit extended the invitation to Heritage Inspectorate Unit.

## 2. Background

On the 06<sup>th</sup> of October 2016, SAHRA officials together with the officials from South African Police Services and Madibeng Local Municipality (Environmental Health Department) went on a graves exhumation site inspection at portion 263 of farm Krokodildrift 446-JQ in Brits, North West.

PGS Heritage was appointed for the relocation of ten possible graves on portion 263 of farm Krokodildrift 446-JQ by Resilient Properties (Pty) Ltd. The graves were identified during a site survey when a Heritage Impact Assessment was being compiled for the expansion of Brits Mall. Public participation including site and news paper notices for the next of kin identification was undertaken. After the public consultation was concluded, only one grave was claimed. Mrs Irene Daniels claimed the grave of her



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grandmother and her remains will be reburied at the Damonsville cemetery. The unclaimed grave remains will be buried at Oukasie cemetery, Madibeng Local Municipality.

Site surveying and searching excavations were scheduled to take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2016. The exhumation of confirmed graves took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2016.

### **3. Purpose of the site visit**

Section 50 (8) of the National Heritage Resources Act states that “*A heritage inspector may at any time inspect work done under a permit issued in terms of this Act and may for that purpose at all reasonable times enter any place protected in terms of this act*”. SAHRA Burial Grounds and Graves issued a ten possible graves relocation permit to PGS Heritage. In compliance with section 50 (8) SAHRA inspector went on a site inspection to establish whether the applicant is compliant to the terms of the permit.

### **4. Assessment and Findings**

PGS Heritage was assisted by Martins Funeral Undertakers for the reburial of the human remains uncovered during exhumations. The Daniels family was present during the exhumation process as they had organized a reburial ceremony for their deceased grandmother. The family was not certain of where the grave was located therefore several searching excavations were conducted around the area where they claimed. However the remains they were searching for were not found on that day. Two unknown male remains were exhumed on that day. Due to time PGS Heritage suggested that they will propose another date to the family because the SAHRA permit was valid for



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only one day.



**Picture 1: One of the exhumed graves.**



**Picture 2: PGS Heritage Archaeologist examining gender of the remains.**



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## 5. Conclusion

Many of the graves are neglected or destroyed during developments because we as SAHRA fail to go on sites before issuing permits or during exhumations. Heritage Impact Assessments will mention that there are no graves on site whereas there are graves due to this we fail our communities. SAHRA has to be on site to establish whether the applicant adhere to the terms stated to the permit.

## 6. Recommendations

SAHRA should inspect proposed development sites before issuing permits because most of the complaints that we receive are of graves destroyed during developments.